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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Syria: the case of Muḥannad Al Hassani

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Syria: the case of Muhannad Al Hassani

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, of which the EU and Syria are parties;
 - having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was ratified by Syria on 21 April 1969;
 - having regard to Article 11(1) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 177 of the Treaty establishing the European Communities which establishes the promotion of human rights as an objective of Common Foreign and Security Policy;
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria and Middle-East;
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. whereas Mr Muhannad Al Hassani, a Syrian human rights lawyer, President of the Syrian Human Rights Organisation (SHRO), who had regularly carried out observations of trials before the Supreme State Security Court, was arrested on 28 July 2009 due to his activities in the area of human rights, and his defence of general liberties and human rights;
- B. whereas Muhannad Al Hassani, formally charged with offences of "*weakening national sentiments,*" and for "*spreading false news,*" facing up to 15 years in prison, was referred to the Justice Palace in Damascus, where he was interrogated and formally charged in a closed session in which his lawyer was not allowed access;
- C. whereas on 18 and 25 August 2009 Muhannad Al Hassani was brought before a special correction council of the Bar Association in Damascus which has initiated a misconduct case against him, accusing Muhannad Al Hassani for heading an unauthorised organisation, attending sessions of the Supreme State Security Court without having power of attorney and disseminating false and exaggerated information that could harm the State;
- D. whereas Mr. Muhannad Al Hassani had been interrogated on several occasions before the arrest, questioned for his defence of political detainees and for the work of his SHRO organization which monitors and publicizes human rights violations committed by the Syrian authorities;
- E. whereas the European Parliament and its President have already intervened several times to obtain the release of human rights activists, politicians and parliamentarians

detained in Syrian prisons;

- F. having regard to the important political, economic and cultural ties that exist between the European Union and Syria;
1. Expresses its concern about Mr. Al Hassani's detention, which seems to aim at sanctioning his human rights activities, especially regarding the monitoring of the Supreme State Security Court and the detention conditions in Syria;
 2. Calls on the Syrian authorities to release immediately the lawyer Muhannad Al Hassani and to end to all forms of pressure and harassment against Mr. Muhannad Al Hassani as well as against Syrian human rights defenders and civil society activists in general, in conformity with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1998;
 3. Expresses its concern about harassment of human rights defenders in Syria, including a ban on travel, arbitrary detention and, in this case, using the Bar Association to punish human rights lawyers for their legitimate work in defence of human rights;
 4. Calls upon the Syrian authorities to abide by international human rights standards as expressed in the Barcelona Declaration and other international instruments to which the Syrian Arab Republic is a State party;
 5. Welcomes the continuing dialogue between the European Union and Syria and hopes that the continuous efforts will lead to improvements not only in the economic and social situation in Syria but also politically and in the field of human rights;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government and the Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic.