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B7-0100/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Egypt
(2013/2542(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

B7-0100/2013

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Egypt
(2013/2542(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular that of 16 February 2012 on ‘Egypt: recent developments’,
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 8 February 2013 on the Arab Spring,
 - having regard to the EU-Egypt Task Force Co-chairs’ conclusions of 14 November 2012,
 - having regard to the statements by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, after his meetings with the President of Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, of 13 January 2013 and 13 September 2012,
 - having regard to the statements by High Representative Catherine Ashton of 25 December 2012, on the referendum in Egypt and of 5 December 2012 on the situation in Egypt, and to the statement by her spokesperson of 25 January 2013 on the killings in Port Said,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 1099/2012 of 26 November 2012 amending Regulation (EU) No 270/2011 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Egypt,
 - having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2004 and the Action Plan of 2007,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on ‘A new response to a changing neighbourhood’, issued on 25 May 2011,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which Egypt is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Egypt is a key partner of the European Union in the southern Mediterranean; whereas political, economic and social developments in Egypt have significant implications in the whole region and beyond;
- B. whereas Egypt has experienced important reforms over the past two years of revolution and transition; whereas the free and fair presidential elections held in 2012 represented a milestone in the process of democratic transition; whereas, however, Egyptian society continues to be confronted with fundamental difficulties and challenges on the path

towards a deep and sustainable democracy based on the core values of social justice, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, and good governance;

- C. whereas the referendum held in December 2012 adopted, with a turnout of 32.9 %, a new constitution for Egypt; whereas the constitutional process and the anticipated adoption of the new constitution, instead of creating consensus, further deepened the internal divisions within Egyptian society; whereas many in Egypt and beyond have expressed concerns about various articles of the new constitution, including the status of Sharia in domestic legislation, the independence of the judiciary and the role of military courts, fundamental freedoms, and women's rights;
- D. whereas parliamentary elections to the House of Representatives are scheduled to take place in four rounds, from 22 April to June 2013; whereas on 19 January 2013 the Shura Council adopted a new election law which has provoked criticism and controversy; whereas on 18 February 2013 the Supreme Constitutional Court declared several articles of this law unconstitutional, a decision which has been followed by further controversies; whereas the opposition forces led by the National Salvation Front, protesting against the lack of legal guarantees for free and fair elections, have announced a boycott of the upcoming parliamentary elections;
- E. whereas the mounting political tensions have further deepened the internal polarisation within Egyptian society and are leading to continued street protests and violent clashes; whereas instances of excessive use of force and violence against peaceful demonstrators by security forces and unidentified groups often remain unpunished;
- F. whereas an inclusive political process based on consensus and joint ownership and a genuine national dialogue with the meaningful participation of all democratic political forces are the only way to overcome the current political and social divisions and tensions with the aim of creating a deep and sustainable democracy in Egypt; whereas the opposition forces have called for the formation of a national unity government, a call rejected by President Morsi; whereas on 26 February 2013 President Morsi launched a national dialogue which was boycotted by the leading opposition forces;
- G. whereas social justice and a higher standard of living for citizens are crucial dimensions of the transition towards an open, stable, democratic, free and prosperous Egyptian society; whereas Egypt continues to face worrying economic difficulties, aggravated by the loss of income from tourism and foreign direct investment; whereas fiscal consolidation, restoring economic and investor confidence, which requires political stability, and fighting corruption are indispensable to create a strong Egyptian economy; whereas the Egyptian economy needs further support from the international community, including the EU, to meet these challenges;
- H. whereas judicial institutions and judges continue to face pressure, attacks, intimidation and interference from various political actors and forces in Egypt; whereas in November 2012 the Constitutional Court suspended its work because of the siege laid to its premises by supporters of the President and their allies; whereas the sacking of the general prosecutor in October 2012 and the appointment of his successor have provoked strong criticism and protests from judges, judicial officials and others; whereas this interference in the judiciary undermines the trust of the Egyptian population in the fairness and

impartiality of the legal system;

- I. whereas Egyptian women are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of transition; whereas, according to reports by Egyptian and international human rights organisations, female protesters are often subjected to violence, sexual assault, virginity tests and other forms of degrading treatment by the security forces, while women's rights activists face threats and harassment; whereas women have witnessed major setbacks in the field of political participation; whereas women in the informal sector, in the fields of agriculture and domestic labour in particular, often work in dangerous and degrading working conditions, without health insurance or protection against injury;
- J. whereas Egyptian civil society and international NGOs face mounting pressure in Egypt; whereas the draft laws on civil associations and foundations and on public demonstrations are a considerable threat to their functioning and operation and to the right to peaceful public assembly; whereas independent trade unions report increasing pressure on their organisations and members; whereas physical violence and harassment towards journalists have significantly increased;
- K. whereas on 26 January 2013 a Cairo court sentenced 21 people to death over football riots in Port Said that had led to 74 deaths in early 2012; whereas in its resolution of 16 February 2012 the European Parliament called for an independent inquiry into the events leading to the tragedy and for those responsible to be brought to justice; whereas the EU maintains a strong and principled position against the death penalty, and its abolition is a key objective for its human rights policy;
- L. whereas the EU-Egypt Task Force meeting of 13-14 November 2012 took place in Cairo with more than 500 participants - including political leaders, parliamentarians, more than 300 business leaders, and civil society representatives from both sides - who discussed an exceptionally wide range of issues, including political and economic cooperation, governance and human rights, asset recovery, trade, tourism, infrastructure, ICT and science;
- M. whereas the EU is Egypt's most important economic partner and its main source of foreign investment and development cooperation; whereas at the Task Force meeting the EU and its associated financial institutions offered a total in excess of EUR 5 billion to Egypt in grants, concessional loans and loans for the period 2012-2013; whereas the Task Force also announced a doubling of Egyptian participation in the Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes, aimed at bringing Egyptian students and researchers to Europe; whereas the honouring of these commitments and the speeding-up of EU support delivery are of crucial importance for Egypt;
- N. whereas the Task Force underlined its commitment to the promotion of and respect for human rights, including women's rights and gender equality with a view to empowering women in all fields, the freedoms of expression and association, and the freedom of religion or belief, and condemned all forms of incitement to religious hatred, intolerance, hostility or violence;

- O. whereas the EU offered to send an election observation mission, if invited by Egypt, for the upcoming parliamentary elections to the House of Representatives; whereas the Egyptian Supreme Committee for Elections has recently decided to invite and accept various international actors, including the EU, to monitor these elections;
- P. whereas the return of assets stolen by the former regime, beyond its economic significance, can contribute to delivering justice and accountability to the Egyptian people and is therefore a major political issue of high symbolic importance in relations between the EU and Egypt; whereas since March 2011 19 persons responsible for the misappropriation of Egyptian state funds, including former President Mubarak, have had their assets in the EU frozen; whereas the Council adopted a new regulation on 26 November 2012 aimed at facilitating the return of these misappropriated funds; whereas the Task Force agreed to finalise, within three months, a roadmap which could include the establishment of an asset recovery group coordinated by the EEAS;
- Q. whereas the ‘more for more’ principle and the principle of partnership with societies are cornerstones of the EU’s revised European Neighbourhood Policy;
1. Reiterates its solidarity with and support for the Egyptian people in this difficult and challenging period of political, economic and social transition in the country;
 2. Stresses the importance of the upcoming parliamentary elections to the House of Representatives, which will be another milestone in the process of democratic transition and should be used by the Egyptian government to establish an inclusive political process based on consensus and joint ownership, through a genuine national dialogue with the meaningful participation of all democratic political forces; calls on all political forces in Egypt to work together in this direction;
 3. Welcomes the decision of the Egyptian Supreme Committee for Elections to invite the EU to monitor the upcoming parliamentary elections to the House of Representatives;
 4. Expresses its deep concern at the increasing internal polarisation within Egyptian society and the continued violent incidents; reminds the Egyptian state authorities and security forces of their duty to restore and ensure security and order in the country; urges all political actors to show restraint with the aim of avoiding further violence, in the best interests of the country; calls also for serious, impartial and transparent investigations into the killings, torture, degrading treatment and harassment of peaceful protestors, with special regard to women, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
 5. Reiterates its call on Egypt’s government and authorities to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including women’s rights, freedom of religion, conscience and thought, protection of minorities and non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and speech, and freedom of the press and the media, all of which are essential components of a deep and sustainable democracy;
 6. Stresses the current difficulties and challenges faced by the Egyptian economy; encourages the Egyptian government to continue on the path of economic reform; urges the international community, including the EU, to fully honour the commitments made to

Egypt and to speed up the delivery of financial support to the country; stresses, however, the importance of putting into practice the ‘more for more’ principle, a cornerstone of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy, in the EU’s relations with the Egyptian Government, without generating a negative effect on the living conditions of the country’s population;

7. Is concerned about the situation of the Egyptian judiciary; calls on the Egyptian Government and the country’s political forces to fully respect, support and promote the independence and integrity of judicial institutions in Egypt;
8. Calls for an immediate end to all acts of violence, sexual assault, virginity testing and other forms of degrading treatment of female protesters and women’s rights activists, for serious and impartial investigations into all such cases, and for those responsible to be brought to justice; urges the government to promote and support the political participation of women by reversing the actual trend of setbacks in this field;
9. Urges the Egyptian government to withdraw the draft laws on civil associations and foundations and on public demonstrations and to propose legislation - taking into consideration the draft law submitted by 60 civil society organisations in 2011 - which will protect, support and promote the activities of Egyptian civil society organisations and international NGOs in the country; calls for an immediate end to all pressure, intimidation or harassment directed against trade unions and journalists;
10. Reiterates the EU’s strong and principled position against the death penalty, and calls for a total moratorium on the execution of all pending death sentence in Egypt; urges Egypt to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 aiming at the abolition of death penalty;
11. Urges the EU and its Member States to make further significant efforts aimed at facilitating the return of misappropriated assets stolen by the former regime to the people of Egypt; calls, in this context, for the establishment by the EU of a group of investigators, lawyers and prosecutors from its Member States and other European countries to deliver legal support and assistance to Egyptian authorities in this process;
12. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the President, Government and Shura Council of Egypt.