Resolution on the situation in Syria

2011/2880(RSP) - 15/12/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

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

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

It **condemns again in the strongest terms the brutal repression by the Syrian regime** against its population, including children, noting that according to UN estimates, more than 5 000 people, including over 300 children, have been killed, and more than 14 000 are reported to be detained. Members applaud the courage and determination of the Syrian people, with special regard to women, who play a crucial role in this struggle. They call again for an immediate end to violent crackdowns against peaceful demonstrators and for **President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to step aside immediately** to allow a peaceful and genuine transition to democracy which meets the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and is based on an inclusive process of national political dialogue with the participation of all democratic forces and civil society. They also call for independent and transparent investigations into the systematic and gross violation of human rights by the Syrian authorities, which may amount to **crimes against humanity**. Expressing serious concern that intimidation by the Syrian authorities may be extending to exiled opposition activists, the resolution calls on EU Member States to consider the possibility of expelling or taking other appropriate measures against EU-based Syrian diplomats involved in such cases.

Parliament stresses once again that the Syrian Government has failed to meet its **responsibility to protect its population**, and considers that in light of this failure, the international community needs to take urgent and appropriate measures.

It strongly supports the decisions of the Council of 14 November and 1 December 2011 to impose new **restrictive measures on the regime** including additional trade prohibitions for EU-based companies and financial institutions regarding the Syrian oil and finance sector, new asset freezes and travel bans for 11 individuals and 12 entities, a weapons embargo, and most notably a ban on export from within the EU to Syria of information and communication technologies (ICTs) which the government can use to violate citizens' human rights. Members note that to date the Council/EEAS has failed to agree on and publish required details of the announced ban on ICT exports. It has been widely reported that EU (based) companies have equipped the Syrian Government with (custom-made) technologies to intercept, monitor and catalogue all internet traffic and mobile communication in Syria, capturing both domestic and international traffic. They note also that EU (based) companies have built and operated monitoring centres on the ground in Syria and have provided related technical assistance to the Syrian Government.

Parliament calls for:

- the extension of asset freezes and travel bans to the families and businesses that are its main funders;

- further EU sanctions which target the Syrian regime but minimise the negative impacts on the population, as long as the repression continues;

- the setting-up of appropriate mechanisms to tackle the current and future humanitarian emergencies in the country.

Whilst welcoming the resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria adopted by the UN General Assembly on 22 November 2011, it **deplores the fact that the UN Security Council has not been able**

to respond adequately to the brutal events in Syria so far. It reiterates its call on the UNSC members, and on Russia and China in particular, to uphold their responsibilities to ensure that international human rights standards are respected in Syria. It encourages the UNSC to refer the crimes committed by the Syrian regime against its population to the International Criminal Court.

Parliament encourages the **efforts by the Syrian opposition** both within and outside the country to establish a united platform. It continues to support the Syrian National Council and urges Member Stats to implement the Council's conclusions of 1 December 2011 as well as to find new ways of strengthening their non-military assistance to these opposition forces. Parliament urges the opposition forces to avoid the trap of the further escalation of violence and militarisation of the situation when defending the population.

Members strongly supports the **efforts of the League of Arab States** to promote a political solution in Syria, and welcome the League's proposal to send an observer mission to provide protection to civilians, as well as the latter’s decision to impose sanctions against the Syrian regime. They call for **increased cooperation between the EU and Turkey** regarding the situation in Syria, and they welcome Turkey's condemnation of the Syrian regime, its economic sanctions on that regime and its policy of keeping the borders open for refugees. The VP/HR is urged to make every effort to start discussions with Turkey, the Arab League and the Syrian opposition about arrangements for **setting up humanitarian corridors** at the Syrian-Turkish borders with a view to protecting Syrian refugees and all civilians trying to flee the country in order to escape the ongoing military repression.