

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Session document

12 June 2002

B5-0342/2002 }
B5-0350/2002 }
B5-0355/2002 }
B5-0363/2002 }
B5-0374/2002 }

RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Charles Tannock and Bernd Posselt on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Pasqualina Napoletano and Margrietus J. van den Berg on behalf of the PSE Group
- Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Alima Boumediene-Thiery, Hélène Flautre, Yves Piétrasanta and Matti Wuori on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Jonas Sjöstedt on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR (B5-0342/2002),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0350/2002),
- PSE (B5-0355/2002),
- PPE-DE (B5-0363/2002),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0374/2002),

on the situation with regard to democratic rights in Syria, and the case of
Riad Turk in particular

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PE 319.178}
PE 319.731}
PE 319.738}
PE 319.744}
PE 319.755} RC1

European Parliament resolution on the situation with regard to democratic rights in Syria, and the case of Riad Turk in particular

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas the accession to power, two years ago, of the current President, Bachar Al-Assad, gave rise to some hopes in Syria and abroad of an opening up of the Syrian political system dominated by the Baas Party for many years,
 - B. concerned in particular at the case of Riad Turk, detained as a prisoner of conscience from 1980 to 1998 because of his opposition to the Syrian Government and recently arrested again on charges including that of attempting to change the Constitution by illegal means,
 - C. whereas a fresh trial against Riad Turk and other opposition figures began on 28 April 2002, and whereas the case is being heard by a special court against whose sentences there is no right of appeal,
 - D. whereas his prison conditions, his advanced age and his state of health pose a serious threat to Riad Turk's life,
 - E. whereas the defence of human rights is an essential element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
 - F. dismayed at the recent disaster in northern Syria, where a dam collapsed leaving dozens of people dead,
- 1. Expresses its grave concern at the restrictions imposed on and the sentences recently handed down against various intellectuals and opposition figures, including two MPs who had taken part in public debates and meetings;
 - 2. Urges the Syrian authorities to take serious account of the concerns expressed regarding the health of the lawyer Riad Turk and calls for his immediate release;
 - 3. Calls on the Syrian authorities to:
 - (a) ensure that detainees are well treated and not subjected to torture and/or other ill-treatment;
 - (b) ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment without reservation and implement its provisions;
 - (c) ensure that detained or imprisoned persons are given prompt, regular and unrestricted access to their families, lawyers and doctors;
 - (d) implement international standards with regard to treatment of prisoners and prison conditions, such as the UN Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the

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Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment;

4. Stresses the political importance of Syria's role in achieving peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean and the objectives set out in the Barcelona Declaration;
5. Points out that the European Union is currently conducting an intense dialogue with the Syrian authorities with a view to concluding the association agreement and calls on the Council and Commission to make representations to the Syrian authorities in an effort to secure the release of Riad Turk and an undertaking to conduct trials in a manner consistent with the rule of law and human rights;
6. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the individual Member States to make clear to the Syrian authorities that the agreement currently being negotiated incorporates human rights clauses which the Union will not hesitate to invoke if necessary;
7. Urges the Commission to strengthen MEDA-democracy programmes for Syria, supporting the development of a genuine civil society and the projects carried out by independent NGOs;
8. Calls on its Delegation for relations with the Mashreq Countries to tackle the issue of human rights at its next meeting with Syrian parliamentarians;
9. Extends its condolences to the families of the victims of the recent disaster caused by the collapse of a dam and to the Syrian people in general and calls on the Commission to offer emergency aid;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the Syrian Government and Parliament.