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PRESS RELEASE

EU-ACP Assembly: debate on the consequences of the Arab Spring

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ARAB SPRING

Debate: 23/11/2011

Vote: 23/11/2011

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MEPs and MPs from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are to vote on a resolution on the consequences of the Arab Spring on Sub-Saharan Africa Wednesday afternoon. The Joint Parliamentary Assembly's draft resolution condemns the violence in Syria and Egypt and voices concern that Libyan weapons in al-Qaeda hands could pose a threat to the entire world.

Members of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly discussed the consequences of the Arab Spring Wednesday morning, ahead of the vote scheduled for the afternoon.

"Vengeance should be replaced by justice" in the Arab Spring countries, underlined Bobbo Hamatoucour (Cameroun). Mariya Nedelcheva (EPP, BG) said the EU should continue to help these countries to establish good governance. The question is whether democracy or radical Islam will take advantage of the changes brought about by the Arab Spring, stressed Teshome Toga of Ethiopia.

European countries had in many cases preferred stability to other factors in the region, but now good governance, women's rights, and the proliferation of terrorism should be addressed, said Véronique De Keyser (S&D, BE). Olle Schmidt (ALDE, SE) stressed that the Arab Spring should not be hijacked by those who follow an intolerant and illiberal agenda.

Gabi Zimmer (GUE, DE) underlined that new governments had to prove that they are more human and democratic than the former rulers. She added that former Libyan leaders convicted of crimes should be delivered to the International Criminal Court and not be sentenced in Libya.

JPA Co-President Assarid Ag Imbarcaouane of Mali pointed to the "very dramatic situation" facing his country following the Gaddafi regime's collapse and a large number of armed combatants threatening the Northern regions of Mali. Younoussa Tondy of neighbouring Niger also spoke of a situation that was "difficult to control".

Edit Bauer (EPP, SK) underlined that women, who had played an important role during the Arab Spring, should be kept involved in politics and "should not be left behind". Zita Gurmai (S&D, HU) stressed that letting down women would be "an historic mistake". She added that there was an urgent need to create jobs, especially for the young, to address the refugee problem and to ensure that the human rights of Sub-Saharan prisoners in Libya are respected.

Zuzana Roithová (EPP, CZ) drew attention to the worsening situation of and attacks against Christians in several countries, such as Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. She stressed that the Arab Spring should be a call for democracy and not for Islamisation. It must be ensured that the people have direct access to their countries'

natural resources, and benefit from them, underlined Sérgio de Sousa dos Santos (Angola).

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/2011_lome/default_en.htm

Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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