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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0452/2010

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation of the Jordan River with special regard to the Lower Jordan River area

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on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Jordan River with special regard to the Lower Jordan River area

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East,
 - having regard to the Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan of 1994,
 - having regard to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995 (Oslo II Agreement), and Articles 12 and 40 of its Annex III in particular,
 - having regard to the United States Senate Resolution 387 expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the degradation of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and welcoming cooperation between the peoples of Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority of 16 November 2007,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008,
 - having regard to the Recommendation on The Situation in the Jordan Valley of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of 14 March 2010,
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Jordan River, and the Lower Jordan River in particular, is a cultural landscape of universal significance with great historic, symbolic, religious, environmental, agricultural and economic importance in the Middle East and beyond,
- B. whereas mismanagement has resulted in serious pollution of the Jordan River; whereas an estimated 98% of the Lower Jordan River's 1.3 billion cubic metres of natural fresh water flow per year have been diverted to meet domestic and agricultural water demand; whereas all that is presently left flowing in the Lower Jordan River is untreated sewage, fish pond runoff, saline water, and agricultural runoff,
- C. whereas the Lower Jordan River has seen a 50% loss of biodiversity due to the diversion of fresh water resources and the dumping of polluted effluent into its stream,
- D. whereas new waste water treatment centres, which aim to remove the polluted effluents currently flowing in the Lower Jordan River, are planned to begin operating at the end of 2011; whereas, if fresh water resources are not allocated to the Lower Jordan River to coincide with the operation of these centres, long stretches of the River will likely run dry by the end of 2011,

- E. whereas a minimum of 400-600 million cubic metres of water are needed annually to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River,
- F. whereas the Dead Sea possesses a unique ecosystem in the world; whereas the Jordan River is the primary tributary of the Dead Sea and the dramatically reduced flow of the Lower Jordan River has been the primary cause of a continuous fall in the Dead Sea's water level and a 1/3 decline in the Dead Sea's surface area in less than 50 years,
- G. whereas the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept proposes to build a canal which would run from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, contribute to the restoration of the Dead Sea and provide electricity and potable water to Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians; whereas this project may have serious consequences on the unique natural characteristics of the area; whereas the World Bank is working on a feasibility study as well as an environmental and social assessment in this regard,
- H. whereas in the Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan both parties attached great importance to the integrated development of the Jordan Rift Valley area and agreed to cooperate along the common boundaries towards ecological rehabilitation of the Jordan River as well as environmental protection of water resources of both the River and the Dead Sea,
- I. whereas efforts to save the Lower Jordan River have created cooperation between Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian local communities sharing the same water challenges; whereas active cooperation between governments, local communities and civil society organisations in the countries and territories concerned may be a major contribution to regional peace-building efforts,
- J. whereas the Palestinian population in the West Bank faces serious water shortages: whereas sufficient water resources are one of the principal pre-conditions for a future viable Palestinian state as well as an important aspect of the security of the State of Israel,
- K. whereas EU funding has been contributing to attempts to alleviate environmental challenges faced in the Lower Jordan River area,
 - 1. Calls attention to and expresses its serious concerns about the degradation of the Jordan River, and the Lower Jordan River in particular;
 - 2. Calls on riparian countries to rehabilitate the Jordan River by elaborating and implementing policies focusing on tangible results in domestic and agricultural water demand management, water conservation, and the management of sewage and agricultural and industrial effluents as well as to ensure that an adequate quantity of fresh water flows into the Lower Jordan River;
 - 3. Calls on the Governments of Israel and Jordan as well as the Palestinian Authority to work in a spirit of cooperation in order to save the Lower Jordan River and urges them to establish, with the support of the European Union, a Jordan River Basin Commission, which would be a trilateral forum of cooperation open to other riparian countries;
 - 4. Calls on Israel and Jordan to fully honour commitments made in their peace agreement

concerning the rehabilitation of the Jordan River as well as the protection of water resources of the River and the Dead Sea;

5. Welcomes the initiative by the Israeli Ministry of Environment to elaborate a master plan for landscape development in the Lower Jordan River area; urges the Jordanian Government and the Palestinian Authority to take similar initiatives with the aim of adopting master plans for the rehabilitation of sections of the River that flow through their respective territories; notes that such master plans could become a basis for a comprehensive regional plan to rehabilitate and protect the Lower Jordan River area;
6. Reminds that the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept would not address the degradation of the Jordan River;
7. Notes that any sustainable solution to rehabilitate and conserve the unique natural environment of the Lower Jordan River area must be based on an integrated development approach including economic, environmental, energy-related and tourism projects;
8. Welcomes the application of more and more advanced water management methods and technologies in the Lower Jordan River area, especially in Israel, and encourages the transfer of these methods and technologies to all countries in the region; calls on the international community, including the European Union, to step up efforts aimed at providing further financial and technical support to projects in this field;
9. Calls on the Council, the Commission, and EU Member States to put more emphasis on the situation of the Jordan River in their bilateral and multilateral relations with riparian countries and to continue to supply financial and technical support towards the rehabilitation of the River, and the Lower Jordan River in particular, also in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean initiative;
10. Welcomes the cooperation between Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian local communities sharing the same water challenges in the Lower Jordan River area and stresses again the importance of trust-building in finding just and lasting peace in the Middle East; welcomes also the active role of non-governmental organisations in efforts aimed at saving the Jordan River and calls on the international community, including the European Union, to continue to support their activities;
11. Stresses again that the issue of water management, and especially a fair distribution of water that respects equally the need of all people living in the region, is of utmost importance for lasting peace and stability in the Middle East and underlines the need of a comprehensive strategy to key water challenges in the region;
12. Urges Israel to ensure an increased access to water resources for Palestinians living in the West Bank as well as to facilitate the use of improved water management methods and technologies, including in waste water treatment, in the area;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the Knesset and the Israeli Government, the Parliament and Government of Jordan, the Parliament and

Government of Lebanon, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, the
Palestinian Legislative Council, and the Parliament and Government of Syria.