

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1877/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Commission action on Western Sahara

The continuing conflict in Western Sahara is still a potential threat to the security and stability of the Sahel region.

Following the participation of the parties to the conflict in direct negotiations under United Nations auspices, a glimmer of hope has begun to emerge in recent months in connection with Morocco's submission of an initiative concerning the negotiation of autonomous status for Western Sahara.

The international community has welcomed these negotiations, which are due to resume in March; the third round took place last January.

Polisario, however, as shown by its recent statements, is seeking to undermine these positive developments.

This attitude, which is contrary to the spirit of the agreements signed by the parties and the efforts made by the international community, including in particular the Security Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his personal envoy, is clearly shown in the text of the final declaration of the last congress held by Polisario in Tifariti (in the buffer zone set up by the United Nations).

The declaration in question:

1. launched a new call to arms;
2. incited violence inside the disputed territory and
3. called for settlement of the zone situated to the east of the security wall.

Given that the European Union and its Member States have declared that they are in favour of the current negotiations being pursued in the best circumstances possible, and given that the statements in question were made against the background of a resurgence of terrorist acts, what action does the Commission intend to take to persuade Algeria and Polisario to firmly commit to the current process and refrain from any actions or declarations which could sabotage the efforts being made to resolve this long-running dispute?