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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pasqualina Napoletano and Lilli Gruber on behalf of the PSE group,

on **Saudi Arabia**

European parliament resolution on Saudi Arabia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Saudi Arabia,
- having regard to the conclusions of the working visit to Saudi Arabia from 7 -12 February this year of Members of the EP delegation for the Gulf States (including Yemen)

A. strongly condemning the exclusion of women from the local elections held on 10 February 2005, which takes away the legitimacy of these elections; surprised by this exclusion given the fact that the election law states that all citizens over twenty-one years of age are eligible to vote, and several women announced their intention to stand for election,

B. dismayed by the discrimination and restriction of freedom suffered by women in Saudi Arabia

C. Whereas the existing laws in Saudi Arabia prohibit all public employees from “participating, directly or indirectly, in the preparation of any document, speech or petition, engaging in dialogue with local and foreign media, or participating in any meetings intended to oppose the state’s policies”,

D. Concerned by the exploitative working conditions often faced by migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, who are estimated to number 8.8 million, or a third of the country's population. Particularly concerned by many women migrants employed as household domestic workers, who are especially at risk of human rights abuses due to their isolation in private homes and their exclusion from employment protection.

1. Strongly condemns the segregation suffered by women, the most recent expression of such discrimination being women's exclusion from the local elections held 10 February. Calls on the Saudi Arabian government to bestow on women all citizen's rights, including the right to vote.
2. Calls on the Saudi Arabian Authorities to initiate comprehensive reforms including democratic institutions and guarantees of gender equality, freedom of expression, association, and assembly, as well as the recognition of social and workers rights.
3. Denounces the little or no redress for hundreds of migrant workers who have suffered physical, psychological and sexual abuse, including rape, as documented by NGOs in many Asian countries.
4. Deplores the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia

5. Welcomes the establishment of a national human rights commission, and calls for it to be independent.
6. Underlines the importance of countering terrorism and fundamentalism whilst safeguarding basic human rights and civil liberties.
7. Urges the EU institutions to increase their presence in the region and to strengthen working relations with Saudi Arabia.
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to Prince Abdullah, the Saudi Arabian government, the Secretary General of the National Dialogue of Saudi Arabia, the Council, the Commission, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.