

Resolution on the situation in Haiti one year after the earthquake: humanitarian aid and reconstruction

2010/3018(RSP) - 19/01/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Haiti one year after the earthquake: humanitarian aid and reconstruction.

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

It reiterates its solidarity with the people of Haiti suffering as a result of the earthquake in 2010 and the cholera epidemic, and laments the scale of the disaster, the effects of which are still highly visible a year on from the earthquake. Members welcome the extent of the humanitarian aid granted to Haiti by the Commission (EUR 120 million, including EUR 12 million to fight cholera) and Member States (approximately EUR 200 million), and also commends the efforts of humanitarian organisations (the Red Cross, NGOs and the United Nations) and Member States. They stress the need to communicate the non-visible effects of humanitarian work and the fact that the situation was brought under control thanks to, *inter alia*, the provision of care for the injured, drinking water, food and temporary shelter.

Parliament notes that the **cholera epidemic has highlighted the near-total helplessness of the Haitian State** in the face of an easily preventable and treatable disease, along with the limitations of the international aid system in a country benefiting from a massive humanitarian deployment (12 000 NGOs). It stresses that **humanitarian agencies cannot and must not continue to make up for the weaknesses of the Haitian State or to take its place**, and that urgent action must finally be taken to ensure long-term development, in particular as regards access to healthcare and drinking water and urban renewal. Parliament urges the Haitian Government to stand by and implement the commitments made in the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti to strengthen the state's authority, make local government more effective, build the capacity of local and national institutions and incorporate the concept of political, economic and institutional decentralisation.

Members welcome the collective commitment made by the Commission and Member States at the International Donors' Conference to donate a total of EUR 1.2 billion, including EUR 460 million in non-humanitarian aid from the Commission, and they call for the incorporation of local food production and food security into the reconstruction effort in Haiti, via the development of rural infrastructure and the provision of aid to small farmers.

Whilst acknowledging that the effective operation of Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) is contingent on rebuilding the capacity of the Haitian State, **Members deplore the late start to the work of the IHRC**, which should be playing a central role in coordinating reconstruction. They are disappointed at the lack of information concerning its operation and effectiveness, and call on the Commission, as a member of the IHRC, to intervene with a view to speeding up the implementation of the latter's mandate and reviewing its operation and to **submit a report to Parliament on the IHRC's activities**, its use of resources and the proportion of the funds pledged at the New York conference that has actually been committed to reconstruction.

Parliament deplores the fact that the Haitians have only shovels, pickaxes and wheelbarrows with which to clear the tonnes of rubble now strewn throughout the capital, which seems totally inadequate in view of the gravity of the situation. It also deplores the serious housing crisis in Haiti, calling on the Haitian

authorities to make a political commitment to proactive measures, including compulsory purchase. Furthermore, Parliament is increasingly concerned about the situation of the most vulnerable groups of people, noting that the earthquake has had a huge impact on more than 800 000 children, exposing them to the risk of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, exploitation and abandonment.

It goes on to express **grave concern at the current political crisis** following the presidential and parliamentary elections, the results of which have been widely contested and only cautiously endorsed by foreign observer delegations, and which are currently the subject of a recount by experts dispatched by the Organisation of American States (OAS), who – in their report submitted on 13 January 2011 – have recommended that the governing party's candidate, Jude Célestin, be replaced by Michel Martelly, owing to evidence of fraud.

The resolution calls on the EU, its Member States and institutions to:

- do its utmost to support fair and transparent elections and the proper conduct of the second round, postponed to February, so as to prevent Haiti from lapsing into a worse crisis, since only a legitimately elected president and parliament can take the necessary decisions, and that reconstruction calls for stability and political determination;
- cooperate closely with the future Haitian authorities and to assist them – throughout the reconstruction process – with the organisation of their institutions and of the state's powers, with a view to establishing a new equilibrium at all levels and a fully functioning democracy;
- keep the recovery and rehabilitation of Haiti high on their agenda, stressing that now is the time to help Haiti become an economically and politically strong and self-sustaining country, and calls on the international community to use this as an opportunity to tackle the root causes of underlying poverty in Haiti once and for all;
- ensure that a significant effort is made – in conjunction with the government, local authorities and civil society – to incorporate disaster preparation and risk minimisation into the emergency and longer-term development phases.

Lastly, Parliament urges the Commission to put forward proposals as soon as possible for establishing an EU Civil Protection Force based on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.