



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

24.10.2011

B7-0545/2011

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 Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities

Fiorello Provera, Niki Tzavela, Jaroslav Paška, Lorenzo Fontana, Oreste Rossi, Nikolaos Salavrakos, Rolandas Paksas
on behalf of the EFD Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership,
 - having regard to its resolutions on the situation of Christian communities,
 - having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995,
 - having regard to the recent statements of the European Council and of the HR/VP on the situation in Egypt,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as ratified by Egypt in 1982,
 - having regard to the statement by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the violence in Egypt,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 9 October, twenty-five people were killed and 320 injured after Egyptian soldiers attacked Coptic Christian demonstrators who were protesting outside Cairo's state media building, Maspero, demanding that Egypt's interim ruling body, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), provide adequate security for Coptic communities following the attack on a church in Aswan province on 30 September;
- B. whereas Egypt's Christian community has been the target of a number of high profile attacks including an attack on a church in Alexandria on January 1, killing twenty three people, the burning of three Coptic churches in Imbaba on 7 May, during which 15 people were killed and more than two hundreds injured;
- C. whereas Coptic Christians complain of increased marginalisation, as well as a rise in sectarian tensions exacerbated by radical Islamic groups such as the Salafis and Gama'a Islamiya;
- D. whereas Christians make up an estimated ten percent of Egypt's 80 million population, yet 93 000 have fled the country since March and the number is expected to rise to 200 000 by the end of the year;

- E. whereas Egypt's deteriorating security situation has led to attacks against the Embassy of Israel and the forced expulsion of its ambassador;
- F. whereas instability in the country might lead to a rise in the number illegal Egyptian immigrants entering Europe;
1. Expresses its serious concern at the deteriorating situation in Egypt and condemns in the strongest terms all those who incite hostility;
 2. Stresses the importance of Egypt for stability in the Middle East and remains extremely concerned by the prospect of the radicalisation in Egypt's political landscape and its consequences on the living conditions of Christian and other vulnerable minorities; underlines the importance of Egypt's stability for the security of energy supply towards Europe and other regions of the world;
 3. Notes that the army, which is the interim authority until elections are held, responded in a disproportionate manner to the protests in Maspero district; calls for an immediate and independent investigation committee to look into the events that took place on October 9th;
 4. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to meet the aspirations of the Egyptian people with political reforms; invites all parties involved to show restraint, engage in an open, fair and democratic process in view of the upcoming elections of 28 November;
 5. Supports the view of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy that democracy entails more than simply being able to vote and to hold elections, that European history illustrates the need to build a democracy of substance, rather than a mere façade, and that the prerequisites for this are observance of the rule of law, freedom of expression, an independent judicial system and impartial administration;
 6. Calls on the European Commission to intervene in order to protect the religious minorities - in particular Coptic Christians - in Egypt;
 7. Considers that the transition process should be carried out in compliance with Egypt's obligations under international law and Egypt's international commitments, namely the peace agreement with the State of Israel; underlines that the EU's relationship with Egypt must be based now and in the future on the Association Agreement; points out that any breach by Egypt of its international commitments will have implications on its relations with the European Union;
 8. Emphasises the right of all citizens to demonstrate freely and peacefully, under due protection from law enforcement authorities and condemns any attempt to restrict the free flow of information, including aggression and intimidation directed against journalists and human rights defenders; emphasises that the citizens' democratic aspirations should be addressed through dialogue and political reform with full respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and through free and fair elections; calls on all parties to engage in

a meaningful dialogue to that end;

9. Considers strengthening regional stability in the Mediterranean is crucial to preventing migration flows into Europe and calls on the High Representative to develop a package of measures aimed at lending European Union support to the transition and transformation processes (strengthening democratic institutions, promoting democratic governance and social justice, and assisting the preparation and conduct of free and fair elections) and to link the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean towards these objectives;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and Parliament of Egypt, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Mediterranean third countries which are parties to the Union for the Mediterranean and the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.