European Parliament resolution of 7 April 2011 on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Côte d’Ivoire, in particular that of 16 December 20101,

– having regard to the Bamako Declaration of 3 November 2000 on Democracy, Human Rights and Freedoms in the Francophone World,


– having regard to the statements made by the VP/HR, Baroness Catherine Ashton, on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire, in particular those of 3, 10, 12 and 19 March and 1 April 2011,

– having regard to the conclusions on Côte d’Ivoire adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council at its 3065th meeting, on 31 January 2011,

– having regard to EU Council Decision 2011/18/CFSP and to EU Council Regulation No 25/2011 of 14 January 2011 imposing an asset freeze and designating additional persons and entities subject to restrictive measures in Côte d’Ivoire,

– having regard to the decision adopted at Addis Ababa on 10 March 2011 by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU),

– having regard to the UN Security Council statements on Côte d’Ivoire of 3 and 11 March 2011,

– having regard to the Joint Statement issued by the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 18 March 2011 condemning the violence and human rights violations in Côte d’Ivoire,

– having regard to the statement made by its President, Jerzy Buzek, on 18 March 2011 calling for an end to all violence against civilians in Côte d’Ivoire,

– having regard to the resolution on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire adopted on 25 March 2011 in Abuja by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS,

– having regard to the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution of 25 March 2011 establishing an international commission of inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Côte d’Ivoire since the presidential election,

– having regard to Rule 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, over the past four months, Côte d’Ivoire has been plunged into a deep political crisis stemming from the refusal by incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo to relinquish power to the legitimate President Alassane Ouattara, despite the fact that the latter won the November 2010 presidential poll and has been recognised as the victor by the international community, following validation of the results by the United Nations,

B. whereas all diplomatic efforts to devise a peaceful solution to the post-election political deadlock, including those of the AU, ECOWAS and the President of South Africa, have been unsuccessful,

C. whereas since mid-February fighting has intensified both in the capital and in the west of the country, with alarming reports indicating the increasing use of heavy artillery against civilians,

D. whereas in recent days the Republican Forces of President Ouattara have launched a vast offensive aimed at establishing his authority, and have taken control of several important areas, including the political capital, Yamoussoukro, and San Pedro, a key port for cocoa exports; whereas the pro-Ouattara forces have now entered Abidjan, which has led to intense fighting with the forces loyal to the ex-President,

E. whereas according to UN sources hundreds of lives have been lost in Côte d’Ivoire since December 2010; whereas the actual number of casualties is likely to be much higher, as the violence taking place in the interior of the country is not always reported in the press,

F. whereas attacks intentionally directed against UN peacekeepers and institutions constitute war crimes; whereas the UN Mission in Côte d’Ivoire (ONUCI) has constantly been the target of threats and attacks by pro-Gbagbo security forces, while the ex-President has employed inflammatory rhetoric inciting people to violence against the UN forces and foreigners present in Côte d’Ivoire; whereas several UN peacekeepers have been seriously injured or even killed,

G. whereas atrocities have been committed in Côte d’Ivoire, including cases of sexual violence, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against civilians, which amount to crimes against humanity,

H. whereas in the declaration submitted by its government on 18 April 2003 pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, Côte d’Ivoire accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes committed on its territory after 19 September 2002; whereas Côte d’Ivoire remains under preliminary investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC,

I. whereas respect for the rule of law has continued to deteriorate in Côte d’Ivoire, with increasing restrictions being placed on freedom of speech, expression and the media,

J. whereas the economic situation in Côte d’Ivoire has seriously deteriorated in the last four months as Laurent Gbagbo has carried out illegal nationalisations in the banking and cocoa sectors and arbitrary expropriations of money and private property; whereas the IMF recently warned of the serious negative economic consequences of the current situation in Côte d’Ivoire for the whole West African region,

K. whereas owing to the climate of terror prevailing in the country an estimated 1 million
people have been displaced, both internally and to neighbouring countries such as Liberia, Ghana, Togo, Mali and Guinea,

L. whereas on 17 March 2011 the Commission increased the EU’s humanitarian assistance to Côte d’Ivoire fivefold,

M. whereas UNSC Resolution 1975(2011), which was adopted unanimously, urges Mr Gbagbo to step aside immediately and calls for an immediate end to violence against civilians, while imposing targeted financial and travel-related sanctions against Mr Gbagbo, his wife and three associates,

1. Condemns the attempts by ex-President Gbagbo and his supporters violently to usurp the will of the Ivorian people; reiterates its call on Mr Gbagbo to step down and immediately hand over power to Alassane Ouattara; welcomes, in that connection, the adoption of Resolution 1975(2011), in which the UN Security Council made its strongest statement since the beginning of the post-electoral crisis in Côte d’Ivoire, calling on Mr Gbagbo to step aside immediately;

2. Deplores the fact that no diplomatic solution, including those advocated by the AU, has been found and that violence and armed confrontation have been a feature of the post-electoral crisis;

3. Commends the call by West African women for a peaceful resolution of the political conflict in Côte d’Ivoire and for the perpetrators of violence against ordinary people in the country to be brought to justice; deplores the fact that insufficient efforts have been made by women’s organisations and religious and community leaders to build up internal pressure and promote mediation in search of a peaceful resolution to the political deadlock in the country;

4. Recalls that the sole source of democratic legitimacy is universal suffrage and that the election of Alassane Ouattara reflects the sovereign will of the Ivorian people; urges all Ivorian institutions, including the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d’Ivoire (FDSCI), to yield without delay to the authority of the democratically elected President Ouattara and his government;

5. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the escalation of violence in Côte d’Ivoire, in particular the use of heavy weapons against civilians, and the ensuing considerable loss of life; expresses its deepest solidarity with all innocent victims of injustice and violence in Côte d’Ivoire and with their families; stresses that violence against civilians, including women, children and internationally displaced persons, will not be tolerated and must cease immediately;

6. Strongly condemns the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law reportedly perpetrated against civilians, including extrajudicial killings and acts of sexual violence; notes that according to the UNSC these acts may amount to crimes against humanity; expresses its firm opposition to any use of the media to incite hatred; calls for the lifting of all restrictions placed on the exercise of the right to freedom of expression; condemns the abduction of four people, including two EU citizens, from a hotel in Abidjan located in a neighbourhood controlled by pro-Gbagbo forces, and calls for their immediate release;
7. Insists that there can be no impunity and that no efforts should be spared in order to identify and bring to justice, including at international level, all those responsible for crimes against the civilian population; welcomes, in that connection, the establishment of a commission of inquiry by the UN Human Rights Council; notes that the UNSC has indicated that the ICC will decide whether it has jurisdiction over the situation in Côte d’Ivoire; calls on all actors in Côte d’Ivoire to cooperate with these bodies so that justice can be done; calls on the EU to provide all necessary support to these inquiries;

8. Firmly condemns the acts of intimidation and obstruction directed against ONUCI and the EU;

9. Welcomes the additional targeted sanctions, comprising a visa ban and an asset freeze, imposed by the UNSC, the AU and the Council of the European Union on all persons and entities that oppose the legitimate President's authority, and the decisions taken by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have refused to deal with the illegitimate government; stresses that these sanctions are to remain in place until the return of legitimate authorities to power;

10. Welcomes the fact that UNSC Resolution 1975(2011) recalled the authorisation given to ONUCI to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to protect civilians, including in order to prevent further use of heavy weapons, and expressed the UNSC’s full support for such action; calls, in that connection, for a swift and significant strengthening of ONUCI capacities in order to ensure effective protection of civilians in Côte d’Ivoire;

11. Notes that, in accordance with its mandate, ONUCI has already taken action in Abidjan in order to stop the use of heavy weapons and protect civilians and UN personnel, with the assistance of the French Force ‘Licorne’, at the request of the UN Secretary-General;

12. Commends and supports the mediation efforts conducted under the auspices of the AU and ECOWAS with a view to preventing confrontation, and reiterates its calls to all political forces in Côte d’Ivoire to demonstrate their commitment to a peaceful democratic political transition and thus avoid further bloodshed; expresses its support for the AU plan for an overall peaceful solution to the crisis, and stresses that all African countries must show unity and act in a concerted way, so that peace can be restored in Côte d’Ivoire;

13. Calls on President Ouattara to facilitate peace and national reconciliation, whilst recalling that there is no statute of limitations for war crimes and crimes against humanity;

14. Is deeply concerned at the worsening humanitarian situation in Côte d’Ivoire and neighbouring countries, especially Liberia; calls on all actors in Côte d’Ivoire to ensure safe and unhindered access to all parts of the the country for humanitarian organisations on the ground; welcomes the commitment given by the EU, as expressed by Commissioner Georgieva, to help resolve the humanitarian crisis;

15. Emphasises the need for swift international political action to address the humanitarian situation in Côte d’Ivoire and prevent a new migration crisis in the region, calls on the Commission and the Member States to coordinate their efforts with other international donors; calls on the international community to honour the pledges of humanitarian aid in order to respond to the urgent needs of the population of Côte d’Ivoire and its neighbouring countries;
16. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General, the ONUCI, the institutions of the African Union, ECOWAS, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the governments of the Member States and the President-elect of Côte d’Ivoire, Mr Alassane Ouattara.