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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

by Elmar Brok, Gunnar Hökmark, Gitte Seeberg, José Ignacio Salafranca  
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on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the right to freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs

**European Parliament resolution on the right to freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union,
  - having regard to Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights,
  - having regard to Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
  - having regard to Article 22 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations,
  - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the violent protests in various parts of the world are directed towards individual Member States of the EU and the so-called Western world as a whole, and whereas the protests were triggered by the private publication of caricatures which were not communications by any state,
- B. whereas the overwhelming majority of peoples in the EU, as well as countries affected by these unfortunate events, hope for dialogue and a peaceful relationship based on mutual respect and understanding, and whereas only groups opposed thereto profit from recent developments,
- C. whereas the caricatures that triggered the protests do not further the dialogue that the EU has initiated to build intercultural and interreligious ties, and whereas the European Union remains fully committed to further developing and strengthening ties with the affected countries in a spirit of mutual cooperation and a common vision of strengthened relations,
- D. whereas a multilateral statement on behalf of the EU, the UN and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was published on 7 February 2006, calling for the termination of all violent acts and engagement in a dialogue on the matter,
1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence, flag burning and the torching of diplomatic missions, and stresses that such acts can in no way be justified;
  2. Underlines that freedom of speech is a fundamental right in the European Union and is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights;
  3. Recalls that freedom of thought, conscience and religion are enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights;
  4. Believes that freedom of expression should always be exercised with responsibility and

with respect for religious feelings and beliefs, whether it concerns the Islamic, Christian, Jewish or any other religion;

5. Deplores the fact that the publication of these caricatures has hurt religious feelings, and condemns any defamation of religious symbols;
6. Notes that freedom of speech is of particular importance to religious groups in that it enables them to exercise their religion freely;
7. Strongly regrets that there seem to be organised extremist groups which see an advantage in escalating the present tensions and using the caricatures as a pretext for incitement to violence; notes that the population at large in the countries concerned takes a different view and strives for peace, stability and economic and cultural exchange rather than chaos and violence;
8. Expresses its full support for and solidarity with Denmark and other Member States who have been affected under these very difficult circumstances;
9. Deplores the fact that some governments have failed to honour their obligations under the Vienna Convention to protect the inviolability of diplomatic missions, which is fundamental to the functioning of international diplomatic relations and the reestablishment of dialogue; calls for the countries where these incidents happened to show clearly and in practice that such incidents are not to be tolerated;
10. Condemns the use of illegal boycotts as a political tool and urges a speedy restoration of all commercial relations in accordance with the WTO rules; underlines that a boycott against one Member State is in contradiction with the fact that trade agreements are always concluded with the EU as a whole;
11. Welcomes the efforts of High Representative and Council Secretary-General Javier Solana to re-establish trust and dialogue, and asks Member States, the Commission and the Council to stand united and to use every possible means to ease the tensions and engage in a renewed and enhanced dialogue with the Islamic countries and communities; considers the establishment of an enhanced dialogue to be one of the most important challenges in the endeavour to secure peace and stability in the world;
12. Urges all political and religious leaders to undertake all possible efforts to restore calm in the countries affected, with a view to facilitating dialogue in a spirit of mutual understanding;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN, the OIC and the governments and parliaments of the countries concerned by this resolution.