



Plenary sitting

B8-0335/2017

15.5.2017

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU Strategy on Syria
(2017/2654(RSP))

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Ignazio Corrao, Laura Agea, Rolandas Paksas
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**European Parliament resolution on the EU Strategy on Syria
(2017/2654(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission, entitled ‘Elements for an EU Strategy for Syria’, of 14 March 2017,
 - having regard to Council conclusions on Syria, in particular those of 3 April 2017 ‘adopting the EU Strategy on Syria’,
 - having regard to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the declaration of the Brussels Conference on ‘Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region’ of 4-5 April 2017
 - having regard to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has been a marginal player in Syria, and whereas the EU Strategy for Syria seeks to improve the situation by setting out how the EU could play a bigger role and more actively contribute to a lasting political solution in Syria under the existing UN-agreed framework;
- B. whereas, despite this limited political role, the EU is a crucial player in the field of humanitarian aid, having, as of January 2017, collectively mobilised (EU and Member States) more than EUR 9.4 billion in response to the Syrian crisis both inside Syria and in the region, making it the largest donor; whereas the EU has also substantially supported the neighbouring refugee host countries;
- C. whereas more than 13.5 million Syrians are still in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 6.3 million internally displaced people, 1.5 million living under siege conditions and a further 5 million Syrian refugees hosted by its neighbours and the wider region;
- D. whereas the participants at the Brussels Conference on ‘Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region’ have pledged EUR 5.6 billion for 2017 and a multi-year pledge of EUR 3.47 billion for 2018-2020;
- E. whereas more than 80 people were killed in an apparent chemical attack in the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria on 4 April 2017; whereas both the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN have stated

that they are investigating the attack;

- F. whereas US missile strikes targeting Skhairat airbase in Homs, in response to the apparent chemical attack, raised tensions between Russia and the US, which accused the Syrian Government of orchestrating the assault in Idlib province; whereas this led Russia to freeze a critical agreement on military cooperation with the US in Syria;
 - G. whereas on 15 April 2017 a bomb attack near Rashideen, in the Aleppo province, on a convoy of civilians being evacuated killed at least 126 people, including at least 60 children;
 - H. whereas the Syrian city of Deir ez-Zor, originally the home to approximately 200 000 people, has been cut off by a three-year-long ISIS/Da'esh siege, forcing the World Food Programme to establish an air bridge in order to conduct aid drops; whereas recently the situation has further deteriorated, making it necessary to limit the airdrops and leaving the civilians, mostly women and children, with nothing to drink but untreated river water from the Euphrates;
 - I. whereas sanctions targeting Syria have destabilised the country's economy and, by blocking access to raw materials, foreign currency and other equipment, including spare parts to repair power plants, medical devices and blood safety equipment, have been punishing and crippling the Syrian population; highlights the fact that, even when goods are not affected by sanctions, bureaucratic difficulties and the complex system of licensing requirements make it difficult for the civilian population to obtain even basic commodities such as medicines;
 - J. whereas the fourth round of the Astana Process talks on Syria on May 3-4 ended with Russia, Turkey and Iran signing a document envisaging the creation of four 'de-escalation zones' 'on the ground where no military activity would be allowed, including by 'aerial assets,'; whereas the Syrian Government has welcomed the agreement while the opposition armed groups have refused Iran's role in the agreement;
 - K. whereas US President Donald Trump has authorised the supplying of arms to Kurdish YPG fighters to support the operation to retake the Syrian city of Raqqa from ISIS/Da'esh; whereas Ankara has considered the move 'unacceptable';
 - L. whereas Turkey has recently stepped up attacks on areas held by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northern Syria;
- 1. Welcomes the recent Council conclusions and the new EU strategy on Syria; recalls the need for the EU to play an active role in facilitating a political settlement in Syria;
 - 2. Believes that there can be no military solution to the conflict and stresses the need for a political solution, while remaining committed to full respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic;
 - 3. Stresses the importance of protecting ethnic and religious minorities in Syria, and strongly believes that any political process should be inclusive and aimed at restoring Syria as the multiconfessional state that it traditionally was;

4. Reaffirms its support for the UN-led Geneva process and for the efforts of UN Special Envoy Stephan De Mistura, and calls on parties to the Syrian conflict to cooperate constructively and in good faith;
5. Recalls the responsibilities of all parties to the conflict under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as the significant decisions of the Security Council regarding the situation in Syria;
6. Takes positive note of the advancement in the Astana talks and of the signing of the de-escalation zone memorandum brokered by Russia, Turkey and Iran; hopes that this agreement will offer safe zones for refuge and will facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced persons fleeing violence; calls on the Astana guarantors to ensure that the ceasefire is respected through the trilateral monitoring mechanism;
7. Hopes that the Astana de-escalation agreement and talks in general will have a positive effect on the Geneva talks; stresses the need for the US and Russia to work together to stabilise the situation and support the UN-led political process; welcomes the fact that both parties have agreed to resume communications between their respective militaries in order to prevent mid-air accidents in Syria;
8. Strongly condemns the apparent chemical attack in Khan Cheikoun; emphasises the need for a truly impartial international investigation into the circumstances of the attack; equally condemns any other attack on the civilian population, whoever may be responsible; emphasises the need for accountability for such crimes, in accordance with existing international norms;
9. Renews its call on the Syrian Government to grant independent international monitors, such as the UN-mandated Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, access to the country;
10. Notes the conclusions of the Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' of 4-5 April 2017; calls on the participants to follow through on their pledges and to turn the conference conclusions into concrete results for Syria and its neighbours in the region;
11. Is aware that humanitarian needs will remain critical in the years to come and calls on the EU to fully play its role and make a long-term commitment to supporting the civilian population, with particular attention to the needs of the more than 7 million women and girls impacted by the conflict; welcomes the EU's support for neighbouring countries which host Syrian refugees, but urges the Commission to ascertain that refugees, especially women and children, are not exploited in the host countries and that their rights are fully respected;
12. Urges regional actors not to pursue an agenda aimed at disaggregating the country; renews its call for a more engaged approach from regional players to ensure that material and financial support does not reach terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Fateh al Sham (ex Jabhat al-Nusra) and other associated groups;
13. Strongly denounces the use of blockades and famine against civilians as a method of

combat; calls for steps to be taken to allow rapid, safe and sustained humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, including across conflict lines;

14. Commends the advances made by the SDF near the ISIS/Da'esh bastion of Raqqa in northern Syria; strongly condemns Turkey's airstrikes against Kurdish forces in Syria which are hindering the efforts to fight ISIS/Da'esh;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, the members of the International Syria Support Group and all the parties involved in the conflict.