Resolution on a political solution to the problem of piracy off the Somali coast

2009/2780(RSP) - 26/11/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 25 November 2009 the European Parliament adopted by 479 votes to 96 with 54 abstentions a resolution on a political solution to the problem of piracy off the Somali coast.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE ECR and EFD groups.

Parliament begins by strongly condemning the serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law committed by all parties to the conflict in Somalia and calls for **an immediate end to hostilities**, reaffirming its support for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) under the leadership of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. It demands the right conditions for an adequate response to the humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia be created immediately.

Members note with great satisfaction that EUNAVFOR Atalanta, launched by the Council on 8 December 2008 as the EU's first-ever naval operation, continues to make a successful contribution to maritime security off the coast of Somalia by protecting World Food Programme (WFP) -chartered vessels delivering aid to Somalia, and other vulnerable vessels. Since December 2008, Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta has provided crucial protection for 50 WFP ships that have delivered roughly 300 000 tonnes of food, ultimately benefiting 1.6 million Somalis directly. Since piracy on the high seas is severely affecting the supply of food aid, Parliament calls upon **the Council to extend the operation for another year** when the current mandate comes to an end on 12 December 2009, with a possible southward extension of the operation zone depending on pirate activity.

The resolution goes on to stress that fighting piracy successfully will be made possible only by **addressing the root causes of the problem**, which are land-based, which include poverty and a failed state, and can be eradicated only by means of peace, development and state-building in Somalia. Until such time as a political solution has been found by the international community to the problem of Somalia's trustworthiness as a state, the security strategy implemented by means of Operation **EUNAVFOR Atalanta must continue to prevail and even be strengthened** in terms of the resources available to the forces deployed by the operation itself.

Accordingly, the Council is asked to **examine the possibility of setting up a new, small-scale ESDP operation** in parallel to Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta to contribute to the training of TFG security forces, thereby bringing existing initiatives – including the French initiative in Djibouti and the Ugandan initiative as part of the training programme set up by AMISOM – into line with one another by ensuring that they take the same type of action. Whilst Parliament welcomes the approval by the Member States on 17 November 2009 of the Crisis Management Concept for a possible new European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) operation for Somalia but insists that the adoption of this concept should in no way prejudge the decision on launching a mission, which can be taken only after a more detailed examination of the situation on the ground, making sure inter alia, that **the trained security forces are integrated into state and command structures** so that, once they return, they will not turn against the government they are supposed to be protecting.

Parliament regrets that 35-40% of vessels in the area are not registered with the central maritime security coordination body and that, as a result, these vessels are not aware of the specific security threats. It calls, therefore, on Member States to **ensure that all their boats are registered** and on all vessels to follow EU

NAVFOR – Operation Atalanta recommendations so as to ensure the highest possible level of security. Parliament also states that it regrets that **a weak attitude towards the demands of the Somali pirates,** without application of the necessary coercive measures, could produce counter-productive and undesirable effects in the future by contributing to new cases of piracy in the zone. Parliament calls on Member States to **study the possibility of training crew members and fishermen** in order to prepare them for the eventuality of hostage taking.

Noting reports by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that a vast number of illegal shipments of toxic waste have been deposited along the coast of Somalia, Parliament calls on the UN and the Commission to **carry out a full investigation of toxic waste dumping and illegal fishing** along the Somali coast, to establish responsibilities at all levels, to support the efforts to bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.

Lastly, Members call on the international community and the EU in particular, to increase its provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and people in need.