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*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

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**2011/2113(INI)**

17.2.2012

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on International Trade

on trade for change: EU trade and investment strategy for the Southern  
Mediterranean following the Arab Spring revolutions  
(2011/2113(INI))

Rapporteur: Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that ‘the Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation’;
- B. whereas it is in the highest interest of the European Union to aim high regarding economic cooperation and to adopt a strategy that is mutually beneficial, responsible and flexible, based on support for democratic transition and the defence of human rights;
- C. having regard to all of the resolutions adopted by Parliament in the context of the Arab Spring, on the freedoms of religion, belief and conscience as fundamental and universal values that are essential for democratic and economic development;
- D. whereas a virtuous circle of regional integration needs to be promoted in order to foster conditions favourable to the economic, social, commercial and infrastructural growth and development of the southern Mediterranean;
  1. Reiterates its full support for the legitimate democratic aspirations expressed by the peoples of several countries in the EU’s southern Mediterranean neighbourhood; encourages the transitional authorities to bring about a peaceful transition to genuine democracy; urges the national authorities to respect their peoples’ right to demonstrate peacefully, and to refrain from any violent repression;
  2. Recalls the importance of tolerance and economic development, which are essential for long-term political and social stability and for improving the standard of living in the countries concerned, and calls on the countries in democratic transition to ensure full respect for all fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of religion, conscience and thought for all citizens, both men and women, including the members of Coptic Christian communities; emphasises that free access to information and communication and uncensored access to the internet (internet freedom) are universal rights that are essential in order to ensure transparency and accountability in public life;
  3. Welcomes the tailor-made approach to the partner countries adopted in the joint communication of the Commission and the Vice-President/High Representative (VP/HR) entitled ‘A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood’; calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission, at a point when the Commission has just opened negotiations aimed at establishing deep and comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs) with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, to provide, as soon as possible, more details as to how principles such as mutual accountability and conditionality (‘more for more’) will be put into practice, and requests that Parliament be fully involved in assessing compliance with the conditionality established; insists on the EU’s trade and investment policy for the southern Mediterranean going hand in hand with the effective

implementation of clauses on respect for human rights;

4. Welcomes, in this context, the launch of the EU-Tunisia Task Force, the first task force established in conjunction with a southern Mediterranean country with a view to ensuring better coordination of EU and international support for the country's transition; welcomes the fact that Parliament was involved in the first meeting; asks the VP/HR and the Commission to continue to involve Parliament in this and future initiatives; welcomes the creation within Parliament of a monitoring group on the Southern Mediterranean to monitor the EU's response to the crises in the Mediterranean countries;
5. Calls for the conclusion of ambitious, balanced and mutually beneficial trade agreements on goods and services, preceded by the appropriate impact studies;
6. Urges the Commission to adopt a strategy that strengthens its role as an investor ***and to take account of the investment programmes already deployed in the region*** by developing specific guidelines for responsible investment, with a view to reducing social inequalities and territorial gaps and promoting the diversification of local economies; stresses that combating corruption at all levels should be a top priority for the EU in the development of trade and financial relations with its Southern partners, ***as should the promotion of an environment conducive to investment which has security and legal stability at its core, and emphasises the importance and necessity of establishing more synergies with other national and international financial establishments; welcomes the work undertaken by the European Investment Bank (notably through the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), programmes run by national agencies in the Member States, and the Deauville Partnership;***
7. Emphasises the important role played by countries in the Southern neighbourhood in supplying energy to various Member States, and highlights the great potential for cooperation in the energy field; notes the need to encourage Euro-Mediterranean interconnections in the gas and electricity sectors;
8. Welcomes the recent fair and transparent elections in Tunisia, which – accompanied by economic, legal and social reforms – provide a good example for other countries in the region; underlines the importance of free and fair elections in making it possible to ensure the unity of these countries through the establishment of democratic and pluralist institutions, thus laying the groundwork for increased stability and modernised socioeconomic structures, which are themselves a necessary precondition for attracting international investment and generating sustainable growth; highlights the need for democratic changes to be accompanied by economic, legal and social reforms in order to open up and modernise the socioeconomic structures of these countries;
9. Proposes that the impact of the move to a free trade policy be regularly assessed in order to keep a continuous watching brief on the repercussions of that policy on the Mediterranean countries of southern Europe, with the ultimate goal of generating benefits for the public and for the economic and productive systems of the various countries concerned.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	6.2.2012
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 40 -: 2 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Frieda Brepoels, Elmar Brok, Jerzy Buzek, Arnaud Danjean, Michael Gahler, Marietta Giannakou, Ioannis Kasoulides, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Evgeni Kirilov, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Krzysztof Lisek, Ulrike Lunacek, Barry Madlener, Kyriakos Mavronikolas, Francisco José Millán Mon, Alexander Mirsky, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Alojz Peterle, Cristian Dan Preda, Libor Rouček, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Charles Tannock, Sir Graham Watson, Boris Zala
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Elena Băsescu, Tanja Fajon, Elisabeth Jeggle, Doris Pack, Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, Marietje Schaake, Indrek Tarand, Traian Ungureanu, Ivo Vajgl
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Marije Cornelissen, Rui Tavares