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on security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa and the prospects of
political stability
(2014/2229(INI))

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on security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa and the prospects of political stability (2014/2229(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 8 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part and its position of 17 January 2013 on that agreement¹,
- having regard to the European Security Strategy of 12 December 2003 and the Council Declaration of 11 December 2008 on strengthening capabilities,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 8 March 2011 of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission on a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the southern Mediterranean,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 25 May 2011 of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission on a new response to a changing neighbourhood,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 6 February 2015 of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission on elements for an EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat (JOIN(2015)0002),
- having regard to the Declaration adopted at the third meeting of Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the League of Arab States in Athens on 11 June 2014, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Brussels on 19 January 2015 between the European External Action Service and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 30 August 2014 on Iraq and Syria,
- having regard to the conclusions of the International Conference on Peace and Security in Iraq held on 15 September 2014 in Paris,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 15 December 2014 regarding 'AMICI',
- having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 15 December 2014– regarding an EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq,

¹ Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2013)0023.

- having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 9 February 2015 on combating terrorism,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011 on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council¹,
- having regard to its relations of 10 March 2011 on the EU's approach towards Iran²,
- having regard to its resolution 24 November 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy³,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2012 on trade for change: EU trade and investment strategy for the southern Mediterranean following the Arab Spring revolutions⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 February 2014 on Saudi Arabia, its relations with the EU and its role in the Middle East and North Africa⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State offensive and the persecution of minorities⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2015 on the situation in Libya⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular with regard to the Islamic State⁸,
- whereas the conflict in Syria, the conflict in Iraq, the crisis in Yemen and the situation in Libya are a major potential source of destabilisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); having regard to the junction between the Sahel and Middle Eastern fronts in the fight against terrorism; having regard to the disastrous consequences of such a situation for the security of the whole region and of Europe; having regard to the number of civilian victims and the acts of terror committed against them; having regard to the serious humanitarian crisis caused by these conflicts, causing massive population displacements and creating enormous difficulties for refugees and their host communities; having regard to the difficulties in discerning a political approach and establishing a legitimate and reliable basis for inclusive dialogue with the various parties concerned; having regard to the resulting long-term damage to political and economic development, durable infrastructures and demographic cohesion in the region;
- whereas it is necessary to review EU action in the MENA area in the light of the implications of the Arab uprisings for the countries concerned, the new and complex

¹ Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2011)0109.

² Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2011)0096.

³ Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2011)0576.

⁴ Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2012)0201.

⁵ Texts adopted of that date, P7_TA(2014)0207.

⁶ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2014)0027.

⁷ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2015)0010.

⁸ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2015)0040.

- situation thus created and the imperative need to combat the ISIS; whereas stabilisation in the region is not a security issue alone but also has economic, political and social implications, requiring the Union to develop strategic global and multifaceted cooperation with all parties the region, in the medium and long term;
- having regard to the escalating crises and conflicts, their ethnic and sectarian dimension, the rise of paramilitary groups and the weakness or collapse of certain states in the region; whereas the MENA countries and international community have shared security interests in connection with the fight against ISIS;
 - whereas the conflict in Iraq and Syria is exacerbating regional tensions, with the risk of political confrontation between Sunni and Shia extending beyond their immediate borders and jeopardising other countries in the region;
 - having regard to the limited influence of the European Union in the region and the declining influence of the Member States; whereas political and economic stability in the MENA region is of fundamental strategic importance to the Union; whereas the Union accordingly has a major role to play in the region;
 - whereas EU aid to MENA countries has in the past been too fragmented and too slow to adapt to the political and economic needs of the countries concerned, thereby undermining the EU's capacity to play a major role in the region;
 - whereas EU aid to the MENA countries, particularly under the European Neighbourhood Instrument, has in the past too often adopted the same indiscriminate strategic approach, failing to distinguish sufficiently between the specific situations in the countries concerned;
 - whereas having been forced take emergency measures in response to successive crises that it failed to anticipate in the MENA region, the European Union has been unable to analyse the key elements or deal with the complexity of the situation, expectations and prospects created by the Arab uprisings of 2011; whereas, above all, it has failed to respond to the need for a very long-term strategy for genuine democratic transition and political stability; whereas, acting on the instructions issued by the European Council of December 2013, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) launched a major strategic reflection process; whereas a broad consultation process was launched by the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) for a review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP);
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0000/2015),

Addressing the security situation

1. Welcomes the action taken by the Member States against ISIS in Iraq; notes that this type of operation should be carried out under the auspices of the European Union; to this end, calls on the EU to develop sufficient operational capacity to achieve CSDP

- targets; stresses however that a response must be found at political and regional level to the challenge presented by ISIS; calls on the EU to facilitate regional dialogue involving all stakeholders, in particular Saudi Arabia and Iran;
2. Stresses that the European Union will only gain real influence on the international scene if it is able to speak with one voice; calls on the VP/HR accordingly to appoint representatives at the highest level, i.e. EU foreign ministers or very senior political figures acting on her instructions and together with her, to ensure a constant dialogue with the countries of the region;
 3. Recalls that the emergence of ISIS is a symptom of the economic, political, social and cultural crisis afflicting the region; calls on the EU, together with the Arab world, to assess the root causes and adopt a global approach through an approach based on security, political, economic, social and cultural considerations;
 4. Notes the allocation of EUR one billion under the EU strategy entitled 'Elements of an EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat', under which EUR 400 million has been earmarked for humanitarian aid; calls for special attention to be given to Jordan and Lebanon; is concerned that, as a result of extreme poverty and deprivation, refugee camps may become a hotbed of radicalisation; welcomes the funds for host populations under the new strategy and under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP);
 5. Welcomes the involvement of the countries of the Arab Peninsula in the international coalition against ISIS; urges their governments to redouble their efforts to prevent the financing of international terrorism, for example through including increased surveillance of waqfs and private donors; stresses the urgent need to introduce an efficient system of penalties coordinated with the LAS so as to put an end to ISIS financing by the Arab world; stresses also the urgent need for a decryption system to deal with clandestine oil sales by ISIS;
 6. Stresses the importance of long-term strategic dialogue with the LAS; welcomes in this regard the declaration adopted in Athens on 11 June 2014 and the memorandum of understanding of January 2015 and calls for their full implementation; stresses the crucial importance of the regular organisation of summits between the EU and LAS; stresses the central role to be played by the LAS in terms of crisis resolution; is convinced that these crises highlight the need for the LAS to be transformed by its members into a fully-fledged executive body genuinely capable of taking binding decisions;
 7. Stresses also the importance of regional dialogue with Turkey and Iran; stresses the need to reintegrate Iran into the international community once it has provided definitive assurances and cast-iron guarantees of its intention to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes only;
 8. Recalls the need to put in place the conditions for a resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority for a lasting settlement of the conflict based on a solution enabling both countries to live side by side in peace and security; welcomes the 2002 peace initiatives and calls on the LAS countries to put them into effect; calls on

international donors to honour the commitments made by them at the Cairo Conference of October 2014;

9. Expresses full support for a new common security and defence policy (CSDP) to promote stability and security in the MENA countries; points out that the EU could play a major role in providing specific training in border surveillance, anti-terrorism and the prevention of arms' trafficking and in overhauling security;
10. Recalls the crucial importance of promoting improved cooperation between the EU Member States and the MENA countries in combating terrorism; calls for closer cooperation with the Europol and Interpol countries, providing them with assistance in developing the necessary anti-terrorist structures and resources;
11. Stresses the urgent need for a political solution to the conflict in Syria, taking due account of the moderate opposition existing alongside the Syrian National Council and strengthening the moderate Sunni components; points out that no democratic solution in line with the fundamental principles of the Union can be negotiated with Bashar Al-Assad, following the massacres perpetrated by him;
12. Calls for any initiative to end the fighting in Syria to take into account the requirements of international humanitarian law; calls on the European Union to step up its efforts to channel humanitarian aid towards the areas controlled by the moderate opposition;
13. Stresses the need for the Iraqi Government to continue to promote the sharing of political responsibilities, power and oil profits, encompassing all religious and ethnic communities in that country; calls for this to be made an essential condition for implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iraq; calls on the EU to contribute to capacity building by the Iraqi Government;
14. Expresses its deep concern at the situation in Libya; stresses the need to maintain its territorial integrity and national unity; stresses that the Libyan crisis can only be resolved by means of dialogue that is as inclusive as possible;

Stepping up the global strategy for democracy

15. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to continue to encourage democratic reforms within the EU neighbouring countries; stresses the importance of maintaining the 'two-thirds/one third' principle for the allocation of ENP funding; calls on the Commission, the EEAS, the Council and the Member States to develop a political and strategic ENP dimension; welcomes the launch by the HR/VP and the Commission of broad consultation on ENP renewal;
16. Stresses the advantages of coordinating EU aid to the MENA countries with that of other international donors; calls on the Commission to recommend improvements in this respect;
17. Is convinced that cultural cooperation is essential in combating terrorism and any form of radicalism; stresses the utmost importance of promoting cultural and academic exchanges; urges partner countries to participate in EU cultural programmes; calls on

the Commission to act on the European Parliament's proposal for the creation of an ambitious Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus programme distinct from the Erasmus+ programme;

18. Stresses the need to develop an effective common European response by all Member States to jihadist propaganda; underlines the need to send a positive message regarding relations between the European Union and the MENA countries and cooperation between them; stresses the need to ensure much greater visibility for EU initiatives in the region than is now the case;
19. Stresses the importance of developing direct dialogue with civil societies in the MENA countries in order to understand their expectations more clearly; stresses its support for the consultation and enhancement of civil society and new generations within the ENP framework; recalls the importance of election observation missions and urges the European Parliament and EEAS to send such missions to all countries in the region;
20. Stresses the need to highlight the central role of the Union for the Mediterranean; points out that it should itself be able to raise the necessary funds for these projects; endorses the direction being taken by ministerial meetings; calls for wider dissemination of resulting programmes and actions;

Strengthening cooperation for economic development

21. Takes the view that strategic dialogue between the EU and the MENA countries should be given further impetus in the direction of sustainable economic development, helping to iron out inequalities and creating youth opportunities; stresses the importance of facilitating access to the EU single market for the MENA countries, while providing all necessary protection; stresses the importance of encouraging European investments in MENA countries;
22. Supports the funding of academic and vocational training to create wide reserves of professional skills in the MENA countries; notes that EU vocational training circular mobility programme should be extended as far as possible to all MENA countries;
23. Regrets that a minimum one-year period is necessary for the release of macro-financial assistance to countries in a very precarious financial situation; urges the European Union to mobilise or redirect funding very promptly; calls on Arab donors to coordinate aid within the LAS and, as far as possible, together with the European Union;
24. Calls on the EU to develop partnerships with countries in the region that are not direct neighbours; supports the conclusion of a convention to establish a free-trade area between the EU and GCC and the resumption of negotiations for a new joint action programme;
25. Regrets the deadlock faced by the EU with regard to the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); calls on the EU to make every effort to assist with the regional integration of the Maghreb countries under the AMU or Agadir agreements;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the

Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of all the EU Member States, the LAS and UfM Secretaries-General and the governments and parliaments of their member countries.