Resolution on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories and the role of the EU

2006/2562(RSP) - 01/06/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories and the role of the EU. This follows the elections in Palestine which led to the setting-up of a government which is composed of members of Hamas. Parliament expressed its serious concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza. It called on the Council and Commission to strengthen their initiatives by taking account of the following recommendations:

- to act within the Quartet with the aim of urgently guaranteeing the flow of aid essential to the Palestinians through humanitarian agencies and NGOs and implementing the above mentioned temporary international mechanism, as proposed by the Quartet, to guarantee direct aid to the Palestinian people, which should be funnelled by the World Bank or other international bodies;

- to invite the governments of the US and the other donor countries to ensure a broad and flexible scope for this mechanism, to facilitate it by the direct involvement of the President of the Palestinian Authority and to ensure financial control and accountability of expenditure;

- to develop such a mechanism in order to avoid a major humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories; in this regard, Parliament called on all the institutions involved in establishing such a temporary international financial mechanism to be as transparent as possible in order to prevent any fraud or misuse of funds;

- to call on the Israeli government immediately to resume the direct transfer of the withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues which have been blocked since January 2006; Parliament noted that part of these funds have been transferred for payment of electricity supplies in compliance with the 1994 Paris Protocol;

- to reinvigorate the institution-building process in Palestine, which has seen an important moment in the recent elections;

- to continue with the EU presence in Rafah and the implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access,

- to make a comprehensive assessment of the situation together with the High Representative for CFSP so as to guarantee coherence in both aid measures and political and diplomatic initiatives in order to conduct a dialogue with the Palestinian Authority through its President,

- to ensure that all future assistance will be reviewed in the light of the Palestinian government's respect for these principles,

- to take full advantage of the Action Plan with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy; the Commission, for its part, will have to guarantee the full implementation of the EU–Israel Action Plan as far as Israel's obligations towards the Palestinian Authority are concerned.

Parliament felt that any contact with the newly appointed Palestinian government should aim to achieve recognition of a final peace agreement based on a solution involving two viable states and the renunciation of violence by the government itself and the groups supporting it. The government's clarification

regarding denouncing violence and recognition of Israel's right to exist and the Palestinians' international obligations are crucial for any cooperation by the EU.

A solution to the Middle East conflict is only possible through the negotiation of a final peace agreement as set out in the Roadmap, without prior conditions and based on the existence of two democratic, sovereign and viable states within secure and recognised borders. Parliament pointed out that there is no alternative to bilateral negotiations and that unilateral actions could undermine efforts to reach a lasting and comprehensive settlement.

It again condemned and called for an immediate halt to, the continuing extension of settlements, in particular in East Jerusalem, and the building of the wall beyond the 1967 borders, which is contrary to international law and is an obstacle to the restoration of a climate of dialogue.

Finally, Parliament supported the constructive attitude of the Commission and Council within the Quartet in setting the conditions for a future engagement with the Palestinian Authority.