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*Plenary sitting*

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15.5.2013

B7-0188/2013

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on asset recovery by Arab Spring countries in transition  
(2013/2612(RSP))

**Charles Tannock**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on asset recovery by Arab Spring countries in transition  
(2013/2612(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the policies and strategies adopted by the Commission and the Council in relation to the various countries of the Arab world,
  - having regard to previous resolutions of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and to the European Union's Mediterranean policy,
  - having regard to recent speeches made by Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, on the issue of the Arab Spring,
  - having regard to recent speeches made by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on the issue of the Arab Spring,
  - having regard to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and to the UN Convention against Corruption,
  - having regard to the report of the Arab Forum on Asset Recovery,
  - having regard to the Deauville Partnership,
  - having regard to the five winners of the 2011 Sakharov Prize, who were representatives of the Arab Spring,
  - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Tunisia and Egypt celebrated the second anniversary of their Arab Spring in January 2013, and Libya in February 2013;
- B. whereas a huge number of problems still exist in many Arab Spring countries, including violent protests, rising unemployment, economic difficulties, administrative difficulties and challenges in relation to democratisation;
- C. whereas the former leaders of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya had accumulated large sums of money and goods (aeroplanes, precious metals and art, for example), which had been banked or hidden in the USA, Canada, other Middle Eastern states, Switzerland and the UK;
- D. whereas it is alleged that on 14 January 2011 the assets of former Tunisian leader Zine el Abidine Ben Ali were frozen by the Swiss Government; whereas it is estimated that those assets were worth USD 68 million;
- E. whereas it is alleged that on 21 March 2011 the assets of former Egyptian leader

Hosni Mubarak were frozen by the UK Government; whereas it is estimated that those assets were worth USD 133 million;

- F. whereas it is alleged that assets worth USD 168 billion were banked by Muammar Gaddafi in a number of countries; whereas the sum of USD 30 billion is known to have been banked in the USA; whereas unknown sums of money have been frozen by the UN and individual countries;
1. Affirms its commitment to the recovery of stolen assets belonging to Arab Spring countries and acknowledges that asset recovery is complex work which involves identifying and tracing hidden assets, ensuring that the proper judicial processes are followed in order to confiscate them and, finally, ensuring that recovered and confiscated assets are returned to their rightful country;
  2. Notes that national laws in the countries in which funds are located differ greatly and recognises that Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have faced difficulty with regard to the legal systems of countries in which funds are located; acknowledges that the UK and Switzerland are working to assist Arab Spring countries in retrieving their assets through the freezing of assets and measures designed to prevent illicit assets from being transferred elsewhere;
  3. Welcomes comments from President Obama confirming the United States' commitment to working with other G8 countries and Deauville partnership countries for the recovery and return of stolen assets; welcomes the United States' support for Arab Spring countries' transition to democracy;
  4. Notes that in addition to assets held by former leaders, there have been allegations of state assets having been stolen and held by spouses and children of former leaders; stresses that illegal activity has taken place and asserts that individuals employed sophisticated techniques to hide assets on purpose; believes that individuals should be brought to justice for the theft of state assets;
  5. Welcomes the progress made so far, which includes the establishment of the British Asset Recovery Taskforce, the EU/Tunisia Task Force, the International Centre for Asset Recovery and the Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative;
  6. Welcomes the Deauville Partnership's priority areas for 2013, in particular asset recovery and the Transition Fund, and commends the UK Government, which currently holds the presidency of the Deauville Partnership, for its strong leadership of the asset recovery agenda;
  7. Reaffirms its commitment to democratic transition in the Arab Spring countries and pledges to support and assist Arab Spring countries in creating strong and stable democracies in which the rule of law, women's rights, free and open elections and freedom of expression are respected;
  8. Highlights the necessity of economic stability and prosperity in the Middle East and stresses that asset recovery will improve the economic predicaments of Arab Spring countries, since the recovered funds will help to create jobs, stimulate private-sector

development and fund social programmes;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments / interim governments of Arab Spring countries, the countries of the G8 and the members of the Deauville Partnership.