Resolution on famine in East Africa

2011/2814(RSP) - 15/09/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on famine in East Africa.

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

It notes that tens of thousands of people have died, 750 000 are imminently at risk of starvation and 13.3 million people across Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Eritrea and Djibouti are in urgent need of food aid in the worst famine in 60 years, and expresses its deepest sorrow at the loss of life and suffering in the region. Members call for **increased mobilisation of EU aid to areas where the famine is most severe** to provide food aid, healthcare, clean water and sanitation supplies to the most vulnerable, and they call for humanitarian aid organisations to have unhindered access to those in need and protection for the civilian population under all circumstances in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. **Humanitarian corridors must be opened** up in order to take food and aid deeper into the affected regions. Members note that the militant group al-Shabab in Somalia controls many areas where famine has been declared and has forced some Western aid agencies out of the area and that there is a clear-cut denial of access by the Government of Eritrea for food and other humanitarian support for its people. They strongly condemn the role of the Islamist militant group al-Shabab in obstructing the efforts of aid agencies and the WFP to deliver food aid, and remind all countries in the region of the need to assist and protect refugees under international law.

Parliament goes on to underline that a solution to the famine in the Horn of Africa, and Somalia in particular, will only be possible if the underlying political, economic, and environmental and security problems are addressed by local actors and the international community alike. It calls for an EU strategy for the region which outlines political objectives and how individual humanitarian, development, security and military measures correspond and interlink. The HR/VP is asked **critically to assess the Djibouti Peace Process**. All people affected by the conflict in Somalia, including civil society and women's groups, must be involved at all levels, and Members encourage the establishment of a national reconciliation regime in order to begin the country's reconstruction.

Whilst welcoming the commitments of the EU and its Member States (the EU has committed EUR 158 million in humanitarian relief in 2011, in addition to EUR 440 million from Member States and more than EUR 680 million committed to the region in long-term aid in the areas of agriculture, rural development and food security until 2013) the committee recalls that the **UN emergency appeal is still USD 1 billion short of what is needed**, and urges the international community to honour its commitments, deliver food aid and improve health conditions on the ground. It also calls for a greater percentage of EU Official Development Aid (ODA) to be directed to **agricultural production and assistance to pastoralists** in developing countries to boost food security. The international community is asked to make long-term investments in agriculture as the main source of food and income in the region, and in the building of sustainable infrastructure, and to afford small farmers access to land, thereby bolstering the local market and providing acceptable everyday food for people in the Horn of Africa. Members stress the need to integrate pastoralists better into EU development policy.

Members ask the Commission and governments in the region to: (i) assess the current impact of farmland acquisition on rural poverty and famine-hit areas; (ii) to include the **land grab issue** in its policy dialogue with developing countries; (iii) to improve reporting on and monitoring of large-scale land acquisitions and (iv) to support developing countries in decision-making on investments. The Commission is asked to update its **land policy guidelines** with regard to land grabbing, to ensure their alignment with the CFS-led Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests and to give

greater importance to this through its development cooperation programmes, trade policies and involvement in multilateral financing institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Parliament turns its attention to **speculation**, and demands that Member States ensure that financial institutions that engage in speculation on food and agricultural commodity markets **cease abusive speculative activity which is responsible for high and volatile food prices** and to put tackling poverty and human suffering above profits and earnings from food price speculation. The Commission must present proposals to amend the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (2004/39/EC) and Market Abuse Directive (2003/6/EC) to prevent abusive speculation. Members stress that the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) must have a key role in oversight of commodities markets, and should exercise vigilance in its application of regulatory tools to prevent manipulation and abuses in food and agricultural commodities markets. Institutions must take their corporate social responsibilities seriously and put in place internal rules to ensure that they limit their activities on food and agricultural commodity markets to serving real economy businesses with a need to hedge risk. The G20 is asked to step up action to agree global regulation to prevent abusive speculation and to coordinate the creation of preventive mechanisms against the excessive fluctuation of global food prices.

Lastly, Members express concern about recent **reports of misuse of Official Development Assistance** to carry out political oppression in Ethiopia, and they calls on the EU and Member States to ensure that aid is used strictly for poverty alleviation, in an accountable and transparent manner, making full use of the human rights clauses of the Cotonou Agreement.