Horn of Africa: EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Filip **KACZMAREK** (EPP-ED, PL) in response to the Commission communication entitled "Strategy for Africa: an EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa". It deplored the fact that neither the European Parliament nor the parliaments of the African countries, nor the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, nor civil society representatives, were duly consulted at any stage in the formulation of the EU-Africa Strategy, which called into question the democratic legitimacy of the common commitment.

Security dimension: the conflicts in the Horn of Africa must be addressed through a comprehensive, conflict-sensitive, regional approach that will enable the formulation of a comprehensive response to the regional dynamics and conflict systems. The EU's action with regard to the Horn of Africa must address not only security concerns but also the structural causes of conflicts connected to social, political and economic exclusion, as well as strengthening security and justice. While addressing security concerns and pursuing counter-terrorism policies, the EU must not neglect human rights and humanitarian law, and Member States must bring to light and denounce any 'international renditions' of persons arrested in the region on suspicion of terrorism. The Council and the Commission must take resolute steps to counter impunity in the region, arms trafficking, human rights abuses, violations of ceasefires and attacks on civilians, peace-keepers and humanitarian workers, and to support the involvement of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Parliament called on the EU publicly to condemn the repressive regimes in that region, and expressed its deep concern about the repressive backlash in Ethiopia - the seat of the AU - against opposition leaders, journalists, human rights activists and ordinary people that has taken place since the rigged elections in 2005.

Peace-building regional approach: Parliament called for consolidation of the EU presence in the region through the appointment of an EU representative for the Horn of Africa, a person to be entrusted with the coordination of EU initiatives for the region to serve as the main EU interlocutor for all Horn of Africa States and submit regular reports to Parliament. It asked the Commission and the Council to start a consultation process with the other stakeholders involved in the region, namely the UN, AU, IGAD, the League of Arab States, USA and China, on the initiative of convening a Comprehensive Security, Peace and Development Conference to deal with these security concerns of all Horn of Africa States simultaneously. It strongly believed that the EU should first and foremost seek African solutions, that is, solutions to be achieved with the involvement of the regional organisations in place, AU and IGAD. However, these organisations must be strengthened through capacity and institution building, and particularly through the African Peace Facility, in terms of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Parliament stressed the need to foster the role of national and international NGOs, Community Based Organisations, grassroots movements and other non-State actors.

Development dimension: the objective of reducing poverty by achieving the MDGs and putting the Millennium Declaration into effect must be prioritised in all relevant EU policies for the region. However, the MDGs should not be seen as a technical issue which would be resolved simply by providing more money without identifying and tackling the underlying causes of poverty. In addition to shared security problems, the States of the Horn of Africa have a common development agenda which required common efforts and the mobilisation of the political leadership and societies in these countries. Organising initiatives and regional cooperation around clearly identified issues of common concern such as refugee flows, border control, food security, natural resources, energy, the environment, education, infrastructure,

arms control and gender equality would serve as a solid basis for positive political dialogue among Horn of Africa States. Parliament called on the Commission to promote better coordination among its departments and the Member States and to ensure coordination with the UN, USA, China and other international actors. Dialogue with China was emphasised, taking into consideration the fact that China had intensified its political and economic involvement in Africa, investing heavily in infrastructure and development projects in countries such as Sudan. Parliament stressed that the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, as well as neglected diseases and female genital mutilation, must be one of the key strategies for eradicating poverty and promoting economic growth in the Horn of Africa States.

Country level: with regard to **Sudan,** Parliament called on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to make every possible effort to protect the people in Darfur from the humanitarian disaster resulting from the continuing violation of the ceasefire by all parties. It called on the Sudanese Government to prevent exactions by the Janjaweed militia, and urged the Sudanese authorities to facilitate the deployment of a joint international AU and UN force in the region. Parliament called for the implementation of the UN Security Council sanction regime by means of targeted economic sanctions, and for equipment to be made available for the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Darfur established by UN Security Council Resolution 1591. The international community must launch peace talks to improve the content of the Darfur Peace Agreement. Failure to resolve the conflict in Darfur would have serious consequences not only for the East Africa region but also for other relatively stable parts of Africa, namely Central Africa and the region of the Great Lakes.

With regard to **Somalia**, Parliament condemned foreign intervention and called on the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its army from the country. The AU peace-keeping operation in Somalia, AMISOM, should be framed within a broader political process that has a clear mandate, good capacity, clear objectives and an exit strategy. EU support for AMISOM must be conditional on the launch of an inclusive political dialogue and reconciliation by the Somali authorities, addressing the challenges of reconciliation, institution building and providing peace for the Somali people. Parliament called on the Somali TFG to rescind the state of emergency and reinstate the speaker of parliament and it considered that the Somaliland request for independence should be examined as part of the over-arching security agenda for Somalia.

On **Ethiopia,** Parliament called for pressure to be put on the Ethiopian Government to disclose the total number detained throughout the country, to allow visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross and to allow all detainees access to their families. Ethiopia must accept the demarcation and delimitation of its border as set out by the UN Boundary Commission. With regard to **Eritrea,** Parliament wanted the Eritrean Government to release all political prisoners, bring prisoners with specific charges against them to a speedy and fair trial and disclose the place of detention of all who are detained in secret prisons.

Lastly, with regard to **Uganda**, Parliament called on the Council and the Commission to facilitate the peace process in Northern Uganda, which requires all parties to the conflict to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the peace process, to respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and to put an end to hostile and inflammatory propaganda.