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# Speaker seeks to stall EU debate on CAA

Letter to EU Parliament chief says it is 'inappropriate for one legislature to pass judgment on another'

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Concerned by the European Parliament's decision to discuss six resolutions on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has written to its President David Sassoli, "urging" him to reconsider the resolutions critical of India.

"As members of the Inter Parliamentary Union, we should respect the sovereign processes of fellow legislatures, especially in democracies," Mr. Birla wrote in the letter, adding that it was "inappropriate for one legislature to pass judgment on another".

The government also came out sharply against the

EU Parliament's decision to discuss the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, with Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad dismissing the resolutions critical of India as driven by "Left parties", and reiterating the law was India's "internal matter".

"Lots of Left parties [at the EU Parliament] have sought this resolution, and our External Affairs Minister will engage with them and explain our position," Mr. Prasad said on Monday, accusing the MEPs of not being "objective".

The External Affairs Ministry has made no official comment on the draft resolutions, which are backed by six political groups, representing 626 MEPs of the total Parliament strength of 751.



Om Birla

While the harshest resolution, invoking the UN Security Council resolution on Kashmir, indeed comes from the "Left-leaning" European United Left/Nordic Green Left group (GUE/NGL); the largest number of MPs belongs to the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) and the centrist Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European

Parliament, S&D.

At least six or seven MEPs, who had been invited to Jammu and Kashmir in October 2019 by the government, are members of centrist and right-leaning groups such as Renew and European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), which have tabled resolutions against the government's actions over the CAA and Article 370.

Distancing itself from the outcome of the resolutions to be debated and voted on later this week, the European Union's Foreign office said it did not represent the official EU position.

"It is important to recall that these texts are only drafts tabled by various political groups in the European Parliament. Let me also remind you that the opinions

expressed by the European Parliament and its Members do not represent the official position of the European Union," Virginie Battu-Henriksson, EU Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, responded to specific questions from *The Hindu*.

A French diplomat source also said Paris continues to believe the CAA is "India's internal political matter", and the European Parliament is "an institution independent of Member States and the European Commission."

Ms. Henriksson declined to respond to a question about the government's call for the EU Parliament to rethink its decision to discuss the CAA.

(With inputs from Sobhana K. Noida)