Resolution on EU policy on the West Bank and East Jerusalem

2012/2694(RSP) - 05/07/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 291 votes to 274 against with 39 abstentions a resolution on EU policy on the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

It reiterates its **strong support for the two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as capital of both states,** and with the State of Israel with secure and recognised borders and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security. It welcomes the Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process of 14 May 2012 – which include conclusions on the West Bank and East Jerusalem – and reiterates that **the EU will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties.**

Parliament stresses that **ending the conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU**, as well as of the parties themselves and the wider region, and that this can be achieved through a comprehensive peace agreement, based on (i) the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, (ii) the Madrid Principles including land for peace, (iii) the Roadmap, (iv) the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Members note that the EU, as the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority and one of Israel's major trading partners has **instruments at its disposal** to more actively encourage both parties to work towards a solution. They call on both parties to work together with the EU, which should pursue all efforts to resolve the conflict. They stress that **direct negotiations leading to a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians should be resumed without delay** and according to the deadlines called for by the Quartet, in order to overcome the unacceptable status quo. In this context, Parliament welcomes the exchange of letters between the parties initiated on 17 April 2012 and the joint statement by Israel and the PA of 12 May 2012.

It expresses its deepest concern about **developments on the ground in Area C in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem,** as described in the EU Heads of Mission reports on 'Area C and Palestinian State Building' of July 2011 and on East Jerusalem of January 2012, which confirmed once more alarming and potentially irreversible developments on the ground in the areas concerned. Members stress the importance of protecting the Palestinian population and its rights in Area C and in East Jerusalem, which is essential for keeping the viability of the two-state solution alive. T

They reiterate that all settlements remain illegal under international law and **call on the Israeli Government to stop all construction and extension of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001**. The resolution strongly condemns all acts extremism, violence and harassment committed by settlers against Palestinian civilians and calls on the Israeli Government and authorities to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice and hold them accountable.

Parliament also calls for full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and EU-Israel bilateral agreements to ensure that the EU control mechanism – the 'technical arrangements' – does not allow Israeli settlement products to be imported to the European market under the preferential terms of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

It **calls on the Israeli Government and authorities to meet their obligations under international humanitarian law**, in particular by:

- **securing an immediate end to house demolitions**, evictions and forced displacement of Palestinians;
- facilitating Palestinian planning and building activities and the implementation of Palestinian developments projects;
- facilitating access and movement;
- facilitating the access of Palestinians to farming and grazing locations;
- ensuring a fair distribution of water meeting the needs of the Palestinian population;
- improving access of the Palestinian population to adequate social services and assistance, in particular in the fields of education and public health, and
- facilitating humanitarian operations in Area C and in East Jerusalem.

Parliament calls on the Council, and the Commission and EEAS to:

- continue to deliver assistance to Palestinian institutions and development projects in Area C and in East Jerusalem with the aim of protecting and strengthening the Palestinian population, stressing that **Israel must put an end to the practice of withholding customs and tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority;**
- verify on the ground all allegations concerning the destruction of and damage caused to EU-funded structures and projects in the occupied territory, and submit the results to Parliament;
- continue to address these issues at all levels in the EU's bilateral relations with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, stressing that Israel's commitment to respect its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law towards the Palestinian population must be taken into full consideration in the **EU's bilateral relations** with the country;

Parliament wants the EU and Member States again to play a more active political role, including within the Quartet, in the efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

It goes on to call for:

- an end to the administrative detention without formal charge or trial of Palestinians by Israeli authorities, for access to a fair trial for all Palestinian detainees, and for the release of Palestinian political prisoners, with special regard for members of the Palestinian Legislative Council;

- the protection of the Bedouin communities of the West Bank and in the Negev, and for their rights to be fully respected by the Israeli authorities, condemning any violations (e.g. house demolitions, forced displacements, public service limitations); calls also, in this context, for the withdrawal of the Prawer Plan by the Israeli Government;

- the immediate, sustained and **unconditional lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip** in terms of persons, the flow of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, and for steps allowing for the reconstruction and economic recovery of this area;

- an effective control mechanism preventing the smuggling of arms into Gaza;

- **Hamas to recognise the State of Israel** and to give its support to the two-state solution, and put an end to the violence perpetrated both internally and externally against the State of Israel.

Parliament takes note of the decision of the Council to extend the mandate of the European Border Assistance Mission Rafah until 30 June 2013 and expects it to fulfil its tasks and play a decisive and effective role as regards the daily management of cross-border relations and the build-up of confidence between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

It stresses again that peaceful and non-violent means are the only way to achieve a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and supports President Abbas' policy of non-violent resistance and to encourage intra-Palestinian reconciliation and Palestinian state-building.

Lastly, Parliament reiterates its strong commitment to the security of the State of Israel, and condemns any act of violence by any party deliberately attacking civilians, and is appalled by the rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip.