



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

26.1.2011

B7-0081/2011

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission
pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure
on the situation in Tunisia

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United in diversity

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B7-0081/2011

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Tunisia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement concluded between the European Union and Tunisia in March 1998,
 - having regard to the EU's policy on human rights and democratisation in third countries, as adopted by the Council in December 2005,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication of 4 December 2006 on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2006)0726),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2009: progress report on Tunisia' (COM(2010)0207 - SEC(2010)0513),
 - having regard to the European Union statement issued following the Eighth Meeting of the EU-Tunisia Association Council of 11 May 2010,
 - having regard to the statements made by Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Commissioner responsible, Stefan Füle, on the situation in Tunisia on 13 and 17 January 2011 respectively,
 - having regard to the statement made by Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, on the situation in Tunisia on 17 January 2011,
- A. whereas the mass demonstrations which took place throughout Tunisia in the four weeks following Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation culminated in the departure from power of President Ben Ali, enabling the Tunisian people to regain its freedom and bring down the regime imposed by the ousted President since 1987,
- B. whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy is founded on a mutually acknowledged commitment to shared values, which include democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights, in accordance with Articles 8 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- C. whereas the shortcomings in the instruments for political cooperation between the EU and Tunisia, whether Article 2 of the Association Agreement (which makes the provision of assistance contingent on implementation of the human rights clause) or the neighbourhood policy, which incorporates an action plan for democracy, but no assessment criteria, ruled out any possibility of improving the situation with regard to human rights and democracy,
- D. having regard to the conclusions of the Association Council of 11 May 2010, which reminded Tunisia that reform of the justice system is fundamental to genuine

rapprochement with the European Union, as are pluralism and participatory democracy, freedom of expression and association and the protection of human rights defenders,

- E. whereas the EU implements a policy of sustained dialogue and broad cooperation with Tunisia and endeavours to strengthen bilateral relations in a wide range of areas, whereas this process will require both partners to commit themselves to achieving greater progress on all the issues involved, in particular that of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- F. whereas the hope generated by the toppling of the authoritarian regime in Tunisia, assuming that it is followed by a successful transition to a stable democracy, could encourage other peoples to make similar demands,
- G. having regard to the degree of integration between the Tunisian economy and those of the European Union and several of its Member States,
 - 1. Expresses its solidarity with the Tunisian people, who, prompted by legitimate democratic aspirations and a desire for better social conditions and easier access to employment, brought their country to an historic political watershed; in that connection, applauds their courage and determination during the five weeks of demonstrations and extends its condolences to the families of the victims and expresses its solidarity with the injured;
 - 2. Condemns the repressive measures and the disproportionate force employed by the State police; applauds, by contrast, the actions of the armed forces, which refused to fire on the demonstrators;
 - 3. Emphasises how important it is that all political forces in Tunisia should be represented in the interim government, as only in this way can that government be endowed with the legitimacy it needs to prepare elections and the transition to democracy;
 - 4. Expresses concern at the continued presence in the government of ministers from the former regime who allegedly were either implicated in or ordered the bloody repression of the demonstrations held in recent weeks;
 - 5. Endorses all the measures taken to usher in a genuine democratic process; calls for the election, within a time frame which, while brief, gives all opposition forces and the free press time to organise at national level, of a new parliamentary assembly with the task of drawing up a democratic constitution which strikes a proper balance between the powers of the executive and the legislature and the independence of the judiciary; hopes that all democratic forces which pledge to respect pluralism, freedom of conscience and arrangements for the democratic handover of power will be able to take part in that election;
 - 6. Welcomes the bill introducing a general amnesty and the release of political prisoners;
 - 7. Welcomes the decree on the appropriation by the State of the movable and immovable assets of the Constitutional Democratic Rally party (RCD) and the Ben Ali family, and calls for the application of the EU decisions to freeze ill-gotten assets;
 - 8. Welcomes the establishment of three committees, each chaired by an independent,

respected eminent person, on institutional reform, the fight against corruption and the investigation of State repression;

9. Urges Tunisia's interim government to act in a manner commensurate with the ambitions, hopes and expectations of the Tunisian people and the European Union;
10. Calls on the High Representative to promote the establishment of an interinstitutional task force, involving Parliament, to assess Tunisia's needs in terms of assistance for its democratic transition process, in particular as regards the preparation of free and democratic elections, support for the formation of political parties and for the development of an independent media sector and the rebuilding of an open State apparatus independent of the executive and of a fair and independent judicial system;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Council, therefore, to be ready to redirect – and if necessary increase – funding under the various financing instruments for EU-Tunisia cooperation;
12. Calls on the Commission and the EIB to make provision for support for Tunisia in the form of loans with interest-rate subsidies in order to enable the Tunisian economy to diversify and offer young Tunisians the prospect of skilled jobs, as part of a genuine development contract to foster local and foreign productive investment;
13. Calls on the Commission to encourage, also financially, the provision by European civil society of support and assistance to Tunisian civil society, in particular human rights organisations and trade unions;
14. Calls on the Commission to establish a mechanism whereby implementation of the human rights clause in all the agreements concluded with third countries can be monitored and this work can be coordinated more closely with the Union's other policies vis-à-vis those countries;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the interim government and Parliament of Tunisia.