

Gomes (PSE ). - (PT) In the paradise islands of the Maldives, where more than 300 000 European tourists enjoy unforgettable holidays, thousands of local citizens have to endure appalling oppression by a regime that has been in power for 26 years.

The European Union, for its part, has a moral and political duty not to forget these people who live under a state of emergency, subject to arbitrary mass imprisonment - pro-democracy leaders have been tortured, detained and forbidden from communicating with the outside world - and still have to live under a regime that denies them an independent judiciary. The situation is so serious that an EU delegation was denied access to those detainees.

The EU must demand an immediate end to the state of emergency and the release of all detainees. Parliament calls on the Commission and on the Member States to halt non-humanitarian aid to the Maldives immediately and to impose an immediate travel ban to stop members of the Maldives Government and other Maldives officials from entering EU Member States. The EU must, in turn, ask Member States to notify tourists planning to go to the Maldives that paradise is not paradise after all, and that there are human beings suffering tremendous oppression in that country.