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- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure: second reading
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure: third reading

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments by Parliament:

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the **■** symbol or strikeout. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014-2015 SESSION

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TEXTS ADOPTED

Thursday 18 September 2014

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P8_TA(2014)0022

Persecution of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan

European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the persecution of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan (2014/2832(RSP))

(2016/C 234/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Azerbaijan, in particular those of 18 April 2012 containing its recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the negotiations of the EU-Azerbaijan Association Agreement ⁽¹⁾ and of 13 June 2013 on the case of Ilgar Mammadov ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 15 May 2012 from the Commission and the High Representative of the European 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 'Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy' (JOIN(2012)0014),
- having regard to the Commission's 2013 ENP progress report on Azerbaijan of 27 March 2014 (SWD(2014)0070),
- having regard to the EU-Azerbaijan ENP Action Plan,
- having regard to the statement of 2 August 2014 by the spokespersons of the VP/HR and of the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Füle, on the arrest of Leyla Yunus,
- having regard to the statement of 6 August 2014 by the spokesperson of the VP/HR on the arrest of Rasul Jafarov,
- having regard to the EU statement of 14 August 2014 on the situation of human rights and civil society in Azerbaijan,
- having regard to the statement made on 8 September 2014 in Baku by Commissioner Füle regarding the crucial role played by civil society in the Eastern Partnership and his announcement of a new EU support programme for civil society in Azerbaijan, providing EUR 3 million in 2014-2015,
- having regard to the statement of 1 August 2014 by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, concerning the arrest of Leyla Yunus, director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy in Azerbaijan,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 258 E, 7.9.2013, p. 36.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0285.

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- having regard to the Baku Declaration adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its annual session from 28 June to 2 July 2014, in which concern is expressed at the misuse of administrative procedures and legislation to detain, imprison, intimidate or otherwise silence human rights defenders and critics in numerous OSCE participating states,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Azerbaijan, which entered into force in 1999, and to the ongoing negotiations between the two parties for a new agreement to replace the existing one,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in the last few years the general human rights climate in Azerbaijan has been deteriorating, with a major escalation of government repression, pressure and intimidation directed at NGOs, civil society activists, journalists and human rights defenders taking place in recent months;
- B. whereas since late July the government has targeted some of the country's most prominent human rights defenders, imprisoning them on apparently politically motivated charges, with particular reference to the cases of Leyla Yunus, the well-known director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy, and her husband, the historian Arif Yunus, and Rasul Jafarov, chair of Azerbaijan's Human Rights Club;
- C. whereas the chair of Azerbaijan's Legal Education Society, Intigam Aliyev, a human rights lawyer who has defended more than 200 cases before the European Court of Human Rights in the areas of infringement of freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial and electoral law in Azerbaijan, was arrested on 8 August 2014 and subjected to three month's detention on criminal charges, an incident which confirms the growing tendency to silence and prosecute prominent human rights defenders in the country;
- D. whereas it has been reported that Leyla Yunus has been subjected to acts of violence in prison committed by her cellmate, and that no measures have been taken to punish the cellmate or to ensure the protection of Ms Yunus; whereas although Ms Yunus' health has deteriorated in prison, suitable medical care has not been provided;
- E. whereas on 26 May 2014 Anar Mammadli, chair of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDS), and Bashir Suleymanli, director of the same centre, were sentenced to prison terms of, respectively, 5 years and 6 months and 3 years and 6 months, on charges ranging from tax evasion to illegal entrepreneurship;
- F. whereas concurrently with the above, 8 activists of the non-governmental youth movement NIDA were convicted on charges of hooliganism, drug possession and possession of explosives, as well as intent to cause public disorder and, in addition, the social media activists Omar Mammadov, Abdul Abilov and Elsever Murselli were sentenced to between 5 and 5.5 years' imprisonment on charges of drug possession, none of them having access to a lawyer of their own choosing and all complaining of ill-treatment in police custody;
- G. whereas many more journalists, human rights defenders and activists are facing legal charges brought against them in Azerbaijan, including Hasan Huseynli, head of the Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Centre Public Union, sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment on 14 July 2014, and Rauf Mirkadirov, an investigative journalist with the leading Russian-language newspaper 'Zerkalo', held on pre-trial detention on charges of treason; whereas the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS), a leading media rights NGO in the country headed by the well-known and internationally recognised human rights defender Emin Huseynov, had its offices raided by the police on 8 August 2014; whereas another recently arrested figure is the prominent opposition journalist Seymour Haziyevev, charged with criminal hooliganism and held in 2 months' pre-trial custody;
- H. whereas these cases are following in the wake of dozens of others affecting political activists, rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and social media activists, whom the authorities have imprisoned in the past two years on similarly trumped-up charges, including hooliganism, drug possession, tax evasion, and even treason; whereas the recent wave of arrests has had a severe ripple effect, compelling a number of well-known activists to flee the country or go into hiding;

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- I. whereas the independent Azerbaijani newspaper 'Azadliq' was forced to suspend publishing due to alleged financial problems, having previously had to face official pressure, apparently in connection to its reporting on corruption;
- J. whereas the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has issued numerous rulings in cases of breaches of human rights in Azerbaijan, the latest being on 22 May 2014 in the case of Ilgar Mammadov, chair of the Republican Alternative Civic Movement (REAL); whereas despite it being ruled that his detention was politically motivated, the authorities refused to release him;
- K. whereas there has been an effective ban on peaceful protesters demonstrating in central Baku since 2006, and new harsh fines and longer periods of administrative detention were recently introduced for those who organise or participate in unauthorised public gatherings
- L. whereas the Azerbaijani authorities have not taken into account the opinions of the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) on the laws relating to freedom of association, political parties and protection from defamation; whereas, furthermore, they have not given due consideration to the findings of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights in his visits to the country;
- M. whereas in February 2014 President Aliyev signed further amendments to the NGO Law, which now provides the authorities with additional powers for the temporary suspension or permanent banning of national and foreign NGOs in Azerbaijan, and introduces new offences punishable by fines, which have now been increased to AZN 2 500 – 3 000 (around EUR 2 600 – 3 100) for NGOs and AZN 1 000 – 2 000 (around EUR 1 000 – 2 000) for directors of national and foreign NGOs;
- N. whereas the Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organisation Public Union located in Baku has had its bank account frozen along with that of its leader, Gahramanova Mirvari Uzeyir, following a decision of 8 July 2014 of the Baku City Nasimi District Court;
- O. whereas Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Europe and a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights;
- P. whereas on 14 May 2014 Azerbaijan took over as chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
 1. Stresses that full respect for human rights, democratic principles, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law lies at the heart of the framework for cooperation within the EaP, and of the commitments made by Azerbaijan within the Council of Europe and the OSCE;
 2. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the arrest and detention of Leyla Yunus, Arif Yunus, Rasul Jafarov, Intigam Aliyev and Hasan Huseyni, and demands their immediate and unconditional release as well as the withdrawal of all charges against them; demands an immediate and thorough investigation into the assault on Ilqar Nasibov, and calls for all those responsible to be brought to justice;
 3. Calls on the authorities in Azerbaijan to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Leyla Yunus, Arif Yunusov and all human rights defenders in Azerbaijan, and to ensure the urgent provision of suitable medical care, including medication and hospitalisation;
 4. Reiterates its call on the Azerbaijani government to take concrete steps to improve the human rights situation in the country as a matter of urgent priority, including immediately and unconditionally releasing all political prisoners and ceasing politically motivated arrests;
 5. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to cease their harassment and intimidation of civil society organisations, opposition politicians and independent journalists and to refrain from interfering in or undermining their valuable work for the development of democracy in Azerbaijan; also calls on them to ensure that all detainees, including journalists and political and civil society activists, enjoy their full rights to due process, in particular access to a lawyer of their choosing, access to their families, and other fair trial norms;

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6. Deplores the actions taken by the Azerbaijani Government to curb contacts between civil society and youth activists and intellectuals from Armenia and Azerbaijan, since these contacts are of major importance for bridging the long-standing hostility between the two countries; in this regard, recalls the important work done in this area by Leyla Yunus and her husband Arif;
7. Urges the Government of Azerbaijan to invite and fully cooperate with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and Commissioner and the UN special procedures, with regard to human rights defenders, the rights of freedom of association and peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and arbitrary detention, with the aim of amending its legislation and adapting its practices in line with the conclusions of the experts;
8. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to undertake, without further delay, the human rights reforms that are long overdue, including the many outstanding accession commitments Azerbaijan undertook when joining the Council of Europe, and to comply with the judgements against Azerbaijan that have been handed down by the European Court of Human Rights;
9. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to lift the ban on public gatherings in central Baku and to cease fining peaceful demonstrators or subjecting them to administrative detention;
10. Reaffirms its position that EU support for and cooperation with the Republic of Azerbaijan, including the ongoing negotiations for a Strategic Modernisation Partnership, must be conditional on and include clauses relating to the protection and promotion of human rights, especially with regard to freedom of the media, **including guarantees of internet freedom and of uncensored access to information and communication**, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly;
11. Stresses that its consent to the signature of a partnership agreement with Azerbaijan will be conditional on the satisfactory reflection of the above-mentioned requirements, the release of human rights defenders, the withdrawal of legislation restricting the operations of independent civil society, and the cessation of repression and intimidation of NGOs, independent media, opposition forces, human rights defenders, **minority rights activists** and youth and social network activists;
12. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the EEAS to strictly apply the 'more for more' principle, focusing notably on the situation of human rights defenders (in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders), arbitrary and politically motivated detentions, the independence of the judiciary, democratic reforms and fundamental rights and freedoms; calls in particular for a review of ENI programming, putting an end to all assistance which is not strictly HR/civil society-oriented;
13. Regrets that the fact that the EU-Azerbaijan human rights dialogue has made no substantial progress as regards the human rights situation in the country; calls on the EEAS to step up this dialogue with a view to making it effective and result-oriented, and to report regularly to Parliament;
14. Calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to simplify the current over-complicated and lengthy procedure for registration of NGOs, to introduce substantial legislative amendments in order to repeal the recent measures limiting NGOs' freedom to accept donations without official registration, and to comply with the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of NGOs in Europe;
15. Calls on the Council and the Member States to urge the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to call on the Azerbaijani authorities to stop the crackdown, and make it clear that it expects them, as hosts of the European Olympic Games to be held next year, to uphold the Olympic Charter's requirement to respect press freedoms;

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16. Calls on the EEAS to fully apply the EU guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and to organise regular meetings at the EU Delegation in Baku with independent human rights organisations, including by coordinating those meetings with EU Member State representations, and to use those meetings to express public support for the work of human rights defenders; urges the EEAS to monitor closely all trials and judicial proceedings against human rights defenders and to report on the matter to Parliament;
 17. Recalls its position of 24 May 2012 ⁽¹⁾, and calls on the Council to consider the possibility of targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations, should these persist;
 18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the EEAS, the Council, the Commission and the Council of Europe.
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⁽¹⁾ OJ C 264 E, 13.9.2013, p. 91.

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P8_TA(2014)0023

Burundi, in particular the case of Pierre Claver Mbonimpa**European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on Burundi, in particular the case of Pierre Claver Mbonimpa (2014/2833(RSP))**

(2016/C 234/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Burundi,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to the statement of 10 September 2014 by the EU Delegation to Burundi,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 10 April 2014 on the situation in Burundi,
 - having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the Great Lakes region of 22 July 2014, in particular point 7 thereof,
 - having regard to the reports of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB),
 - having regard to the statement made on Wednesday, 9 July 2014, by UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic at the Burundi Configuration of Peacebuilding Fund,
 - having regard to the mission reports and priority areas of action (2010-2014) of the FAO and UNICEF in Burundi, in particular with regard to combating hunger and malnutrition,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, a leading human rights defender and President of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (*Association pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues*, APRODH), was once again arrested on 15 May 2014 and later charged with 'threatening the external security of the state' and 'threatening the internal security of the state by causing public disorder' and has been in pre-trial detention since he was taken in for questioning;
- B. whereas Mr Mbonimpa's work in the defence of democracy and human rights in Burundi over the past two decades and more has earned him several international awards and widespread recognition domestically and beyond;
- C. whereas the charges against him relate to comments he made on *Radio Publique Africaine* (RPA) on 6 May 2014 that the youth wing of the ruling party CNDD-FDD, also known as the *Imbonerakure*, is being armed and sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for military training, and whereas these same concerns were raised by the BNUB, which stressed that the militarisation of these young people constituted a 'major threat to peace in Burundi';

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- D. whereas the arrest of Pierre Mbonimpa is representative of the mounting risks facing human rights defenders, the harassment of activists and journalists and the arbitrary arrest of opposition party members, which according to human rights groups and the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights have largely been carried out by the *Imbonerakure*;
- E. whereas, following a peaceful opposition party event on 8 March 2014, 70 people were arrested, with 48 later being handed prison sentences, including life imprisonment;
- F. whereas in recent weeks the government in Burundi has prohibited peaceful protests and demonstrations in support of Mbonimpa and warned radio stations not to broadcast information supporting Mbonimpa's claims;
- G. whereas full respect for freedom of expression, including for journalists and human rights defenders, is a precondition for free and fair elections in 2015 and for the results thereof to be accepted by everyone;
- H. whereas the EU has recently allocated EUR 432 million to Burundi from the European Development Fund 2014-2020, to assist with improving governance and civil society, among other things;
- I. whereas at least one in two Burundians and almost two-thirds, or 58 %, of all children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition, and whereas Burundi has the highest rate of hunger among the 120 countries on the basis of which the global hunger index was calculated in 2012;
- J. whereas Burundi is one of the five poorest countries in the world, with one of the lowest GDPs per capita; whereas many Burundians have become increasingly frustrated at the increasing cost of food, water and fuel, high levels of corruption and the unaccountability of political leaders;
- K. whereas Burundi is currently facing its worst political crisis since it emerged from a 12-year civil war in 2005, and whereas this is once again posing threats not only to the country's internal stability, but also to that of its neighbours in an already volatile region of the African continent;
1. Firmly condemns the detention of human rights defender Pierre Claver Mbonimpa and calls for his immediate unconditional release; expresses concern about his deteriorating state of health and demands that he be given urgent medical assistance;
 2. Expresses particular concern about the situation of MSD opposition members being detained following the events of 8 March 2014; calls on the Burundian authorities to annul the judgment and re-try those against whom there may be credible accusations in line with international standards, including the right to a defence and proportionality;
 3. Urges the Burundian Government to take measures to control the CNDD-FDD youth league, preventing its members from intimidating and attacking perceived opponents, and ensure that those responsible for abuses are brought to justice; calls for an independent international investigation into the claims that the CNDD-FDD arms and trains its youth wing; urges the leaders of opposition parties to prevent violence being perpetrated against their opponents;
 4. Calls on the countries of the Great Lakes region to address the unlawful activities of the *Imbonerakure* and jointly address such problems with the Government of Burundi; calls on these countries to maintain a high level of commitment to promoting peace and stability through existing regional mechanisms and to intensify their efforts on regional economic development, paying special attention to reconciliation, respect for human rights, the fight against impunity, and the establishment of better judicial accountability;

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5. Recalls that Burundi is bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and therefore has an obligation to respect universal human rights, including freedom of expression; calls on the Government of Burundi to allow genuine and open political debate to take place ahead of the elections in 2015 without fear of intimidation, by refraining from interfering in the internal management of the opposition parties, from placing restrictions on campaigning for all parties, especially in rural areas, and from abusing the judiciary to exclude political rivals;
 6. Expresses deep concern about the absence of justice for scores of political killings between 2010 and 2012, following the 2010 elections; calls on the Burundian authorities to ensure that the perpetrators of these killings are brought to justice, in fair trials, and make every effort to prevent political violence before the 2015 elections;
 7. Reiterates in this context the importance of respecting the Code of Conduct in electoral matters (*Code de bonne conduite en matière électorale*) and the UN-brokered election roadmap which was signed by political actors in 2013, and fully supports the activities of the BNUB aimed at preventing a further increase in political violence in the run-up to the 2015 elections and helping restore long-term security and peace;
 8. Is deeply concerned at the economic and social situation facing the population of Burundi as a whole, in particular refugees and displaced persons, whose numbers will continue to rise, given the security problems within the country and the tensions in neighbouring countries;
 9. Encourages all sides to keep to their commitments contained in the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which was instrumental in ending 12 years of civil conflict in 2005; warns against amending the Burundian constitution in such a way as to strip it of the fundamental power-sharing provisions stipulated in the Arusha agreements;
 10. Calls on the EU High Representative and the Member States to ensure that there is a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis Burundi that addresses the ongoing serious human rights violations, in line with the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights; calls on the Commission to consider launching consultations with Burundi under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement with a view to possible suspension from the Agreement and to take any appropriate measures while they are conducted;
 11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Government of Burundi and governments of the countries of the Great Lakes region, the African Union, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament.
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Thursday 18 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0024

Human rights violations in Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on human rights violations in Bangladesh (2014/2834 (RSP))

(2016/C 234/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh,
 - having regard to the EC-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement of 2001,
 - having regard to Articles 33 and 35 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, which stipulate that no person shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading punishment or treatment and that no person shall be arrested or detained in custody without being informed of the grounds for such arrest,
 - having regard to the Bangladesh Supreme Court ruling which laid down safeguard measures against arbitrary arrests by the police under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which also requires that any death incidents occurring in police custody be investigated by a magistrate, and the necessary legal proceedings taken,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Bangladesh in 2000,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has good, long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the Cooperation Agreement on partnership and development;
- B. whereas Bangladesh has made significant progress in recent years, in particular towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in its economic performance;
- C. whereas the Government of Bangladesh has announced a 'zero tolerance' policy towards any violation of human rights by the enforcement agencies, and has passed a Police Reform Act providing for a code of conduct, model police stations and victim support centres in key police stations;
- D. whereas the Government of Bangladesh has announced that, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, it is carrying out advocacy and training programmes for law enforcement agencies and prison authorities on international safeguards against torture;
- E. whereas in recent years Bangladesh has seen a number of tragedies in its garment factories, the deadliest being the Rana Plaza factory collapse, with more than 1 100 casualties; whereas following the Rana Plaza collapse Bangladesh, together with major stakeholders in the garment sector, has embarked on a reform programme aimed at securing safe and decent working conditions; whereas the EU supports this programme through the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact, but whereas some stakeholders are reluctant to take part;
- F. whereas disappearances (allegedly often involving state security forces), the use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment persist in Bangladesh despite the safeguards laid down in the Constitution, the Penal Code and the Torture and Custodial Death (Prohibition) Act, as do restrictions on the right to freedom of expression;

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- G. whereas following the general elections of 5 January 2014, which were boycotted by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) — the main opposition party — and overshadowed by BNP-instigated strikes and the resulting violence, the Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina has taken several steps to limit civil rights;
- H. whereas the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), created 10 years ago as an emergency measure to counter security threats from militant groups, comprises both military and police officers, effectively bringing the army into civilian law enforcement without any transparent accountability mechanisms; whereas independent human rights organisations allege that the RAB is responsible for some 800 deaths, without any prosecution or punishment of the officers responsible; whereas apart from recent arrests of several RAB members in connection with a suspected contract killing of a ruling-party politician, other egregious abuses go unpunished;
- I. whereas on 6 August 2014 the Government of Bangladesh published its new media policy; whereas elements of this policy impose limits on media freedom, for example by banning speech that is ‘anti-state’, ‘ridicules the national ideology’ or ‘is inconsistent with Bangladesh’s culture’ and by restricting the reporting of ‘anarchy, rebellion, or violence’; whereas the government is planning to introduce a legislative framework through which to enforce the policy; whereas Bangladesh ranks 145th of 179 countries on the World Press Freedom Index;
- J. whereas the Government of Bangladesh has proposed a new law that is reported to impose severe restrictions on non-governmental organisations (NGOs); whereas the new draft Foreign Donations Regulation Act would regulate operations and funding for any group in receipt of foreign funding, and give the NGO Affairs Office within the Prime Minister’s Office approval authority over foreign-funded projects; whereas the new draft act would also require anyone involved in voluntary activities to obtain approval prior to travelling out of the country for purposes related to their work on a project; whereas there is widespread concern among NGOs that the act will involve more government officers in the process as monitors, evaluators and approvers – with the potential for delays and malpractice;
- K. whereas on 27 August 2014 Hana Shams Ahmed, coordinator of the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC), and a friend were brutally attacked by 8 to 10 members of Somo Odhikar Andolon during a private visit to Shoilooproat in Bandarban in the Chittagong Hill Tracts; whereas the four members of the police Detective Branch (DB) who were supposedly providing them with security did not intervene, and even disappeared while the assault was taking place;
- L. whereas ethnic and religiously motivated violence continues, including an attack by several dozen armed men in early July 2014 on the convent of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions (PIME) nuns in Boldipuku; whereas during this attack the convent was looted, and the nuns physically assaulted;
- M. whereas at least four bloggers and two human rights defenders have been charged in the last two years under Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act;
- N. whereas Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), which is meant to investigate war crimes connected with Bangladesh’s war of independence has handed down 10 verdicts so far, including 8 death sentences and 2 terms of life imprisonment; whereas Islamist politician Abdul Quader Mollah was the first to be executed; whereas there is strong and repeated criticism that the ICT does not comply with international standards; whereas it is estimated that there are more than 1 000 people on death row in Bangladesh;

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- O. whereas following the tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in April 2013, the Government of Bangladesh and Western retailers set up a regime for the inspection of more than 3 500 garment factories for structural integrity and fire and electrical safety; whereas, while the inspections carried out through the Western retailers have been ongoing and public, those carried out through the Government of Bangladesh have not yet been made public;
- P. whereas the Donor Trust Fund set up by the Rana Plaza Coordination Committee to help victims and survivors – which is made up of representatives of the Government of Bangladesh, the garment industry, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, and chaired by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – has not yet reached its target of USD 40 million; whereas according to the Clean Clothes Campaign only half of the mainly Europe- and US-based companies connected with factories in the Rana Plaza building have made contributions to the Donor Trust Fund;
- Q. whereas, notwithstanding a few labour law reforms, workers continue to report harassment and intimidation intended to stop them joining or forming unions, and whereas acts of violence against trade union organisers continue to be reported; whereas the Labour Act of 2013 continues to fall short of international standards with regard to freedom of association, including the right to strike and collective bargaining;
1. Commends the Government of Bangladesh for the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which has resulted in significant real-life improvements for millions of its citizens; further acknowledges the fact that these improvements were made under difficult domestic circumstances, including the constant threat of violent attacks by radical groups such as the BNP-affiliated Jamaat-e-Islami party; welcomes, in this connection, the adoption of the Child Marriage Prevention Act on 15 September 2014;
 2. Expresses concern, however, about continuing human rights violations by the RAB and other security forces, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of opposition activists; reiterates its call for the abolition of the death penalty and welcomes the Supreme Court decision of 16 September 2014 to commute the death sentence handed down by the International Crimes Tribunal to the vice-president of Jamaat-e-Islami, Delwar Hossain Sayedee, to life imprisonment;
 3. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately release anyone subjected to an enforced disappearance, unless they can be charged with a recognisably criminal offence, in which case they should be brought before a court immediately; calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to investigate the perpetrators, taking into account command responsibility, and to bring those found responsible to justice in a fair trial; urges the government to establish an independent body to investigate such cases and reiterates its call on the government to establish an effective and fully independent human rights commission;
 4. Urges the government to use minimal force to restore public order and to abide strictly by the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms; strongly condemns violent attacks by opposition groups against both civilian and government targets; calls on opposition groups to engage only in peaceful protests;
 5. Urges the Government of Bangladesh to bring the state security forces, including the police and the RAB, back within the bounds of the law; strongly calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to put an end to the RAB's impunity by ordering investigations and prosecutions in respect of alleged illegal killings by RAB forces; points out that it will closely monitor the proceedings in the Narayanganj murder case, in connection with which three RAB officers have been arrested and are awaiting judicial proceedings following the abduction and killing of seven people in Narayanganj in April 2014;
 6. Emphasises the importance of an independent, impartial and accessible judicial system to enhance respect for the rule of law and for the fundamental rights of the population, and of reforming the International Crimes Tribunal; recognises that it is more important than ever to build public confidence in the judiciary, security and human rights institutions, given the increased threats in the region from terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda;

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7. Expresses its concern at the proposed NGO law; urges the Government of Bangladesh to continue its consultations with independent groups on the content of this draft law and to make sure that, if eventually adopted, it complies with international standards and civil rights conventions to which Bangladesh has committed itself;
 8. Urges the Government of Bangladesh to recognise and respect freedom of the press and media and to allow human rights groups to play an important role in strengthening accountability and documenting human rights abuses; urges the Bangladeshi authorities to revoke the new media policy and abide by their obligations to allow free speech and expression;
 9. Is very concerned at recurring cases of ethnic and religiously motivated violence; urges the Government of Bangladesh to offer better protection and guarantees to minorities such as Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, but also Biharis; welcomes the arrest of suspects in relation to the criminal attack on the convent in Boldipuku;
 10. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the enforcement of labour laws and urges further reform to bring them into line with ILO standards, in particular the possibility for workers to freely form and join labour unions;
 11. Takes note of the reform programmes in the garment industry, but urges the government to fully implement the action plan it agreed and signed with the ILO in May 2013, including the recruitment and training of inspectors and thorough inspections, with public records, of its many thousands of factories; urges the signatories to the Accord on Fire and Safety in Bangladesh to live up to their commitments, including with regard to financial compensation for victims and minimum standards;
 12. Regrets the fact that as at June 2014 the total amount raised by voluntary company donations to the Donor Trust Fund was just USD 17 million, leaving USD 23 million outstanding; concludes, therefore, that the voluntary principle has failed the victims of the Rana Plaza disaster and that a mandatory mechanism is urgently needed;
 13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
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P8_TA(2014)0025

Situation in Ukraine and state of play of EU-Russia relations

European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Ukraine and the state of play of EU-Russia relations (2014/2841(RSP))

(2016/C 234/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the European Neighbourhood Policy, on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and on Ukraine, with particular reference to those of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Ukraine ⁽¹⁾, 13 March 2014 on Ukraine's invasion by Russia ⁽²⁾, 17 April 2014 on Russian pressure on Eastern Partnership countries and in particular the destabilisation of eastern Ukraine ⁽³⁾, and 17 July 2014 on the situation in Ukraine ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 22 July and 15 August 2014 and of the European Council conclusions of 30 August 2014 on Ukraine,
 - having regard to the statement by the EEAS spokesperson of 11 September 2014 on the abduction of the Estonian police officer,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, with particular reference to its resolution of 6 February 2014 on the EU-Russia summit ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to the Wales NATO Summit Declaration of 5 September 2014,
 - having regard to the outcome of the extraordinary meeting of the European Agriculture Council of 5 September 2014,
 - having regard to the Joint Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (AA/DCFTA) of 12 September 2014,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the summer of 2014 was marked by further escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine; whereas, according to UN estimates, at least 3 000 people have lost their lives and many more thousands have been injured, while hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled the conflict areas; whereas the economic costs of the conflict, including the cost of rebuilding the eastern regions, are of serious concern for the social and economic development of Ukraine;
- B. whereas the Trilateral Contact Group agreed on 5 September 2014 in Minsk on a ceasefire which entered into force the same day; whereas the agreement also contained a 12-point protocol which covers the release of hostages, measures to improve the humanitarian situation, the withdrawal of all illegal armed groups, military equipment and mercenaries from Ukraine and measures on decentralisation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions;
- C. whereas the ceasefire has been persistently violated by, mainly, regular Russian troops and separatists since Friday, 5 September 2014 in areas near Mariupol and Donetsk airport, with attempts to probe Ukraine's defences in several other localities;
- D. whereas in the previous weeks Russia increased its military presence on the territory of Ukraine and logistical support of the separatist militias through a steady flow of weapons, ammunition, armoured vehicles and equipment, mercenaries and soldiers in disguise, in spite of the EU's calls to make every effort to de-escalate the situation; whereas since the beginning of the crisis the Russian Federation has amassed troops and military hardware on the border with Ukraine;

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0170.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0248.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0457.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0009.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0101.

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- E. whereas Russia's direct and indirect military intervention in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea, violates international law including the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the 1994 Budapest Agreement; whereas Russia continues to refuse the implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE);
- F. whereas the European Council of 30 August 2014 requested proposals to enhance the EU's restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions in destabilising eastern Ukraine; whereas these proposals came into force on 12 September 2014;
- G. whereas after the signing on 21 March 2014 of the political provisions of the Association Agreement (AA), on 27 June 2014 the EU and Ukraine officially signed the remaining part of this Agreement, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA); whereas the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada have simultaneously ratified the Association Agreement; whereas on 12 September 2014 the Commission announced that the provisional application of the DCFTA would be postponed until 31 December 2015; whereas this will result in a prolongation of the unilateral trade preferences granted by the EU to Ukraine, which were to expire on 1 November 2014;
- H. whereas on 7 August 2014 the Russian Government adopted a list of products from the EU, US, Norway, Canada and Australia to be banned from the Russian market for a period of one year; whereas the EU will be affected the most as Russia is the second-largest export market for EU agricultural products and the sixth-largest for fishery products and 73 % of the banned imports come from the EU; whereas the overall restrictions currently applied by Russia could jeopardise EUR 5 billion worth of trade and affect the incomes of 9,5 million people in the EU working on the agricultural holdings most concerned;
- I. whereas the ban on EU food products to the Russian market that has hit the fruit and vegetable sector in particular, as well as the dairy and meat sectors, could have a possible knock-on effect leading to over-supply in the internal market, while the ban on EU fisheries products to the Russian market could potentially pose severe problems in some Member States; whereas the value of banned fisheries products amounts to almost EUR 144 million;
- J. whereas Russia undermines EU security by regularly violating the airspace of Finland, the Baltic States and Ukraine, as well as by the recent gas cut to Poland, which amounts to 45 % of Russian exports to that country;
- K. whereas the NATO summit in Newport reaffirmed that NATO stands with Ukraine in the face of Russia's destabilising influence, offered support in strengthening the Ukrainian armed forces and called on Russia to pull back its troops from Ukraine and end the illegal annexation of Crimea; whereas NATO has declared that it continues to aspire to a cooperative, constructive relationship with Russia, including reciprocal confidence-building, and declared that channels of communication with Russia remain open;
- L. whereas the tragic downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in the Donetsk region provoked outrage in international and European public opinion; whereas the UN and the EU demanded a thorough international investigation of the circumstances of the accident, and whereas the bringing to justice of those responsible is a moral and legal obligation;
- M. whereas Mykola Zelenec, Honorary Consul of Lithuania in Luhansk, was abducted and brutally killed by the rebels;
1. Welcomes the signing of the Minsk ceasefire agreement and calls on all sides to make every effort to implement it in full and in good faith with a view to paving the way for the start of a genuine peace process, including permanent and effective control of the Ukrainian border verified by the OSCE, the full and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops, illegal armed groups, military equipment and mercenaries from the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine and the release of hostages; deplores the fact that the ceasefire agreement is being persistently violated by, mainly, Russian troops and separatist forces, and that their ongoing build-up continues; strongly stresses that there should be a political solution to this conflict;

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2. Calls on all sides to respect the ceasefire and to refrain from any action or moves which would jeopardise the agreement; expresses its strong concern, however, that the ceasefire is a pretext for Russian troops to regroup in order to continue their offensive towards establishing a 'land corridor' to Crimea and beyond to Transnistria;

3. Strongly condemns the Russian Federation for waging an undeclared 'hybrid war' against Ukraine with use of regular Russian forces and supporting illegally armed groups; underlines the fact that these actions by the Russian leadership constitute a threat not only to the unity and independence of Ukraine, but to the whole European continent; calls on Russia immediately to withdraw all its military assets and forces from Ukraine, to prohibit the flows of fighters and weapons into eastern Ukraine, and to end support, direct or indirect, for the actions of the separatist forces on Ukrainian soil;

4. Reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of Ukraine, and its right to make a European choice; reiterates that the international community will not recognise the illegal annexing of Crimea and Sevastopol or the attempts at creating quasi-republics in Donbas; welcomes the EU decision to prohibit imports originating from Crimea unless accompanied by a certificate of origin from the Ukrainian authorities; condemns, furthermore, the enforced 'passportisation' of Ukrainian citizens in Crimea, the persecution of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, and the threats made by the self-proclaimed leaders against Crimean citizens who expressed their interest in voting in the upcoming parliamentary elections;

5. Underlines that the OSCE plays a crucial role in resolving the Ukrainian crisis due to its experience in dealing with armed conflict and crises and the fact that both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are members of this organisation; calls on the Member States, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to make every effort in order to strengthen and increase the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine both in terms of experienced personnel and in terms of logistics and equipment; emphasises the need to deploy without any further delay the OSCE monitors all along the parts of the Ukrainian-Russian border currently under the control of the separatists;

6. Emphasises that the reform and Association agenda must proceed in parallel with the continued struggle to ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity and unity; reiterates that these two tasks are inextricably and synergistically intertwined; stresses the need for peaceful dialogue and decentralisation which still ensures that authority over the whole territory remains with the central government, thus guaranteeing Ukraine's unity; underlines the need for confidence-building between various communities in society and calls for a sustainable reconciliation process; in this context, emphasises the importance of establishing an inclusive national dialogue, avoiding propaganda, hate speech and rhetoric, which may further aggravate the conflict; emphasises that an inclusive dialogue such as this should involve civil society organisations and citizens from all the regions and minorities;

7. Welcomes the simultaneous ratification of the AA/DCFTA by the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament; considers this an important step which shows the commitment of both sides to successful implementation; takes note of the eventual postponement of the provisional implementation of the EU-Ukraine DCFTA until 31 December 2015, to be replaced by the prolongation of unilateral trade measures which represent a de facto asymmetrical implementation of the agreement; deplors the extraordinary measures and level of pressure exerted by Russia; states that the agreement cannot and will not be changed and that this has been made very clear by the European Union through this ratification; calls on the Member States to swiftly proceed with the ratification of the AA/DCFTA with Ukraine; takes note of the ongoing consultation between Ukraine, Russia and the EU on the implementation of the AA/DCFTA with Ukraine and hopes that it will help solve any misunderstandings;

8. Stresses that the coming months until implementation of the AA/DCFTA should be used to tackle the necessary transformation and modernisation of Ukraine's political system and its economy and society in accordance with the Association agenda; welcomes the reform programme announced by President Poroshenko, which includes laws on anti-corruption, decentralisation and amnesty; calls on the Commission and on the EEAS to urgently draw up a comprehensive and ambitious financial assistance and aid package for Ukraine and in particular for the people in eastern Ukraine, to support the work on a political solution and on national reconciliation;

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9. Notes the laws on special status for some districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and on amnesty adopted by Verkhovna Rada on 16 September 2014 as an important contribution to de-escalation within the implementation of the President of Ukraine's Peace Plan;
10. Supports the restrictive measures the EU adopted against Russia during the summer as a result of Russia's continued aggression, and notes their enforcement on 12 September 2014; is of the opinion that any sanctions should be designed in a way which would not allow Kremlin-linked companies to circumvent them; calls for the EU to closely monitor such forms of economic cooperation as equity swaps and joint ventures;
11. Stresses the reversibility and scalability of the EU restrictive measures, depending on the situation in Ukraine;
12. Calls on the Member States and the EEAS to adopt a clear set of benchmarks which, when achieved, could prevent adoption of the new restrictive measures against Russia or lead to the lifting of the previous ones; believes these benchmarks should include: complete withdrawal of Russian troops and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine; ending the supply of arms and equipment to terrorists; full respect for the ceasefire regime by Russia; establishment of effective international control and verification of the ceasefire regime; and the restoration of Ukraine's control over its entire territory; calls on the Council and the Member States not to consider lifting any sanction before these conditions are met and to remain ready to impose further sanctions for any actions undertaken by Russia to undermine the ceasefire agreement or to further escalate the tensions in Ukraine;
13. Recalls that the restrictive measures taken by the EU are directly linked to the Russian Federation's violation of international law with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine, while the trade measures taken by the Russian Federation, including those against Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries which have recently concluded Association Agreements with the EU, are unjustified; calls for the EU to consider excluding Russia from civil nuclear cooperation and the Swift system;
14. Calls on the Commission to follow closely the impact of the Russian so-called 'counter-sanctions' and to take swift measures to support producers that are hit by the Russian trade restrictions; welcomes the measures adopted by the EU Agriculture Council of 5 September 2014, and urges the Commission to explore ways of enabling the EU to cope better with similar crises in the future and to do its utmost to support in a substantial and timely manner the European producers affected; regrets the suspension of the emergency market measures for perishable fruit and vegetable markets, but condemns any abuse of the support; calls on the Commission to present a new scheme as soon as possible;
15. Calls on the Commission to closely monitor the agricultural, food, fish and aquaculture markets, to inform the Council and the European Parliament of any changes and to assess the impact of the measures taken in order possibly to extend the list of products covered and to increase the EUR 125 million budget; urges the Commission not to restrict itself to market measures but to also take medium-term measures in order to strengthen the EU's presence on third-country markets (e.g. promotional activities);
16. Considers the possibility of drawing on EU funds other than agricultural funds, since the crisis is first and foremost of a political nature and not the result of a market failure or adverse weather conditions;
17. Underlines the fact that medium- and long-term political and economic stability and development in Russia are dependent on the emergence of true democracy, and stresses that the future development of EU-Russia relations will depend on efforts to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights inside Russia;
18. Expresses satisfaction with the release of hostages held by the illegally armed groups in eastern Ukraine and calls for the freeing of Ukrainian prisoners detained in the Russian Federation; points in particular to the case of Nadezhda Savchenko, a Ukrainian volunteer captured by the separatists in June 2014, subsequently transferred to Russia and still being held in detention; points also to the cases of the film-makers and journalists Oleg Sentsov, Oleskiy Chorny, Gennadiy Afanasiev and Aleksandr Kolchenko, captured in Crimea;

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19. Welcomes NATO's renewed pledge to prioritise collective security and the commitment to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty; welcomes the decisions at the Newport NATO Summit to increase the security level of the eastern allies, including the creation of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), a permanent rotating NATO military presence and the establishment of logistical infrastructure, as well as efforts designed to enhance Ukraine's ability to provide for its own security; takes note of the fact that NATO allies on a bilateral level can provide Ukraine with the necessary weapons, technology and know-how for their security and defence; strongly underlines, however, that there is no military solution to the Ukrainian crisis;

20. Underlines the importance of the independent, rapid and full investigation, delegated to the Dutch Safety Board, into the causes of the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, and the need to bring those responsible for the crash to justice; notes that the Dutch Safety Board issued its preliminary report on the investigation into the crash of MH17 on 9 September 2014; stresses that, based on the preliminary findings to date, no indications of any technical or operational issues were found with the aircraft or crew, and that the damage observed in the forward section appears to indicate that the aircraft was penetrated by a large number of high-energy objects from outside the aircraft; deplores the fact that the rebels are still not permitting unhindered access by investigators to the crash site, and calls on all sides to facilitate immediate access;

21. Strongly believes that the EU's only viable answer to Russia's threats is to stand together and speak with one voice; believes that the EU needs to rethink its relations with Russia, abandon the strategic partnership concept and find a new, unified approach;

22. Expresses its deep concern as regards the catastrophic humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, especially with regard to the upcoming winter; points out the urgent need to provide humanitarian assistance and relief to the population in the conflict-affected areas, internally displaced people and refugees; echoes the recent alert by the World Health Organization that eastern Ukraine is facing a health emergency, with hospitals not fully functioning and a shortage of medicines and vaccines; welcomes the Commission's recent decision to mobilise EUR 22 million in humanitarian and development aid for Ukraine; calls for further urgent efforts under full EU branding and supervision, including a humanitarian aid convoy, to contribute to supporting the most deprived; recalls that the delivery of humanitarian aid to eastern Ukraine must be carried out in full compliance with international humanitarian law and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and in close coordination with the Ukrainian Government, the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); expresses its deep respect for the tremendous work done by groups of Ukrainian citizens in the field of humanitarian aid in eastern Ukraine, especially with regard to evacuation of children, healthcare and food supply;

23. Urges the Commission to start the preparation of the third ambitious package of macro-financial assistance to Ukraine, as well as to play a leading role in organising the Donor Conference for Ukraine, due to take place before the end of 2014, involving international organisations, international financial institutions and civil society; stresses the importance of a commitment by the international community to support economic and political stabilisation and reform in Ukraine;

24. Commends the continuous efforts made by the Ukrainian authorities to ensure the right to education and in particular to ensure that all children will be able to return to schools affected by the conflict as soon as possible; recalls the importance of providing psychosocial support for all children who have been directly exposed to violent events;

25. Strongly condemns the unlawful abduction of an Estonian counterintelligence officer from Estonian territory to Russia and calls on the Russian authorities to immediately release Mr Kohver and allow his safe return to Estonia;

26. Considers it of the utmost importance to reduce the EU's dependence on Russia and on other authoritarian regimes; calls, furthermore, on the October 2014 European Council to adopt an ambitious and comprehensive emergency plan for the coming winter, by including also neighbouring countries such as Ukraine;

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27. Draws attention to the recent credible reports on human rights violations in the conflict areas, perpetrated mainly by regular Russian troops and separatists; supports the call on the Ukrainian Government to create a single, regularly updated register of incidents of reported abductions, and the thorough and impartial investigation of all allegations of abuse of force, ill-treatment or torture;

28. Welcomes the adoption by the Commission of the 4th progress report on the implementation by Ukraine of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and the decision of the Council to move to the second phase; insists on the quick finalisation of the visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine as a concrete response to the European aspirations of the people who demonstrated in Maidan Square; reiterates its call, in the meantime, for the immediate introduction of temporary, very simple and inexpensive visa procedures;

29. Calls for the continuation of the trilateral talks on Ukraine's gas supplies, which have been suspended since June 2014, in order find a way to reinstate them; reiterates the need to ensure the gas supply through reverse gas flows from EU neighbouring states to Ukraine;

30. Calls on the EU to consider gas storage, interconnectors and flow-back facilities as strategic assets, and therefore regulate the share of third-party business contracting parties in those crucial sectors; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to cancel planned agreements with Russia in the energy sector, including the South Stream gas pipeline;

31. Underlines the need to radically enhance the EU's energy security, independence and resilience to external pressure through the consolidation of energy sectors, further development of the energy infrastructure in the EU's neighbourhood countries and the development of energy interconnectors between these countries and with the EU, in accordance with the objectives of the Energy Community, and to implement these projects of common interest as a priority with the utmost urgency in order to build a fully functioning free gas market in Europe;

32. Welcomes the decision by the French Government to halt the delivery of the Mistral helicopter carriers, and calls on all Member States to take a similar line regarding exports not covered by the EU sanctions decisions, in particular as regards arms and dual-use material; recalls that this contract, under the current circumstances, would contradict the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Export and the 2008 Common Position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment; calls on EU Member States to fully respect the embargo on trade in arms and the export ban on dual-use goods for military end-users;

33. Welcomes the decision to hold early parliamentary elections in Ukraine on 26 October 2014 and expects the government to ensure free and fair elections; calls on Ukraine to establish transparency in the financing of parties and their political campaign and to address in full all the remarks referred to in the findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR observation mission for the recent presidential elections; calls upon all political parties currently represented in the Verkhovna Rada to take part in the elections and on all sides fully to respect their outcome; hopes for a strong majority for the important challenges and necessary reforms ahead; urges the rebel forces in eastern Ukraine not to obstruct the electoral process and to guarantee the fundamental right of Donbas residents to freely elect their representatives; is committed to sending election observers in order to monitor these elections and calls for a substantial international election monitoring mission to oversee this crucial election that will take place under ongoing difficult conditions;

34. Emphasises that Russia has less grounds than ever before to criticise the EU-Ukraine Agreement or to react with unjustified trade restrictions and military aggression; expresses concern that this new development is an incentive for Russia to escalate its policy of intimidating Ukraine and drawing it into its own sphere of influence; fears a danger of spillover into Georgia and Moldova;

35. Regrets the fact that the Russian leadership regards the EU's Eastern Partnership as a threat to its own political and economic interests; underlines the fact that, on the contrary, Russia will gain from increased trade and economic activities, while Russia's security will be enhanced by a stable and predictable neighbourhood; deplores the use of trade by Russia as an instrument to destabilise the region by introducing several import bans on products from Ukraine and Moldova, and more recently by renouncing the CIS FTAs with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and by consequently reintroducing most favoured nation (MFN) duties for products coming from these countries;

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36. Reiterates its view, in this respect, that this agreement does not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine relations; points out, furthermore, that pursuant to Article 49 TEU, Ukraine – like any other European state – has a European perspective and may apply to become a member of the European Union provided it adheres to the principles of democracy, respects fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, and ensures the rule of law;

37. Stresses that relations of partnership and cooperation with Russia should be re-established when Russia demonstrates compliance with international law, contributes actively and without ambiguities to a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis, and fully respects the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, as well as of other countries of the Eastern Partnership and its neighbours; invites the new HR/VP to take a proactive role in facilitating dialogue between Ukraine and Russia, as well as the EU's dialogue with Russia, and in promoting peaceful solutions to conflicts; believes, furthermore, that the Commission should explore the modalities of EU cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union;

38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the President, Government and Parliament of Ukraine, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.

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P8_TA(2014)0026

EU response to the Ebola outbreak**European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the EU's response to the Ebola outbreak (2014/2842 (RSP))**

(2016/C 234/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 'public health emergency of international concern' announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of 8 August 2014,
 - having regard to the WHO Ebola response roadmap of 28 August 2014,
 - having regard to the European Union Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the Ebola crisis in West Africa of 15 August 2014,
 - having regard to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control's Ebola risk assessment of 27 August 2014,
 - having regard to the 'Statement on the Ebola outbreak' in West Africa by the Commissioner for Health, Tonio Borg, of 8 August 2014,
 - having regard to the 'Statement on the EU's response to the Ebola outbreak' by the Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, of 5 September 2014,
 - having regard to the European Commission's High Level Event to coordinate the response to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa of 15 September 2014,
 - having regard to the African Union (AU) mission 'AU Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa' (ASEOWA) established on 21 August 2014,
 - having regard to the United Nations 'Special Briefing on Ebola' by Dr Joanne Liu, international president of *Médecins Sans Frontières*, of 2 September 2014,
 - having regard to the statement made by Liberia's Defence Minister, Brownie Samukai, before the UN Security Council on the threat to his country's existence posed by the outbreak of Ebola,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council meeting of 18 September 2014 where the Ebola crisis will top the agenda,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans;
- B. whereas since the Ebola outbreak was officially declared on 22 March 2014 in Guinea, it has reached four other countries (Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal), has affected almost 4 000 people and has caused more than 2 000 deaths, and bearing in mind that there are also unreported cases of Ebola-infected persons and deaths;

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- C. whereas the epidemic is fast accelerating and spreading in the West Africa region, although a separate outbreak of the virus is also occurring in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- D. whereas the WHO recognises that the outbreak had been underestimated and estimates that the number of patients could exceed 20 000 over the next 3 months;
- E. whereas the WHO has announced that this is the largest recorded outbreak in terms of cases, deaths and geographical coverage, and has declared the crisis to be a 'public health emergency of international concern' which demands a coordinated international response;
- F. whereas there are 4,5 million children under the age of five living in areas affected by the Ebola virus, and women (accounting for 75 % of cases) have been disproportionately affected by the virus because of their role as caregivers;
- G. whereas the WHO roadmap lists a series of highly concrete and immediate measures aimed at stopping ongoing Ebola transmission worldwide within six to nine months, while also rapidly managing the consequences of any further international spread and recognising the need to address, in parallel, the outbreak's broader socio-economic impact;
- H. whereas the NGOs most active on the ground, such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, are criticising the international effort as being dangerously inadequate, since highly limited capacities on the ground are resulting in critical gaps in all aspects of the response: medical supportive care, training of health staff, infection control, contact tracing, epidemiological surveillance, alert and referral systems, community education and mobilisation;
- I. whereas the European Commission's Development Cooperation department (DG DEVCO) and Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (DG ECHO) have pledged more than EUR 147 million in humanitarian and development aid in order to contain the spread of the virus, provide treatment and essential equipment to infected persons and deploy humanitarian experts;
- J. whereas only EUR 11,9 million out of the EUR 147 million pledged specifically address some of the most urgent humanitarian needs;
- K. whereas all partner organisations on the ground have stressed the fact that in order to isolate and treat patients there is an urgent need not only for funds but also for operational capacity, including qualified human resources and logistic materials;
- L. whereas the Commission monitors the situation through its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which should serve as a platform for the coordination of EU assistance;
- M. whereas EU humanitarian experts have been deployed in the region to monitor the situation and liaise with partner organisations and local authorities;
- N. whereas EU Member States have the capacity to mobilise immediate response teams to ensure early diagnosis, isolation (of suspected cases and confirmed cases in different wards), monitoring of contact persons and tracing of transmission chains, measures for burials, education and local support;
- O. whereas affected countries already suffer from shortages of food and clean water and economic collapse caused by the disruption of trade, commercial flights and harvest work following the outbreak of the epidemic, leading to social unrest, fleeing, chaos, threats to public order and further spreading of the virus;

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- P. whereas the outbreak has revealed the serious inadequacy of the health systems of the affected countries and the urgent need for support to strengthen them;
1. Deplores the loss of lives in the region devastated by the Ebola outbreak and expresses its sincere condolences to the governments of the countries and people affected by the outbreak;
 2. Considers that the international community must play a greater role while African countries must also take their share of responsibility, as the Ebola outbreak poses a global security challenge and is not only a West African problem but rather a problem on a global scale;
 3. Calls upon the Commission to intensify efforts and coordinate actions with the United Nations to combat the Ebola virus outbreak; asks the UN Security Council, together with the affected partner countries, to look into the possibility of using military and civil defence assets under the leadership of the Secretary-General and coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs;
 4. Welcomes and encourages the ongoing scaling-up of the European Commission's financial commitment in terms of humanitarian and development aid to respond to the crisis and especially its support for the African Union ASEOWA mission;
 5. Congratulates the work done on the ground by partner organisations despite the challenges and warmly welcomes their great input and help to control this outbreak;
 6. Reminds Member States that the financial aid provided to the affected countries should not be at the expense of long-term development aid but, rather, complementary;
 7. Regrets the underestimation of the crisis by the international community and the delay in providing any adequate coordinated strategy;
 8. Welcomes the commitments made by the Member States at the European Commission's High Level Event of 15 September 2014, and urges the Council of the European Union to hold a ministerial meeting to establish an emergency plan to mobilise a medical response to agree and provide humanitarian aid from the Member States, under the coordination of the Commission;
 9. Calls on the Commission to draw up needs assessments and country-specific plans to determine and coordinate the demand for, and deployment of, qualified health personnel, mobile laboratories, laboratory equipment, protective clothing and treatment centres with isolation wards;
 10. Calls on the Member States to coordinate flights and establish dedicated air bridges to move health personnel and equipment to the affected countries and the region, and to provide medical evacuation if necessary;
 11. Stresses the need to strengthen scientific collaboration and technological support in the areas affected by this outbreak, with a view to setting up clinical, epidemiological and diagnostic infrastructures, including sustainable infrastructures and surveillance, and paying particular attention to the engagement of local staff, including training;
 12. Calls on the Commission, through the ERCC, to maintain close contacts with the ECDC, the WHO and Member States via the Committee on Health Security;
 13. Calls on the Commission to put in place control systems to ensure that the entire budget allocated to stopping the Ebola outbreak is actually used to fight the epidemic in the countries affected by the virus and not for other purposes;
 14. Considers the WHO Ebola response roadmap to be a basis for priority activities, notably the differentiated response for countries with widespread transmission, initial cases and neighbouring countries in which preparedness has to be strengthened;

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15. Welcomes discussions on how UN peacekeeping efforts can – with appropriate training – further support the fight against Ebola in the region;
 16. Calls on the Council and Commission to support and encourage the African Union with regard to the need for a holistic action plan, as the situation is continuing to deteriorate rapidly and is affecting the economy as well as public order in the countries concerned, as the Ebola crisis has become complex, with political, security, economic and social implications that will continue to affect the region well beyond the current medical emergency;
 17. Stresses that the current crisis cannot be solved by health systems alone, but that a concerted approach involving different sectors (healthcare, education and training, sanitation, food aid) is needed to address the critical gaps in all essential services;
 18. Believes that local medical staff must be involved in treating the affected population and should liaise between the population and the international medical staff;
 19. Calls for educational and informative action to raise awareness of symptoms and preventive measures in order to facilitate trust and popular cooperation with anti-Ebola measures, as information and communication constitute an important aspect of the fight against the Ebola outbreak;
 20. Stresses that the fight against Ebola must not lead to stigmatisation of survivor patients in communities or countries;
 21. Calls on Member States to carry out scrupulous infection control and, in cooperation with the ECDC, provide fuller information to the public on the risks;
 22. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to coordinate and strengthen medical research and the production of efficient medicines and vaccines against Ebola, and to advance the necessary clinical trials for existing candidate treatments;
 23. Calls also for a clear distinction to be made between Ebola vaccination tests and the treatment provided to Ebola-infected persons; calls for clinical trials of the Ebola vaccine to respect the relevant WHO rules in force;
 24. Asks its Committee on Development to provide in-depth recommendations for mitigating the long-term consequences of the epidemic and strengthening the health systems of the affected countries in order to avoid similar outbreaks;
 25. 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, the governments and parliaments of the African Union, the UN Secretary-General and the World Health Organisation.
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P8_TA(2014)0027

Situation in Iraq and Syria and the IS offensive including the persecution of minorities**European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria, and the IS offensive, including the persecution of minorities (2014/2843(RSP))**

(2016/C 234/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions on Iraq and Syria of 30 August 2014,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to UN Security Council resolution 2170 (2014) and UN Human Rights Council resolution S-22/L.1 (2014),
 - having regard to the statements by the UN Secretary-General on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to the NATO Summit Declaration of 5 September 2014,
 - having regard to the EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief adopted on 24 June 2013,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Paris conference on security in Iraq and the fight against Islamic State of 15 September 2014,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and Syria, which was already critical, has further deteriorated as a result of the occupation of parts of their territory by the terrorist jihadist al-Qaeda splinter group Islamic State (IS); whereas the transnational character of IS and associated terrorist groups poses a threat to the wider region; whereas there are growing concerns for the welfare of those still trapped in areas controlled by IS forces;
- B. whereas the disintegration of the Iraqi-Syrian border has provided IS with opportunities to enhance its presence in both countries; whereas IS has, over the past months, extended its territorial conquest from eastern Syria into north-western Iraq, including Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul; whereas on 29 June 2014 it was reported that IS had proclaimed a 'caliphate', or 'Islamic state', in the territories it controlled in Iraq and Syria, and whereas its leader, Abdu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has declared himself as the caliph; whereas IS does not recognise the internationally accepted borders and has declared its intention to spread the 'Islamic caliphate' to other Muslim-majority countries;

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0023.

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- C. whereas the conquest of the territories in Iraq and Syria was followed by the imposition of the harsh interpretation of Sharia law; whereas serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have been committed in the areas under the control of IS and associated groups, including targeted killings, forced conversions, abductions, selling of women, slavery of women and children, recruitment of children for suicide bombings, sexual and physical abuse and torture; whereas IS has murdered the journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and the aid worker David Haines; whereas Christian, Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Kaka'e, Sabian and Shia communities have been targeted by IS, as well as many Arabs and Sunni Muslims; whereas mosques, monuments, shrines, churches and other places of worship, tombs and cemeteries, as well as archaeological and cultural heritage sites, have been deliberately destroyed;
- D. whereas Iraqi Christians have recently been persecuted, deprived of their fundamental rights and forced to leave their homes and become refugees because of their religion and convictions; whereas according to Open Doors International the number of Christians in Iraq has significantly fallen, from 1,2 million at the beginning of the 1990s to between 330 000 and 350 000 now; whereas before the conflict in Syria started, around 1,8 million Christians lived in the country; whereas since the conflict started at least 500 000 Christians have been displaced;
- E. whereas according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) an estimated 1,4 million persons were internally displaced this year in Iraq and an estimated 1,5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance; whereas the upsurge of IS has produced a humanitarian crisis, notably a massive displacement of civilians; whereas on 12 August 2014 the EU decided to increase its humanitarian assistance to Iraq by EUR 5 million to provide basic assistance to displaced people, thus bringing humanitarian funding for Iraq to EUR 17 million so far in 2014; whereas the EU has been further extending its humanitarian aid and has established an air bridge between Brussels and Erbil;
- F. whereas according to the UN over 191 000 people have died in Syria in the conflict; whereas according to OCHA an estimated 6,4 million persons are internally displaced in Syria and there are more than 3 million Syrian refugees, mainly in Lebanon (1,17 million refugees), Turkey (832 000), Jordan (613 000), Iraq (215 000) and Egypt and North Africa (162 000); whereas, according to the Office for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) an estimated 10,8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance; whereas so far in 2014 the EU has contributed EUR 150 million in humanitarian aid for the victims of the Syrian crisis;
- G. whereas hundreds of foreign fighters, including many from EU Member States, have joined the IS insurgency; whereas these EU citizens are identified as a security risk by the governments of the Member States;
- H. whereas the EU has acknowledged the burden placed on the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which are hosting a large number of internally displaced persons;
- I. whereas the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has stated that it remains very difficult to operate within the area to give civilians and refugees the proper aid they need; whereas it is important to shelter the hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Iraqi refugees before winter arrives;
- J. whereas the EU has reiterated its firm commitment to Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- K. whereas the Heads of State and Government participating in the NATO Summit on 4 and 5 September 2014 stated that the presence of IS in both Syria and Iraq is a threat to regional stability, and that the people of Syria and Iraq and elsewhere in the region need the support of the international community to counter that threat;
- L. whereas the possibility has been raised of carrying out air strikes in eastern Syria; whereas at the NATO meeting of 5 September 2014 an anti-IS coalition was formed; whereas the European External Action Service (EEAS) is currently working on a comprehensive regional strategy to address the threat posed by IS; whereas on 10 September 2014 US President Barack Obama unveiled his strategy to combat IS, which includes, among other actions, a systematic campaign of air strikes against IS targets 'wherever they are', including in Syria, increased support for allied ground forces fighting IS, and greater counter-terrorism efforts aimed at cutting off the group's funding; whereas the Arab League has pledged to strengthen cooperation to bring down IS in Syria and Iraq;

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- M. whereas IS has secured significant income sources by looting banks and businesses on territories it controls and taking over up to six oilfields in Syria, including Syria's largest oil facility, the al-Omar field close to the border with Iraq, and is receiving funds from wealthy donors, most of whom are from the region;
- N. whereas the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, including the right to freedom of religion and belief, are fundamental principles and aims of the EU and constitute common ground for its relations with third countries;
1. Is extremely concerned at the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and in Syria as a result of the occupation of parts of their territory by IS; firmly condemns the indiscriminate killings and human rights violations perpetrated by this and other terrorist organisations against religious and ethnic minorities and the most vulnerable groups; strongly condemns attacks directed at civilian targets, including hospitals, schools and places of worship, and the use of executions and sexual violence by IS in Iraq and Syria; underlines the fact that there should be no impunity for the perpetrators of these acts;
 2. Strongly condemns the murders of the journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and the aid worker David Haines by IS, and expresses grave concern for the safety of others still being held captive by the extremists; expresses its deep sympathy and condolences to the families of these victims and to the families of all victims of the conflict;
 3. Emphasises that widespread or systematic attacks directed against civilians because of their ethnic or political background, religion, belief or gender may constitute a crime against humanity; strongly condemns all forms of persecution, discrimination and intolerance based on religion and belief, and acts of violence against all religious communities; stresses once again that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right;
 4. Expresses its support for all victims of religious intolerance and hatred; expresses its solidarity with the members of the Christian communities being persecuted and facing the danger of extinction in their motherlands, Iraq and Syria, as well as with other persecuted religious minorities; confirms and supports the inalienable right of all religious and ethnic minorities living in Iraq and Syria, including Christians, to continue to live in their historical and traditional homelands in dignity, equality and safety, and to practise their religion freely; stresses that the crimes committed against Christian minorities such as Assyrians, Syrians and Chaldeans, as well as Yazidis and Shia Muslims, represent a final push by IS for a complete religious cleansing in the region; notes that for centuries members of different religious groups coexisted peacefully in the region;
 5. Rejects without reservation and considers illegitimate the announcement by the IS leadership that it has established a caliphate in the areas it now controls; emphasises that the creation and expansion of the 'Islamic caliphate', as well as activities of other extremist groups in Iraq and Syria, is a direct threat to the security of European countries; rejects the notion of any unilateral changes of internationally recognised borders by force; stresses again that IS is subject to the arms embargo and assets freeze imposed by UN Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), and underlines the importance of prompt and effective implementation of those measures; calls on the Council to consider more effective use of the existing restrictive measures, and in particular to deny IS the benefits of illicit oil sales or sales of other resources on international markets; is deeply concerned about the assertions that actors in some Member States are engaged in illicit oil trade with IS; asks the Commission whether it can confirm these assertions and, if so, calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the illicit oil trade is immediately brought to an end;
 6. Condemns the use and exploitation of oilfields and related infrastructure by IS and associated groups, which enables IS to generate substantial income, and urges all states to uphold UN Security Council resolutions 2161 (2014) and 2170 (2014), which condemn any trade, direct or indirect, with IS and associated groups; is concerned that IS is generating income through sales of oil; takes note of the EU's intention to tighten sanctions in order to prevent IS from selling oil; therefore calls for the EU to impose sanctions on all those (governments and public or private companies) involved in the transport, transformation, refinement and commercialisation of oil extracted in IS-controlled areas, together with strict controls on financial flows in order to prevent economic activity and exploitation of tax havens on the part of IS;

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7. Welcomes the appeal of 8 September 2014 by all the French Islamic federations, as well as appeals by other Islamic communities, which unequivocally and unconditionally condemns the instrumentalisation of Islam by extremist terrorist groups to justify their violence, intolerance and crimes against humanity;

8. Calls on all parties to the conflict in Iraq to ensure the protection of the civilian population and adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law; calls for immediate support and humanitarian assistance for the displaced people of Iraq;

9. Welcomes the efforts of the United States and of all the other contributing states to support the Iraqi national and local authorities in their fight against IS, to stop the advance of IS and to facilitate access for humanitarian support; welcomes the call by the USA for an international coalition against IS, which is building up; welcomes the decision reached by the Arab League on 7 September 2014 to take the necessary measures to confront IS and cooperate with international, regional and national efforts to combat militants in Syria and Iraq, and to endorse UN Security Council resolution 2170 (2014); calls on the Arab League to discuss amending the Arab Convention for Fighting Terrorism of 1998 so that it can challenge global terrorism by all means;

10. Calls on the international community to assist the Iraqi authorities – including by providing military protection to particularly vulnerable groups – in ensuring protection of, and assistance to, those fleeing the areas affected by terrorism, in particular members of vulnerable groups and of ethnic and religious communities; calls on all regional actors to contribute to efforts to promote security and stability in Iraq; recalls that it should be the ultimate commitment and responsibility of all regional actors, as well as of the EU, to do their utmost to guarantee the return of traditional minorities and all citizens to their original places of residence from which they were forced to flee; calls on the EU Member States to assist the Iraqi and local authorities by all possible means, including appropriate military assistance, in containing and repelling the terrorist and aggressive IS expansion; underlines the necessity for coordinated action by countries in the region to counter the IS threat; calls on all regional actors to do everything in their power to stop all activities by official or private bodies intended to propagate and spread extreme Islamist ideologies; calls on Turkey to clearly and unambiguously commit itself to countering the common security threat posed by IS; calls for the EU to facilitate a regional dialogue on the problems facing the Middle East and to include all significant parties, in particular Iran and Saudi Arabia;

11. Welcomes the mobilisation of the European Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism at the request of the Iraqi Government; welcomes the EU's humanitarian assistance to Iraq and Syria; calls for additional humanitarian support for the populations affected by the conflict, including the Syrian Kurds;

12. Calls on all parties to the conflict in Syria, in particular the Syrian regime, to ensure the protection of the civilian population, to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance through all possible channels, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure the safety of all medical personnel and humanitarian workers; commends the role of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey in accepting refugees; calls on the international community to be more active and forthcoming in burden-sharing and to provide direct financial support to the host countries; calls for the EU to put pressure on all donors to fulfil their promises and deliver their pledges in a swift manner; welcomes the commitments by the Member States, since the EU is the biggest donor of financial aid and source of future pledges;

13. Emphasises the need to seize all possibilities with a view to effectively countering the IS threat in Syria, with full respect for international law; stresses that in the long term only a lasting and inclusive political solution entailing a peaceful transition to a genuinely representative government in Syria would help to neutralise the threat of IS and other extremist organisations;

14. Calls on all parties to the conflict in Syria to respect the mandate of the UN's Disengagement Observer Force and ensure the safety and freedom of movement of UN troops, including those from EU Member States; condemns the fact that 45 Fijian peacekeepers were detained by an armed group; welcomes the release of the peacekeepers on 11 September 2014;

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15. Recalls the statement by the Special Coordinator for the Joint Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations (OPCW-UN), who declared that 96 % of Syrian chemical weapons have been destroyed; calls for the remaining weapons to be deactivated in accordance with the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons;
 16. Welcomes the decision by individual Member States to respond positively to the call by the Kurdish regional authorities to urgently provide military material; stresses that such responses reflect the capabilities and national laws of the Member States and have the consent of the Iraqi national authorities; calls on those Member States which are providing military material to the Kurdish regional authorities to coordinate their efforts and to implement effective monitoring measures in order to prevent uncontrolled dissemination and the use of military material against civilians;
 17. Reiterates its concern that thousands of transnational foreign fighters, including citizens of the Member States, have joined the IS insurgency; calls on the Member States to take appropriate measures to prevent fighters from travelling from their soil, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2170 (2014), and to develop a common strategy for security services and EU agencies in monitoring and controlling jihadists; calls for cooperation in the EU and at international level with a view to appropriate legal action against any individual suspected of being involved in acts of terrorism; calls on the Member States to intensify cooperation and exchange of information among themselves and with EU bodies, and to ensure efficient cooperation with Turkey; stresses the importance of prevention, prosecution, outreach, rehabilitation and reintegration;
 18. Welcomes the formation of a new and inclusive government in Iraq, as well as the adoption of the ministerial programme; supports the Prime Minister's efforts to finalise the formation of the government; calls on the government to be truly representative, with an inclusive agenda; stresses that the government should properly represent the political, religious and ethnic diversity of Iraqi society, including its Sunni minority, in order to stop the bloodshed and the fragmentation of the country; calls on all participants to work together in the interests of political stability and peace, and in combating the IS insurgency; underlines the fact that Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity are essential for stability and economic development in the country and the region;
 19. Calls on the Iraqi Government and Parliament to urgently review legislation and legal practice, reform the country's judicial system and security apparatus and implement inclusive policies towards all Iraqis with a view to ending the policy of discrimination;
 20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific actions to address the situation of women in Iraq and Syria and guarantee their freedom and respect for their most fundamental rights, and to adopt measures to prevent exploitation of, and abuse and violence against, women and children, in particular the early marriage of girls; is particularly concerned at the increase in all forms of violence against Yazidi women, who are imprisoned, raped, sexually abused and sold by the members of IS;
 21. Expresses concern at the increasing number of cases of recruitment of children and young people in Iraq and Syria; encourages the Commission to engage with partners – including international organisations – to prepare a comprehensive programme to address the need to protect children and women affected by armed conflict;
 22. Supports the request by the UN Human Rights Council to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for the urgent dispatching of a mission to Iraq, to investigate the violations and abuses of international human rights law committed by IS and associated terrorist groups and establish the facts and circumstances of such abuses and violations, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability;
 23. Remains convinced that there can be no sustainable peace in Syria and Iraq without accountability for the crimes committed by all sides during the conflict, in particular those based on religious or ethnic grounds; reiterates its call for the referral of those suspected of committing crimes against humanity in Syria and Iraq to the International Criminal Court and supports all initiatives in this direction;
 24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the United Nations Human Rights Council and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.
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P8_TA(2014)0028

Situation in Libya

European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Libya (2014/2844(RSP))

(2016/C 234/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Libya,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 15 August 2014 and the European Council conclusions of 30 August 2014 on Libya,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) of 26 August 2014,
 - having regard to the ENP Package on Libya of September 2014,
 - having regard to the appointment of 14 August 2014 of Bernardino León as new Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Libya,
 - having regard to the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970, 1973 (2011) and 2174 of 27 August 2014,
 - having regard to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) report entitled ‘Overview of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law during the ongoing violence in Libya’ of 4 September 2014,
 - having regard to the meeting of the Special Envoys for Libya of the Arab League, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States with the United Nations on 24 July 2014 to discuss recent developments in Libya,
 - having regard to the Libyan parliamentary elections in June 2014,
 - having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, and to the obligation of parties to armed conflict to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and its Optional Protocol,
 - having regard to the Council Decision of 22 May 2013 creating the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM),
 - having regard to Libya’s ratification on 25 April 1981 of the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Libyans took to the streets in February 2011 asking for political rights, and were confronted by indiscriminate state repression which triggered nine months of civil conflict and the ousting of the Gaddafi regime; whereas recent weeks have seen a severe deterioration in Libya’s security situation, political stability, and human rights and humanitarian situation;

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- B. whereas clashes between rival militia forces, and more particularly those from Misrata and Zintan, have intensified in the past months, and battles for control of Tripoli and Benghazi in particular have destabilised Libya and its democratic transition and have resulted in increasing numbers of civilian casualties, internally displaced persons and refugees; whereas UNSMIL estimates that at least 100 000 Libyans have been internally displaced by the latest wave of fighting and a further 150 000, including many migrant workers, have left the country;
- C. whereas Islamist-affiliated militia forces took control of Tripoli and its civilian airport on 24 August 2014; whereas Islamist-affiliated militias are linked to armed groups such as Islamic State, AQIM, al-Jammaa al-Libiya, al-Moukatila and Ansar al-Charia;
- D. whereas recent fighting makes the threat of a spread of terrorist groups more likely; whereas, if not addressed, this could exacerbate an already volatile situation in the wider region;
- E. whereas Libya faces escalation of fighting among local armed groups, including attacks on civilians and civilian property involving massive human rights violations, in some cases amounting to war crimes; whereas dozens of civilians have reportedly been abducted in Tripoli and Benghazi solely on account of their actual or suspected tribal, family or religious affiliations; whereas those committing acts of violence appear to disregard the likely impact of their actions on innocent civilians;
- F. whereas the human rights situation is further deteriorating throughout the country, including cases of arbitrary detention, abductions, unlawful killings, torture and violence against journalists, officials, political figures and human rights defenders, such as the brutal murder of prominent activist Salwa Bugaighis;
- G. whereas the recent fighting has led to a general deterioration of living conditions in Libya, with food, fuel, water and electricity in short supply; whereas the departure of foreign medical staff and shortages of medical supplies have made the plight of civilians more critical;
- H. whereas since December 2013 a number of foreign nationals have been killed or kidnapped as the security situation has deteriorated; whereas in August 2014 several EU Member States joined the United States in strongly condemning the ongoing violence in Libya;
- I. whereas legislative elections were held on 25 June 2014; whereas following the recent violence, the legitimately elected House of Representatives, that replaces the former General National Congress (GNC), has been moved from Tripoli to Tobruk, and whereas the Islamist militias do not recognise the House of Representatives or the new government and have formed their own government and parliament;
- J. whereas according to the Libyan state media, the Constitutional Drafting Assembly, elected in February 2014 and composed of 60 representatives from the three historic regions of Libya, will make public a draft constitution at the end of 2014 and a referendum on it could be held in March 2015;
- K. whereas there is an urgent need to restore credibility to the political process in Libya; whereas widespread scepticism among ordinary Libyans has led to an erosion of credibility and low participation in recent elections; whereas the threat to the democratic process, which began following the toppling of Colonel Gaddafi, is mounting as a result of recent violence;
- L. whereas UNSMIL has been tasked with the main effort of state-building, and the European Union has focused on supporting Libya through EUBAM;
- M. whereas there are reports of outside involvement in the violence in Libya, including in the form of military action and the delivery of arms and munitions and undertaking actions which exacerbate local divisions, impacting on the poor governance structures and thus undermining Libya's democratic transition; whereas some Gulf States and some other regional actors are now backing rival sides in Libya's escalating domestic unrest;

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- N. whereas United Nations Security Council resolution 2174 (2014) authorises travel bans and asset freezes against 'individuals and entities determined by the Committee to be engaging in or providing support for other acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct or undermine the successful completion of its political transition';
- O. whereas hundreds of migrants and refugees, fleeing the violence in Libya, have reportedly died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe, leading to a major refugee crisis in Italy and Malta; whereas the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that 1 600 people have died since June while trying to reach Europe; whereas Libya is the primary departure point for migrants attempting to reach Europe; whereas the UNHCR estimated that around 98 000 of approximately 109 000 arrivals in Italy were believed to have departed from Libya since the beginning of the year; whereas a further 500 migrants are feared dead after their boat was reportedly rammed by another vessel near Malta on 15 September 2014;
- P. whereas on 26 February 2011, the United Nations Security Council referred the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC); whereas on 27 June 2011, the ICC issued three arrest warrants for Muammar Gaddafi, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi and Abdullah al-Senussi for crimes against humanity; whereas the remaining suspects are not in the custody of the Court; whereas the Libyan authorities have insisted that they be tried within the Libyan domestic legal system;
- Q. whereas on 25 August 2014 Egypt held the third ministerial meeting for Libya's neighbouring countries, which gathered the foreign ministers from Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Niger and Chad, and the Arab League, to discuss the Libyan crisis; whereas the forum issued a press release reaffirming the legitimacy of Libyan institutions, rejecting foreign interferences, calling for the disarmament of militias and proposing the creation of a gradual sanction mechanism against individuals or entities blocking the political process;
1. Condemns the increasing violence, in particular that against the civilian population and civilian institutions; calls on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all violence and agree to a ceasefire in order to end the escalating suffering of the population, and to engage in an inclusive national political dialogue to build a State based on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law; calls for those responsible for all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law to be held accountable; expresses its deep concern and full solidarity with the suffering Libyan civilian population and institutions;
 2. Urges all parties to the conflict to respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in order to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance, the safety of civilians receiving assistance and the security of humanitarian personnel;
 3. Recalls that all parties in Libya must commit to the protection of civilians at all times, and that all those detained should be treated in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law; recalls that attacks intentionally directed against personnel involved in humanitarian assistance or a peacekeeping mission in accordance with the UN Charter, meant for the protection of civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict, constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC);
 4. Notes the impact on regional and European security resulting from the general insecurity and deteriorating governance in Libya; recalls that the fighting that occurred throughout July and August 2014 for the control of Tripoli Airport resulted in a dramatic escalation and a descent into chaos, leading to numerous fatalities and the destruction of strategic infrastructures;
 5. Is deeply concerned by reports of involvement of regional players in the violence in Libya and calls on neighbouring countries and regional players to refrain from actions which might exacerbate current divisions and undermine Libya's democratic transition; calls on them to increase control of their borders, including at seaports and airports, and to maintain thorough inspections of all cargo to and from Libya; commends Tunisian hospitality towards the hundreds of thousands of Libyan citizens currently in Tunisia fleeing from violence;

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6. Recalls United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2174, adopted on 27 August 2014, broadening the existing international sanctions on Libya, to include the criminal responsibility of people who engage in or support acts that 'threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct or undermine the successful completion of its political transition'; invites the High Representative, the EU, its Member States and the broader international community to look into the possibility of applying such measures to specific individuals threatening the prospects for peace and democratic transition in Libya and then to list them in the same way the international community listed Gaddafi and his inner circle;

7. Recalls that warring parties are to be held accountable and subject to prosecution by domestic courts or the International Criminal Court, which has jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and rape as a war crime committed in Libya since 15 February 2011, under UNSC resolution 1970;

8. Strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and of the recently appointed UN Special Envoy for Libya, Bernardino León, to promote and facilitate national dialogue amongst politicians and influential actors in Libya; urges the international community to take action with regard to the situation in Libya, through the United Nations;

9. Supports the House of Representatives as the legitimate body emanating from the June 2014 elections; calls on Libya's interim government, elected House of Representatives and Constitutional Drafting Assembly to carry out their tasks based on the rule of law and human rights, in a spirit of inclusiveness, in the interests of the country and in order to protect the rights of all Libyan citizens, including religious minorities; calls on all parties to support them and to engage in an inclusive political dialogue in order to rebuild stability and agree on ways forward; invites members of the House of Representatives to visit the European Parliament and meet its newly elected members, in order to establish parliamentary relations with them;

10. Recognises the key role women have played in Libya's transition, and stresses the importance of full participation by women in Libya's national decision-making process and in the establishment of national institutions at all levels;

11. Stresses that the Libyan authorities must administer the exploitation and sale of oil, and calls on the international community to refrain from any transactions with other actors; requests that international companies involved in Libya reveal their financial dealings in the energy sector;

12. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to coordinate Member States' action in Libya and focus their support on state-building and institution building and, together with Member States, the UN, NATO and regional partners, to assist in the creation of effective and nationally commanded and controlled security forces (armed forces and police forces) that can ensure peace and order in the country, as well as supporting the initialling of a ceasefire and designing a mechanism to monitor it; stresses that the EU should also give priority to assisting with reform of the Libyan justice system, as well as other fields crucial for democratic governance;

13. Points out that the Union has launched an EU Border Mission (EUBAM) in Libya, which has so far not been in a position to achieve its objectives of improving the security of the country's borders; notes that this mission is currently on hold, with most of its personnel repatriated due to security conditions, with the exception of a small team relocated to Tunis; stresses that an EU security-related contribution focusing only on border security is manifestly insufficient and inconsistent with both the country's needs and the challenges for regional security, including that of the EU; calls, therefore, on the High Representative to review the mandate of the European Union Border Assistance Mission with a view to designing a new mission within the CSDP which takes into account the changed situation in Libya, especially with regard to the urgent need for state-building, the strengthening of institutions and security sector reform;

14. Remains concerned by the proliferation of weapons, ammunition, explosives and smuggling of arms in Libya, which poses a risk to stability in the country and to its population;

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15. Is deeply concerned by the unprecedented arrival of asylum seekers and irregular migrants on Italian and Maltese shores, many of whom are departing from Libyan territory; calls on the EU to follow up on the priorities identified in the Mediterranean Task Force and launch a political dialogue on migration issues with the Libyan government, as soon as conditions allow; deeply regrets that a further 500 lives were lost after their boat was reportedly rammed by another vessel near Malta;
 16. Calls on the EU and the Member States to effectively help and support Italy in its laudable efforts to save lives and to tackle the spiralling migration flows from North Africa, particularly from Libya;
 17. Calls for the reopening and unhindered functioning of the UNHCR in Libya; calls for the EU to continue to offer humanitarian, financial and political assistance in crisis areas in North Africa and the Middle East in order to tackle the root causes of migration and humanitarian pressures;
 18. Is deeply concerned at the growing presence of Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups and individuals operating in Libya, and reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and with international law, including applicable international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts;
 19. Reiterates the EU's unwavering support for and commitment to the democratic aspirations of the Libyan people, in particular during the current crisis and in the democratic transition of the country; calls for strengthened EU involvement in support of stability and democratic transition in Libya;
 20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Libyan Government and the House of Representatives, the UN Secretary-General, the Arab League and the African Union.
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P8_TA(2014)0029

Israel-Palestine after the Gaza war and the role of the EU**European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on Israel-Palestine after the Gaza war and the role of the EU (2014/2845(RSP))**

(2016/C 234/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949,
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 18 September 1995,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 12 July 2014,
 - having regard to the Oslo Accords ('Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements') of 13 September 1993,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process of 30 August 2014, 16 December 2013, 14 May 2012, 18 July and 23 May 2011, and 8 December 2009,
 - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) of 27 August 2014 on the ceasefire in Gaza,
 - having regard to the daily UNRWA situation reports,
 - having regard to the statement by the UN Security Council of 12 July 2014 and the statement by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of 13 July 2014,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law,
 - having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the latest conflict in Gaza has caused loss of life and unacceptable suffering to the civilian population of both parties involved;
- B. whereas more than 2 000 Palestinians have been killed – a large majority of them civilians, including 503 children – and more than 10 000 Palestinians have been wounded in the Gaza Strip, while 66 Israeli soldiers and 6 Israeli civilians, including one child, have lost their lives and more than 500 Israelis have been wounded as a result of Operation Protective Edge by the Israeli Defence Forces and the firing of rockets by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups from Gaza into Israel; whereas this violent conflict has created a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza;
- C. whereas a ceasefire agreement was reached on 26 August 2014, putting an end to seven weeks of hostilities in Gaza; whereas Egypt has made considerable efforts to broker this agreement;
- D. whereas, according to the ceasefire agreement, humanitarian aid should be allowed access to the Gaza Strip through crossings to Israel, the Rafah crossing should be opened, and the fishing zone should be extended to six miles off the coast of Gaza;

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- E. whereas, if the truce holds, the parties should start talks on various subjects relating to the situation in the Gaza Strip at the end of September 2014; whereas these talks may include the disarmament of armed groups in Gaza, the return of the remains of two Israeli soldiers killed in the violent conflict, the release of Palestinian prisoners and the lifting or easing of the blockade of Gaza, including through the reconstruction of the seaport and the airport in the area;
- F. whereas according to UNRWA and organisations on the ground, over 1 700 homes have been completely or partially destroyed and 40 000 others damaged, and 17 hospitals and health care clinics, 136 UNRWA schools, 60 mosques and 13 cemeteries have also been destroyed;
- G. whereas whole neighbourhoods and vital infrastructure were flattened in Gaza, including the Gaza Power Plant which remains inoperable, resulting in electricity outages of 18 hours a day and some 450 000 people are still without access to municipal water due to damage or low pressure;
- H. whereas Palestinian experts have estimated that the reconstruction of Gaza would cost close to USD 8 billion; whereas on 9 September 2014 the UN and the Palestinian Government called on international donors to provide USD 550 million for food aid, access to clean water, healthcare and education as immediate relief following the recent conflict; whereas an international donors' conference for the reconstruction of Gaza is planned in Egypt;
- I. whereas 29 UNRWA school buildings continue to serve as collective centres for over 63 000 displaced persons;
- J. whereas according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, about 42 000 acres of cropland have sustained substantial direct damage and half of Gaza's poultry stock has been lost due to direct hits or lack of care owing to the reduced access to farmlands in border areas;
- K. whereas it is the responsibility of the United Nations to launch an inquiry to evaluate the damages caused to its structures;
1. Expresses, once again, its condolences to all victims of the armed conflict and to their families; strongly condemns the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
 2. Welcomes the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt; recognises and commends the role played by Egypt in brokering a ceasefire; supports the Egyptian authorities in their continued work with the Israelis and Palestinians in order to establish a long-term ceasefire and distinguish its strategic role as a current and future mediator of a peaceful resolution; welcomes recent reports that the Egyptians are due to commence talks on a permanent ceasefire;
 3. Urges the EU to participate effectively in the urgent humanitarian aid effort and in the reconstruction of Gaza; calls on the EU to participate fully in the International Donors Conference on 12 October 2014 in Cairo;
 4. Stresses that providing full and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to the population in the Gaza Strip must be an immediate priority; urges the international community to further intensify its efforts in this regard and to answer as a matter of urgency the emergency appeals for additional funding of UNRWA; calls on all actors in the region to facilitate humanitarian assistance reaching those in need of basic goods and services – with special regard to electricity services and water supplies, and the specific needs of children in particular – in Gaza without delay; expresses its concerns about the alleged cases of intentional blocking of humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza; underlines, at the same time, that EU humanitarian and financial assistance must fully benefit, in the most efficient way possible, the Palestinian people, and must never be used, directly or indirectly, for terrorist activities;

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5. Welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Consensus Government in various fields, and urges both parties to continue along this path; urges, at the same time, the Palestinian National Consensus Government to take over full authority in the Gaza Strip without delay, in order to avoid Gaza's sliding into chaos and lawlessness; calls, in this spirit, for the completion of the Palestinian reconciliation process, which should lead to the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections soon;
 6. Encourages key regional actors, notably Egypt and Jordan, to continue their efforts to calm the situation; reiterates its strong support for the two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as capital of both states, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security, which would imply the lifting of the blockade of Gaza; reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace; urges all EU institutions to encourage trade, cultural, scientific, energy, water and economic relations between Israel and its neighbours;
 7. Encourages an intra-Palestinian reconciliation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to work together to rebuild Gaza and to find a long-term political solution;
 8. Welcomes the readiness of the EU to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution enhancing the security, welfare and prosperity of Palestinians and Israelis alike; takes positive note of the fact that the EU will develop options for effective and comprehensive action in the following areas: movement and access, capacity building, verification and monitoring, humanitarian relief and post-conflict reconstruction;
 9. Reiterates its support for the policy of peaceful resistance of President Mahmoud Abbas and condemns all acts of terrorism and violence; calls on the European Union and its Member States to reinforce their support for the leadership of President Abbas and his latest initiative to unblock the conflict;
 10. Stresses that the status quo in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and plays into the hands of extremists, leading to constantly renewed cycles of violence; believes that there will be no long-term stability in Gaza without reconstruction and economic revival, which is undermined by the lack of free movement of people and goods; calls for a rapid reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza, and strongly supports the donors' conference to be held on 12 October 2014 in Cairo;
 11. Urges the EU and its Member States again to play a more active political role, also within the Quartet, in the efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians; supports the High Representative in her efforts to create a credible perspective for re-launching the peace process;
 12. Applauds the fact that the EU is ready to support a possible international mechanism endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, including through the reactivation and possible extension of the scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions on the ground, extending to the launch of a training programme for Palestinian Authority customs personnel and police for redeployment in Gaza;
 13. Expresses its recognition of the immense importance of the work carried out by UNRWA and all its staff during and after the conflict; expresses its condolences to UNRWA and the families of the 12 staff members killed during the conflict; calls on the EU and international donors to significantly increase their support to cover the increased immediate needs of the affected population, which UNRWA has to meet;
 14. Stresses that it is imperative that the PA, the EU, Egypt and Jordan work, in a robust manner, towards ensuring that terrorist groups in Gaza and the West Bank cannot rearm and do not return to smuggle weapons, manufacture rockets and build tunnels;
 15. 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, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Parliament and Government of Egypt, and the Parliament and Government of Jordan.
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Tuesday 16 September 2014

III

(Preparatory acts)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P8_TA(2014)0014

EU-Ukraine association agreement, with the exception of the treatment of third country nationals legally employed as workers in the territory of the other party***

European Parliament legislative resolution of 16 September 2014 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part, with the exception of the provisions relating to the treatment of third-country nationals legally employed as workers in the territory of the other party (13613/2013 – C8-0105/2014 – 2013/0151A(NLE))

(Consent)

(2016/C 234/09)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (13613/2013),
 - having regard to the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part (7076/2013),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 217 and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a) and paragraphs 7 and 8, second subparagraph, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C8-0105/2014),
 - having regard to its resolution of 1 December 2011 containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the negotiations of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 12 December 2013 ⁽²⁾, 6 February 2014 ⁽³⁾, 27 February 2014 ⁽⁴⁾, 13 March 2014 ⁽⁵⁾, 17 April 2014 ⁽⁶⁾, 17 July 2014 ⁽⁷⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 99(1), first and third subparagraphs, Rule 99(2), and Rule 108(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0002/2014),
1. Gives its consent to conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of Ukraine.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 165 E, 11.6.2013, p. 48.
⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0595.
⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0098.
⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0170.
⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0248.
⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0457.
⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0009.

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P8_TA(2014)0015

EU-Ukraine association agreement, as regards the treatment of third country nationals legally employed as workers in the territory of the other party ***

European Parliament legislative resolution of 16 September 2014 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part, as regards provisions relating to the treatment of third-country nationals legally employed as workers in the territory of the other party (14011/2013 – C8-0106/2014 – 2013/0151B(NLE))

(Consent)

(2016/C 234/10)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (14011/2013),
 - having regard to the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part (7076/2013),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 79(2)(b), Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), and paragraph 8, first subparagraph, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C8-0106/2014),
 - having regard to Rule 99(1), first and third subparagraphs, Rule 99(2), and Rule 108(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A8-0009/2014),
1. Gives its consent to conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of Ukraine.
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Wednesday 17 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0016

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund - application EGF/2014/000 TA 2014 -Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/000 TA 2014 – Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission) (COM (2014)0366 – C8-0031/2014 – 2014/2041(BUD))

(2016/C 234/11)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0366 – C8-0031/2014),
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions on a Compact for Growth and Jobs of 28-29 June 2012,
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 7-8th February 2013,
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 ⁽¹⁾ (EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0003/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers, who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns, dramatically aggravated by the economic, financial and social crisis, and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the amount of EUR 330 000 proposed to be mobilised by the Commission for technical assistance in 2014 is below the maximum of 0,5 % of the annual maximum amount of the EGF (EUR 150 million at 2011 prices) as laid down by Article 11(1) of the EGF Regulation;
- C. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be adequate and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- D. whereas the findings of the Commission's Internal Audit suggest improvement and securing of the functionalities of the EGF database, which require external expertise;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

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- E. whereas up to 0,5 % of the annual EGF amount can be made available each year for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission, in order to finance preparation, monitoring, data gathering and creation of a knowledge base, administrative and technical support, information and communication activities as well as audit, control and evaluation activities necessary to implement the EGF Regulation, as stipulated in Article 11(1) of that Regulation; whereas technical assistance shall also include the provision of information and guidance for the Member States in using, monitoring and evaluating the EGF to the European and national social partners, as stipulated in Article 11(4) of the EGF Regulation;
- F. whereas the technical assistance expenditure in year 2014 is significantly reduced compared to the previous year, also due to the fact that there are no evaluations to be funded;
- G. whereas, in accordance with Article 12(2) of the EGF Regulation, the Commission is obliged to set up an internet site, available in all Union languages, to provide and disseminate information on applications and highlighting the role of the Parliament and the Council in the budgetary procedure;
- H. whereas the final phase of the ex-post evaluation of the EGF (2007-2013) was conducted in 2013;
- I. whereas, on the basis of those articles, the Commission requested that the EGF be mobilised to cover expenditures in relation to technical assistance in order to monitor applications received and paid and measures proposed and implemented, to expand the website and translate new elements in all Union languages, increase the visibility of EGF, produce publications and audio-visual tools, to create a knowledge base, to provide administrative and technical support to Member States and regional authorities and not requesting funds for evaluations in 2014;
- J. whereas the number of EGF cases that has been wound up until today provides for a considerable number of qualitative and quantitative data regarding the influence of the EGF in relation to the employability of the workers made redundant due to the effects of globalisation and the financial and economic crisis;
- K. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;
- L. whereas the cost of information activities in 2014 is significantly reduced;
- M. whereas the EGF Working Groups have frequently underlined the necessity of a better visibility of the EGF as a community instrument of solidarity with the workers made redundant;
- N. whereas preparations are on-going with a view to integrating the EGF into the electronic data exchange system (SFC2014);
- O. whereas the technical assistance provided by the Commission to the Member States supports and enhances the use of the EGF by providing information on the applications and by spreading best practice among the Member States;
1. Agrees with the measures proposed by the Commission to be financed as technical assistance in accordance with Article 11(1) and (4) as well as with Article 12(2), (3) and (4) of the EGF Regulation;
 2. Recalls the importance of networking and exchange of information on the EGF; supports, therefore, the funding of the Expert Group of Contact Persons of the EGF as well as other networking activities among the Member States including this year's networking seminar for practitioners on the implementation of the EGF; underlines the need to further enhance the liaising between all those involved in EGF applications, including namely the social partners and stakeholders at regional and local level, to create as many synergies as possible;
 3. Notes that the cost of information activities is significantly reduced in 2014; underlines the importance of this not having an adverse effect on the production and sufficient distribution of information material and necessary guidance on the EGF Regulation in the first year of its implementation;

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4. Encourages the Commission to further enhance its work on the standardised procedures for simplified applications, faster processing of the applications and better reporting with the aim of easing the administrative burden for the Member States; encourages the Commission to increase the visibility of EGF in further actions;
5. Underlines the importance of increasing general awareness about EGF and its visibility; reminds applicant Member States of their role to publicise the actions funded by EGF to the targeted beneficiaries, authorities, social partners, the media and the general public, as set out in Article 12 of the EGF Regulation;
6. Notes the fact that the Commission will make available a print run of the EGF ex-post evaluation together with an online publication;
7. Welcomes the fact that the final phase of the ex-post evaluation of EGF (2007-2013) was conducted in 2013; calls for the timely publication of the final evaluation in accordance with the deadline set in Article 17 of the previous EGF Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006);
8. Calls on the co-legislators to introduce special provisions to facilitate the mobilisation of the EGF in the Member States which are facing particularly serious social, economic and financial constraints;
9. Notes that the Commission has already started to work in 2011 on the electronic application form and the standardised procedures for simplified applications, faster processing of the applications and better reporting; notes furthermore the preparations to integrate the EGF into the electronic data exchange system (SFC2014); asks the Commission to present the progress made following the use of technical assistance between 2011 and 2013;
10. Deeply regrets that the Commission did not duly analyse the effectiveness of the use of the crisis derogation criterion, especially taking into account that these EGF cases were not duly considered in the EGF framework review; regrets, however, that the results did not arrive in time to feed into the discussion on the new regulation for the EGF in 2014-2020, especially regarding the effectiveness of the use of the crisis derogation criterion; still believes that this should be taken into account for the future evaluation of the EGF; calls on the co-legislators to consider the reintroduction of this measure without delay, especially in the context of the social emergency situations in several Member States;
11. Recalls the importance of networking and exchange of information on the EGF, particularly in relation to the provisions of the EGF Regulation; supports, therefore, the funding of the Expert Group of Contact Persons of the EGF; calls on the Commission to invite the Parliament to the expert group meetings and seminars in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission⁽¹⁾; underlines furthermore the importance to liaise with all those involved in EGF applications, including the social partners;
12. Urges the Member States to profit from the exchange of best practices and to learn particularly from those Member States, regional and local authorities that have already put in place national information networks on the EGF involving the social partners and stakeholders at local and regional level with a view of having a good structure for assistance in place once any situation which falls under the scope of the EGF might occur; points out the need to encourage assistance with autonomy and ease of access at regional level to implement a bottom up ethos, empowering local solutions at a regional level where any situation which falls under the scope of the EGF might occur;
13. Requests the Member States and all the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural and budgetary arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF; notes in this sense, the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request to accelerate the release of grants, aimed at presenting to the Parliament and the Council the Commission's assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the EGF; takes note of the adoption of the EGF Regulation which will allow greater efficiency, transparency, accountability and visibility of the EGF;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 304, 20.11.2010, p. 47.

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14. Strongly believes that it is essential that Union expenditure is closely scrutinised on the basis of value for money; asks the Commission to outline clearly the added value in terms of tangible outcomes in creating a separate budget line for the EGF;
15. Welcomes the extension of the objectives and criteria of the EGF Regulation introduced in December 2013, in order to integrate and facilitate applications from regions and countries with a smaller demographic density; deeply regrets that this has an exceptional character and is limited to a threshold of a maximum of 15 % of the maximum annual amount of the EGF, while these regions are suffering a much higher impact of the global social, economic and financial crisis;
16. Welcomes the extension of the scope of the EGF regarding the eligible beneficiaries, namely self-employed persons, and the provision of personalised services co-financed by the EGF to a number of NEETs under the age of 25, or when the Member States decide under the age of 30; nevertheless, believes that the EGF would increase its effectiveness and produce a much higher impact if the general threshold would be placed at 200 workers, instead of 500;
17. Following the extension of the objectives, criteria and eligible beneficiaries of the EGF, insists on the need to increase the level of appropriations available for the EGF both in commitments and in payments to at least the 2013 level, that is to say, to at least EUR 500 million, in full alignment with the policy priorities set by the Union regarding the promotion of investment for growth and jobs; furthermore, reminds the Council of the Parliament's position to consider the integration of the EGF in the Union budget in the framework of the 2014-2020 MFF review, in accordance with the principle of budgetary unity;
18. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
19. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in *the Official Journal of the European Union*;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (EGF/2014/000 TA 2014 - Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/697/EU.)

Wednesday 17 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0017

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund - application EGF/2014/001 EL/Nutriart - Greece

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/001 EL/Nutriart from Greece) (COM(2014)0376 – C8-0032/2014 – 2014/2042 (BUD))

(2016/C 234/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0376 – C8-0032/2014),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 ⁽¹⁾ (new EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Regional Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0004/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- C. whereas Greece submitted application EGF/2014/001 EL/Nutriart for a financial contribution from the EGF, following redundancies in Nutriart S.A and 25 providers and downstream producers and 24 self-employed people whose activity ceased and was dependent on the primary enterprise in Greece with 508 workers targeted for EGF co-funded measures, during the reference period from 16 July 2013 to 16 November 2013;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

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- D. whereas 66,34 % of the workers targeted by the measures are men and 33,66 % are women; whereas the vast majority (86,42 %) of the workers are between 30 and 54 years old; whereas 8,07 % of the workers are between 55 and 64 years old;
- E. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;
1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 4(1)(a) of the new EGF Regulation are met and that, therefore, Greece is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation;
 2. Notes that the Greek authorities submitted the application for EGF financial contribution on 5 February 2014, supplemented it by additional information until 2 April 2014, and that its assessment was made available by the Commission on 24 June 2014; welcomes the speedy evaluation of four months;
 3. Notes that this is the first application which was submitted and assessed under the scope of the new EGF Regulation;
 4. Considers that the redundancies in Nutriart S.A and 25 providers and downstream producers and 24 self-employed people whose activity ceased and was dependent on the primary enterprise in Greece are linked to global financial and economic crisis, referring to the fact that the Greek economy has experienced a cumulative fall of 5 % in its GDP since 2008 and despite the fact that it slowly emerges out of recession it is still unable to create new job opportunities and reduce the unemployment rate which is at a historical record of 26-27 % of the working population;
 5. Notes that the events giving rise to the redundancies were mainly three: (1) the decrease of available household income that affected in a very negative way the consumption of a different range of products — (due to the increase in the tax burden, decreasing salaries of both private and public employees and rising unemployment) — resulting in a huge drop of purchasing power; (2) the delayed payments by most of the Nutriart's clients; and (3) the drastic reduction of loans to enterprises and individuals due to the effort of the Greek banking system to reduce its outstanding loans;
 6. Stresses that the 508 redundancies will further aggravate the unemployment situation in Attica and Central Macedonia regions bearing in mind that in the fourth quarter of 2013 the unemployment rate in Attica was 28,2 % whilst in Central Macedonia it was 30,3 % ⁽¹⁾; notes moreover that Attica accounts for 43 % of the Greek GDP and therefore the impact of the closure of enterprises based in this region reaches the whole Greek economy; notes, in addition, that rising unemployment in the two major urban centres of Greece weakened social cohesion and contributed to social tensions;
 7. Welcomes the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Greek authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 30 April 2014 well ahead of the final decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package;
 8. Warmly welcomes the fact that, in addition to 508 redundant workers, the Greek authorities will provide personalised services co-financed by the EGF to up to 505 young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) under the age of 30 which brings the total number of targeted beneficiaries to participate in the measures to 1 013; stresses that this is the first time that this provision of the new EGF Regulation is used;
 9. Notes that the maximum eligible amount of EUR 15 000 will be granted to 150 selected workers and NEETs as a contribution to setting up their own businesses; underlines that the aim of this measure is to promote entrepreneurship by providing funding, which should result in the creation of further workplaces in the medium term;

⁽¹⁾ Source: ELSTAT, Q4 2013 Labour Force Survey.

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10. Notes that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes measures for workers made redundant, self-employed persons whose activity has ceased and NEETs such as occupational guidance, training, retraining and vocational training, counselling services towards entrepreneurship, contribution to business start-up, job-search allowances and mobility allowances; warmly welcomes the fact that for the first time self-employed persons are included in co-funding of the EGF;
11. Welcomes the idea of the development of an incubator for innovative new businesses;
12. Welcomes the fact that the coordinated package of personalised services has been drawn up in consultation with the representatives of the targeted beneficiaries, the trade union GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) and the Hellenic Confederation of Enterprises, and that a policy of equality of women and men as well as the principle non-discrimination will be applied during the various stages of the implementation of and in access to the EGF;
13. Recalls the importance of improving the ability of all workers to seek employment by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career; expects the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the actual business environment;
14. Notes that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds; stresses that the Greek authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments; reiterates its call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that no duplication of Union-funded services can occur;
15. Appreciates the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants; notes that the Commission finalised the assessment of the application's compliance with the conditions for providing a financial contribution within 12 weeks of the receipt of the complete application;
16. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 9 of the new EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF assistance is limited to what is necessary to provide solidarity and temporary one-off support for targeted beneficiaries, and will not furthermore replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements;
17. Welcomes the adoption of the new EGF Regulation which reflects the agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council to reintroduce the crisis mobilisation criterion, to increase Union financial contribution to 60 % of the total estimated cost of proposed measures, to increase efficiency for the treatment of EGF applications in the Commission and by the Parliament and the Council by shortening time for assessment and approval, to widen eligible actions and beneficiaries by introducing self-employed persons and young people and to finance incentives for setting up own businesses;
18. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
19. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with Point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/001 EL/Nutriart from Greece)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/698/EU.)

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P8_TA(2014)0018

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2012/010 RO/MECHEL - Romania

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2012/010 RO/Mechel from Romania) (COM(2014)0255 – C8-0088/2014 – 2014/2043(BUD))

(2016/C 234/13)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0255 – C8-0088/2014),
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽¹⁾ (EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Regional Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0008/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- C. whereas Romania submitted application EGF/2012/010 RO/Mechel for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 1 513 redundancies: 1 441 during and after the reference period in Mechel Campia Turzii and 72 in Mechel Reparatii Targoviste with 1 000 workers targeted for EGF co-funded measures, during the reference period from 20 June 2012 to 20 October 2012;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 406, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

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- D. whereas the Romanian authorities argue that decision to make workers redundant at Mechel Campia Turzii could not have been foreseen; whereas the company put in place a number of measures to reduce staff costs, however these measures did not remedy the financial difficulties and the enterprise decided to initiate collective redundancies;
- E. whereas 72,8 % of the workers targeted by the measures are men and 27,2 % are women; whereas 87,9 % of the workers are between 25 and 54 years old and 11,2 of workers are between 55 and 64 years old;
- F. whereas the 44,9 % of the dismissed workers belong to the category of plant and machine operators and assemblers, 27,1 % belong to the category of craft and related trades workers, 9,1 % are technicians and associate professionals and 8,1 % belong to the category of clerical support workers;
- G. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;
1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 2(a) of the EGF Regulation are met and that, therefore, Romania is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation;
 2. Notes that the Romanian authorities submitted the application for EGF financial contribution on 21 December 2012, and that its assessment was made available by the Commission on 7 May 2014; regrets very lengthy evaluation of seventeen months and that because of the inflation rate in the period 2012-2014, there has been a decrease of the purchasing power; calls on the Commission to propose measures for addressing this issue in similar situations in the future;
 3. Stresses that labour market conditions slightly changed in the past seventeen months and believes that a further analysis based on the economic and financial situation in 2014 should be foreseen;
 4. Considers that the redundancies in SC Mechel Campia Turzii SA and one downstream producer (SC Mechel Reparatii Targoviste SRL) are linked to major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation, referring to the fact that the sector of the manufacture of finished and semi-finished steel products, in which Mechel Campia Turzii and Mechel Reparatii Targoviste were active, has undergone serious economic disruption as a result of a rapid decline of the Union market share in the steel products sector and the market share growth of countries such as China; points out that this case demonstrates the need for a Union strategy on the steel products industry in order to maintain competitiveness;
 5. Notes that the 1 513 redundancies in question have had major repercussions for the local labour market, given that the Mechel Campia Turzii was the largest employer in the area with 1 837 employees (in June 2012), accounting for around a third of the total number of employees in the area, deplores that the number of unemployed persons in the Campia Turzii area more than doubled as a result of the redundancies; notes also that the local labour market is very restricted as the unemployment rate in the Cămpia Turzii area is generally around 5 % and the job vacancy rate is very low (below 0,5 %) ⁽¹⁾;
 6. Notes that to date, the steel sector has been the subject of five EGF applications, four of which were intended to provide support to workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation ⁽²⁾ and one was intended to provide support to workers made redundant as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis ⁽³⁾;
 7. Notes the amount of EUR 15 000 to be granted to 250 selected workers as assistance in initiating independent activities; regrets that only a fourth of the targeted workers will be able to participate in this action;

⁽¹⁾ The job vacancy rate measures the percentage of vacant posts, compared with the total number of occupied and unoccupied posts. In the third quarter of 2012, the estimated job vacancy rate in the EU-28 in NACE Rev.2 sections B to S (industry, construction, services) was 1,4 %.

⁽²⁾ EGF/2009/022/BG/Kremikovtsi AD (application rejected by the Commission), EGF/2013/002 BE/Carsid (application presented to the Commission on 2 April 2013), EGF/2013/007 BE Dufenco-NLMK (application presented to the Commission on 27 September 2013).

⁽³⁾ EGF/2010/007 AT/Steiermark and Niederösterreich. Decision 2011/652/EU of 27 September 2011 (OJ L 263, 7.10.2011, p. 9).

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8. Welcomes the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Romanian authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 1 March 2013, well ahead of the final decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package;
9. Expects with great interest the creation and development of the 'cooperative society' with the dismissed workers and its outcomes;
10. Notes that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes measures for the reintegration of 1 000 redundant workers into employment such as vocational guidance and counselling, vocational training courses and internships, assistance in initiating independent activities, renting the production space and paying the rent for the project's duration; travel, interview, participation, subsistence and internship allowances, mentoring after employment integration;
11. Calls on the Romanian authorities to ensure that the selection of the 250 members of the cooperative society fully respects the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities; calls further for the continued consultation and involvement of the social partners;
12. Welcomes the fact that the Romanian National Agency for Employment (ANOFM), the Cluj County Agency for Employment (AJOFM Cluj) as well as other local and regional authorities, trade unions and enterprises will be linked to the cooperative enterprise which will be established to support the workers targeted for assistance as part of the measure 'Assistance in initiating independent activities' and that a policy of equality of women and men as well as non-discrimination will be applied during the various stages of the implementation of and in access to the EGF;
13. Notes the elevated cost of the registration of workers compared to a previous application from Romania; notes furthermore the total estimated costs of EUR 70 000 on information and publicity actions which should result in a better awareness about the EGF contribution and ensure more visibility of the role of the Union in it;
14. Recalls the importance of improving the employability of all workers by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career; expects the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the actual business environment;
15. Notes that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds; stresses that the Romanian authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments; reiterates its call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that no duplication of Union-funded services can occur;
16. Requests the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF; appreciates the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants, aimed at presenting to the Parliament and the Council the Commission's assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the EGF; underlines that further improvements in the procedure have been integrated in the new EGF Regulation ⁽¹⁾ and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the EGF will be achieved;
17. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 6 of the EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF supports the reintegration of individual redundant workers into stable employment; stresses, furthermore, that EGF assistance can co-finance only active labour market measures which lead to durable, long-term employment; reiterates that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements nor measures restructuring companies or sectors;

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855).

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18. Welcomes the adoption of the new EGF Regulation which reflects the agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council to reintroduce the crisis mobilisation criterion, to increase Union financial contribution to 60 % of the total estimated cost of proposed measures, to increase efficiency for the treatment of EGF applications in the Commission and by the Parliament and the Council by shortening time for assessment and approval, to widen eligible actions and beneficiaries by introducing self-employed persons and young people and to finance incentives for setting up own businesses;
19. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
20. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with Point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2012/010 RO/Mechel from Romania)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/696/EU.)

Wednesday 17 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0019

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2014/003 ES/ Aragón food and beverage - Spain

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management (application EGF/2014/003 ES/Aragón food and beverage from Spain) (COM(2014)0456 – C8-0099/2014 – 2014/2054(BUD))

(2016/C 234/14)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0456 – C8-0099/2014),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006⁽¹⁾ (EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Regional Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0006/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns or are made redundant as a result of the global financial and economic crisis and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- C. whereas Spain submitted application EGF/2014/003 ES/Aragon food and beverage for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 904 redundancies in 661 enterprises operating in the NACE Rev. 2 Division 56 (Food and beverage service activities)⁽⁴⁾ in the NUTS level 2 region of Aragón (ES24) with 280 workers targeted for EGF co-funded measures, during the reference period from 1 March 2013 to 1 December 2013;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing the statistical classification of economic activities NACE Rev. 2 and amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90 as well as certain EC regulations on specific statistical domains (OJ L 393, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

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- D. whereas the Spanish authorities argue that the major factor giving rise to the redundancies was the significant decrease in the consumption of food and beverage, particularly food-away-from-home, due to the downturn in the economy, the increase in tax revenues, particularly VAT and the decrease of salaries;
- E. whereas 65,36 % of the workers targeted by the measures are women and 34,64 % are men; whereas the vast majority (82,86 %) of the workers are between 25 and 54 years old; whereas 9,29 % of the workers are between 15 and 24 years old;
- F. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;
1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 4(1)(b) of the EGF Regulation are met and that, therefore, Spain is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation;
 2. Notes that the Spanish authorities submitted the application for EGF financial contribution on 21 February 2014, supplemented it by additional information until 18 April 2014, and that its assessment was made available by the Commission on 10 July 2014; welcomes the speedy evaluation of five months;
 3. Considers that the redundancies in 661 enterprises operating in the NACE Rev. 2 Division 56 (Food and beverage service activities) are linked to global financial and economic crisis, referring to the fact that a decline in average income and a decrease in household consumption in Spain resulted in an overall shrinking demand for food and beverage services;
 4. Notes that out of the 904 eligible beneficiaries, only 280 are expected to participate in the proposed actions; expects that in regions with high unemployment rates the number of participants in training and retraining need to be higher;
 5. Notes that 904 redundancies will further aggravate the difficult unemployment situation in Aragón where the unemployment rate has increased rapidly, rising from 4,2 % in December 2007 to 18,4 % in December 2013;
 6. Notes that many companies have dismissed only one person;
 7. Welcomes the fact that the Spanish authorities began providing the personalised services to the targeted beneficiaries on 21 February 2014;
 8. Notes that following the redundancies in the construction and retail sectors in Aragón, Spain submitted applications for this region in May 2010 ⁽¹⁾ and December 2011 ⁽²⁾ for financial contributions from the EGF;
 9. Notes that 100 participants can receive a wage subsidy of EUR 200 up to a period of 3 months to incentivise their return to employment; points out that the working contracts of these participants should provide favourable prospects even after the provision of wage subsidy is finished;
 10. Notes that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes measures for workers made redundant such as guidance, counselling and job search; training and re-training, reintegration into employment and incentives;
 11. Notes that 20 participants can receive an employment incentive for self-employment of EUR 400 up to a period of 3 months; considers that this amount is too small and the period through which it is provided is too short to provide real incentives for starting up self-employment;
 12. Welcomes the fact that the coordinated package of personalised services has been drawn up in consultation with the trade unions Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras-CC.OO Aragón and Unión General de Trabajadores-UGT Aragón; and the employers' organisations Confederación de Empresarios de Aragón-CREA and Confederación de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Aragonesa-CEPYME Aragón, and that the principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination will be applied during the various stages of the implementation of and in access to the EGF;

⁽¹⁾ EGF/2010/016 ES Aragón Retail. COM(2010)0615.

⁽²⁾ EGF/2011/017 ES Aragón construction of buildings. COM(2012)0290.

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13. Notes that these allowances remain well below the maximum limit of 35 % of the total costs for the coordinated package of personalised services;
14. Recalls the importance of improving the employability of all workers by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career; expects the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the actual business environment;
15. Calls on the Spanish authorities to ensure that the selection of the recipients of allowances and incentives fully respects the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities;
16. Notes that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds; stresses that the Spanish authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments; reiterates its call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that no duplication of Union-funded services can occur;
17. Calls on the Spanish authorities and the Commission to take every step necessary to verify that the actions financed are carried out in accordance with the principles of sound and efficient financial management;
18. Appreciates the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants; notes that the Commission finalised its assessment of the application's compliance with the conditions for providing a financial contribution within 12 weeks of the receipt of the complete application;
19. Recalls that, in line with Article 7 of the EGF Regulation, the design of the coordinated package of personalised services should anticipate future labour market perspectives and required skills and should be compatible with the shift towards a resource-efficient and sustainable economy;
20. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 9 of the EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF assistance is limited to what is necessary to provide solidarity and temporary one-off support for targeted beneficiaries; and will not furthermore replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements;
21. Notes that the total estimated costs of information and publicity actions is estimated at EUR 4 100; reminds of the importance of raising a better awareness about the EGF contribution and more visibility of the role of the Union in it;
22. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
23. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in *the Official Journal of the European Union*;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with Point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/003 ES/Aragón food and beverage from Spain)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/815/EU.)

Wednesday 17 September 2014

P8_TA(2014)0020

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2014/002 NL/Gelderland-Overijssel construction – The Netherlands

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/002 NL/Gelderland-Overijssel construction from the Netherlands) (COM(2014)0455 – C8-0100/2014 – 2014/2055(BUD))

(2016/C 234/15)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0455 – C8-0100/2014),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 ⁽¹⁾ (new EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to the trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Regional Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0005/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- C. whereas the number of beneficiaries expected to participate is 475 out of the total 562 eligible workers;
- D. whereas the Netherlands submitted application EGF/2014/002 NL/Gelderland-Overijssel construction for a financial contribution from the EGF, following redundancies in 89 enterprises operating in the NACE Rev.2 division 41 ("Construction of buildings") ⁽⁴⁾ in the contiguous NUTS level 2 regions of Gelderland and Overijssel with 475 workers targeted for EGF co-funded measures, during the reference period from 1 March 2013 to 1 December 2013;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing the statistical classification of economic activities NACE Revision 2 and amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90 as well as certain EC regulations on specific statistical domains (OJ L 393, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

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- E. whereas the vast majority (92,6 %) of the workers targeted by the measures are men and 7,4 % are women; whereas 65,3 % of the workers are between 30 and 54 years old; whereas 21,9 % of the workers are between 55 and 64 years old;
- F. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;
1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 4(1)(b) of the new EGF Regulation are met and that, therefore, the Netherlands is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation;
 2. Notes that the Dutch authorities submitted the application for EGF financial contribution on 20 February 2014, supplemented it by additional information until 17 April 2014, and that its assessment was made available by the Commission on 10 July 2014; welcomes the speedy evaluation of five months;
 3. Considers that the redundancies in 89 enterprises operating in the NACE Rev.2 division 41 ('Construction of buildings') in the contiguous NUTS level 2 regions of Gelderland and Overijssel are linked to global financial and economic crisis, referring to the observation that the policy of banks to implement more stringent rules for the provision of mortgages and credits reduced the provision of mortgages and credits considerably, while the austerity measures of the government to reduce national debt and budget deficit reduced public spending and the sharp decline of prices and values on the housing market makes it difficult to sell and buy houses;
 4. Notes that 562 redundancies will further aggravate the unemployment situation in Gelderland and Overijssel bearing in mind that a substantial rise of redundancies in the construction sector is noted and compared with the national figures the number of unemployed in both provinces constitutes 39 % of the total number of redundancies in 2012;
 5. Welcomes the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Dutch authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 1 February 2014, well ahead of the final decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package;
 6. Notes that application does not contain allowances or incentives in the proposed measures;
 7. Notes that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes measures for workers made redundant, such as job search assistance and intakes, training and retraining measures, outplacement assistance, mobility pool;
 8. Notes that demolition of asbestos is listed amongst the opportunities for training the participants for occupations outside the construction sector; calls on the Dutch authorities to ensure that workers participating in this specific training must be thoroughly informed of the health and safety risks related to working with asbestos;
 9. Welcomes the fact that the coordinated package of personalised services has been drawn up in consultation with trade unions and employers' organisations, the social partners in the construction sector and educational institutions, and that a policy of equality of women and men as well as the principle of non-discrimination will be applied during the various stages of the implementation of and in access to the EGF; stresses the importance of future cross-border initiatives such as border desks or alignment of rules in order to enhance the exchange of information and to stimulate the cross-border mobility of workers;
 10. Welcomes the idea of creating a mobility pool, which will provide for flexible deployment of workers with the aim to gain work experience and find work through this instrument; expects that the participants will find a non-temporary job;
 11. Recalls the importance of improving the employability of all workers by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career; expects the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the economy as a whole;

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12. Recalls that, in line with Article 7 of the new EGF Regulation, the design of the coordinated package of personalised services for training and retraining should anticipate future labour market perspectives and required skills and should incorporate the shift towards a resource-efficient and sustainable economy;
13. Notes that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds; stresses that the Dutch authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments; reiterates its call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that no duplication of Union-funded services can occur;
14. Notes that the total costs of information and publicity actions is estimated at EUR 27 096; reminds of the importance of raising a better awareness about the EGF contribution and ensuring more visibility of the role of the Union in it;
15. Appreciates the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants; notes that the Commission finalised the assessment of the application's compliance with the conditions for providing a financial contribution within 12 weeks of the receipt of the complete application;
16. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 9 of the new EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF assistance is limited to what is necessary to provide solidarity and temporary one-off support for targeted beneficiaries, and will not furthermore replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements;
17. Welcomes the adoption of the new EGF Regulation which reflects the agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council to reintroduce the crisis mobilisation criterion, to increase Union financial contribution to 60 % of the total estimated cost of proposed measures, to increase efficiency for the treatment of EGF applications in the Commission and by the Parliament and the Council by shortening time for assessment and approval, to widen eligible actions and beneficiaries by introducing self-employed persons and young people and to finance incentives for setting up own businesses;
18. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
19. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with Point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2014/002 NL/Gelderland-Overijssel construction from the Netherlands)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/814/EU.)

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P8_TA(2014)0021

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: Application EGF/2013/010 ES/ Castilla y León - Spain

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2014 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2013/010 ES/Castilla y León from Spain) (COM(2014)0478 – C8-0115/2014 – 2014/2062(BUD))

(2016/C 234/16)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2014)0478 – C8-0115/2014),
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽¹⁾ (EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 12 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾ (IIA of 2 December 2013), and in particular point 13 thereof,
 - having regard to trilogue procedure provided for in point 13 of the IIA of 2 December 2013,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0007/2014),
- A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market;
- B. whereas the Union's financial assistance to workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible, in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted during the conciliation meeting on 17 July 2008, and having due regard for the IIA of 2 December 2013 in respect of the adoption of decisions to mobilise the EGF;
- C. whereas Spain submitted application EGF/2013/010 ES/Castilla y León for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 587 redundancies, with 400 redundant workers expected to participate in the measures, in three enterprises operating in the manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork sector ⁽⁴⁾ in the NUTS II region of Castilla y León (ES41) in Spain during the reference period from 28 December 2012 to 28 September 2013;
- D. whereas the application fulfils the eligibility criteria set up by the EGF Regulation;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 406, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing the statistical classification of economic activities NACE Revision 2 and amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90 as well as certain EC regulations on specific statistical domains (OJ L 393, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

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1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation are met and that, therefore, Spain is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation;
2. Notes that the Spanish authorities submitted the application for EGF financial contribution on 5 December 2013, and that its assessment was made available by the Commission on 22 July 2014;
3. Considers that the redundancies in three enterprises operating in the manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork sector in the NUTS II region of Castilla y León (ES41) are linked to major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation, referring to the fact that the volume of the EU 27 exports of builders' joinery and carpentry of wood products decreased by 10,33 % during the period 2008-2011; notes that in the same period the decline in Spain was even higher, where the number of enterprises decreased by 28,8 %;
4. Notes that the 587 redundancies in question have severely affected the local labour market with the unemployment rate rising from 8,2 % in the first quarter of 2008 to 22,70 %⁽¹⁾ in the first quarter of 2013; considers that the unemployment situation in the affected region seems particularly fragile given the extremely low population density in Soria, one of the two provinces affected by the redundancies, and the high dependency of the affected territory on wood sector due to its extremely low population density the redundancies in this region also have a serious impact on the local economy;
5. Notes that it is estimated that a limited number of participants may receive an estimated amount of up to EUR 5 200 under the measure to promote entrepreneurship; points out that this estimated amount is made up of several amounts from different support measures;
6. Welcomes the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Spanish authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 1 February 2014, well ahead of the final decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package;
7. Notes that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes measures for the reintegration of approximately 400 redundant workers into employment, such as welcome and information sessions, occupational guidance and counselling, intensive job-search assistance, training, promotion of entrepreneurship, incentives;
8. Welcomes the fact that the former workers of Puertas Norma - the main dismissing enterprise, FAFECYL⁽²⁾ and the social partners discussed the proposed application;
9. Recalls the importance of improving the employability of all workers by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career; expects the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the actual business environment;
10. Notes that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds; stresses that the Spanish authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments; reiterates its call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that no duplication of Union-funded services can occur;

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.datosmacro.com/paro-epa/espana-comunidades-autonomas/castilla-leon>

⁽²⁾ FAFECYL is a tripartite public foundation under the Public Employment Service of Castile and León. The employer association CECALE and the trade unions UGT and CCOO are members of its board.

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11. Requests the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF; appreciates the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants, aimed at presenting to the Parliament and the Council the Commission's assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the EGF; underlines that further improvements in the procedure have been integrated in the new EGF Regulation ⁽¹⁾ and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the EGF will be achieved;
12. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 6 of the EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF supports the reintegration of individual redundant workers into stable employment; stresses, furthermore, that EGF assistance can co-finance only active labour market measures which lead to durable, long-term employment; reiterates that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements nor measures restructuring companies or sectors;
13. Welcomes the adoption of the new EGF Regulation which reflects the agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council to reintroduce the crisis mobilisation criterion, to increase Union financial contribution to 60 % of the total estimated cost of proposed measures, to increase efficiency for the treatment of EGF applications in the Commission and by the Parliament and the Council by shortening time for assessment and approval, to widen eligible actions and beneficiaries by introducing self-employed persons and young people and to finance incentives for setting up own businesses;
14. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
15. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with Point 13 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (application EGF/2013/010 ES/Castilla y León from Spain)

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision 2014/812/EU.)

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855).

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