
Tunisian PM: "EU did excellent work in Tunisia and should do same in other countries"

In a region still reeling from the effects of the Arab Spring four years, Tunisia is seen as an example, succeeding the transition to democracy. Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid visited the Parliament on 28 May to discuss challenges facing his country and the region with EP President Martin Schulz and the foreign affairs committee and the human rights and security subcommittees. We talked to him to find out his views on the migration crisis and the secret of why Tunisia is doing so well.

Tunisia is often cited as an example of a successful transition to democracy. What can other countries learn from your example?

Tunisia has made good choices since 1956, together with President Habib Bourguiba, father of the nation. The president focussed on education, health and women's emancipation and we have been able to succeed with the democratic transition thanks to these institutions and the education of children.

Your country borders Libya, which is experiencing upheaval. How is it affecting Tunisia and what can be done?

Tunisia's security depends on Libya's. As long as the current situation continues in Libya, we will experience many problems. We are dealing with the situation, but it's not an easy one. The Libyan problem should be settled using political solutions.

The migrant crisis in the Mediterranean has become a major political issue in the EU. What do you think of the EU's approach?

To solve this problem you need to fight it at its source. It's the consequence of people's despair, who can't survive at home and take risks. They sell their possessions to buy a ticket to freedom and a job.

At the moment we are managing the issue and we have somewhat failed. We now need to find solutions for those who have made this journey both at home and at their destinations.

How can the EU and the European Parliament help to stabilise countries in the region and foster democracy?

They have done excellent work with Tunisia; it should be the same with others. They helped us during the political transition phase, which is extremely important, and during the preparation of the elections. But you need to support the countries during their economic and social transition too.

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Habib Essid



Tunisia: the challenges

<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=3e84104c-28de-425e-bbbe-a4a400a4c86d>