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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Tunisia

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Tunisia**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the human rights situation in Tunisia and its resolutions of 29 September 2005, 15 December 2005 and 15 June 2006 in particular,
  - having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Union and Tunisia, which entered into force on 1 March 1998,
  - having regard to the Communication of the Commission on the European Neighbourhood Policy of 12 May 2004 and the EU-Tunisia action plan, which entered into force on 4 July 2005,
  - having regard to its report on the human rights and democracy clause in European Union agreements, adopted on 16 February 2006,
  - having regard to the Council Guidelines on ensuring the protection of human rights defenders, adopted in June 2004 and updated in December 2008,
  - having regard to the report on Tunisia of 10 April 2008 by the Universal Periodic Review Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of 8 and 9 December 2008 on the building up of bilateral relations between the EU and its European partners,
  - having regard to the European Union statement following the Eighth Meeting of the EU-Tunisia Association Council of 11 May 2010,
  - having regard to the Commission's Progress Report on Tunisia of 12 May 2010,
  - having regard to the Report on EU policies in favour of human rights defenders, adopted on 14 May 2010,
  - having regard to the statements by Mr Füle and Baroness Ashton,
  - having regard to the offer made by the French Foreign Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie on 12 January 2011 to send riot police from France to Tunisia to help end the demonstrations,
  - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas relations between the European Union and Tunisia have been governed since 17 July 1995 by an association agreement that includes a human rights clause and since 4 July 2005 by an action plan that is based, under the European neighbourhood policy, on a mutually recognised commitment to shared values including 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 (TEU),

- B. whereas due to the stance of some Member States and their special relations with the previous regime in Tunisia, the European Union is unable to develop a genuine foreign policy that is consistent and effective vis-à-vis its partners in its immediate neighbourhood; whereas particular note is made of the weakness of the EU-Tunisia cooperation mechanisms and the need for human rights clauses in association agreements to be backed up by a mechanism implementing said clause is once more stressed,
- C. whereas the ongoing review of the neighbourhood policy should therefore take into account the values and principles set out in Article 21 TEU, allow for greater vigilance concerning observance of these values, make provision for clear and precise assessment mechanisms capable of backing up genuine reforms as regards respect for and promotion of human rights and democracy, and make the granting of advanced status subject to a conditionality clause,
- D. whereas the act of desperation in which Mohammed Bouazizi set fire to himself on 17 December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid sparked off a popular uprising calling for profound political change in Tunisia,
- E. whereas the peaceful protest movement spread throughout Tunisia and was violently repressed by the police, leaving over one hundred dead and many more injured,
- F. whereas the riot police were ordered to use guns and other firearms against protesters, and arbitrary arrests, acts of torture in detention centres, looting of private property and forced disappearances were reported,
- G. whereas President Ben Ali fled on 14 January 2011 and his successor was installed in accordance with Article 57 of the Tunisian Constitution, and special note is taken of the role played by trade unions in organising the protests and overthrow of the totalitarian regime,
- H. whereas the EU-Tunisia relationship is largely anchored in a shared memory formed by very strong economic and cultural exchanges,
  - 1. Gives its strong support to the peaceful democratic transition process in Tunisia and expresses its solidarity with the Tunisian people who, driven by legitimate democratic and economic aspirations, have brought their country to an historic political turning point; salutes the courage and determination of the Tunisian people and extends its condolences to the families of the victims;
  - 2. Welcomes the key role played by the army in terms of their protection of citizens and by explicitly stating that they would not shoot demonstrators;
  - 3. Takes note of the initial decisions taken in order to release political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, abolish the Ministry of Information, guarantee freedom of speech including on the Internet, recognise all the opposition parties and re-establish former political parties, and that non-governmental organisations may now register;

4. Notes that the formation of the 'National Union' government by the Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi on 17 January 2011 has met with criticism and even hostility from a large section of Tunisian public opinion;
5. Recalls that protests are continuing in Tunisia and that the people are expecting to see signs of openness and calls for a new government to emerge, one that matches the population's legitimate political, social and economic aspirations;
6. Requests the re-establishment of free avenues of communication and access to information; urges the ending of any form of government interference or other types of censorship in regard to Internet access, communication tools and access to information, and recognition of the freedom to print and publish;
7. Welcomes the creation of three national commissions looking into events post-17 December 2010, ending corruption and the reform of institutions and laws;
8. Underlines the need for human rights abuses and corruption throughout the presidency of Ben Ali to be investigated and for individuals responsible for human rights violations to be held accountable, as this is essential for reconciliation in Tunisia and for paving the way towards a society whose governance is based on the rule of law and separation of powers;
9. Urges the European Union and the Member States to assess critically their relations with repressive regimes and dictators the world over, but specifically in the Maghreb and the Middle East, in order to assess whether existing relations are appropriate or whether more can be done to support the human rights of citizens;
10. Considers it crucial that a variety of independent figures from civil society, representing the diversity of the Tunisia's population, are able to sit on these commissions, that the commissions can have genuine investigative powers, can count on the cooperation of all government services and are endowed with the budgetary and human resources they need to function effectively and transparently;
11. Stresses the importance of supporting the emergence of an independent judiciary and setting up a transitional justice process whose first priority shall be investigating the hundreds of deaths and numerous cases of corruption;
12. Underlines the need for an independent commission to examine the serious human rights violations since Tunisia gained its independence – notably the detention of political prisoners who had not been charged with acts of violence and the discrediting of journalists, human rights activists and lawyers – and to determine responsibility, identify the victims and award compensation for damages done collectively and to individuals; considers that this commission should propose necessary measures to prevent such acts from ever occurring again;
13. Emphasises the importance of creating the conditions necessary for holding legislative and presidential elections that are free and transparent and consonant with a multiparty democracy, with all political parties represented, international observers and an independent electoral commission present, and held within a reasonable time span that

allows for the creation of a genuine democratic space in accordance with international standards, as well as the establishment of a democratic system based on the rule of law and respect for human rights in Tunisia;

14. Calls on the High Representative of the European Union and on the Commission to support fully the ongoing democratic transition process through political and financial assistance to civil society and for the reforms needed to make the country democratic, notably in terms of freedom of expression and conscience, Internet freedom, freedom of association and assembly, an independent judiciary and good governance;
15. Welcomes international initiatives such as the one by the League of Arab States to support enterprises in the region and calls for Community funds earmarked for Tunisia to be increased and the action plan to be reoriented towards a programme supporting the democratic transition and those responsible for its implementation, and stresses the importance of ensuring good coordination and oversight of these funds so they are used effectively;
16. Asks the External Action Service and the Commission to take all measures necessary in order to support fully the establishment and work of the three national commissions;
17. Calls on the Commission to assess the role Member States played during the peaceful demonstrations, notably the French offer of riot police to assist the Tunisian authorities, and to take adequate measures if there were irregularities or actions counter to EU policies;
18. Supports the joint proposal from the High Representative of the EU and the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy to furnish immediate assistance with elections and calls on them not to restrict this to the election period, but to take into account the ongoing need to provide support to the democratisation process and those responsible for its implementation;
19. Calls on the European Union to pass sanctions targeting those persons who have fraudulently seized wealth belonging to Tunisia, notably by a visa ban and the freezing of their assets, and calls on Member States who have not yet done so to freeze the assets of the Ben Ali family and their relations and to ensure that the 'misappropriated' goods are returned to Tunisia, and asks in that regard for a special inquiry into Banque Zitouna;
20. Asks the representatives of the EU and of the Member States to establish diplomatic relations with the whole of the transition government so that all its different components may join in talks with the EU and the Member States;
21. Supports the setting up of a interinstitutional taskforce, that shall include Parliament, tasked with redefining the priority actions to be supported over the forthcoming months and reorienting, in line with needs, funds from the various financial instruments for external aid deployed up until now in Tunisia; asks for aid already scheduled for the next three years to be increased;
22. Calls on the European Union to grant Tunisia 'advanced status', notably with a view to supporting its economic development, which would – for example – allow Tunisia, in the

context of closer cooperation, to benefit from preferential customs tariffs and would exempt its citizens from the need to obtain a visa when visiting Europe;

23. Urges the European Union to draw lessons from events in Tunisia and to review its European neighbourhood policy, particularly with regard to the countries in the Mediterranean basin, taking into account these peoples' aspirations to democracy and development, in full compliance with the Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the External Action Service and the Commission, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States, to Tunisia's transitional government, to all agents of change and to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.