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Plenary sitting

10.9.2013

B7-0420/2013

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 Egypt
(2013/2820(RSP))

Marietje Schaake, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Graham Watson, Robert Rochefort, Sarah Ludford, Kristiina Ojuland, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Edward McMillan-Scott, Alexandra Thein, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Hannu Takkula, Louis Michel
on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0420/2013

**European Parliament resolution on Egypt
(2013/2820(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular those of 16 February 2012 on Egypt: recent developments¹, 14 March 2013 on the situation in Egypt² and 4 July 2013 on the crisis in Egypt³,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions on the Arab Spring of 8 February 2013,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Egypt of 27 February and 25 June 2012, and of 31 January, 8 February, 22 July and 21 August 2013,
- having regard to the statements by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Egypt of 28 June, 3 and 31 July and 14, 15 and 16 August 2013, and her remarks of 18 July 2013 after her visit to Egypt, her joint statement with US Secretary of State John Kerry of 7 August 2013 and her remarks of 21 August 2013 after the Foreign Affairs Council meeting,
- having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2001, which entered into force in 2004, strengthened by the Action Plan of 2007, and to the Commission's progress report on its implementation of 20 March 2013,
- having regard to the EU-Egypt Task Force meeting of 13 and 14 November 2012, and its conclusions,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Egypt is a party,
- having regard to the presidential decree by Egypt's interim President Adly Mansour of 8 July 2013, proposing a roadmap for constitutional amendments and new elections,
- having regard to the 2013 European Court of Auditors report on EU aid to Egypt between 2007 and 2012,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Egypt is the largest Arab country, a pivotal country in the southern Mediterranean, an important trade partner of the EU and a major recipient of EU aid;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0064.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0095.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0333.

whereas political, economic and social developments in Egypt have significant implications in the whole region and beyond;

- B. whereas on 30 June 2013 several million people took to the streets in Cairo and across Egypt in peaceful protests of an unprecedented size, called by the Rebel Movement (Tamarod), to demand that President Morsi leave power, claiming that the general situation in the country under the government led by the Muslim Brotherhood had not improved but deteriorated; whereas supporters of President Morsi staged demonstrations in support of the President and the Muslim Brotherhood; whereas tens of people were killed and many injured in the demonstrations; whereas several ministers and officials resigned in support of the massive popular protest movement;
- C. whereas the Egyptian Armed Forces issued a statement on 1 July 2013 giving Egyptian political forces 48 hours to fulfil the people's demands, failing which the military would step in and present a political roadmap for the country;
- D. whereas on 3 July 2013 President Morsi was forced out of office and to date remains in custody in an unknown place;
- E. whereas in its statement of 4 July 2013 the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces announced the suspension of the Constitution, the transfer of power to the head of the High Constitutional Court until early presidential elections were held, to be followed by parliamentary elections, and the forming of a national coalition government and a committee to look into amendments to the Constitution; whereas on the same day Mr Adly Mansour was sworn in as interim President; whereas the upper house of parliament was dissolved on 5 July 2013;
- F. whereas since the military intervention supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood have organised large-scale demonstrations throughout Egypt, demanding the release and reinstatement of President Morsi; whereas several of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders have been detained, as well as many of its supporters;
- G. whereas many of the Muslim Brotherhood-organised protests have turned violent and led to deadly clashes between citizens, as well as between Muslim Brotherhood supporters and the army and security forces;
- H. whereas the EU, together with the United States and several Arab countries, undertook diplomatic efforts at the highest level to forge a political compromise between the army, the interim-government and the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood; whereas, regrettably, despite much effort, no political consensus was reached;
- I. whereas on 14 August 2013 the army and security forces violently cleared the Rabaa and Nahda encampments of Muslim Brotherhood supporters, using live ammunition and snipers, and deliberately killing hundreds of citizens, including children of Muslim Brotherhood leaders; whereas the excessive use of force and violence against peaceful demonstrators continues and remains unpunished;
- J. whereas on 14 August 2013 the Egyptian Presidency declared a state of emergency for one month; whereas the Interior Ministry authorised police to use force against protesters

targeting police and state institutions;

- K. whereas the Coptic community has been and still is the target of violence directed against its members and of acts of destruction against its churches, community centres and businesses; whereas there are growing concerns about restrictions being placed on the freedoms of conscience, belief and religion in Egypt;
- L. whereas a free and independent press and media forms a key part of society in any true democracy; whereas physical violence and acts of harassment against journalists have increased;
- M. whereas, in response to the killing of hundreds of protesters by the Egyptian army and security forces, the EU Foreign Ministers decided at an extraordinary meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 August 2013 that Member States would suspend licences for the export to Egypt of any equipment used for internal repression and reassess their export licences covered by EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, and tasked Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton with reviewing the issue of EU assistance under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Association Agreement on the basis of Egypt's commitment to the principles that underpin them and the understanding that the assistance to the most vulnerable groups and civil society will continue;
- N. whereas on 3 September 2013 a court in Cairo ordered the closure of four television stations, bringing the total number to some 10 in the 2 last months, stating that they were operating illegally;
- O. whereas press and digital freedoms are enablers of universal human rights and should be upheld at all times;
- P. whereas a new constitutional committee composed of 50 experts was appointed on 1 September 2013 to draft Egypt's next Constitution;
- Q. whereas on 2 September 2013 ousted President Mohammed Morsi and members of the Muslim Brotherhood were charged by Egypt's State Prosecutor with inciting the murder of protesters;
- R. whereas several Muslim Brotherhood leaders have called for 'martyrdom' and, as such, incited violence;
- S. whereas on 5 September 2013 the Interior Minister, Mohammed Ibrahim, survived a bomb attack that targeted his convoy in Cairo;
- T. whereas due to the instability and lack of security throughout Egypt, acts of terrorism are increasing in the Sinai, causing many deaths, including the killing of several Egyptian soldiers;
- U. whereas an inclusive political process, based on consensus and joint ownership and a genuine national dialogue with the meaningful participation of all democratic political forces, is the only way to overcome the current political and social divisions, to build deep

and sustainable democracy in Egypt and to allow the necessary economic reform and governance to be established; whereas Egypt should not reverse its democratic achievements by reverting to military dictatorship;

- V. whereas women are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of transition in Egypt; whereas female protestors are often subject to violence, sexual assaults, virginity tests and other forms of degrading treatment, while women's rights activists face regular harassment and intimidation; whereas women have witnessed major setbacks in the field of political participation in the country;
 - W. whereas Egypt is facing increasingly serious economic difficulties; whereas economic prosperity in the country requires political stability, sound economic policies, action to fight corruption and international support; whereas social justice and a higher standard of living for citizens are crucial dimensions of the transition towards an open, stable, democratic, free and prosperous Egyptian society;
 - X. whereas civil society has a crucial role to play in the democratic transition in Egypt and must be allowed to operate freely;
 - Y. whereas between 2007 and 2012 Egypt received approximately EUR 1 billion of EU aid and whereas the EU has committed a further EUR 5 billion in aid, which can only become fully available once conditions tied to those set by the IMF are met;
 - Z. whereas Article 2 of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement states that relations between the Parties are to be based on respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, and leads to the policy of 'more for more', which is a cornerstone of the EU's reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy;
1. Expresses its solidarity with the Egyptian people in this critical period of transition towards democracy and its sincere condolences to the families of the victims, and demands that those responsible be brought to justice; reiterates its full commitment to assist the Egyptian people in moving towards a democratic society in which basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are upheld;
 2. Expresses its deep concern at the situation in Egypt following the military intervention, in particular the strong crackdown on supporters of the ousted President Morsi and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the violation of basic human rights and freedoms, as well as the increasing social polarisation; is concerned at the deteriorating security conditions throughout the country and the mounting socio-economic problems;
 3. Stresses that power should be transferred to democratically elected civilian authorities as soon as possible; expresses its fundamental solidarity with all those Egyptians who cherish democratic aspirations and values for their country and calls for a rapid return to the democratic process, including the holding of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in a fully inclusive process, with the participation of all democratic actors;
 4. Condemns in the strongest possible terms all acts of violence, the disproportionate use of force by the army and the police, the tragic loss of life during the dismantlement of the

Rabaa and Nahda encampments and the mass killings that took place there;

5. Calls on the interim government to exercise restraint and points to the urgent need for a constructive and inclusive political dialogue in order to set up a clear roadmap for a transition to democracy; calls on the Egyptian authorities to establish a judicial committee to independently investigate all killings, as promised by the Egyptian presidency on 8 July 2013; notes the recent announcement by Prime Minister El Beblawy that an independent committee composed of public figures will be established to investigate the dispersal of the Rabaa and Nahda Square sit-ins;
6. Deplores at the same time the fact that the Muslim Brothers leadership failed to clearly instruct its political base to refrain from any form of violence against fellow citizens, the army and the police; deplores the fact that the Muslim Brothers leadership did not do anything to prevent and stop those attacks and only belatedly condemned them; calls on Muslim Brotherhood leaders to refrain from calling for and glorifying violence;
7. Urges the interim authorities to order a stop to all politically motivated arrests and other forms of harassment; calls for the release of all political detainees, including ousted President Morsi, and a swift and a transparent review of all criminal cases; stresses the importance of free and fair trials for all those detained; emphasises that civilians should not be tried before military courts;
8. Calls on the interim authorities to ensure the security of all citizens, irrespective of their political views and affiliation and of their confession, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, to protect the freedoms of association and expression and press freedom, and to respect and fulfil their international obligations; calls on all parties to act responsibly with the aim of avoiding violent actions and provocations that could undermine and hinder the legitimate right of the people to demonstrate peacefully, freely expressing their will and opinions;
9. Condemns the violence against the Coptic community and the destruction of a large number of churches, community centres and businesses throughout the country; points to the historical pluralism of Egyptian society and asks the Egyptian Government to support the diverse communities in every possible way, so that peaceful cohabitation can quickly be restored;
10. Stresses the urgent need for a process of national reconciliation, involving all moderate political and social forces in Egypt, and calls for the moderate components of the Muslim Brotherhood to actively support and be part of the process of democratic transition;
11. Is very concerned at the re-establishment of the emergency law and calls on VP/HR Catherine Ashton to demand that the Egyptian authorities lift the law as soon as possible;
12. Expresses its strongest support for the process of constitutional drafting and reform currently underway and stresses that this must lay the foundations for a truly democratic new Egypt, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms for all citizens of Egypt and promoting interreligious tolerance and cohabitation; strongly believes that the consultation process on the new draft Constitution should include all components of the Egyptian political spectrum, including the moderate components of the Muslim Brotherhood, and

that it should be followed by a referendum on a new, pluralistic Constitution;

13. Calls on the Union to apply the principle of ‘conditionality’ and not to commit to aid and loan packages or to a full and detailed free trade agreement until the benchmarks for political stability, such as the settled establishment of elected democratic organs, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, have been fulfilled; notes that on 21 August 2013 the Foreign Affairs Council tasked VP/HR Catherine Ashton with reviewing the issue of EU assistance under the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Association Agreement on the basis of Egypt’s commitment to the principles that underpin them and the understanding that the assistance to the most vulnerable groups and civil society will continue;
14. Calls for strict scrutiny to be applied to EU funds paid, in terms of transparency and accountability, as well as the other concerns mentioned by the European Court of Auditors with regard to EU aid to Egypt between 2007 and 2012;
15. Considers that the Union should concentrate its support on the transition to democracy, respect for human rights and freedoms, women’s rights and minority rights, the development of institutional capacities, judicial reform, the development of non-governmental organisations and improvement of the business environment; welcomes the Foreign Affairs Council’s decision of 21 August 2013 to suspend licences for the export to Egypt of any equipment used for internal repression and to reassess export licences covered by the EU common position;
16. Commends the active role played by the Vice-President / High Representative and the European External Action Service staff on the ground in Egypt as a mediator with a view to brokering a way out of the crisis; calls on the international community, and in particular the League of Arab States, to play an active role in addressing the situation in Egypt with the utmost urgency;
17. 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 parliaments and governments of the Member States, the League of Arab States and the Egyptian authorities.