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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Thierry Cornillet and Bernard Lehideux

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on human rights in Tunisia

**European Parliament resolution on human rights in Tunisia**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the human rights situation in Tunisia, in particular those adopted on 29 September 2005 and 15 December 2005,
- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Association between the European Union and Tunisia, which came into force on 1 March 1998,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of May 2003 entitled ‘Reinvigorating European Union actions on Human Rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners’,
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Tenth anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years’ of April 2005,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 12 May 2004 on European Neighbourhood Policy and its EU-Tunisia Action Plan, which came into force on 4 July 2005,
- having regard to the Council’s guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders, adopted in June 2004,
- having regard to the statements made by the President-in-Office of the Council and the European Commission at the debate on human rights in Tunisia held on 13 December 2005,
- having regard to its report on the human rights and democracy clause in the European Union’s agreements adopted on 16 February 2006,
- having regard to the steps taken by the presidencies of the European Union with regard to human rights in Tunisia between September 2005 and May 2006,
- having regard to Tunisia’s appointment to the presidency of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (APEM) on 1 April 2006,
- having regard to the meeting of the political committee of the APEM on 7 June 2006,
- having regard to Tunisia’s election to the United Nations Human Rights Council and its commitments in the field of human rights,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas human rights constitute an essential element of the European Union’s relations

with Tunisia in accordance with Article 2 of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement and its Plan of Action for the European Neighbourhood Policy,

- B. mindful, in this context, of the fact that Tunisia undertook, in the Plan of Action, to promote democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms in accordance with international conventions,
- C. recalling the three requests the Commission made to the Tunisian authorities on that date, which included the immediate release of European funding allocated to projects for civil society, the implementation of the programme for reform of the judicial system and the creation of a subcommittee on human rights,
- D. noting, in this context, that the only result achieved by the European Commission was the conclusion of a convention on financing the reform of the justice system,
- E. whereas the law creating a higher institute for lawyers, envisaged in the convention, was adopted by the Tunisian Parliament at the beginning of May, but noting that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers has still not received an invitation from the Tunisian Government,
- F. expressing concern at the ban imposed on the Congress of the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH) scheduled for 27 and 28 May this year and at the use of force and acts of violence against defenders of human rights and international observers,
- G. pointing out that the LTDH is the first Arab and African human rights league and is one of the pillars of independent civil society in Tunisia,
- H. whereas the human rights situation in Tunisia has become a cause for concern,
- I. whereas Tunisia has held the presidency of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (APEM) since 1 April 2006, which constitutes a major responsibility for the country as regards promoting democracy and human rights in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership,
  - 1. Points to the leading role played by Tunisia in the development of a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace, prosperity and freedom;
  - 2. Points out that Tunisia and the European Union have been linked by a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement since 1998, Article 2 of which includes a human rights clause that constitutes an essential element of the Agreement;
  - 3. Regrets the deterioration of human rights in Tunisia and calls on the Tunisian authorities to fulfil their international commitments;
  - 4. Would like the Tunisian authorities to provide explanations for the ban on the Congress of the LTDH and for any acts of violence against defenders of human rights and Tunisian judges;
  - 5. Reiterates its request to the Council and the Commission to hold a meeting of the Association Council in order to discuss the human rights situation in Tunisia;

6. Calls on the Council and the Commission, in this context, to take all necessary steps vis-à-vis the Tunisian authorities to ensure the release of European funding allocated to civil society projects;
7. Calls on the Commission to do everything possible to ensure that the project in support of the reform of the justice system guarantees the independence of judicial power and the freedom of action of judges;
8. Takes the view that the implementation of the current reforms must be considered as a priority in the partnership between the EU and Tunisia and should constitute a fundamental element of the harmonious development of relations between the EU and Tunisia;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Tunisian government and parliament, as well as the presidency-in-office of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.