

Resolution on the situation in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen

2011/2645(RSP) - 07/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Parliament strongly condemns the violent repression by security forces of peaceful demonstrators in these countries, expresses its solidarity with the people in those countries, applauds their courage and strongly supports their legitimate democratic aspirations. It urges the authorities of Bahrain, Syria and Yemen to refrain from the use of violence against protestors and to respect their right to freedom of assembly and expression. It condemns the interference by the authorities in Bahrain and Yemen in the provision of medical treatment and the denial and limiting of access to health facilities. Members state that **the use of violence by a state against its own population must have direct repercussions on its bilateral relations with the EU**. They remind the EU High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) that the EU can use numerous tools to deter such actions, such as **asset freezes, travel bans** etc, but recall that the people at large should never be affected by such a review of bilateral relations. The EU and its Member States are asked to take into full consideration recent events and further developments in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen in bilateral relations with these countries, including the **suspension of further negotiations over the signing of the still pending Association Agreement between the EU and Syria**. The conclusion of such an agreement should depend on the capacity of the Syrian authorities to carry out the expected democratic reforms in tangible form.

The EU, its Member States, the HR/VP and the Commission, as appropriate are asked to:

- support the peaceful democratic aspirations of people in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, to review their policies towards those countries, to respect the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, and to stand ready to assist, in case of a serious commitment by national authorities, in the implementation of concrete political, economic and social reform agendas in those countries;
- make full and effective use of the existing support given through the ENPI, EIDHR and IfS, and urgently draw up concrete proposals on how future EU financial assistance can better assist the countries and civil societies in the Middle East and in the Gulf in their transition towards democracy and respect for human rights;
- in view of the commitments by the HR and the Commission in the Joint Communication on a Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity within the Southern Mediterranean to support further democratic transformation and civil society in response to the current historic developments in the region;
- provide EU assistance to democratic processes in the Mediterranean and Gulf regions to ensure full participation of all citizens – particularly women, who have played a crucial role in the demands for democratic change – in political life;
- support calls for independent investigations into the attacks against protestors in those countries, with special regard to an independent investigation to be carried out by the United Nations (UN) or the International Criminal Court into the attack on protestors on 18 March in Sana'a, Yemen, where 54 people were killed and more than 300 were injured;
- immediately take the lead in convening a Special Session of the Human Rights Council to address abuses committed in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen during the crackdown on demonstrations and repression of dissent.

Parliament calls on the governments of Bahrain, Syria and Yemen to **engage in an open political process without delay or preconditions aimed at paving the way for genuine democracy**, and to respect their international commitments to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Syria: Members take note of the resignation of the Government of Syria on 29 March, but believes that this will not be enough to counter the growing frustrations of the Syrian people. They call on President Bashar al-Assad to put an end to the policy of repression of political opposition and human rights defenders, to lift the state of emergency that has been in place since 1963, to promote the process of democratic transition in Syria and to establish a concrete agenda for political, economic and social reforms.

Bahrain: Parliament expresses its concern at the presence of foreign troops under the Gulf Cooperation Council (security forces from Saudi Arabia , United Emirates and Kuwait) banner and calls on the GCC to use its resources as a regional collective player to act constructively and mediate in the interests of peaceful reforms in Bahrain.

Yemen: Members call on President Saleh to take concrete steps towards the implementation of his pledge to ‘transfer power peacefully through constitutional institutions’. They call on all parties, including the opposition, to act responsibly, to engage in an open and constructive dialogue without delay, in order to achieve an orderly political transition, and to include all parties and movements representing the Yemeni people in this dialogue. Noting that Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, with widespread malnutrition, the resolution expresses its grave concern over the level of poverty and unemployment and the growing political and economic instability in Yemen. It insists that the delivery on the ground of the pledges from the donor conference 2006 must be accelerated; additionally calls on the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council to make a particular effort to provide financial and technical support as soon as President Saleh is ready to give way to a democratically established government.