



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Development

2013/2020(INI)

23.9.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the situation of human rights in the Sahel Region
(2013/2020(INI))

Rapporteur: Jean Roatta

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

Security and Development

1. Reiterates that human security and development in the Sahel countries are inextricably linked, as stated in the EU's 2011 Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel; stresses that a stable security situation, economic and political stability, and stability as regards respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are necessary for the long-term success and sustainability of development policies in the Sahel; draws attention, however, to the need to invest in development aid so that the local population has sufficient resources to boost regional stability; takes the view that this would prevent much of the trafficking and illegal activities that stem from the extreme poverty and lack of resources and alternatives in the region;
2. Takes the view that political instability in the Sahel region, combined with the severe drought affecting millions of people, constitutes a serious threat to democracy, the rule of law and human and socio-economic rights, and in turn is having an adverse impact on people's living standards; points out that the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights are essential for guaranteeing national stability, security, and respect for fundamental freedoms;
3. Calls on local and regional authorities, in cooperation with civil society, to enhance security and respect for human rights in the Sahel countries and at their borders in an effort to ensure that development and humanitarian aid policies can be implemented as effectively as possible;
4. Calls on the governments of the Sahel countries to address the root causes of the crisis on the basis of a sustainable economic development strategy that takes account of their citizens' political, economic and social concerns, such as access to food, education, health care, employment and housing, wealth redistribution and decent living conditions;
5. Emphasises that the various conflicts in the Sahel region have led to greater population displacement within states and to an increase in the number of refugees; calls on the EU, the Sahel countries, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States to coordinate their refugee policies in order to provide refugees with proper sanitary facilities and healthy and decent living conditions, guarantee human security for the most vulnerable groups and establish self-sufficiency programmes; points out that, in addition to assisting refugees and internally displaced persons and guaranteeing their protection, efforts must be made to ensure that, wherever possible, they can return to their home regions;
6. Notes that there are alarming signs that the Sahel region will be hit by a severe food and nutrition crisis this year, and calls on the Commission to provide adequate humanitarian aid funding for the region;

7. Calls on the Sahel countries and on local and regional authorities to implement policies to guarantee the safety of refugees, displaced persons and the most vulnerable groups, with a view to combating terrorism, violence against women, exploitation and trafficking (of drugs, weapons, human beings and goods);
8. Expresses its support for the International Support Mission (ISM) to Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, which took over from the ISM on 1 July 2013, and the EUCAP Sahel Mission; welcomes the proposal by the UN Secretary-General of 14 June 2013 to establish a 'United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel' to tackle all aspects of the crisis: enhancing governance, combating crime (trafficking of drugs, people, weapons and cigarettes, money laundering) and terrorism, and delivering humanitarian aid; welcomes, in particular, those objectives of the strategy which aim to enhance effective and inclusive governance throughout the region and to integrate humanitarian and development plans and interventions with a view to boosting long-term resilience;
9. Stresses the need for all the Sahel countries to implement policies on the establishment of basic social infrastructure and networks (sanitation, network of medical advisers, transport, telecommunications) which ensure that humanitarian aid can be channelled in a neutral, universal, unrestricted, proper and efficient way; looks to those countries and local and regional authorities to ensure that the networks remain operational and accessible;
10. Highlights the adverse impact that the conflict in the Western Sahara is having on the wider region, and, following the example of the ongoing UN political negotiations, calls on the parties in the conflict and neighbouring countries to adopt confidence-building measures in good faith, such as supporting MINURSO's (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) family visit programme and extending its mandate to include human rights monitoring, speeding up Morocco's promised regionalisation process, including authorising the establishment of regional political parties as a first step towards self-determination for the Saharawi people, and, in general, ending repression and political, social or economic discrimination against political dissidents in particular;
11. Acknowledges the important role which women play in stabilising and developing the Sahel, and calls for their leadership role in conflict prevention, peace-keeping and peace-building processes, security, politics and economic development to be strengthened; encourages development partners to allocate financial support to projects which seek specifically to empower women in the region;

Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

12. Calls on the EU, in cooperation with the Sahel countries, to implement priority development policies, based on an approach rooted in human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to alleviate the food crisis and the problems of malnutrition and famine and tackle problems caused by drought and natural disasters; calls on the Commission, in keeping with those priority policies, to make optimum use of the funds earmarked for combating malnutrition (EUR 123.5 million in 2012) in order to meet the needs of the people concerned and support local capacity-building in the countries in question in an effort to ensure that the aid has a positive impact;

13. Points out that a long-term commitment is necessary in order to increase resistance to drought in the Sahel and thus prevent recurring food crises and obviate the need for large-scale humanitarian assistance whenever there is a drought; stresses that a commitment of this kind needs to be underpinned by a sustainable partnership between governments, regional institutions, donors and financial institutions, along the lines of the 'AGIR Sahel' initiative launched by the European Union;
14. Stresses that a long-term approach, based on universal access to education, is needed in order to improve the everyday lives of the Sahel's inhabitants and to support the development of a region that will have a population of 150 million by 2040;
15. Calls for effective health and education policies targeting the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children, to be implemented and monitored in order to make progress towards achieving the MDGs: universal primary education, improved maternal health, universal access to health care, and efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and all infectious diseases; calls on the EU, under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), to make youth a priority action area in the Sahel and to develop an ambitious education policy; reiterates the importance of policies focusing specifically on women and access to employment;

Financing and development

16. Calls on the Commission, on the basis of the local population's previously identified needs, to release all the development funding earmarked for the Sahel: the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the EDF, the Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation and the Sahel Resilience Fund;
17. Calls on the Union to continue and step up its efforts to boost humanitarian aid for the Sahel, ensure that there is close cooperation between international humanitarian aid agencies, civil society, local and regional authorities and governments, and to mobilise the funding earmarked under the 10th EDF (EUR 660 million for the period 2007-2013) and the Fund for the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR Sahel - EUR 172 million for 2012).

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.9.2013
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Michael Cashman, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Corina Crețu, Leonidas Donskis, Mikael Gustafsson, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Michèle Striffler, Keith Taylor, Patrice Tirolien, Ivo Vajgl
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Philippe Boulland, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Edvard Kožušník, Krzysztof Lisek, Isabella Lövin, Judith Sargentini
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Emma McClarkin, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska