

European Neighbourhood Policy, working towards a stronger partnership: EP's position on the 2012 progress reports

European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2013 on the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership. Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 reports (2013/2621(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communications of 11 March 2003 on ‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours’ (COM(2003)0104), of 12 May 2004 entitled ‘European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper’ (COM(2004)0373), of 4 December 2006 on ‘Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy’ (COM(2006)0726), of 5 December 2007 on ‘A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy’ (COM(2007)0774), of 3 December 2008 on ‘Eastern Partnership’ (COM(2008)0823), of 20 May 2008 entitled ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean’ (COM(2008)0319), of 12 May 2010 on ‘Taking Stock of the European Neighbourhood Policy’ (COM(2010)0207) and of 24 May 2011 on ‘A dialogue for migration, mobility and security with the southern Mediterranean countries’ (COM(2011)0292),
- having regard to the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 20 March 2013 on ‘European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a Stronger Partnership’ (JOIN(2013)0004), of 25 May 2011 on ‘A new response to a changing Neighbourhood’ (COM(2011)0303) and of 8 March 2011 on ‘A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean’ (COM(2011)0200),
- having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union of 26 July 2010, 20 June 2011 and 22 July 2013 on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs/Trade Council of the European Union of 26 September 2011 and of the European Council of 7 February 2013,
- having regard to the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 15 May 2012, entitled ‘Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Summit’ (JOIN(2012)0013) and ‘Delivering a new European Neighbourhood Policy’ (JOIN(2012)0014) and their accompanying joint staff working documents of 20 March 2013 (‘Regional reports’, SWD(2013)0085 and 0086),
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument¹,
- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995,

¹ OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1.

establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,

- having regard to the Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, held on 13 July 2008,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2010 on the Union for the Mediterranean¹,
- having regard to the Deauville Partnership launched by the G8 at the leaders' meeting in Deauville in May 2011, to which the EU is a party,
- having regard to the Joint Declarations of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of 7 May 2009 and of the Warsaw Eastern Partnership summit of 29-30 September 2011,
- having regard to the Joint Statement of the Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels, of 23 July 2012,
- having regard to Council Decision 2011/424/CFSP of 18 July 2011 appointing a European Union Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean region² and Council Decision 2011/518/CFSP of 25 August 2011 appointing the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia³,
- having regard to its resolutions of 7 April 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy – Eastern Dimension⁴ and on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy – Southern Dimension⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 May 2013 on asset recovery by the Arab Spring countries in transition⁷,
- having regard to its recommendation of 12 September 2013 on EU policy towards Belarus⁸,
- having regard to its Resolution of 13 June 2013 on freedom of the press and media in the world⁹,
- having regard to its Resolution of 11 December 2012 on a digital freedom strategy in EU foreign policy¹⁰,
- having regard to the Constituent Act of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May

¹ OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 126.

² OJ L 188, 19.7.2011, p. 24.

³ OJ L 221, 27.8.2011, p. 5.

⁴ OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 105.

⁵ OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 114.

⁶ OJ C 168 E, 14.6.2013, p. 26.

⁷ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0224.

⁸ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0382.

⁹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0274.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0470.

2011¹,

- having regard to the conclusions of the Summit of Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments (Marseille, 6-7 April 2013) and to the conclusions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly,
 - having regard to its resolutions containing Parliament’s recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the EU-Armenia Association Agreement², the EU-Azerbaijan Association Agreement³, the EU-Moldova Association Agreement⁴, the EU-Georgia Association Agreement⁵ and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement⁶,
 - having regard to Decisions 2006/356/EC, 2005/690/EC, 2004/635/EC, 2002/357/EC, 2000/384/EC, 2000/204/EC and 98/238/EC concerning the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and, respectively, the Republic of Lebanon, the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Israel, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Tunisia,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement on the Eastern Partnership of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group, Ireland and Lithuania, issued in Krakow on 17 May 2013,
 - having regard to the EU’s long-standing relations with the countries of Europe’s Southern Neighbourhood and the historical, economic, political and social links that many EU Member States have with the countries of this region, and of the EU’s commitment to maintaining the closest possible ties and providing the necessary support, in coherence with the broader ENP,
 - having regard to the fact that the decisions at the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit may be crucial for the future of the Eastern Partnership, which is why it is important to keep a long-term perspective in mind, extending beyond the Summit and ensuring an ambitious follow-up policy for the region,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Association Agreements (AAs) are not a goal in themselves but an instrument for promoting profound and sustainable reform, systemic transformation and closer alignment with the Union and its founding values and standards; whereas their due and timely implementation is therefore an overriding criterion in assessing the situation in the relevant countries;
- B. whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy should strengthen the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of the neighbourhood, in order to build and

¹ OJ C 198, 6.7.2011, p. 4.

² OJ C 258 E, 7.9.2013, p. 44.

³ OJ C 258 E, 7.9.2013, p. 36.

⁴ OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 108..

⁵ OJ C 153 E, 31.5.2013, p. 137.

⁶ OJ C 165 E, 11.6.2013, p. 48.

consolidate healthy democracies, pursue sustainable economic growth and manage cross-border links;

- C. whereas the privileged relationship with Europe's neighbours within the ENP is built on a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development); whereas following the revision of the ENP, there should be a strong focus on the promotion of deep and sustainable democracy, accompanied by inclusive economic development;
- D. whereas a functioning democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are fundamental pillars of the EU's partnership with its neighbours; whereas building deep and sustainable democracy requires a strong and lasting commitment on the part of governments in favour of free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly and a free press and media, the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary and the right to a fair trial, efforts to combat corruption, reform of the security and law enforcement sector (including the police), and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces;
- E. whereas the Union's external policy has to be consistent, especially with its internal policies, by avoiding double standards; whereas the economic and financial crisis cannot justify any reduction in the Union's engagement with its Neighbourhood;
- F. whereas the mass movements in the Arab world constitute a milestone in the modern history of the countries of Europe's Southern Neighbourhood and of their relations with the EU, and the ongoing implementation of a differentiated approach based on the principle of assistance in line with performance and progress ('more for more' and 'less for less') in the partner countries should be regularly assessed in progress reports according to specific and estimable criteria and on the basis of their needs; whereas the inconsistent or non-existent application of the 'more-for-more' principle may be self-defeating and may undermine the whole process, as well as the Union's leverage and credibility;
- G. whereas the peaceful popular demonstrations seen in the Arab world in 2011 were a call for dignity, expressed legitimate democratic aspirations and made strong demands for institutional, political and social reforms aimed at achieving genuine democracy, fighting corruption and nepotism, ensuring respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, reducing social inequalities and creating better economic and social conditions; whereas, two years later, the citizens of several Mediterranean countries still encounter violations of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, economic hardship and unrest;
- H. whereas the assessment of progress made by partner countries in respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic process and implementing the rule of law, as well as sustainable economic and public sector reforms, must be based on common general principles and country-tailored specific requirements, using effective, clear, transparent, objective and measurable indicators and benchmarks and taking into account overall progress and the level of commitment to reform;
- I. whereas respect for and promotion of democracy and human rights (particularly children's, women's and minority rights), justice and the rule of law, fundamental freedoms (including freedom of speech, conscience, religion or belief and association), free and independent media (including unrestricted access to information, communication and the internet), the

strengthening of civil society, security (including peaceful conflict resolution and good neighbourly relations), democratic stability, prosperity, the fair distribution of income, wealth and opportunities, social cohesion, the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance and sustainable development are all founding principles and aims of the EU which must always constitute common values at the core of the ENP;

- J. whereas respect for the fundamentals of democracy is a red line which must not be crossed and is a basic condition for closer association by the Eastern Partnership countries with the EU; whereas depriving citizens of their legitimate right to a choice of government, by applying selective justice, pre-trial detention, imprisoning political opponents and failing to conduct free and fair elections, jeopardises those fundamental principles;
- K. whereas the goal of the ENP is to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful regional relations, promoting deep and sustainable democracy, the rule of law, political and economic reforms, a sustainable social market economy in the EU's neighbouring countries and creating a circle of friends of the Union and friends' relations with each other; whereas, therefore, the ultimate guiding principle for assessing progress should be the contribution made to each side's security, solidarity and prosperity; condemns, in this regard, the negative effects of closed borders policies within the EU Neighbourhood area, and in particular among Eastern Partnership and EU candidate countries;
- L. whereas the multilateral dimension of the ENP offers a unique opportunity to bring together all countries and stakeholders in the region to achieve tangible progress and understanding by working on concrete projects on a technical level; whereas the Euronest and Euromed parliamentary assemblies offer a further opportunity on a political level to create and deepen mutual understanding by helping to develop the fledgling democracies in these regions; whereas the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) both play an important role in strengthening democracy through economic, social and territorial cooperation;
- M. whereas press and media freedom, as well as digital freedoms, are under constant pressure in many of the ENP countries; whereas the right to freedom of expression is a universal human right which lies at the basis of democracy and is essential for the attainment of other rights; whereas universal rights and freedoms require protection both online and offline;
- N. whereas the EU revised its European Neighbourhood Policy in 2011 in order to provide more support to partner countries engaged in building deep and sustainable democracy and to support inclusive economic development; whereas the EU external financial instruments, and especially European Neighbourhood Instrument, should support the objectives of the Neighbourhood Policy; whereas it is necessary to establish strong and clear links between the policy framework and the support provided under these instruments;
- O. whereas the unsatisfactory progress made by several Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries may result from the slow or non-existent dynamics of political and social change in the partner countries, from the Union's fatigue with the ENP and a failure to show European partners a sufficiently motivating European perspective, from the economic and financial crisis, and also from pressure by Russia and its competing offer of integration into the

Eurasian Union;

- P. whereas the Vilnius summit is a milestone in the evolution of the Eastern Partnership and a major test of the ability of the EU's neighbourhood policy to deliver tangible results;
 - Q. whereas, while the Association Agreements (AAs) are the result of the EaP's bilateral track, the multilateral track remains a crucial dimension in developing good regional cooperation based on good-neighbourly relations; whereas, in this respect, it is deplorable that the EaP harbours a number of unsettled territorial disputes, which should be resolved; whereas Parliament fully subscribes to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right to self-determination of nations;
 - R. whereas, in this regard, the EU should play a more active role in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including frozen conflicts, which currently constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the full development of good-neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in Eastern and Southern partnership countries;
 - S. whereas the Parliamentary Assembly of the Eastern Partnership (Euronest) remains a key player in developing the democratic and parliamentary dimension of the EaP, allowing for the sharing of best practices in parliamentary work methods and constituting a crucial platform for bringing Eastern partners closer to the EU and reaching out to citizens;
1. Welcomes the publication of the 2012 progress reports for the ENP South and East countries, but regrets that, in most cases, the reports, as well as the events that followed, present a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression and describe the national situation without evaluating the programmes carried out by the Union or making concrete recommendations regarding the allocation of funds under the EU external instruments or development cooperation assistance and its influence on policy-making in the partner countries; takes the view that those reports should also assess trends by containing data for previous years;
 2. Stresses that according to Articles 8 and 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), all European countries, including those covered by the EaP, have the long-term possibility of applying for membership of the European Union;
 3. Strongly believes that Parliament should be fully involved in implementing the new ENP and in adjusting EU financial support, notably through delegated acts, and should be kept regularly informed about progress in the implementation of reforms in the partner countries and resulting adjustments; deplors the fact that it is not always consulted when action plans are drawn up or informed about the tenor of discussions; considers that its resolutions constitute an integral part of the ENP policy framework and calls for the status of observer to be accorded to MEPs to take part in meetings of policy and human rights subcommittees;
 4. Regrets that progress made by partner countries has not always matched the goals set in common with the EU; calls for a concrete evaluation of the effectiveness of the revised ENP; calls for greater efforts to use all instruments and policies at the disposal of the Union in a coherent way under the umbrella of the ENP; calls for the consistent implementation of the incentive-based and differentiated approaches and of the principle of 'more for more' as the cornerstone of the revised ENP; calls, if necessary, for 'less for less' for those ENP countries making insufficient efforts to build a deep and sustainable

democracy and to undertake the agreed reforms; underlines that the Union's baseline support shall also reflect partners' needs in terms of development;

5. Emphasises the important role played by civil society in transition and reform processes and political dialogue in the Neighbourhood countries; calls on the EU to strengthen cooperation with civil society in the Neighbourhood countries and provide it with support through a range of different funding instruments;
6. Considers that support for democratic transition processes should focus on developing the institutional capacity of democratic institutions, on supporting all democratic political parties and civil society and women's and minority rights, and on enshrining in the societies of partner countries the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of association, expression, assembly and free press and media; calls on the Union and the Member States to enhance partnerships between various organisations and sectors in society in order to hand over ownership of the European neighbourhood process to them; reaffirms that this should be conducted, inter alia, by creating horizontal links between different societal actors on the basis of twinning partnerships between civil society organisations (NGOs, trade unions, business organisations, media, youth organisations, etc.) and twinning projects with national authorities and administrations (especially in the education sector);
7. Considers that a proper gender analysis should be conducted throughout the progress reports; underlines the need for a greater focus on strengthening labour and trade union rights, mainstreaming gender equality and collaboration and dialogue with NGOs, trade unions and other civil society organisations in the revised ENP;
8. Insists on respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms as the founding principle of EU external policy; considers that support for civil society is the keystone of the revised ENP and therefore recommends that assistance to civil society, including the social partners, be commensurate with the challenge faced and that close coordination with the European Endowment for Democracy be established for that purpose;
9. Stresses that the main NGOs have set up common platforms for both the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership; takes the view that due and timely consultations should be held with these civil society fora when drawing up, implementing and monitoring ENP Action Plans;
10. Believes that the ENP's multilateral structures should be consolidated and developed along more strategic lines; contends that, given the centrality of 'effective multilateralism' in the Union's foreign policy, the Commission and the EEAS should consider the possibility of the ENP's multilateral track serving as a framework for organising political relations in the wider Europe;
11. Calls on the Union to enhance the visibility of ENP-funded or supported projects in the partner countries and to engage more actively with society in improving the image and acceptance of the Union among citizens in the ENP countries, namely by using media campaigns and demonstrating the added value of cooperation with the EU;
12. Regrets the substantial cuts made to Heading 4 in the 2014-2030 MFF compared to the original proposal from the Commission; underlines that ambitious funding of the Eastern Partnership is crucial for further progress in reforms, the sharing of best practices and

achieving and/or maintaining fully-fledged functioning democracies in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood, these being of vital interest to the EU; believes also that the current balance between the Eastern and Southern parts of the ENP should be maintained, with full respect for the principles of differentiation and the tailor-made approach applied so far; insists that relevant budgetary authorities should be updated regularly on the indicators and guidelines that shape the decision-making process in relation to budget support, and that Parliament should be involved in the process of attributing or withdrawing allocations resulting from the application of the 'more-for-more' and 'less-for-less' principles;

13. Stresses that freedom of expression, pluralism and media independence are cornerstones of democracy; underlines therefore the importance of EU support for independent, sustainable and accountable public media services providing quality, pluralistic and diverse content, bearing in mind that free and independent public media always play a crucial role in deepening democracy, in maximising the involvement of civil society in public affairs and in empowering citizens on the path to democracy;
14. Recognises the crucial importance of free and fair elections for the transition to democracy and highlights the role of independent media, in particular public service media, in the transparent, credible and democratic conduct of the election process; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to continue and, wherever possible, to reinforce their support for the democratic conduct of upcoming elections in the partner countries, including the strengthening of media freedom and pluralism;

Eastern Partnership

15. Recommends that the Union should: (a) strengthen the application of the more-for-more principle and stimulate it by positive competition and cooperation among partner countries, expressing necessary support to EaP states facing pressure from third countries when implementing the *acquis communautaire*; (b) apply a two-track approach, by making demands of EaP governments whilst being open, generous and engaging towards the citizens of partner countries; (c) encourage those citizens to advance the values the EU is based upon – namely democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – through their commitment to promote them, thus making them the main source of normative power transformation; (d) design a long-march strategy to promote European values encompassing internal change and the aspirations of these societies for freedom and prosperity; (e) decentralise the EaP by engaging with, and offering its ownership to, public actors on both sides through horizontal partnerships and twinning, accompanied by increased mobility, people-to-people contacts, visa facilitation and the prospect of a visa-free system, in which case the neighbours-first approach should apply; and (f) initial or sign the Association Agreements and aim for their prompt entry into force, initially on a provisional basis and then in full, before the end of the current term of the European Parliament and the European Commission, provided that the necessary conditions and requirements have been met; (g) refrain from using force or threats to use force in resolving disputes in the region, underlining that the only possible way to settle conflicts in the region is through negotiations within the internationally accepted formats, based on the principles of international law;
16. Recalls its position that the occupation by one country of the Eastern Partnership of the territory of another violates the fundamental principles and objectives of the Eastern Partnership and that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should comply with

UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of 1993 and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Basic Principles, enshrined in the L'Aquila joint statement of 10 July 2009;

17. Deplores the fact that as the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit approaches, different types of pressure are escalating on Eastern Partnership countries; regards this pressure as unacceptable and calls on Russia to abstain from proceedings which are in clear violation of the Helsinki principles; strongly underlines that the free choices of the Eastern Partnership countries should not make them bear consequences such as trade measures, visa policy, the restricted mobility of workers, interference in frozen conflicts, and others; calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to deal with the deplorable developments beyond a purely trade dimension, thereby acting and defending the Union's partners by sending a strong message of support for all Eastern Partnership countries in their European aspirations and choices; underlines however, that Association Agreements (AAs) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) are a blueprint for reforms that are beneficial for all;
18. Remains committed to further developing the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly as an important forum for multilateral interparliamentary cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries; deplores the proposed cuts in the ENP budget lines for the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, as these budget lines aim at a closer support for actions and projects related to democracy-building, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights;
19. Stresses that lifting visa requirements would be a significant gesture towards the peoples of Eastern Partnership countries and would genuinely help them to move closer to EU Member States;
20. Considers the publication of the Eastern Partnership Roadmap 2012-2013 to be a first step towards developing better monitoring tools; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to further develop appropriate follow-up mechanisms capable of assessing the performance and achievements of the ENP countries and to set clear and measurable objectives;
21. Recommends that the Eastern Partnership countries: (a) rebalance and redouble their efforts towards the fulfilment of political, legal and economic criteria; (b) enshrine in their societies fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality, and the fight against corruption; (c) further boost societal change, reform processes and the systemic upgrading of public standards and administration, considering European integration as a long-term strategic choice and not merely an economic and administrative endeavour; (d) close the gap between rhetoric and practical action; (e) pay greater attention to the multilateral structure of the Eastern Partnership and to learning through best practices; (f) apply to regional conflicts the spirit and lessons derived from the historical experience of European integration and enhance regional, political and economic cooperation among themselves, since bilateral issues must be resolved peacefully and good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are fundamental elements of the Eastern Partnership; (g) involve citizens and engage public actors in horizontal partnerships and in twinning with counterparts from the Union, as well as engaging with civil societies and the younger generation as a factor for change; (h) refrain from using force or threats to use force in resolving disputes in the region, underlining that the only possible way to settle conflicts in the region is through

negotiations within the internationally accepted formats, based on the principles of international law;

22. Is concerned by Russian actions designed to deter partner countries from political and economic association with the EU; reaffirms the sovereign right of each state to choose political and trade alliances; believes, furthermore, that progressive integration of partner countries with the EU is fully consistent with their pursuit of cordial relations with Russia; rejects the perception of a zero-sum game as a paradigm for the EU's and Russia's relations with partner countries;
23. Reaffirms the need to strive for the regional stability and security that are necessary to achieve the goals of the Eastern Partnership, also in the context of further integration with the EU; urges further efforts to progress towards the resolution of the territorial conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Moldova;
24. Recalls that a commitment to the AAs and DCFTAs precludes any other simultaneous form of participation in a customs union;
25. Calls on the Member States and Eastern European partners to review their arms export policies in the region with a view to reaching agreements on the disarmament and demilitarisation of conflict areas; calls on Russia to respect the agreements in a constructive way, fully respecting the sovereignty of the countries of the region and refraining from any actions which would endanger regional stability;
26. Emphasises that the EU and Eastern European partners face common political challenges with regard to ensuring the reliable and safe supply of energy; recalls that energy security cooperation is clearly identified as a priority under the Eastern Partnership and the ENP for the period 2014-2020; expects the third Eastern Partnership Summit, to be held in Vilnius, to provide an impetus for enhanced cooperation in the energy field and to increase energy security on both sides;
27. Recalls that the Energy Community Treaty sets the basis for establishing a fully integrated regional energy market favouring growth, investment and a stable regulatory framework; recommends to this end extending the Energy Community Treaty beyond 2016, whilst adapting its decision-making to future challenges, including by setting up legal control mechanisms to deal with deficient acquis implementation as well as solidarity mechanisms; welcomes the application to join the Energy Community by Georgia, which would become the third Eastern Partnership country, after Ukraine and Moldova, to join; calls for further expansion of the Energy Community via the ENP in line with the objectives of the Energy Community on the basis of mutual interest; emphasises that regulatory integration should be in line with common investments in interconnection capacity and infrastructure as well as renewable energy, energy efficiency and new technologies; emphasises the key importance of the further diversification of supply and transit routes;
28. Calls for the insertion of an energy security clause in every agreement with the Eastern Partnership countries to guarantee full respect for EU internal energy market laws, as well as the inclusion of an Early Warning Mechanism in such agreements to guarantee an early evaluation of potential risks and problems relating to transit and supply of energy from third countries, as well as establishing a common framework for mutual assistance, solidarity and dispute settlement;

Armenia

29. Recognises the progress made in democratic standards and in the fulfilment of Association Agreement requirements, but acknowledges that persistent deficiencies in the area of democracy still remain to be addressed; recognises that further progress should be made in the areas of governance reforms, including law enforcement, judicial sectors, and the fight against corruption; regrets the latest move by the President of Armenia in committing to the customs union; reminds the Armenian authorities that such a policy is not compatible with the Association Agreement; deplors, in this regard, the fact that this choice was made without fully-fledged parliamentary scrutiny or an open and transparent debate in Armenian society; hopes, in this regard, that Armenia will continue EU-related reforms, the implementation of which could lead to the country's economic prosperity and could help solve socio-economic and political problems which still persist within the country; calls for a pursuit of cooperation with the EU, to which the EU is open; condemns, furthermore, the attacks on civic activists demonstrating in favour of European integration, and calls for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
30. Welcomes the implementation of sound macroeconomic policies and structural reforms in Armenia and further progress towards meeting the objectives of the Action Plan;

Azerbaijan

31. Regrets that an unclear vision and hesitation persist on the issue of Azerbaijan's pursuit of the Association Agreements; stresses the economic potential of EU-Azerbaijan relations, but is concerned by deficiencies in the fields of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Azerbaijan; insists therefore that Azerbaijan show its commitment by stepping up its relevant standards, including freedom of speech and association and allowing the democratic opposition to enjoy their rights; insists that the release of political prisoners and an end to the harassment of political activists, human rights defenders and journalists are the necessary preconditions for any agreement on a strategic modernisation partnership with Azerbaijan;
32. Regrets the fact that, according to the conclusions of the ODIHR long-term mission, the latest presidential election, held on 9 October 2013, once again failed to meet OSCE standards, with restrictions being placed on freedom of assembly and expression; calls, in view of this, on the Azerbaijani authorities to address and swiftly implement all the recommendations included in present and past ODIHR/OSCE reports; and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the 14 Azerbaijani opposition politicians, journalists and human rights activists imprisoned during the past months, including Tofiq Yaqublu and Ilgar Mammadov¹;

Belarus

33. Deplores the stagnant, unacceptable situation with regard to human rights, democracy and political prisoners, and the lack of progress in respecting the values and standards promoted by the Union; insists that critical engagement and strict conditionality are needed on the part of the Union, together with a more generous and open attitude towards civil society and NGOs, which should be supported to monitor and deliver reforms; urges the

¹ European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2013 on Azerbaijan: the case of Ilgar Mammadov (Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0285).

Belarusian authorities to participate in the Dialogue on Modernisation and start negotiations with the EU on visa facilitation and readmission agreements in order to promote people-to-people contacts;

34. Calls on the Belarusian authorities to take advantage of Lithuania's presidency and the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius as a further opportunity to improve relations with the EU, as soon as all political prisoners have been released, in order to restart the political dialogue on, inter alia, democratic reforms, free and fair elections, respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and engagement with the opposition and civil society, provided that the Belarusian authorities demonstrate respect for these fundamental values;
35. Reiterates the EU's readiness to improve relations with the Belarusian Government as soon as its authorities commit to pursue a commonly defined agenda, including respect for democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms through, inter alia, the unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners; stresses, however, that any engagement is subject to strict conditionality;
36. Stresses the particular need to strengthen even more financial support for independent Belarusian media;

Georgia

37. Recognises the progress achieved in the modernisation of the country and in meeting the requirements of the Association Agreement in recent years, as well as the authorities' effort to fight corruption; welcomes the exemplary peaceful transfer of power following the democratic parliamentary elections; notes with concern, however, the deficiencies that still persist in the application of democratic standards; highlights in this regard the need for further improvements and reforms aimed at achieving an independent and impartial judiciary and an effective criminal justice system, as well as a non-discriminatory electoral system and respect for minority rights; notes the ongoing judicial inquiries affecting leading opposition figures, including Vano Merabishvili, and calls for the full respect of European standards and norms; supports the efforts of the Georgian Government to lessen tensions with Russia while preserving the country's pro-European orientation; reiterates the EU's firm support for Georgia's territorial integrity;
38. Encourages the initialling of the Association Agreement, including DCFTA, at the Vilnius summit and the speedy conclusion of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan; believes that the signing of the Association Agreement should be conditional on tangible progress by Georgia in the area of the rule of law and democracy and meeting European standards in the upcoming presidential elections; recognises the important impact the implementation of the Association Agreement, free trade and the introduction of visa-free travel will have on the reform process in Georgia;
39. Calls on the Commission to apply this rule of conditionality by setting a range of benchmarks according to which this progress will be measured;
40. Stresses that the presidential elections to be held on 27 October 2013, and thus concurrently with the closing of negotiations on the AA with the EU, will be a litmus test for Georgia's readiness to apply standards of democracy and the rule of law, with full freedom for the opposition to run in the elections and for free, independent media to cover

the campaign without any interference by the authorities;

41. Stresses that Georgia should not abstain from European aspirations and that it should resist pressure to give up association with the EU;

Moldova

42. Welcomes the political determination to fulfil the requirements of the Association Agreement, including the DCFTA, as well as the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and the progress with regard to the initialling of the Iasi-Ungheni pipeline project; praises the modernisation efforts undertaken in the country, in particular the increased expenditure on education; calls for the rapid signature and completion of all necessary steps in order to implement the Agreement as soon as possible; is aware, however, of the weakness of the democratic institutions and of the need for the steady reinforcement of those institutions; encourages the Government of Moldova to continue to work hard on the implementation of the necessary measures; believes that political stability and enduring consensus on reforms, especially as regards the rule of law and independence from state institutions, are of paramount importance to Moldova's European aspirations;
43. Encourages the initialisation of the Association Agreement, including the DCFTA, at the Vilnius summit, and hopes to see a speedy conclusion of the visa dialogue; recognises the important impact that the implementation of the Association Agreement, free trade and visa-free travel will have on the reform process in Moldova; notes, in this regard, that the most recent political crises have revealed the fragility of the democratisation process conducted so far, and stresses the need to work towards building truly credible independent democratic institutions;
44. Recommends proceeding swiftly with the signing, in the near future (post-Vilnius summit), of the Association Agreement, if the present compatibility with the requirements is sustained;
45. Welcomes the Commission proposal to fully liberalise wine imports from Moldova and hopes that swift implementation of the proposal will help offset the negative consequences of the Russian import ban on Moldovan wine;
46. Welcomes the launch of a new pipeline between Moldova and Romania and encourages the continuation of efforts and resistance to pressure from Russia to give up the Association Agreement;

Ukraine

47. Welcomes the ongoing dialogue between Ukraine and the EU and their common ambition to sign an Association Agreement at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013;
48. Encourages the Ukrainian authorities to advance further in fulfilling the requirements of the Association Agreement, as laid down in the Council conclusions of 10 December 2012 on Ukraine and in Parliament's resolution of 13 December 2012 on the situation in Ukraine¹, and in addressing the pending issues of selective justice and electoral and

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0507.

judicial reform; welcomes, nevertheless, the recent commitments made by both President Yanukovich and the opposition leaders to proceed with the required legal acts through Verkhovna Rada, and awaits prompt delivery on those promises before the Vilnius summit; recognises the progress made so far, but underlines the need for reforms, notably of the Prosecutor's Office; commends the work of the European Parliament's Monitoring Mission for Ukraine and welcomes the extension of its mandate until 12 November 2013; expresses hope and confidence that it will soon lead to a mutually acceptable solution to the case of Yulia Tymoshenko, on the basis of the appeal by Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwaśniewski to the President of Ukraine;

49. Acknowledges Ukraine's European aspirations and reiterates its view that a deepening of relations between the EU and Ukraine and the fact of offering Ukraine a European perspective are of great significance, and are in the interests of both parties;
50. Recommends that the Council sign the Association Agreement between the EU and its Member States, on the one part, and Ukraine on the other part, if the required conditions, as formally defined by the Foreign Affairs Council of 10 December 2012 and supported by Parliament's resolution of 13 December 2012, are met; expresses its approval, conditional upon the above-mentioned requirements, of the Council decision on the provisional application of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement immediately upon signature; states its intention, in the event of meeting all requirements and subsequent signing, to proceed with the full ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement within the present legislative term;
51. Condemns the recent trade sanctions imposed by Russia on Ukrainian exports, which are aimed at putting pressure on Ukraine not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU; calls on Russia not to impose these sanctions and to refrain from undue political interference and pressure;

The Southern Neighbourhood

52. Is concerned at the difficulties being encountered by the southern Mediterranean countries in overcoming the challenges of their democratic transitions;
53. Emphasises the vital role which the legal and technical assistance provided by the Union and its Member States to the authorities of the Arab Spring countries in transition has played in helping the latter to achieve concrete results in their efforts to recover assets;
54. Welcomes the success of its initiative of convening task forces for Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt, and stresses that these meetings between private stakeholders, public authorities and international organisations should ensure greater inclusion of civil society and NGOs and should produce tangible outcomes, provided the political situations allow increased economic cooperation and integration; suggests that the possibility of widening this initiative to other countries in the region should be explored;
55. Takes the view that a successful transition to sustainable democracy must be the Union's priority regarding its Southern Neighbourhood, and calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to increase their support to that effect;
56. Recommends that the Union maintain and, where appropriate, step up its engagement in supporting transitions in the Southern partner countries, focusing on democratic

transformation, partnership with people and civil society, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth;

57. Points out that social justice and improving the quality of life are key elements of the transitions currently taking place in the Southern Neighbourhood countries; expresses deep concern at the employment situation, in particular among young people, and urges the Commission to support effective employment policies;
58. Notes that the number of students from the Southern Neighbourhood countries taking part in the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes is very low, despite the additional funding allocated to those programmes in 2012; reiterates its call on the Commission to set up a Euro-Mediterranean Leonardo da Vinci programme with the aim of fostering mobility for young apprentices who want to acquire professional training abroad, thus contributing to the fight against youth unemployment, which is endemic in the Southern Mediterranean;
59. Calls for the Union and its Member States to implement a concrete and effective mobility policy with the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, in particular by simultaneously signing visa liberalisation agreements and readmission agreements similar to those signed with most countries of the Eastern Partnership; underlines, in this context, the importance of increasing mobility and cooperation in the field of academic education and vocational training, broadening and increasing the existing programmes and mobility of students, graduates, teachers and academics, and promoting exchanges between higher education and training institutions, along with public-private partnerships in the field of research and enterprise; considers it essential to develop easier procedures for issuing visas to participants in such programmes; calls for the EU to develop a sensible and comprehensive strategy involving the EEAS, the Commission, Member States and partners in the Southern Neighbourhood to deal with migration and protect refugees and asylum seekers originating from the Southern Neighbourhood, especially in the light of the Arab Spring and continued instability in North Africa;
60. Reiterates how important it is that the EU institutions and the Member States demonstrate the genuine political will to play an active part in resolving conflicts in the region, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so that they no longer pose an obstacle to the implementation of the ENP;
61. Considers it a priority to support partner countries in the development and financing of projects on regional policy and the inclusion of regional enclaves; recommends in this regard that steps be taken to build on the Union's experience in managing European regional funds for the development of competences both of partner countries and of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean;
62. Believes that there is an urgent need to promote projects for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and integration in the Maghreb in order to facilitate the circulation of goods, services, capital and persons; recalls that the conflict in Western Sahara is a major obstacle to the integration of the region; calls on Algeria and Morocco to create an active partnership capable of meeting the regional challenges, including the Western Sahara conflict; welcomes, in this context, the adoption of the Joint Communication of December 2012 from the High Representative and the Commission setting out proposals to support the five countries of the Maghreb in their efforts towards closer cooperation and deeper regional integration; welcomes the fact that the Union has assumed the Northern co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, and expects it to

promote policy coherence, overall coordination and effectiveness, with particular reference to projects which receive financing;

63. Encourages all parties involved in the conflict to work with a view to achieving a just, peaceful, long-lasting and mutually acceptable political solution on Western Sahara, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including those allowing self-determination; stresses the importance of guaranteeing human rights for the Saharawi people and the need to address these rights in Western Sahara and in the Tindouf camps, including those of Sahrawi political prisoners who have not had a fair trial and who should be released;
64. Highlights the importance of the Union for the Mediterranean as an instrument for the institutionalisation of relations with the Southern Neighbourhood; underlines the importance of the upcoming ministerial meetings in terms of invigorating the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and pushing forward common projects;
65. Reaffirms that, for the Southern partnership, the aim is to bring the two shores of the Mediterranean closer together with a view to establishing an area of peace, democracy, security and prosperity for their 800 million inhabitants, and to provide the EU and its partners with an effective bilateral and multilateral framework enabling them to overcome democratic, social and economic challenges, promote regional integration, in particular in relation to trade, and ensure their co-development for the benefit of all, as well as to assist partners in building democratic, pluralistic and secular states, especially through institutional-capacity building programmes, while also developing mutually beneficial, balanced and ambitious arrangements for trade in goods and services, preceded by the relevant impact assessments that can lead to DCFTAs; believes this will surely represent the first step towards a large 'Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area' that could also help to alleviate the economic problems of our neighbouring partners in the South and facilitate South-South integration;
66. Stresses the fact that supporting the process of returning the assets stolen by former dictators and their regimes constitutes a moral imperative for the EU; believes that asset recovery is a highly political issue due to its symbolic value and that there is a need to restore accountability in the spirit of democracy and the rule of law; notes that asset recovery must constitute a key political commitment of the EU in its partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood; reiterates the need to establish an EU mechanism with the aim of delivering legal support to countries of the Southern Neighbourhood in the process of asset recovery;
67. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to do more to encourage countries in the region to incorporate clear provisions into their laws and to implement programmes with a view to guaranteeing the rights of women, their involvement in political and economic decision-making, their access to education and their economic independence, and to eliminating all forms of violence against them;
68. Believes that the EU should provide assistance and knowledge to lawmakers in considering and drafting legislation related to the ICT sector, which should unlock the vast potential of digital technologies for both the democratic process and economic development and regional cooperation; considers the free flow of information and access to the internet to be essential for socio-economic improvements; stresses, in this regard, the importance of respect for digital freedoms;

69. Expresses grave concern over increasing religiously motivated violence in the region, especially towards Christians, and calls on the Union to act on this also within the ENP framework;
70. Reiterates its call on the Commission to raise the profile of Eastern Partnership and Union for the Mediterranean projects in the partner countries, and to make them more readily understandable to people in those countries by demonstrating the value added which cooperation with the EU generates;

Algeria

71. Notes that Algeria has confirmed its intention to participate in the ENP, but that it has not yet adopted an action plan; welcomes the launching of the negotiations for an EU-Algeria action plan and strongly encourages Algeria to take advantage of this instrument for enhancing its relations with the EU; calls on the EU and Algeria to speed up their negotiations in the context of the ENP with a view to adopting an action plan quickly;
72. Welcomes the steps taken by the Algerian Parliament to improve cooperation with the European Parliament and the quality of the political dialogue established between the two parliaments;
73. Welcomes the signing on 7 July 2013 of the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the European Union and Algeria in the field of energy, which will ultimately clear the way for the closer integration of markets, infrastructure development and technology transfers between the two sides;
74. Stresses the need for a policy that enables human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of association and the freedom to demonstrate, to be fully upheld; hopes that the expected revision of the Algerian constitution takes place in the framework of an open and transparent process open to representatives of all political tendencies in the country, in such a way that it can contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law; notes the smooth running of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) sent to Algeria for the general elections of 10 May 2012; recalls the recommendations made by the EOM, and urges the Algerian authorities to make the improvements required, in preparation for future elections; reiterates the Union's offer of support for that process;
75. Calls on the Union to reinforce and to step up even further its support to civil society organisations in Algeria and to programmes promoting female and youth employment, economic governance, improvement of the business environment and the strengthening of freedoms and fundamental rights;
76. Urges Algeria to facilitate the work of civil society organisations by promoting freedom of association and the freedom to demonstrate;

Egypt

77. Is concerned about current political developments in Egypt after the military takeover of 3 July 2013, about the political polarisation, serious economic difficulties, and the situation regarding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country, and about security in the region, with special regard to Sinai; condemns in the clearest possible terms

all acts of violence, including attacks on Coptic churches, and believes that the recent operations of the Egyptian security forces have been disproportionate and have resulted in an unacceptably large number of deaths and injuries; calls on the Egyptian Government to refrain from such action; urges all political parties to engage in a genuinely inclusive dialogue in order to restore a democratic process responding to the legitimate requests and aspirations of the Egyptian people; stresses the need for a national reconciliation of all political and social forces, including the moderate components of the Muslim Brotherhood, as a key element in order to move forward the democratic transition which entails the organisation of presidential and parliamentary elections; stresses that the EU, through the HR/VP, could be in a position to encourage a dialogue between the main political actors in the country conducive to the establishment of a government of national unity to prepare elections; in particular, recommends that the HR/VP send a clear message that the illegalisation of the Muslim Brotherhood would jeopardise democratic inclusion and compromise the prospects of returning to democracy;

78. Stresses that a prosperous future for Egypt is only possible on the basis of a democratic solution with fully functioning democratic institutions which will guarantee the safety of all citizens, and that the democratic transition should entail the right to a fair trial for all;
79. Calls on the Union, in its bilateral relations with and its financial assistance to Egypt, to take into consideration both the serious economic challenges the country is facing and their social consequences, on the one hand, and to apply the principle of 'conditionality' ('more for more'), on the other; believes that the Union should not commit to a full and detailed free trade agreement with Egypt until the conditions for political stability, such as the settled establishment of elected democratic bodies, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental rights, have been fulfilled; notes that the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 August 2013 tasked HR/VP Catherine Ashton to review the issue of EU assistance under the ENP and the Association Agreement on the basis of Egypt's commitment to the principles that underpin them and on the basis of the understanding that the assistance to the most vulnerable groups and to civil society will continue;
80. Considers that the Union should concentrate its support on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly women's rights, minority rights and freedom of belief, as well as on the transition to democracy, the development of institutional capacities, judicial and security reforms, the development of all democratic political parties and NGOs, and the improvement of the business environment; is of the view that the EU should maintain current aid and assistance channelled to NGOs and civil society, as part of a strategy to engage with political actors in Egypt and to sponsor a genuine democratic transition process; welcomes the decision by the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 August 2013 to suspend export licenses to Egypt of any equipment used for internal repression and to reassess the export licences covered by the EU common position;
81. Appreciates the mediation efforts of the HR/VP and believes that the Union should capitalise on its unique position and networks of relationships among the key Egyptian players and continue to strive toward a political settlement in line with the basic parameters of a democratic transition;
82. Notes the Court of Auditors' special report (No 4/2013) on cooperation with Egypt in the area of governance and the Commission's replies, and calls on the Commission and the EEAS to draw the requisite conclusions as regards the need to make Union support more

effective;

Israel

83. Notes the positive implementation by Israel of the action plan, adopted in April 2005 for a period of three years and extended until the end of 2012; regrets the discriminatory policies pursued by the current Israeli Government, and calls for measures to enhance and advance the rights of minorities, especially those of the Arab-Israeli and Bedouin communities in the country; in addition, calls on the Commission and the EEAS to step up efforts and further develop projects to this end;
84. Welcomes the resumption of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians; stresses its commitment to a two-state solution, based on the 1967 borders, with mutually agreed land swaps and Jerusalem being the capital city of both states; expresses its disapproval and repeated condemnation of the increasing number of illegal settlements in the occupied territories, and calls on the Government of Israel to cease settlement activity and cancel all planned projects for building new settlements; recalls vehemently that the building of settlements is a tangible obstacle to the success of both the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians and the viability of the two-state solution; and draws attention to the guidelines which the EU has laid down concerning the eligibility for grants, prizes and EU-funded financial instruments, from 2014 onwards, of Israeli entities established in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 and the activities they carry on there;
85. Expresses concern at Israel's decision to end its involvement in the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review conducted by the UN; calls on Israel to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to recognise minors as a specific group and to uphold the rights of Palestinian minors without discrimination;
86. Calls on Israel, notwithstanding the fact that the number of Palestinian detainees under administrative detention decreased in 2012, to further address the issue of the use of administrative detention and to continue to ensure international rights standards for Palestinian prisoners, especially women and children;

Jordan

87. Recognises the improving cooperation between the Union and Jordan, specifically with the signature of the Protocol for the participation of Jordan in Union programmes, and the positive progress of political reforms, notably the establishment of the electoral commission and the constitutional court and the adoption of an electoral law;
88. Welcomes the implementation of political reforms in Jordan; deplores, however, the use of military tribunals to try cases involving freedom of expression, a practice which represents a breach of the country's constitution, as well as the amendment of the law on the press and publications concerning electronic publications and the delays in strengthening the independence of the legal system;
89. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to give financial priority to projects supporting democratic and judicial reforms, the fight against corruption, and humanitarian assistance for refugees;
90. Welcomes Jordan's active role in the resolution of conflicts in the Middle East, as well as

its considerable efforts to take in refugees from the Syrian conflict; notes that according to UNHCR, as of 8 October 2013 the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, including unregistered refugees, stood at 538 839; would welcome the signature by Jordan of the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;

91. Is deeply concerned about the implications for Jordan of the Syrian crisis and the dangerous saturation point that the country is approaching due to the influx of Syrian refugees, which could set off unprecedented regional instability in relation to its capability and resources in providing shelters and humanitarian aid to families fleeing the conflict; urges the Union to generously support Jordan in managing the growing refugee influx, as well as in facing the tremendous domestic challenges that include economic instability, inflation and unemployment;

Lebanon

92. Calls for the rapid implementation of the action plan, and regrets the slow pace of reform, but is aware of the volatility of the context, especially due to the persistence of the conflict in Syria, which has effectively impacted inside Lebanon, especially through refugee inflow and imported political conflicts;
93. Considers that the Union's assistance should be focused on supporting institutions and the development of their capacities, on the humanitarian aid needed due to the ever-increasing number of Syrian refugees, on the reinforcement of the judicial sector and its independence, and on assistance at borders; calls on the Lebanese Parliament to resume its session as scheduled and to adopt the electoral law as soon as possible;
94. Notes the neutral stance taken by Lebanon in the Syrian conflict and welcomes its efforts to take in Syrian refugees;
95. Notes that, according to the UNHCR, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including unregistered refugees, is close to one million, and is deeply concerned at the implications for Lebanon of the Syrian crisis and the dangerous saturation point that the country is approaching due to the influx of Syrian refugees, which could set off unprecedented regional instability in relation to its capability and resources in providing shelters and humanitarian aid to families fleeing the conflict; urges the Union to generously support Lebanon in managing the growing refugee influx, as well as in facing the tremendous domestic challenges that include economic instability, inflation and unemployment;
96. Applauds Lebanon's commitment to take in and assist Syrian refugees, despite its limited capacity and the need to maintain a balance among its communities, as well as its efforts to limit the regional impact of the conflict, but deplors the fact that this situation has hampered implementation of the country's reform agenda; stresses the importance of a new, inclusive electoral law;
97. Welcomes Lebanon's role in providing shelter to over one million Syrian refugees who have been forced to leave their home and country; commends the resourcefulness of the Lebanese population in facilitating the taking-in of refugees, and reiterates its full support for the Lebanese authorities in continuing these efforts;

Libya

98. Encourages the Libyan authorities to step up democratic reforms and actions designed to stabilise the security and political situation; calls for the resumption of the negotiations on the signature of an association agreement between the Union and Libya at the earliest opportunity, as a means to assist the country in its efforts towards reform; invites Libya to draft and adopt its Action Plan;
99. Urges the Commission and the EEAS to cooperate with other international institutions operating in the region and complement their work, with the aim of supporting Libya in the process of constructing its democracy;
100. Stresses the importance of building a strong and independent judicial system, expresses concern at the human rights situation in Libya, and calls for action to fight racism and discrimination against minorities;
101. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to focus their support on promoting civil society and institution-building in Libya, as well as on constitution drafting and capacity- building and on the training of Libyan senior officials and of effective security forces (armed forces and police forces) that can ensure peace and order in the country; stresses that the EU should also step up efforts in assisting the Libyan justice system to reform, as well as in other fields such as independent media, respect for human rights, national reconciliation and the fight against corruption, in order to meet the needs expressed by the Libyan authorities, including those relating to border management, in particular in southern Libya, and to ensure a migration policy respectful of fundamental rights;
102. Welcomes the deployment of the CSDP-led EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Libya to support the country in securing its borders, which entails short- and long- term goals that will contribute to state consolidation and will help in fighting terrorism and organised crime, especially arms and human trafficking, not only within Libya but also in the wider region; invites the HR/VP to review its mandate and dimension in order to adjust it to the huge needs on the ground; criticises the slowness of the procedures, in particular when set against the gravity of the situation;

Morocco

103. Welcomes Morocco's commitment to deepening its relationship with the EU and taking full advantage of its advanced partnership status; considers that implementation of the constitution, reform of the legal system, reinforcement of the capacities of democratic institutions and support for civil society, including at local level, contributing to the human development of the Moroccan people, and the negotiation of an ambitious, balanced and mutually beneficial DCFTA, should constitute the main thrust of the Union's support to Morocco;
104. Welcomes the proposal for adoption of the Council decision on the implementation of the EU-Morocco action plan implementing the advanced status (2013-2017)¹;
105. Welcomes Morocco's commitment to pursuing political reform; recommends the rapid implementation of the new constitution, accompanied by a calendar for the adoption of organic laws and the national Charter for the reform of the legal system, and stresses in this regard that this reform has been ongoing for at least three years, with significant financial

¹ JOIN(2013)0006.

support from the Union; recalls that the implementation of policy reforms, and particularly of the process for advanced regionalisation, while also respecting cultural, economic and social specificities, should contribute to Morocco's development and should help consolidate democratic processes at local level;

106. Welcomes the fact that parliamentary debate in Morocco has become more dynamic, but criticises the lack of any specific reference in the progress report to the work of the EU-Morocco Joint Parliamentary Committee;
107. Calls on Morocco to foster gender equality, to set up a gender equality and anti-discrimination authority, to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and to revise the provisions of its Family Code on polygamy and marriages involving underage girls;
108. Notes the work carried out by the Moroccan National Human Rights Council, and calls for its regional offices to be provided with the human and financial resources they need so that the Council can carry out its tasks properly and take on new ones;

Palestine

109. Calls for the effective implementation of the new action plan; welcomes the progress made by the Palestinian authorities on the implementation of the current action plan despite the extremely difficult situation; welcomes the resumption of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians; stresses that there is no alternative to direct negotiations between the parties to reach the two-state solution;
110. Insists once again on the need for an intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, which the EU, under the coordination of the HR/VP, should be in a position to sponsor and facilitate; calls on the Palestinian political actors to start negotiating a clear roadmap envisaging presidential and general elections in the nearest possible future; stresses that genuine Palestinian reconciliation is essential to the successful pursuit of Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and is vital to the stability and overall viability of a Palestinian state;
111. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to support as a priority the moves to establish institutional empowerment and for reinforcement of the rule of law, good governance, the modernisation of public services, and projects aiming at the inclusion of women and young people in economic and political activities;

Syria

112. Expresses its deepest concern at the further aggravating violent crisis in Syria and the use of chemical weapons in the country, and is alarmed at the continued violence of this ongoing civil war; expresses its solidarity with the victims and their families; takes the view that humanitarian law violations of such magnitude cannot go unpunished and require a strong reaction from the international community and the Union, and stresses in this context the responsibility to protect the civilian population; considers, in the light of the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria, that the immediate priority for the international community and for the Union must be to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in need of basic goods and services in Syria and the neighbouring countries affected by the crisis, notably Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and calls for special attention to the situation of Palestinians in Syria;

113. Calls on the EU to take appropriate, responsible measures regarding a possible influx of refugees into its Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue monitoring the current situation and to work on contingency planning, including the possibility of applying the Temporary Protection Directive if and when conditions demand it;
114. Expresses its deepest concern over further aggravation of the violent crisis in Syria, and condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons against civilians, which is a crime according to international law; calls again for an adequate response from the UN Security Council and for the EU and the international community to show a strong united front and to react strongly to this breach of international law, in order to fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians in Syria; calls on the Union to support mediation attempts such as the Geneva Conference II in order to find a solution that would respect the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people; believes that any deterrent action must have clear and attainable objectives and must be anchored in a wider political strategy aimed at containing the Syrian conflict;
115. Is convinced that a lasting solution to the crisis in Syria can only be achieved through a political process; supports, therefore, all efforts to implement Geneva II and the efforts of High Representative / Vice-President Ashton, Member States and UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi aimed at achieving progress in the Geneva II process and on the UN Security Council; stresses the importance of involving all key actors, in the region and beyond, in these efforts;
116. Expresses concern regarding the situation of the Kurdish population in the north and north-east of Syria, resulting in large numbers of refugees and threatening to further destabilise the region;
117. Expresses concern at the intolerable burden which refugees are imposing on the countries which have borders with Syria, what is more at a time when funding humanitarian aid is becoming problematical;

Tunisia

118. Expresses its concern at the increasing polarisation of political life in Tunisia; condemns in the strongest terms the brutal assassinations of prominent opposition figures; stresses that freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of the media must be guaranteed;
119. Welcomes the strengthened commitments on the part of the Union and Tunisia as illustrated in the action plan, and calls on both parts to adopt that plan; urges the National Constituent Assembly to finalise a democratic constitution that respects international human rights agreements; calls for the organisation of free and fair elections, and regrets the extension of the state of emergency; takes the view that the adoption of a constitution firmly grounded in democratic values and respect for human rights, corresponding to the wishes of the Tunisian people, a functional and independent judiciary and media, and the holding of new elections are key elements for pursuing Tunisia's political transition; is concerned about the increasing numbers of trials of journalists in Tunisia; welcomes the inclusion in the draft constitution of a specific article on children's rights in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and recommends the establishment of an independent mechanism to monitor its implementation;

120. Urges Tunisia's Constituent Assembly to complete the process of adopting the constitution, and as soon as possible to call elections, to be supervised by the Independent Supreme Electoral Commission; takes the view that implementing the new constitution, reforming the legal system and the media, revising the press code and strengthening the capacity of democratic institutions and civil society should be the priorities guiding the provision of support by the Union;
121. Calls on Tunisia to deposit without delay the ratification instruments for and thus withdraw its last remaining reservations to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and to enact laws which guarantee equal rights and non-discrimination, including by decriminalising homosexuality;
122. Welcomes the fact that EU cooperation with Tunisia has been stepped up, through the doubling of the aid granted, and, more particularly, the fact that the aid has been used to boost the economy, develop less-favoured areas and strengthen civil society;
123. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to increase their support for moves to open up regions by infrastructure development projects, for actions in favour of employment, especially of young people, for civil society at regional level, and for the reform of the judicial sector with a view to establishing the rule of law whilst respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as for reform of the social sectors (health, education and social protection), with special focus on gender, equity and vulnerable children;
124. Deplores the delays affecting the negotiations for the signing of a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with Tunisia;

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125. 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 European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the ENP countries, the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean.