Resolution on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa

2011/2756(RSP) - 07/07/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa.

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

It strongly condemns the disproportionate use of force by the regimes against peaceful demonstrators and deplores the large number of persons killed and wounded calling for an immediate end to the bloodshed and praising the people for the courage they have demonstrated. Members call on the political leaderships of the Arab countries to honour their commitments by engaging without delay or precondition in an open political dialogue aimed at paving the way for genuine democracy.

Syria: bearing in mind that since the beginning of the crackdown in Syria in March 2011, more than 400 civilians have been killed in the Daraa governorate alone and possibly more than 1000 in total across Syria, Parliament strongly condemns the escalation of violence and deplores the fact that the lifting of the state of emergency announced on 21 April 2011 and other reforms promised by President Assad have not been implemented. It urges the Syrian authorities and President Bashar al Assad to put an end to the killings and release all those detained, including children, and to allow the foreign press into the country to verify all claims that ‘armed gangs of extremists’ are firing at the security forces first, which is the regime's justification for the unacceptable bloodbath that is taking place.

Parliament welcomes the Council's decision to **impose restrictive measures on Syria on 23 June 2011**, supporting the set of smart sanctions adopted by the Council, and calling on the latter to take a strong diplomatic initiative to persuade other countries to adopt the same sanctions. The Council should continue to **extend targeted sanctions** to all persons and entities linked to the regime with the view to weakening and isolating them. Members strongly support the EU's diplomatic efforts with its partners in the international community to ensure that the UN Security Council (UNSC) condemns the ongoing violence in Syria, and regret the fact that a resolution could not be introduced, calling on the EU to continue working with international partners to secure the **involvement of the UNSC** in the situation in Syria. They welcome **Turkey's policy of maintaining open borders for Syrian refugees** and the rapid mobilisation of the Red Crescent's resources, and call on the Council and the Commission to provide aid to the Turkish and Lebanese authorities in their efforts to manage the humanitarian crisis on their borders with Syria, including by setting up a humanitarian **corridor at UN level. The VP/HR, the Council and the Commission are asked to encourage** the emerging democratic opposition movements inside and outside the country, with an urgent start to be made on a genuine political dialogue leading to an in-depth democratic transition in Syria.

Yemen: Parliament strongly condemns the recent armed attacks in Yemen, including the attack of 3 June 2011 on the presidential compound, when President Saleh was seriously injured and power temporarily transferred to the Vice-President of the country, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. It welcomes the latter’s commitment to respect the ceasefire, to demilitarise Yemen's cities, and to ensure proper protection for any further peaceful protests. Members note that Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, with widespread malnutrition, dwindling oil reserves, a growing population, weak central government, worsening water shortages and little investment in the country's economy. Members note too, that there is

serious concern that the Yemeni State will disintegrate, with a fragile truce having been in force since February with the Shiite rebels in the North, a secessionist movement in the South and many al-Qaeda fighters reportedly using Yemen as a sanctuary. They expresses their solidarity with the people of Yemen, and support the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council in as much as these are directed at finding a **negotiated solution, which implies the resignation of President Saleh and his of family members who remain in positions of power**. Parliament welcomes the mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to Yemen, which assessed the human rights situation in that country and will make recommendations to the Yemeni Government and to the international community.

Bahrain: Members condemn the repression in Bahrain and urges the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful demonstrators and opposition activists imprisoned on 22nd June for plotting to topple the government, and release of the 47 Bahraini doctors and nurses accused of 'incitement to overthrow the regime by force' facing trial by a Bahraini military court. They welcome the lifting of the 'state of national safety' in Bahrain as well as the call made by King Hamad Bin Isa al-Khalifa for a national dialogue, which can only be possible with the participation of all political forces, including the opposition and civil society, with the aim of paving the way for genuine democracy and political reforms in Bahrain. Parliament takes positive note of King Hamad's decision to set up an independent commission to investigate human rights violations during recent government crackdowns on pro-reform protesters, calling on the Bahraini Government not to interfere in its work.

Lastly, it expresses its concern at the **presence of foreign troops under the GCC banner in Bahrain**, and reiterates its call on the GCC to contribute resources as a regional collective player in order to act constructively and mediate in the interest of peaceful reforms in Bahrain.

Arab world and North Africa: Parliament supports the democratic transition process in Egypt and Tunisia, as the first examples of the current process of democratisation and new wave of participation by citizens, and notably youth, in the Arab world. It calls on the international community to make further efforts to sustain and encourage the process of political reform in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Members express concern at the hardship faced by the people of Libya and calls on the VP /HR and EU Member States to **make part of the frozen Libyan assets available to the Transitional National Council**, under the authorisation and supervision of the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee, so that emergency needs can be met. Further initiatives must be taken to work out a solution to the conflict, taking into account the recent ICC arrest warrant issued against Colonel Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi and Abdullah al-Sanussi.

Parliament goes on to make the following observations:

- it welcomes the process of reforms in Morocco, and in particular the proposed constitutional reform that has been submitted to a referendum, as a step in the right direction;
- it takes note of the positive announcement by the President of Algeria on the launch of the process of democratisation and calls for a strong commitment from the Algerian authorities to the process of reforms, which should be inclusive and open to civil society;
- it welcomes the commitment to political reforms of Jordan, and in particular the review of the Jordanian Constitution and the work of the National Dialogue Committee, noting commends that the EU agreed to grant Jordan 'Advanced Status' partnership in 2010;
- welcomes the 'Deauville Partnership' with the people of the region launched by the members of the G8, and calls on the Council and EU Member Sates to coordinate their efforts with the members of the G8 who stand ready to extend this Partnership to all countries in the region engaging in a transition towards free, democratic and tolerant societies.

Lastly, Parliament calls for a differentiated approach based on the 'more for more' policy as set out in the Joint Communication of 25 May 2011 with regard to Southern Mediterranean countries, under which real progress on democracy, free and fair elections and, above all, human rights should be rewarded.