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Plenary sitting

20.5.2013

B7-0226/2013

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 of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries
(2013/2611(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

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United in diversity

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**European Parliament resolution on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries
(2013/2611(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on Syria of 2011, 2012 and 2013,
 - having regard to the European Council's conclusions on Syria of 2011, 2012 and 2013,
 - having regard to the statements on Syria by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,
 - having regard to the statements on Syria by the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response,
 - having regard to the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on Syria,
 - having regard to the statements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on Syria,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to all of which Syria is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to an estimate from the UN, since the start of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria in March 2011, at least 80 000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed; whereas extreme violence, such as the use of heavy artillery and shelling against populated areas, and horrific killings by the Syrian army, security forces and the Shabiha, as well as by various opposition forces, have continuously increased;
- B. whereas any further militarisation of the situation in Syria would have a serious impact on its civilian population, which is already facing a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, and would also continue to affect the wider region, in particular Jordan and Lebanon, in terms of security and stability, with unpredictable implications and consequences;

- C. whereas in May 2013 more than 1.2 million people from Syria are registered as refugees in the region, and more than 230 000 people are awaiting registration; whereas there are more than 462 000 refugees in Lebanon and more than 460 000 in Jordan, as well as more than 320 000 in Turkey, more than 145 000 in Iraq and more than 66 000 in Egypt; whereas the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees projects a total of 3.5 million refugees from Syria by the end of 2013;
- D. whereas the continuous influx of refugees from Syria is increasing the burden on the neighbouring countries and is fuelling tensions in some areas;
- E. whereas it is estimated that 6.5 million people are affected by the violence in Syria and require humanitarian assistance; whereas it is also estimated that 4 250 000 people have been displaced within Syria;
- F. whereas refugees living in Syria (of Palestinian, Iraqi, Afghan, Somali and Sudanese origin) are becoming more vulnerable; whereas Palestinians in particular are being drawn into the conflict;
- G. whereas the Syria Regional Response Plan outlines the joint response of the 55 agencies engaged in assisting Syrian refugees across five countries and has four priority areas: protection, emergency response, assistance to non-camp refugees and emergency preparedness;
- H. whereas on 22 April 2013, the total amount of humanitarian assistance committed by the EU in response to the Syrian crisis was almost EUR 473 million, including EUR 200 million from the EU itself and nearly EUR 273 million from Member States; whereas on 12 May 2013 the Commission announced additional funding of EUR 65 million; whereas the EU is the largest donor by far;
1. Strongly condemns the use of indiscriminate violence by the Syrian authorities against the Syrian civilian population, in particular the targeted killing of children and women and mass executions in villages; expresses its deepest concern at the gravity of the human rights violations and possible crimes against humanity authorised and/or perpetrated by the Syrian authorities, the Syrian army, security forces and affiliated militias; condemns the summary extrajudicial executions and all other forms of human rights violations committed by groups and forces opposing the regime of President Assad;
 2. Extends its condolences to the families of the victims; reiterates its solidarity with the Syrian people's struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy, and applauds their courage and determination;
 3. Reiterates its call on all armed actors to put an immediate end to violence in Syria; calls on the Syrian Government to withdraw the Syrian army from besieged towns and cities without delay, and to immediately release all detained protesters, political prisoners, human rights defenders, bloggers and journalists; calls for a peaceful and genuine Syrian-led political transition to democracy which meets the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and is based on an inclusive dialogue involving all democratic forces and components within Syrian society, with a view to launching a process of thoroughgoing democratic reform that also takes account of the need to ensure national reconciliation and

is committed to ensuring respect for the rights and freedoms of minorities, including ethnic, religious, cultural and other minorities;

4. Supports the joint call made by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to convene an international peace conference on Syria as soon as possible as a follow-up to the Geneva Conference of June 2012;
5. Calls on the Syrian authorities to allow the swift provision of humanitarian assistance and full access to humanitarian organisations, and to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian pauses in order to allow the safe delivery of humanitarian aid; stresses again that international humanitarian law must be fully respected by all those involved in the crisis; calls on all the parties involved to protect civilians, allow full and unimpeded access to food, water and electricity, and refrain from using all forms of intimidation and violence against patients, doctors, health workers and aid workers; urges the EU and its Member States to step up their efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria, in spite of all the obstacles and difficulties;
6. Welcomes the launch by the UN, in March 2013, of an independent investigation into allegations of the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria;
7. Expresses its concern about further militarisation of the conflict and sectarian violence; notes the role of different regional players, including in the delivery of arms, and is concerned about the spill-over effects of the Syrian conflict in neighbouring countries; strongly condemns the car bomb attack on 11 May 2013 that killed and injured dozens of people near a Syrian refugee base in the town of Reyhanli, in the Hatay province in south-eastern Turkey;
8. Welcomes the Council's decision of 22 April 2013 to amend restrictive measures against Syria so as to provide greater non-lethal support and technical assistance for the protection of civilians; calls on the EEAS to provide a detailed overview of the composition of the Syrian opposition, indicating which parts of the opposition are most attached to the universal values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms and would therefore be most appropriate as beneficiaries of European support;
9. Applauds the continuing efforts of Syria's neighbouring countries in hosting and providing humanitarian relief to refugees from Syria and calls for increased international support and assistance in this context; stresses the crucial importance of finding a sustainable response to the humanitarian crisis both within Syria and among refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries; urges neighbouring countries to continue to provide protection to refugees from Syria and displaced persons and to refrain, in line with their international obligations, from expelling and returning any such persons to Syria; stresses the need to cooperate with the Red Cross; welcomes the EU's readiness to offer additional support, including financial resources, to help neighbouring countries host the increasing number of refugees from Syria;
10. Notes that overcrowding at refugee camps in Syria's neighbouring countries is increasing, which is putting a heavy burden on sanitation and contributing to disease outbreaks and tensions; stresses that it is important to assess the conditions of refugees living inside and outside the camps;

11. Welcomes the statement of the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response of 23 April 2013 that ‘in view of the spill-over risks, we have to come with a comprehensive package of measures to help the Syrian refugees and support their host countries’;
12. Welcomes the USD 1.5 billion pledged by the Member States and others at the Kuwait Donors’ Conference on 30 January 2013; notes that this new funding will partially top up the Syria Regional Response Plan; urges all donors to honour their commitments in full;
13. Calls on the EU to support the establishment of safe havens along the Turkish-Syrian border, and possibly within Syria, as well as the creation of humanitarian corridors by the international community;
14. Welcomes the UN Security Council’s press statement of 18 April 2013 on Syria; calls on the UN Security Council members, in particular Russia and China, to uphold their responsibility to put an end to the violence and repression against the Syrian people, including by adopting a UNSC resolution based on the UNSC press statement of 18 April 2013; calls on the VP/HR to do her utmost to secure the adoption of a UNSC resolution, exerting effective diplomatic pressure on both Russia and China; calls on the EU to continue to explore within the UNSC all options within the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework, in close cooperation with the US, Turkey and the League of Arab States, in order to assist the Syrian people and to halt the bloodshed; calls for a referral by the UNSC of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court for a formal investigation; strongly supports the work of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the situation in Syria and welcomes the updated report;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Government and Parliament of the People’s Republic of China, the Government and House of Representatives of the United States of America, the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Lebanon, the Government and Parliament of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey, the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Iraq, the Government and Parliament of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic.