

Resolution on the situation in Tunisia

2011/2517(RSP) - 03/02/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Tunisia.

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

Referring to the departure from power of President Ben Ali on 14 January 2011 enabling the Tunisian people to regain their freedom, Parliament expresses its solidarity with the Tunisian people, who, prompted by legitimate democratic aspirations and a desire for better social conditions and easier access to employment, have brought their country to a historic political watershed. Members recall that the peaceful protest movement was violently repressed by the forces of law and order, leaving over one hundred dead, and they condemn the repressive measures and the disproportionate force employed by the security forces, whilst applauding the actions of the armed forces, which refused to fire on the demonstrators.

Parliament states in the resolution that the **EU has proved unable to develop a genuine foreign policy that is consistent and effective vis-à-vis its partners**. It notes particularly the weakness of the EU-Tunisia cooperation mechanisms and urges the EU to draw lessons from events in Tunisia and to revise its democracy and human rights support policy so as to create an **implementation mechanism for the human rights clause** in all agreements with third countries. It insists that the review of the neighbourhood policy must prioritise criteria relating to the independence of the judiciary, respect for fundamental freedoms, pluralism and freedom of the press and the fight against corruption, and calls for better coordination with the Union's other policies vis-à-vis those countries.

The resolution also calls for the **immediate application by the EU of the decisions to freeze the ill-gotten assets of the Ben Ali family and their associates**. It welcomes the announcement by the authorities of their intention to return to the State the movable and immovable assets of the RCD party;

Parliament calls on the Council, the Commission and the High Representative, as appropriate:

- to promote the establishment of a task force, involving Parliament, to meet Tunisia's needs in terms of assistance for its democratic transition process, in particular as regards the preparation of free and democratic elections, support for the formation of political parties and for the development of an independent media sector and the rebuilding of an open State apparatus independent of the executive and of a fair and independent judicial system;
- to support the upcoming electoral process by sending an electoral observation mission to Tunisia;
- to be ready to redirect – and if necessary increase – funding under the various financial instruments for EU-Tunisia cooperation;
- to make provision for support for Tunisia in the form of loans with interest-rate subsidies in order to enable the Tunisian economy to diversify and offer young Tunisians the prospect of skilled jobs, as part of a genuine development contract to foster local and foreign productive investment;
- to encourage, also financially, the provision by European civil society of support and assistance to Tunisian civil society, in particular human rights organisations and the social partners.

Members emphasise how important it is that **all political, social, civic and democratic forces in Tunisia should be represented in the interim government**, as this is the only way to secure for that government the confidence of the people and endow it with the legitimacy it needs to prepare elections and the transition to democracy. They underline the importance of creating the necessary conditions for the holding of elections, within a time frame which gives all opposition forces and all the media time to organise at national level, for a new parliamentary assembly. The assembly must have the task of drawing up a democratic constitution which strikes a proper balance between the powers of the executive and the legislature and the independence of the judiciary. Members hope that all democratic forces which pledge to respect pluralism, freedom of conscience and arrangements for the democratic handover of power will be able to take part in that election.