Resolution on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries

2013/2611(RSP) - 23/05/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.

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

It notes that up to May 2013 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered a total of 1 523 626 Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and in North Africa, but that the total number of refugees, including those unregistered, is assessed as being much higher, and rising, with UNHCR estimating that 7 million Syrians rely on aid. Members express grave concern at the **ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria** and the **implications for its neighbouring countries**, and condemn again, in the strongest terms, the atrocities perpetrated by the Syrian regime against the country's population. They stress again that **international humanitarian law**, the main aim of which is to protect civilians, must be fully upheld by all actors, and demand that the Assad government allow humanitarian organisations full access to the country. Those responsible for the gross human rights violations committed in Syria over the past 24 months must be **held accountable and brought to justice.**

Parliament believes that the **key to solving the conflict lies in political mechanisms** facilitating a Syrian-led political process that will promote a swift, credible and effective political solution in conjunction with those genuinely committed to transition. It reaffirms that it is a **priority to keep the humanitarian and political tracks separate** in order to facilitate access to those in need. Members call on the EU and the European External Action Service to develop a **roadmap for political governance in the liberated areas** , including the possibility of lifting the economic sanctions. I

It pays tribute to host communities and to Syria's neighbouring countries, in particular **Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq,** for their resourcefulness in providing shelter and humanitarian aid to families fleeing the armed conflict in Syria, but is seriously concerned about the **dangerous saturation point** that those countries are approaching.

Parliament calls on the VP/HR and EU actors to:

- ensure that the EU plays a leading role in preventing the armed conflict in Syria from spilling over into neighbouring countries;

- better coordinate their actions and assistance inside and outside Syria;

- present a comprehensive aid package – serving as an example to other major donors – to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria and its neighbouring countries, based on three pillars: (i) increased humanitarian assistance (via ECHO), (ii) help host countries strengthen local communities and increase capacity and infrastructure (via DEVCO) and (iii) the swift introduction of **macro-financial assistance packages for Lebanon and Jordan;**

- take appropriate, responsible measures regarding the possible influx of refugees into its Member States;

- support the establishment of **safe havens along the Turkish-Syrian border**, and possibly within Syria, as well as the creation of humanitarian corridors by the international community;

- enhance the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers and medical personnel.

In the light of the growing needs of the **Palestinian refugee population in Syria** and its neighbouring countries, Member States are asked to fund the UNRWA appropriately.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the **UN Security Council members, in particular Russia and China**, to fulfil their responsibility to put an end to the violence and repression against the Syrian people, inter alia by adopting a UNSC resolution based on the UNSC press statement of 18 April 2013, and to mandate humanitarian aid deliveries in all areas of Syria. The EU should continue to explore all the options under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework, in close cooperation with the US, Turkey and the League of Arab States.