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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 EU strategy towards Iran
(2014/2625(RSP))

María Muñoz De Urquiza

on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

**European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy towards Iran
(2014/2625(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, in particular those of 10 March 2011 on the EU's approach towards Iran¹, of 17 November 2011 on recent cases of human rights violations in Iran², of 2 February 2012 on Iran and its nuclear programme³ and of 14 June 2012 on the situation of ethnic minorities in Iran⁴,
- having regard to the joint statement made by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, and the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on 24 November 2013 in Geneva, and to the statement by the VP/HR of 12 January 2014,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 October 2012 and of 16 December 2013, and to the amendments to the restrictive measures in place against Iran, as decided by the Council at its meeting of 20 January 2014,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 March 2011 announcing the implementation of restrictive measures targeting those responsible for grave human rights violations in Iran,
- having regard to the statement by the VP/HR of 19 September 2013 on the liberation of Nasrin Sotoudeh and other prisoners of conscience in Iran,
- having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 4 October 2013, to his recent statement of 22 January 2014 warning of the 'sharp increase in hangings in Iran', and to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 10 September 2013 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on a digital freedom strategy in EU foreign policy⁶,
- having regard to the Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections, unanimously adopted on 26 March 1994 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of which the Iranian parliament is a member,

¹ OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 163.

² OJ C 153 E, 31.5.2013, p. 157.

³ OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 43.

⁴ OJ C 332 E, 15.11.2013, p. 102.

⁵ A/68/377.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0470.

- having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2013 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran¹, which ‘expresses deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran’, including but not limited to the arbitrary, frequent and ongoing use of the death penalty,
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2013 on a world against violence and violent extremism²,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 24 November 2013 in Geneva VP/HR Catherine Ashton, together with the foreign affairs ministers of the E3/EU+3, reached an interim agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran (hereinafter referred to as Iran) on the nuclear issue (detailed in the Joint Plan of Action); whereas on 10 January 2014 the E3/EU+3 reached an agreement on the implementation modalities for the Joint Plan of Action; whereas the six-month implementation period for the Joint Plan of Action is crucial and requires simultaneous and reciprocal action from both sides;
 - B. whereas the presidential elections were not held in accordance with the democratic standards valued by the EU; whereas, however, President Hassan Rouhani has signalled readiness for more open and constructive relations between Iran and the West; whereas, in addition to the nuclear deal, various topics – including human rights and regional security – need to be discussed by the EU and Iran;
 - C. whereas the commitments made in the Joint Plan of Action are only a first step towards a more complete solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and aim to reduce immediate tensions, creating more time and space for a comprehensive diplomatic solution; whereas Iran’s nuclear activities were in contradiction to previous UN Security Council resolutions;
 - D. whereas internal political developments in Iran and the interim agreement on the nuclear issue have opened a window of opportunity for both reforms within Iran and an improvement of its external relations with the EU;
 - E. whereas negotiations on a comprehensive trade and cooperation agreement and on a political dialogue agreement between the EU and Iran started in 2002; whereas this process was interrupted in 2005 as a result of revelations concerning Iran’s clandestine nuclear activities and the country’s refusal to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);
 - F. whereas the human rights situation in Iran is still characterised by the continued, systematic violation of fundamental rights;
 - G. whereas Iran has one of the youngest populations in the world, including more than 7 million children under the age of six;

¹ A/RES/68/184.

² A/RES/68/127.

- H. whereas Iran still refuses to cooperate with several UN bodies on the issue of human rights, for instance by denying a visa to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and preventing him from fulfilling his mandate in an independent manner;

On the nuclear issue

1. Welcomes the Geneva interim agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on Iran's nuclear programme; considers it vital that all parties continue to engage constructively in the negotiating process so that the final comprehensive agreement can be concluded within the agreed timeframe;
2. Stresses that there can be no alternative to a peaceful negotiated solution that addresses the international community's concerns regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and regional sensitivities as well as Iran's security sensitivities;
3. Welcomes the decisions taken by the Council at its meeting of 20 January 2014 with a view to implementing the Joint Plan of Action, in particular the provisions on partial sanction relief; stresses the crucial importance of reliably monitoring Iran's implementation of its commitments under the Joint Plan of Action; believes that, once a comprehensive agreement ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme is reached, nuclear-related sanctions against Iran should be gradually removed;

On prospects for EU–Iran relations

4. Stresses that more constructive relations with Iran are contingent on progress in the full implementation of Iran's commitments under the Joint Plan of Action; hopes that the progress in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and in the negotiations for the Geneva agreement will pave the way for more constructive relations between the EU and Iran, including as regards issues of regional concern such as the civil war in Syria and the fight against all forms of terrorism and its causes, but also in areas such as economic development, trade agreements, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights;
5. Calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to carry out all the preparatory work for the opening of a Union delegation in Tehran by the end of 2014; strongly believes that this would be an efficient tool for influencing Iranian policies and would also support the dialogue on issues such as human and minority rights;
6. Invites the Council, subject to substantial progress being made in the negotiations on the nuclear issue, to start a discussion on specific steps that could lead to an improvement in bilateral relations between the EU and Iran, including a possible future contractual framework for these relations and the development of sectoral cooperation, focusing for example on the development of civil society and the private sector in Iran, as well as on the areas of the fight against narcotic drugs (while ensuring that suspects receive a fair trial and are not subjected to the death penalty), environmental cooperation, technology transfer, infrastructure development and planning, education and culture, child

protection and health, and common initiatives to promote and protect human rights; is concerned about the possible outbreak of infectious diseases such as polio and measles, especially among children, and urges the EU to ease access to relevant medication which has otherwise been difficult to obtain because of the sanctions;

7. Notes with particular concern the worsening environmental situation in Iran, in particular when it comes to water shortages, desertification and air pollution, and invites the EU to facilitate cooperation between European and Iranian research institutes, environmental organisations and cities;
8. Notes the importance of trade with Iran for many medium-sized European companies and underlines the fact that such trade should make a positive contribution to the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action;
9. Invites the Commission and the EEAS, in the meantime, to use all tools available to the EU to make a concerted effort to empower and develop civil society in Iran and to increase the number of exchanges for students, artists and other visitors, as well as cultural and academic exchanges, and to promote youth participation and civic engagement; calls, to this end, for greater exchange and cooperation between the EEAS and relevant branches of the Commission, such as its Directorate-General for Development Cooperation – EuropeAid;
10. Calls for the EU to pursue a more independent policy towards Iran, while coordinating with allies and partners;

On regional issues

11. Considers that Iran should use its considerable influence in Syria to stop the bloody civil war and calls on Iran's leadership to adopt a constructive role in the international efforts to find a solution to the Syrian crisis; considers that Iran should be involved in all discussions to that end, provided that it shows commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to the crises in Syria and in the region;
12. Considers that greater engagement between the EU and Iran on the basis of credible implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and, in the future, of the comprehensive agreement, could be beneficial in terms of stabilising the situation in the Middle East; encourages the EU, in particular, to facilitate dialogue between Iran and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council;
13. Takes the view that the EU, the US and Iran should develop their cooperation in Afghanistan, in particular on the issue of drug trafficking and on humanitarian issues such as the protection of refugees, and with a view to ensuring the protection of human rights gains in order to achieve a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict; recalls that Iran is hosting approximately 3 million Afghan refugees, and calls on Iran, UN agencies and the international community to ensure respect for their basic rights;

On human rights

14. Welcomes the release of several prisoners of conscience in Iran, including the human

rights lawyer and Sakharov Prize winner Nasrin Sotoudeh, and calls on the Iranian authorities to release all imprisoned human rights defenders, political prisoners, trade unionists and labour activists, and those detained after the 2009 presidential elections; notes with interest President Hassan Rouhani's initiative of formulating a Charter of Citizens' Rights; expresses continued grave concern, however, regarding the human rights situation in Iran, in particular the widespread allegations of torture, unfair trials – including of lawyers and human rights defenders – and impunity for human rights violations; expresses alarm with regard to the high number of executions in 2013 and 2014, including of minors; notes that most of the 2013 executions were carried out during the last five months of the year; condemns the restrictions on freedom of information, freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, academic freedom, freedom of education and freedom of movement, as well as the repression and discrimination on the basis of religion, belief, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation that persist, inter alia against the Baha'i community, Christians, apostates and converts;

15. Takes the view that the Charter of Citizens' Rights should comply fully with Iran's international obligations, particularly as regards non-discrimination and the right to life, strengthening the prohibition of torture, ensuring full freedom of religion and belief, and guaranteeing freedom of expression, which is currently restricted by the vaguely formulated provision on the 'national-security-related offence';
16. Calls, therefore, for the EU to mainstream human rights in all aspects of its relations with Iran; believes that a high-level and inclusive human rights dialogue with Iran should be part of the future policy framework for bilateral EU–Iran relations; calls for the EU to start a human rights dialogue with Iran that includes the judiciary and security forces and establishes clearly defined benchmarks against which progress can be measured; calls for the EU to support fully the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and calls on Iran to grant him an immediate and unconditional entry visa; encourages UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay to take up the Iranian authorities' invitation to visit Iran; calls on Iran to declare a moratorium on the death penalty;
17. Underlines the fact that any future Parliament delegations to Iran should be committed to meeting members of the political opposition and civil society activists, and to having access to political prisoners;
18. Emphasises the importance of creating an environment conducive to the proper functioning of civil society organisations, including a reformed legal framework; calls for the EU to make maximum global use of the EU human rights guidelines, including the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, of the new flexibility provided by the European Instrument for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) 2014-2020, and of the potential of the European Endowment for Democracy newly established by the EU and its Member States, in order to support Iranian human rights defenders and civil society organisations;
19. Joins the urgent call of 772 Iranian journalists on the Iranian President to live up to his promise and allow the reopening of the Association of Iranian Journalists;

20. Encourages the EU to explore the possibility of extending technical assistance, in partnership with international organisations, to Iran with a view to assisting in the reform of the Code of Criminal Procedure currently envisaged by the Iranian parliament; expresses concern, in particular, over detainees' inability to access an attorney during interrogations, over the serious allegations of abuse during pre-charge and pre-trial detention, and over the trials of civilians before revolutionary courts; stresses that independence from political interference and ensuring a free trial are key in developing a modern code of criminal procedure and essential in addressing human rights issues;
21. Calls on Iran to cooperate with international human rights bodies and its own NGOs by acting upon the recommendations of the UN and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and enabling international human rights organisations to carry out their missions;
22. Takes the view that women's rights should, without fail, remain an area of special focus in any dialogue between the EU and Iran; considers that, despite the progress already made, the situation of women in Iran remains marred by unacceptable discrimination, in particular on legal matters, as well as with regard to family law and women's participation in economic and political life;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.