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3. Deplores the continued disregard for Sergeant Shalit's basic human rights and the fact that his family and the Israeli and French authorities have been prevented from obtaining information regarding his well-being; therefore urges Hamas to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Sergeant Shalit without delay, and to permit him to communicate with his family in accordance with the Third 1949 Geneva Convention;
4. Stresses the importance of progress towards a two-state solution and welcomes the relaunching of proximity negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority;
5. Stresses that mutual trust-building measures by all sides, including a significant release of Palestinian prisoners, may help to create a constructive atmosphere leading to the release of Sergeant Shalit;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Member States, the Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Israeli Government, the Palestinian Authority and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

The escalation of violence in Mexico

P7_TA(2010)0067

European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2010 on the escalation of violence in Mexico

(2010/C 349 E/19)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Mexican States,
- having regard to its Recommendation to the Council of 12 March 2009 on an EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership,
- having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament of 15 July 2008 entitled 'Towards an EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership' (COM(2008)0447),
- having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament of 30 September 2009 entitled 'The European Union and Latin America: Global Players in Partnership' (COM(2009)0495),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 October 2007 on the murder of women ('feminicide') in Mexico and Central America and the role of the European Union in fighting the phenomenon,
- having regard to the EU statement on the murders of journalists José Luis Romero, Valentín Valdés Espinosa and Jorge Ochoa Martínez,
- having regard to the declarations of the five summits of heads of state and government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC), held in Rio de Janeiro (28 and 29 June 1999), Madrid (17 and 18 May 2002), Guadalajara (28 and 29 May 2004), Vienna (12 and 13 May 2006) and Lima (16 and 17 May 2008),

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- having regard to the joint statement of 17 May 2008 by the Fourth Mexico-EU summit held in Lima,
 - having regard to the joint statement by the Ninth meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Committee, held in Brussels in November 2009,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mexico and the European Union share common values that find expression in our democratic, pluralist societies, defending fundamental freedoms, human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, and the commitment to consolidating democracy, legal certainty, fighting poverty and equitable economic and social development,
- B. whereas our democratic systems have a duty and obligation to safeguard the operation of the rule of law and respect for human rights, and whereas the enjoyment and full exercise of freedoms and the right to the integrity of the human person are thus one of the basic pillars of the rule of law,
- C. whereas the causes of violence and insecurity in Mexico cannot be disconnected from the structural problem of poverty, inequality and marginalisation, areas in which progress has been reversed since the emergence of the world economic crisis, and whereas there is a need for an integrated strategic vision of inclusive development, including in the long-term, in order to move forward with social cohesion,
- D. whereas the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership will open the door to closer cooperation between the EU and Mexico on issues of global importance, and in particular enhanced dialogue, coordination and exchanges in areas such as security, human rights, electoral reform, regional development and regulatory and trade policies,
- E. whereas the Strategic Partnership will therefore include enhanced cooperation on human rights, as both sides have confirmed their willingness to cooperate closely towards the common goal of attaining the highest human rights standards,
- F. whereas Mexico participates in all the regional and universal fora and has signed all the international agreements on human rights and fundamental freedoms, obviously including combating violence against women; whereas, moreover, it promotes the law in favour of gender equality,
- G. whereas the EU-Mexico Cooperation Programme on Human Rights began operation in 2008 under the EU-Mexico Bilateral Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, and whereas it includes as a priority the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of women's rights, with a series of specific programmes in this respect,
- H. whereas establishment of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, which has as its priorities support for surmounting violence against women and children, encouraging compliance with human rights by members of the public security forces, support for overcoming discrimination and the incorporation of international standards on justice and human rights,
- I. whereas Mexico is suffering from an escalation of violence due mainly to drug trafficking particularly in the frontier region with the United States, as a result, primarily, of fighting between criminal gangs for control of the drug supply, in terms of both production and trafficking, to the enormous market represented by the United States, and secondly as the result of the impact of the Mexican Government's offensive to tackle this situation,
- J. whereas the plan launched by the Government on health, education and social cohesion and strengthening of the political strategy to recover Ciudad Juárez takes on great importance; whereas this plan, backed by 200 million euros, will help to remove the social causes of violence, so there is a need to redouble efforts to that end,

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- K. whereas the Mexican Government has demonstrated its firm commitment to improving the security situation in the country, including an appreciable increase in the security forces' budget and reform of the public security institutions, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement and the effectiveness of the legal system, thus making it possible to confront organised crime,
- L. whereas Mexico is one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists, according to data from the International Federation for Journalists, with at least 53 journalists murdered since 2000 – 13 of them in 2009 alone –, a fact also condemned in reports by the Mexico National Commission on Human Rights,
- M. whereas the harassment of and threats against members of organisations working for the defence and promotion of human rights are frequent, and whereas many of the preliminary investigations into attacks on and murders of defenders of human rights are affected by unjustified delays at state and federal level,
- N. whereas national and international organisations for the defence of human rights have condemned violations of those rights in certain operations by the security forces,
1. Shares the Mexican authorities' concern at the escalation of violence in the country, and stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the Mexican people in the fight against drug trafficking;
 2. Extends its sympathy and support to the families and friends of the victims, and to the Mexican people, whom it encourages to continue to fight to defend democracy and the rule of law;
 3. Supports the Mexican Government in its determination to combat organised drug trafficking, while voicing its deep concern at the increase in the violence due to drug trafficking and the lack of respect for any form of authority and sense of impunity displayed by the drugs cartels, in particular in the Mexican states lying close to the US border;
 4. Condemns all forms of violence, in particular the violence and persistent death threats to which activists engaged in promoting and defending human rights in Mexico are subjected, and calls for the Mexican authorities to step up efforts to provide legal and personal protection to such groups; calls, furthermore, on the EU to apply the guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders in an effective manner;
 5. Urges the Mexican authorities to continue their efforts to strengthen state institutions, particularly for the benefit of women, who are suffering most severely from the violence; considers that it is the government's responsibility to combat 'femicide' and ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes and their accomplices are brought to justice, and calls for effective action to continue to be taken with a view to preventing such crimes from being committed;
 6. Condemns, in this connection, the violence against and murders of media workers, and supports the relevant authorities in taking all necessary steps to identify, arrest and bring to justice the perpetrators of such crimes; welcomes the Mexican legislative authorities' adoption of legislative and institutional measures geared to upholding journalists' freedom of expression and ensuring their safety;
 7. Recommends, in this connection, that the Mexican Government continue with its efforts to consolidate the rule of law, with a view to tackling some of the structural problems that are at the root of the human rights violations, specifically with reference to reform of the judicial system; highlights, accordingly, the importance of an independent judiciary which stands as a guarantee of impartiality and resolute action to combat impunity;
 8. Calls on the governments of the Member States, in their bilateral relations with Mexico, and on the European institutions to step up the support they provide for human rights through cooperation programmes and financial and technical resources; calls on them also to increase the budgetary resources allocated to cooperation in strengthening and reforming the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and prosecution services, with a view to prosecuting and punishing offenders, and to set up effective systems for protecting witnesses and victims and their families,

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9. Draws attention to the Mexican Government's cooperation in promoting an effective form of multilateralism and strengthening the UN's peace-keeping and peace-building capacity and its ability to ensure respect for human rights, while bringing international law to bear in addressing threats to peace and security such as drugs and arms trafficking, organised crime, terrorism and trafficking in human beings, in line with the Lima Declaration;

10. Urges that the Strategic Partnership be seen as an opportunity to discuss how to enhance the effectiveness of the human rights and democracy clause in all the agreements between the two parties and assess compliance with that clause, including through the development of its positive dimension, given that human rights and democracy are fundamental values;

11. Considers social integration to be one of the most important means of enabling young people to identify with the democratic system; considers frustration felt by young people to be one of the main factors behind the violence; believes, therefore, that EU cooperation on social cohesion needs to be stepped up; calls on the Mexican authorities to bring the necessary resources to bear in helping young people to take their place in society, and to adopt prevention, rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes for drug addicts;

12. Calls on the Commission and the Mexican Government to ensure that, during the mid-term review (2007-2013) of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), security, better governance and stronger institutions are made a priority under focal sector 1 (Social Cohesion);

13. 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 Member States, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Eurolat Parliamentary Assembly and the President and Congress of Mexico.

South Korea - death penalty declared legal

P7_TA(2010)0068

European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2010 on the death penalty being declared legal in the Republic of Korea

(2010/C 349 E/20)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the abolition of the death penalty and the need for an immediate moratorium on executions in those countries where the death penalty is still applied,
- having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007 calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty (on the report of the Third Committee (A/62/439/Add.2)),
- having regard to the revised and updated version of the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty, adopted by the Council on 3 June 1998,
- having regard to the final declaration adopted by the 4th World Congress against the Death Penalty, held in Geneva from 24 to 26 February 2010, which calls for universal abolition of the death penalty,
- having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the European Union is strongly committed to the abolition of the death penalty and is striving to achieve universal acceptance of this principle,