

Resolution on Tunisia: the case of Zacharia Bouguira

2011/2947(RSP) - 15/12/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 48 votes to 0, with 0 abstentions, a resolution on Tunisia: the case of Zacharia Bouguira.

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

It welcomes the ratification by Tunisia on 29 June 2011 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, as well as the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance and of the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Parliament reiterates its support for the Tunisian people's legitimate democratic aspirations and welcomes the successful holding of the country's first free elections on 23 October 2011.

Members recall the salient facts regarding **the case of Zacharia Bouguira** noting that on 13 November 2011, at Tunis-Carthage Airport, Bouguira, a Tunisian medical student, witnessed repeated public acts of violence committed by law enforcement officers against a group of young Moroccans who attended the final of the African Champions League football match. In view of the extreme violence of the law enforcement officers' attack on the 13 Moroccans Zacharia Bouguira began to film the scene on his mobile phone with the intention of posting the video on the internet. He was immediately stopped from filming by a security guard and the young man was violently struck by some 20 policemen and taken to the police station, held in arbitrary detention and subjected to repeated acts of violence and intimidation which may be deemed to constitute inhuman and degrading treatment. While in detention, the young man also witnessed the conditions under which the other young Moroccans were being held and the inhuman or degrading treatment to which they were also subjected.

Parliament urges the Tunisian authorities **to guarantee Zacharia Bouguira the right to a judicial process conducted in accordance with international standards**, in order to shed light on the serious human rights violations of which he was the victim and to prosecute the perpetrators of those acts and also calls also for the violation of the rights of the 13 Moroccan citizens to be investigated.

It calls on the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the European Union External Action Service (EEAS) to keep it informed of the approaches made to the Tunisian authorities and the action to be taken thereon. The VP /HR, the EEAS and the Commission are asked also to continue to support Tunisia during this democratic transition process by giving priority to drawing up, in accordance with the objectives of the new European Neighbourhood Policy, a **programme to support the reform of the security sector, in particular the police, and a programme to support the reform of the judicial system** as part of the reform process conducted by the government, and to include therein a mechanism for civil society consultations and assessments. Members urge the EEAS to ensure that Parliament is duly informed of the progress of the current negotiations on the new EU-Tunisia action plan and the work of the EU-Tunisia Task Force.

They call on the Tunisian Government and the Constituent Assembly, as well as on the relevant trade unions, to engage in an **irreversible reform process focusing on the security sector, with specific reference to the police and judicial systems**, and to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and the freedom and independence of the press and the media. **Reforming the security sector** and combating impunity are seen as essential tasks that should be commenced without delay. Parliament takes the view that transforming the police from a body focusing on public order and control into one focusing on

protecting individuals and property is an essential part of the democratic transition process and it calls, accordingly, for the reform process to be conducted in close cooperation with the civil society bodies working in this area.

Lastly, Parliament asks the Tunisian Government and the Constituent Assembly to consider setting up, in accordance with international standards, and in particular the Paris Principles, a **National Council for Human Rights endowed with mechanisms to defend and protect against human rights violations** and empowered to accept individual applications and independent investigations.