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Plenary sitting

6.3.2013

B7-0097/2013

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
(2013/2542(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Peter van Dalen
on behalf of the ECR Group

B7-0097/2013

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Egypt
(2013/2542(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular that of 15 February 2012,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 31 January 2013 on EU Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies ¹,
 - having regard to the statement of 25 December 2012 by the High Representative / Vice-President on the referendum in Egypt,
 - having regard to the statement of 25 January 2013 by the spokesperson of the High Representative / Vice-President on the killings in Port Said,
 - having regard to the outcomes of the first EU-Egypt Task Force of 13-14 November 2012,
 - having regard to the decision of the Council of 26 November 2012 on the facilitation of asset recovery,
 - having regard to Rule 110 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Egypt is the biggest Arab Spring country, a pivotal country in the Middle East / North Africa region, an important trade partner of the EU and a major recipient of EU aid;
- B. whereas the EU, after the start of the Arab Spring, has increased its efforts to exert its influence in Egypt, inter alia through visits of the HR/VP, the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and heads of state and government of its Member States, as well as through various summits and initiatives and through aid disbursement;
- C. whereas on 22 November 2012 President Morsi issued a Constitutional Declaration whereby, inter alia, he placed the presidency beyond judicial control; whereas days later the President nullified that declaration, but escalating demonstrations were already taking place;
- D. whereas on 30 November 2012 a draft Constitution was adopted by the Islamist-dominated Constituent Assembly and presented to the President;
- E. whereas on 15 and 22 December 2012 Egypt held a referendum on the draft Constitution; whereas a majority voted in favour of the draft Constitution, with a voter turnout of 33 %;

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135130.pdf

- F. whereas on 26 January 2013 the Cairo Court referred the cases of 21 defendants from Port Said to the Grand Mufti to ratify the death sentences decreed against them;
- G. whereas following this news, thousands of the defendants' relatives, members of the Port Said Ultras football fan club and other supporters who were gathered in the vicinity of Port Said's General Prison, rushed towards the prison;
- H. whereas some protestors were carrying firearms or threw stones and Molotov cocktails; whereas the security forces responded immediately with heavy use of tear gas and firearms;
- I. whereas in the violence that followed, chiefly in Port Said but also in other cities in Egypt, dozens of people lost their lives and hundreds were wounded;
- J. whereas a second round of sentences is expected to be handed down on 9 March 2013;
- K. whereas demonstrations continue to take place on Cairo's Tahrir Square and elsewhere; whereas, however, the situation in particular for female demonstrators has become extremely dangerous, with daily reports of sexual assaults;
- L. whereas on 26 November 2012 the Council took steps to facilitate the return of misappropriated funds to the Egyptian and Tunisian authorities;
- M. whereas the EU has pledged the availability of loans and grants to the value of EUR 5 billion for 2012-2013, to be provided by the Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD);
- N. whereas the EU has contributed two election experts for the presidential elections and has offered to send an Election Observation Mission to Egypt's parliamentary elections, if invited to do so by Egypt;
1. Reiterates its previous calls for dialogue among all parties in Egypt in order to achieve further progress towards a deep and sustainable democracy; urges all parties, and in particular the President, to intensify efforts in this regard; furthermore reiterates its solidarity with the Egyptian people in this critical period of transition, and continues to support legitimate democratic aspirations;
 2. Urges the Egyptian leadership to ensure the proper representation of all Egyptians through the democratic institutions and the Constitution, as well as human rights for all, independently of faith, gender or any other consideration and in compliance with international human rights law;
 3. Urges the swift enactment of parliamentary democracy, with President Morsi bridging divides and engaging with the entirety of the people in the wake of the constitutional referendum;

4. Regrets that military tribunals for civilians are still admissible under Article 189 of the new constitution; stresses that an impartial civil judicial court system and access to a fair trial are core values in any democratic country;
5. Believes that emphasis should be placed on ensuring freedom of conscience, expression, and belief for all of Egypt's citizens; the Egyptian government must be seen to guarantee the religious freedom of Egypt's Christian community; efforts should be made to reverse the tide of Christian emigration from Egypt, which threatens the continued existence of one of Egypt's oldest communities, and also damages the Egyptian economy, with trained professionals leaving the country;
6. Calls on the Egyptian police and judicial authorities to carry out a full, independent and thorough investigation into the violence following the 26 January 2013 court ruling, and to bring those who committed the crimes to justice;
7. Welcomes the guarantee of freedom of assembly in Article 50 of the new constitution, but remains concerned at the violence accompanying protests across Egypt;
8. Extends its condolences to the relatives of those killed in the recent clashes in Cairo and Port Said, and demands an investigation into the claims of torture and abuse on the part of the security forces; calls for calm regarding the demonstrations following the sentencing of the Port Said football match detainees, especially with the remaining sentences being awaited on 9 March; calls on the EU and its Member States to offer help to Egypt to reform its police service so as to better supervise demonstrations;
9. Urges the Egyptian authorities to tackle the issue of violence against women; condemns the assaults on women protesters in Tahrir Square and other demonstrations;
10. Insists that NGOs must be free to carry out their legitimate activities, including research into human rights, legal and constitutional issues; is of the opinion that no laws should be passed which restrict their activities to humanitarian or social work or restrict their interaction with 'foreign bodies'; condemns, therefore, the letter from Egypt's Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs sent to the NGO the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, giving information on new restrictions;
11. Welcomes the agreement, following the visit of President Morsi to Brussels, to resume bilateral contacts through the structures of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement, as well as the relaunch of negotiations for a new ENP Action Plan;
12. Welcomes the establishment of the EU-Egypt Task Force in November 2012; notes the outcome of the first Task Force meeting of 13 and 14 November; is of the opinion that the Commission, the EIB and the EBRD should attach strict and well-monitored human rights conditions to the loan and grant pledges;
13. Welcomes the creation by the EBRD of a special food security initiative, which should enable Egypt, the world's biggest wheat importer, to ensure a stable food supply;

14. Welcomes the decision to investigate ways of increasing trade and investment between Egypt and the EU; is of the opinion that a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, based on mutual respect for human rights, would represent the best method to increase prosperity and reduce poverty in Egypt;
15. Is encouraged by the discussions on cooperation and coordination regarding the recovery of assets misappropriated by the former regime which have been frozen since March 2011; seeks the finalisation of the promised roadmap aimed at increasing cooperation between the EU and Egypt on this issue;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Egypt.