van den Broek, Member of the Commission. — (NL) Madam President, let me begin with the situation in Iran. I should like to assure Parliament that the Human Rights Commission has not only considered this situation but has also been engaged in a dialogue with Iran. It is clear that the situation is complex and requires a multifaceted approach. The violations of human rights in Iran continue, even though there have been some improvements in recent years.

The EU has been actively engaged in dialogue with Iran on human rights issues. We have repeatedly expressed our concerns to the Iranian authorities, urging them to respect human rights and international law. We have also called for greater transparency and accountability in the treatment of prisoners and the release of political prisoners.

In the case of the persecution of certain religious minorities such as the Baha’is, we have been raising these issues repeatedly. We have called for respect for the rights of all religious minorities and for the protection of their religious freedom.

We have stated on a number of occasions in this House that the United Nations and the Council of Europe have joined the United States in condemning the situation in Iran. We have repeatedly called for a cessation of violence and for the release of political prisoners. We have called for an end to the persecution of religious minorities and for the protection of human rights in Iran.

The economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the EU have had a significant impact on Iran’s economy. We have called for a comprehensive approach to addressing the situation in Iran, including economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure.

Turning now to Armenia, the situation is complex and requires a comprehensive approach. We have been engaged in dialogue with the Armenian authorities and have repeatedly called for a cessation of violence and the release of political prisoners. We have also called for respect for the rights of all religious minorities and for the protection of human rights in Armenia.

We have been engaging with the Armenian authorities on a range of issues, including human rights, democracy, and economic development. We have called for greater transparency and accountability in the treatment of prisoners and the release of political prisoners.

The situation in Armenia is complex and requires a multifaceted approach. We have called for a comprehensive approach to addressing the situation in Armenia, including economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure.

The Commission shares Parliament’s concern about the allegations of human rights violations in the border conflict between Peru and Ecuador. The Commission called for a ceasefire at the start of the dispute between the two countries, and has called for an end to the violence and for the release of political prisoners. We have called for respect for the rights of all religious minorities and for the protection of human rights in Peru and Ecuador.

The conflict has been ongoing for many years, and we have called for a comprehensive approach to addressing the situation, including economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure.

On the subject of the position of the 40,000 Vietnamese in Germany, I would point out that the preamble to the cooperation agreement between the European Union and Vietnam recognizes the policy and concept of repatriation as an element of the agreement, in principle. It has also been the custom, where relevant, for agreements to include references to the need to combat illegal immigration, including agreements on repatriation. These provisions do not imply that people are to be exchanged for money, as the resolution suggests. But they do mean that there has to be close cooperation in this field between the countries concerned and the European Union. I can also tell Members that I myself brought up this subject last year during a visit to Vietnam, when we were negotiating the cooperation agreement, and we repeatedly stressed that no concessions could be made regarding the right of all nationals of every country to have unconditional access to their homeland. Another point is that some countries have to deal with the return of massive numbers of foreign refugees or of people who were illegal immigrants in third countries, and this can cause enormous problems. It was partly for this reason that some countries have linked the return of illegal immigrants to Vietnam with the provision of aid for development projects, in order to ease reintegration problems.