Resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in particular the case of the two detained human rights activists Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma

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The European Parliament adopted by 85 votes to 0 with 6 abstentions a resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in particular the case of the two detained human rights activists Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma.

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

Parliament deplored the loss of lives and the arbitrary violence against, and arrests of, demonstrators during the January 2015 protests, following a draft electoral law that would have allowed the presidential term to be extended, contrary to constitutional provisions. It recalled that activists Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma were still being detained and called on the DRC authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally. All charges against them and other Filimbi leaders should be dropped. Members asked for a full, thorough and **transparent investigation** to be launched by the DRC Government, together with international partners, into the events of January and March 2015.

They urged the Government of the DRC to **uphold provisions of the Cotonou Agreement** to which it signed up, including the obligation to respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles, freedom of expression, good governance and transparency in political office. If it failed, Members asked the Commission to launch the relevant procedure in accordance with Articles 8, 9 and 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Parliament added that the nature and amount of **further EU support for the electoral process** in the DRC must depend on the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 2011 EU election observation mission and the 2014 follow-up mission, in respecting the electoral calendar and in presenting a credible budget. It urged the **EU Delegation to monitor developments** and to use all appropriate tools and instruments, including the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, to support human rights defenders and pro-democracy movements.

Bearing in mind the fact next national elections were scheduled for November 2016, Members were strongly concerned about the continuous attempts to limit freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association (which specifically target opposition leaders and youth movements) given that the right political climate was indispensable if a successful electoral cycle were to be achieved in the DRC in the next year. The DRC authorities must ensure that the aforementioned freedoms were upheld,

Lastly, Parliament recalled the 2014-2020 National Indicative Programme for the DRC, funded with EUR 620 million from the 11th European Development Fund, prioritised **reforms of the judiciary.** It urged the DRC judicial authorities to assert their independence from any political instrumentalisation and to ensure the protection of rights recognised by legal instruments, such as access to justice and the right to a fair trial.