



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2012/0108(NLE)

10.7.2013

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the general principles for the participation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Union programmes
(12138/2012 – C7-0008/2013 – 2012/0108(NLE))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the general principles for the participation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Union programmes
(12138/2012 – C7-0008/2013 – 2012/0108(NLE))**

(Consent)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (12138/2012),
 - having regard to the draft Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the general principles for the participation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Union programmes (12135/2012),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 217 in conjunction with the second subparagraph, point (a) (v) of Article 218(6) and the first subparagraph of Article 218(8) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C7-0008/2013),
 - having regard to Rules 81 and 90(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A7-0000/2013),
1. Consents to the conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Stresses the importance of continuing to promote close cooperation and dialogue with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
 3. Recalls that, according to estimates by the Jordanian authorities, more than 500 000 refugees from Syria have sought refuge in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and that the Syrian crisis is having a severe impact on Jordan's economy and on Jordan's budget on account of the financial resources required to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees;
 4. Stresses, therefore, the importance of providing adequate support to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and of furthering political and economic dialogue between the Union and Jordan;
 5. Greatly appreciates the commitment shown by H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan in

promoting a very wide-ranging process of reforms for the benefit of Jordan and its people;

6. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In October 2010, during the ninth EU-Jordan Association Council's Meeting, the two parties agreed on the first European Neighbouring Policy (ENP) Action Plan that also incorporates the 'Advanced Status' of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as a partner of the European Union. This ENP Action Plan succeeds the one from 2005 and will spell out the EU-Jordan agenda for the next five years. The basis for this 'advanced status' partnership is the overarching objective of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the EU neighbourhood. It is built on the universal values at the core of the EU and which the EU seeks to promote: the rule of law, good governance and the respect for human rights. In this context, in March 2011, Jordan expressed its interest to participate in the broad range of programmes open to partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The successive enlargements of the EU have brought the EU and the Kingdom of Jordan closer together. This offers the opportunity to develop an increasingly close relationship, with significant measures of economic integration and the deepening of political cooperation. Jordan's geographical position makes it also a strategic country for stability and security in the Middle East, but equally makes the country particularly vulnerable to external shocks, both in political and economic terms.

Jordan is currently facing a tremendous challenge in providing adequate humanitarian assistance to the refugees from Syria, who sought refuge on its territory. The number of refugees from Syria in the country is now exceeding 500,000, according to Jordanian authorities, with an estimate of 3,000 additional refugees crossing the border between Syria and Jordan every day. Certain Jordanian towns or urban centres have seen their population literally double in the past year, as in the case of the town of Al Mafraq, where the local population went from the original 90,000 to 190,000 people.

The Syrian crisis and the high number of refugees entering Jordan are putting a tremendous strain on Jordan's budgetary resources, with a strong impact on the country's budget, which is projected to reach a deficit of USD 3 billion this year. They are also having a devastating impact on Jordan's economy because of the lack of trade towards Syria. Jordanian and foreign officials estimate that as many as three quarters of refugees from Syria are living in towns and cities primarily in the northern part of Jordan. This is leading to increasing competition between Jordanians and refugees from Syria for work, trade and access to basic services, such as water and electricity, in a country where almost 14 percent of the population already lives under the poverty line. Unemployment, rising prices and poor social conditions provoked Jordan's most serious demonstrations in 2012. H.M. King Abdullah II has shown commitment and vision to effective political and economic reform in the country. Parliamentary elections last January also testified to the will to produce positive change.

In light of the above, it is crucial to provide Jordan with adequate support not only in consideration of its responsibilities in terms of humanitarian assistance to refugees from Syria, but also with a view to preserving Jordan's political and economic stability. Thus, the Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the participation of Jordan in European Union programmes is a very welcome one, as it

enables to enhance dialogue and cooperation with Jordan and also sends a positive message about the importance of EU-Jordan relations. It will be crucial, however, to continue to provide support to Jordan in all possible respects, based on the programmes available under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument and other Financial Instruments for the external action of the European Union, in order to further political and economic dialogue and support Jordan in its path towards reforms to consolidate democracy, accountability, transparency and justice.