

Thursday 22 May 2008

Lebanon

P6_TA(2008)0228

European Parliament resolution of 22 May 2008 on the situation in Lebanon

(2009/C 279 E/13)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East, in particular those of 16 January 2003 on the conclusion of an Association Agreement with the Republic of Lebanon ⁽¹⁾, 10 March 2005 on the situation in Lebanon ⁽²⁾, 7 September 2006 on the situation in the Middle East ⁽³⁾ and 12 July 2007 on the Middle East ⁽⁴⁾ and its position of 29 November 2007 on the proposal for a Council decision providing Community macro-financial assistance to Lebanon ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 (2004), 1636 (2005), 1680 (2006), 1701 (2006), and 1757 (2007),
 - having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part ⁽⁶⁾ (the Association Agreement),
 - having regard to Council Decision 2007/860/EC of 10 December 2007 providing Community macro-financial assistance to Lebanon ⁽⁷⁾,
 - having regard to the statement of 16 May 2008 by EU High Representative Javier Solana on the situation in Lebanon,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Middle East of 14 March 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. extremely alarmed at the escalation of violence in Lebanon and deeply concerned by the institutional situation that arose in Lebanon following the failure of the presidential elections,
- B. whereas the recent violent clashes between Hezbollah and other militias in Beirut and in other parts of Lebanon, following the decisions taken by the Lebanese Government on 6 May 2008, and the violence that followed the dismissal of the general in charge of airport security and the ban on Hezbollah's communication systems, killed dozens and wounded hundreds of citizens,
- C. whereas the Lebanese Government, with the aim of putting an end to the fighting, has cancelled the decisions that led to the violence and put the Lebanese army in charge of resolving the crisis,
- D. whereas the Lebanese Parliament was not playing its constitutional role even before November 2007, when the mandate of the President of the Lebanese Republic came to an end, and whereas the country is in a state of institutional breakdown, which is having serious consequences in terms of democratic functioning,
- E. whereas Hezbollah is not only a political opposition party but also an armed group that controls a good part of Lebanon's territory, including the area inhabited by its Shi'ite communities,
- F. whereas, based on the initiative taken by the League of Arab States, the parties concerned reached an agreement on 15 May 2008 to end the armed clashes immediately, to resume the national dialogue centred on the questions of the national unity government and the new election law, and to restore normal life and the situation to that prevailing prior to the recent incidents,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 38 E, 12.2.2004, p. 307.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 320 E, 15.12.2005, p. 257.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 236.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0350.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0550.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 143, 30.5.2006, p. 2.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 337, 21.12.2007, p. 111.

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- G. whereas the current political deadlock in Lebanon is paralysing the proper functioning of the country; whereas this political crisis poses a considerable threat to the fragile stability in Lebanon and in the region as a whole; whereas a stable, fully sovereign, united and democratic Lebanon is of crucial importance for the stability and peaceful development of the entire Middle East,
- H. whereas Lebanon is a country with strong political, economic and cultural links to Europe and is an important partner of the European Union in the Middle East; whereas a sovereign and democratic Lebanon can play a crucial role in the development of a strong Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
- I. whereas Article 2 of the Association Agreement stipulates that relations between the parties thereto, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, are to be based on respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of the Agreement; whereas the Association Council is empowered to take the necessary measures, within the framework of the regular political dialogue provided for in the Agreement, to promote cooperation between the European Parliament and the Lebanese Parliament,
- J. whereas UN Security Council Resolution 1757 (2007) set up an international tribunal to try the persons responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and for other political assassinations in Lebanon,
- K. whereas Lebanon still faces substantial financial and economic challenges; whereas on 4 January 2007 the Lebanese authorities adopted a comprehensive programme of socio-economic reforms; whereas macro-financial assistance amounting to EUR 80 million has been offered by the European Union, with a view to supporting Lebanon's domestic efforts to carry out post-war reconstruction and bring about a sustainable economic recovery, and thus alleviating the financial constraints on the implementation of the Government's economic programme,
- L. whereas more than 300 000 Palestinian refugees are still living in poor conditions in Lebanon; whereas the outbreaks of violence and the fights with the army that have taken place in some Palestinian refugee camps have made the situation in the country more strained,
- M. whereas the territorial integrity of the Shebaa farms is still a pending issue,
1. Welcomes the Agreement reached in Doha on the election of General Michel Sleiman as President of the Republic in the coming days, the creation of a new National Unity Government and the adoption of the election law; calls on the parties to the Agreement to fully implement it; stresses the importance of the positive reaction given by the international community; congratulates the Lebanese parties on the Agreement, and the State of Qatar and the League of Arab States on the successful mediation;
 2. Stresses the importance of Lebanon's stability, sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity; points out that political stability in Lebanon should be built on the restoration of a climate of confidence between all the parties, the renunciation of violence and the rejection of external influence;
 3. Welcomes the positive way in which the army and security services contributed to putting an end to the recent developments; invites all the parties involved to support the Lebanese army so that it can guarantee fully the functioning, security, law and order, sovereignty and stability of Lebanon;
 4. Considers, therefore, that the security of the country and of all Lebanese people is dependent on the disarmament of all armed groups, especially Hezbollah, and control of the trafficking of arms to Lebanon; considers it vital that all weapons imported into Lebanon be directed only to the official Lebanese army; reiterates its call for the Lebanese Government to exercise, in cooperation with United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), full sovereignty and effective control over the borders and the territory of the country in this connection; calls in this regard on all parties to renounce violence, fully accept the rules of democracy and recognise all state authorities and institutions democratically elected, regardless of their ethnic, religious and party affiliation and origin;

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5. Recalls that the Association Agreement provides for a political dialogue between the European Parliament and the Lebanese Parliament on the basis of the establishment of political cooperation between the two institutions;
6. Reiterates the importance of the role of UNIFIL; considers it vital that the Lebanese Government exercise full sovereignty and effective control over the country's borders and territory in all activities that fall under the jurisdiction of the state, in such a way as to guarantee the security of the country and its citizens;
7. Reiterates its call for all the parties concerned to support the work of the international tribunal to try those responsible for the assassination of the former Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, and other politically motivated assassinations in Lebanon, and urges Syria to fully cooperate with it;
8. Urges the Lebanese authorities to make every effort to put an end to all discrimination against the Palestinian refugees; reiterates its call for the international community to increase its assistance so as to arrive at a lasting settlement;
9. Calls on Syria to refrain from all interference that can have a negative impact on Lebanese internal affairs and to play a constructive role in seeking to establish stability in the country; appeals to Iran and Syria to play a constructive role; calls on all parties concerned to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006), with regard to respecting the independence, sovereignty, security and stability of Lebanon, recalling the ban on selling weapons to armed militias;
10. Reiterates its support for the determination of the European Union to assist Lebanon in its economic restructuring; calls on the Council and the Commission to continue their efforts to support the reconstruction and economic recovery of Lebanon and to establish closer cooperation with civil society in the country, in order to promote further democratisation there;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Government and Parliament of Lebanon, the President and Government of Syria, and the Government and Parliament of Iran.

Rising food prices in the European Union and developing countries

P6_TA(2008)0229

European Parliament resolution of 22 May 2008 on rising food prices in the EU and the developing countries

(2009/C 279 E/14)

The European Parliament,

- whereas this year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25(1) of which concerns the right to food,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the 1996 World Food Summit and the objective of reducing by half the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015,
- having regard to the obligations contained in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, particularly Article 11 thereof on the right to food, to which all European Union Member States are States Parties,