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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

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on European aid to tsunami victims in Asia

**European Parliament resolution on European aid to tsunami victims in Asia**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. appalled by the scale of the disaster caused by the tsunami which hit Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Maldives in particular on 26 December 2004,
- B. whereas these countries and the United Nations have already confirmed that 150 000 people have died, thousands have gone missing, more than 500 000 have been seriously wounded and five million have been displaced, and that the survival of some 150 000 people is under immediate threat from epidemics and famine,
- C. whereas among the victims there were many foreigners, including thousands of European,
- D. whereas the WHO estimates that more than five million people are suffering from inadequate access to drinking water and a shortage of medical services and health provision,
- E. whereas much of the communication, energy and educational infrastructure has been destroyed in these coastal regions, and whereas the poorer sections of the population, fishermen, farmers and those working in the tourist sector are among the worst affected,
- F. whereas the tsunami has also had devastating effects in Africa, especially in Somalia, where over 50 000 people have been displaced and a very large number of fishing vessels have been destroyed, but also in Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius and Seychelles,
- G. whereas, although the disaster was detected immediately, the necessary warning measures were not taken owing to the absence of prevention systems and the precarious state of the countries hit by the tsunami,
- H. whereas most of the affected countries are struggling under a debt burden which is hampering their development and their capacity to act effectively in favour of their populations,
- I. noting the absurd nature of the position of many industrialised countries, which publicly announce their decisions to grant financial aid while refusing, within the Paris Club, G8 and FMI, to write off the external debt of developing countries at a time when 80% of Iraq's public debt has been cancelled by the Paris Club,
- J. whereas appropriate action to raise awareness of how to react to this type of natural disaster and of prevention and warning systems could have saved many lives,
- K. noting that the native populations of some of the islands worst affected by the disaster survived thanks to the effective manner in which they were warned by the traditional

authorities,

- L. whereas this disaster has once more highlighted the crying need for a European Civil Corps, with trained personnel and appropriate equipment, capable of taking immediate action to tackle this type of natural disaster, whether inside the European Union or elsewhere in the world,
- M. whereas, following previous natural disasters, many of the international aid commitments made by heads of government were not honoured and did not go beyond the stage of empty promises aimed at a public affected by the suffering of the victims,
1. Conveys its condolences and deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the victims, and to the peoples and governments of the countries concerned;
  2. Pays tribute to the many forms of solidarity immediately shown by the local populations and foreigners, and urges the leaders of foreign countries, in particular in Europe, to fully honour the commitments made to the victims of the disaster;
  3. Welcomes the generous response shown by populations, in particular in Europe, and the international community, but notes the serious lack of rapid intervention resources which would make it possible to come to the help of the affected populations;
  4. Welcomes the coordination role taken on by the United Nations and calls on all the parties to coordinate their aid with the UN to ensure that it is effective and is distributed in a balanced manner to all the victims in need of it; calls on ECHO to cooperate as far as possible with UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs);
  5. Welcomes the immediate intervention of the European Civil Protection Mechanism, but calls for the European Union to set up without delay a European Civil Protection Corps. which will eventually become international, with trained personnel and the necessary equipment to intervene immediately on a large scale in the event of a disaster occurring anywhere in the world;
  6. Calls on all the EU Member States to coordinate without delay measures to open up access to EU territory for foreigners in order to alleviate the suffering of the victims, in particular:
    - by enabling foreigners originally from these regions, whether or not they are staying legally in the European Union, freely to travel to their region of origin, without this jeopardising their return to the EU;
    - by speeding up procedures to legalise the stay in the EU of persons from the regions affected by the disaster so that they can assist their families and friends;
    - by extending the concept of family reunification to third-degree relatives, particularly in respect of orphans who have parents resident in Europe, whether legally or illegally;
    - by granting certain categories of victims of the tsunami free access to EU territory, e.g. those seriously injured who can be treated more effectively;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take all the necessary measures to write off the developing countries' bilateral and multilateral external debts rapidly, in particular countries affected by the tsunami and the poorest and most vulnerable countries, in order to provide them again with all the resources required for their development;
8. Welcomes the decision taken by the Commission immediately to release € 23 m in emergency aid and its intention to grant an additional contribution of € 100 m from the Community budget's emergency reserve fund; calls on donors to establish among themselves and with the United Nations and beneficiary countries clear deadlines for the supply of humanitarian aid;
9. Calls for the entire € 350 m of Community aid promised for rehabilitation to come from the budgetary flexibility mechanism and not from the reallocation of earmarked funds; welcomes the fact that total aid commitments made by the EU and Member States amount to € 1.5 bn, and emphasises that this commitment should be honoured within a reasonable period and that the full amount should be paid in the form of donations and not loans which put a strain on these countries' budgets;
10. Calls on the governments of the countries concerned to simplify bureaucratic procedures as far as possible in order to speed up the supply of aid to their countries, in particular in those areas which need it most; believes that the EU and the United Nations should ensure that rehabilitation and reconstruction work is carried out with the participation of local populations in decision-making and that funds are used to meet the needs of victims without discrimination, in particular to assist minorities and populations supporting political opponents of the regime;
11. Calls for the gender issue to be given due consideration in planning rehabilitation programmes, by giving women key diplomatic and decision-making posts in the reconstruction process in both the EU and UN structures and in other institutions, and for a gender assessment to be carried out systematically in all actions taken in the wake of the tsunami disaster in order to take account of its findings in preparing and implementing subsequent measures;
12. Calls on the Commission, in coordination with the ACP secretariat, to assess the assistance needed by African countries hit by the tsunami;
13. Calls for a warning system to be set up as a matter of urgency in all the regions of the world which are most exposed to the risk of tsunamis or other natural disasters, and for populations to be made more aware of how to react in the event of natural disasters;
14. Urges the developed countries to speed up the achievement of the development funding objectives set at the Monterrey conference and to bring the level of development aid up to at least 0.7% of GDP;
15. Calls, irrespective of states' obligations relating to the 0.7% of GDP development aid target, for an international tax on capital movements, arms sales and the use of renewable energy to be introduced and for proceeds to be allocated to the building of a fairer world;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Member States,

the governments of affected countries and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.