



Egypt

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 110(4) of the Rules of Procedure on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities:

The European Parliament, having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt and Syria, in particular of 15 September 2011 on the situation in Syria, of 7 July 2011 on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa, and of 17 February 2011 on the situation in Egypt,

- having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2011 on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion,
- having regard to the statements of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Syria of 8 October 2011 and on Egypt of 10 October 2011,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 20 February 2011,
- having regard to the conclusions on Syria of the Foreign Affairs Council of 10 October 2011 and the European Council conclusions of 23 October 2011,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Egypt and Syria are parties,
- having regard to Council Decision 2011/522/CFSP amending Decision 2011/273/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Syria, Council Decision 2011/523/EU partially suspending the application of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic, Council Regulation (EU) No 878/2011 of 2 September 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning

restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, and Council Regulation (EU) No 1011/2011 <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:269:0018:0020:EN:PDF>> of 13 October 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria - having regard to Rule 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the freedoms of religion, belief, conscience and thought are fundamental and universal values and are essential elements of democracy; whereas the European Union has repeatedly expressed its commitment to the freedoms of religion, belief, conscience and thought, and has stressed that governments have a duty to guarantee these freedoms all over the world;

B. whereas Egypt is going through a critical period of democratic transition and faces considerable challenges and difficulties in this process; whereas economic development and a higher standard of living of the population are essential for long-term political and social stability in the country;

C. whereas at least 25 Egyptian citizens were killed and more than 300 wounded on 9 October in Cairo during a peaceful march organised by Coptic Christians, starting in the Shubra district of Northern Cairo and heading towards the Maspero state television building, to protest against an attack on a Coptic church in Aswan, to effectively fight against religious discrimination, and to call for the adoption of a unified law on the building of houses of worship, for religious discrimination to be effectively criminalised and for the church that was attacked to be rebuilt;

D. whereas the Egyptian authorities have responded to this tragic event by initiating an inspection of the Maspero area by the Prosecutor-General's office, conducting an investigation under the military judicial authority and setting up a fact-finding commission composed of members of the judiciary to investigate these incidents with the aim of holding accountable those responsible for inciting violence and for violent actions; initiated the immediate consideration of a draft decree aimed at legalising the status of places of worship built without proper authorisation; initiated, on the basis of a request made by leaders of various religious groups, a social debate on the draft unified code for building places of worship with the aim of its adoption; and decided to introduce amendments to the Penal Code to fight discrimination both in the public and private domains;

E. whereas since March 2011 tens of thousands of Copts have reportedly left Egypt;

F. whereas civilians arrested under the emergency law are tried before military courts which violate the right to a fair trial and deny defendants the right to appeal; whereas human rights organisations have reported that more than 12 000 civilians have been tried before these special courts since March 2011;

G. whereas Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested by the military police on 28 March 2011 at his home in Cairo for voicing his opinion online, including criticism of the role the Egyptian military played during and after the popular revolution; whereas he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on 10 April 2011 on charges of 'insulting the military' after an unfair fast-track trial in a military court in the absence of his lawyer, family and friends;

H. whereas the threats levelled at NGOs, especially those involved in the defence of human rights, in an intensive defamatory campaign launched by the state-owned press, served to de-legitimise and stigmatise them in the eyes of the public as acting against the interests of Egypt;

I. whereas more violence was incited by Egyptian state television when people were called upon to 'protect the army';

J. whereas the transitional period after the revolution of 25 January in Egypt has been characterised by a tendency towards marginalisation of women, who were excluded from the Constitutional Committee, and whereas, as part of the review of the law on political rights, the women's quota has been abolished;

K. concerned about the kidnapping of Coptic girls who have been forced to convert to Islam;

1. Expresses again its solidarity with the Egyptian people in this critical and difficult period of democratic transition in the country and continues to support their democratic aspirations; encourages the EU and its Member States to continue to support the efforts aimed at accelerating democratic, economic and social reforms in Egypt;

2. Strongly condemns the killing of protestors in Egypt; expresses its sincere condolences to the families of all victims; calls on the authorities to ensure that security forces do not use disproportionate force; emphasises the right of all citizens to demonstrate freely and peacefully, under due protection from law enforcement authorities; calls on the

Egyptian authorities to release the 28 arrested Christians in Maspero as well as all others arrested;

3. Welcomes the efforts made by the Egyptian authorities to identify the authors and perpetrators of the attacks on Christian communities; stresses that it is important that an independent, thorough and transparent investigation into the events in Maspero should be conducted by an independent civil judiciary, in order to hold all those responsible to account; stresses that the role of the media has to be fully addressed; notes the government's announcements about the immediate consideration of a draft decree aiming to legalise the status of places of worship built without proper authorisation as well as about strengthening legal instruments aimed at fighting discrimination both in the public and private domains; stresses, however, the responsibility of the Egyptian Government and authorities to ensure the safety of all citizens in the country and that those responsible for the violence be brought to justice;

4. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure full respect for all fundamental rights, including freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, conscience and thought for all citizens in Egypt, including the Coptic Christians, and that Coptic Christian communities do not fall victim to violent attacks and can live in peace and freely express their beliefs throughout the country; calls for the adequate protection of the churches in order to put an end to the continuous aggression and destruction of churches by Islamic extremists; welcomes continued efforts to adopt a 'Common Code for building places of worship'; stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by legal instruments; urges the Egyptian authorities to end discrimination against Coptic Christians, for example by deleting references to religion from all official documents, and to ensure equal dignity and equal opportunities for all citizens in Egypt to have access to all public and political posts, including representation in the armed forces, in Parliament and in Government;

5. Calls on the EU Member States to strictly abide by the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports; urges the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to ensure the implementation of, and compliance with, these requirements;

6. Takes the view that a new Constitution should explicitly provide for the protection of all fundamental rights, including freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, conscience and thought, and the protection of

minorities; calls on the Egyptian authorities to make sure that any constitutional provision is inclusive and leaves no possibility for discrimination against anyone in Egyptian society;

7. Stresses the importance of holding free, fair and transparent elections to the People's Assembly and to the Shoura Council in late 2011 and early 2012, and presidential elections in 2012, in Egypt; encourages the EU and its Member States to continue to support and assist the Egyptian authorities, political parties and civil society in the efforts aimed at achieving this goal; encourages the Egyptian authorities to facilitate the work of foreign organisations that intend to follow the electoral process on the ground; calls for the interim government of Egypt to be replaced as soon as possible by a government established in accordance with the results of free elections;

8. Calls on the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) to put an end to the emergency law immediately, as it violates the rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly, in order to prevent the parliamentary elections scheduled by the end of the year from being conducted under the state of emergency;

9. Welcomes in this regard the amendment to the Penal Code criminalising acts of discrimination on grounds of sex, race, language, religion or creed;

10. Considers that measures should be adopted by the EU in the event of serious violations of the human rights of any citizens in Egypt; underlines the necessity for the EU to stand ready to adopt further measures in order to assist the Egyptian people who are striving for a democratic future through peaceful means;

11. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to adopt a new association law in accordance with international human rights standards and in close consultation with NGOs and human rights groups; underlines that respect for women's rights, gender equality and women's political participation is crucial for real democratic development in Egypt;

12. Expresses its deep concerns about the health condition of imprisoned blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad and calls for his immediate release; urges the Egyptian Government and authorities to put an end without delay to military trials of civilians; urges the Egyptian authorities to ensure that no civil society organisation is subject to direct or indirect intimidation in the country and to facilitate the participation of these organisations in the process of democratic transition, including the electoral process;

