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Situation in Egypt

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

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on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular those of 14 March and 4 July 2013 on the situation in Egypt,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Egypt of 22 July and 21 August 2013,
- having regard to the statements made by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Egypt over the past two months, including that of 21 August 2013,
- having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and the EU-Egypt Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),
- having regard to the EU-Egypt Task Force meeting of 13 and 14 November 2012, and its conclusions,
- having regard to the report of the European Court of Auditors on EU Cooperation in Egypt in the Field of Governance, published on 18 June 2013,
- having regard to the statements made by General Al-Sisi, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt, on 1 and 4 July 2013,
- having regard to the ‘Programme to Sustain the Path to Democracy’ of the Egyptian interim government,
- having regard to the statement by 22 Arab human rights organisations of 29 August 2013,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Egypt ratified in 1982,

– having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Egypt is a key EU partner in the southern Mediterranean; whereas developments in Egypt have significant implications in the whole region and beyond; whereas Egypt has been engulfed in a tumultuous political transition process since the overthrow of President Mubarak in February 2011;

B. whereas on 30 June 2013, millions of President Morsi's opponents massed in Cairo and in other Egyptian cities calling on him to step down; whereas on 3 July 2013, the head of the armed forces, General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, led a military coup which deposed the Morsi government, suspended the constitution and designated an interim government to oversee the implementation of a roadmap over a nine-month transition period during which the 2012 constitution would be amended and adopted by referendum, followed by parliamentary and presidential elections;

C. whereas the ousting of President Morsi received support from a wide and eclectic alliance; whereas Egypt's highest Islamic and Christian Coptic authorities, prominent liberal politicians, and the Salafist Nour party endorsed the transition roadmap;

D. whereas the interim government has stated that national reconciliation and the rule of law are the highest priorities of its action; whereas the Muslim Brotherhood has insisted on the re-instatement of ousted President Morsi and of the 2012 constitution and on the release of all members of the Brotherhood held in custody, as pre-conditions for their participation in the national reconciliation process;

E. whereas former President Mubarak has been released from prison and placed under house arrest; whereas he is facing a retrial on charges of complicity in the killing of protestors during the 2011 uprising; whereas a number of generals and former Mubarak loyalists have been appointed by the interim government as governors;

F. whereas on 14 August 2013, Egyptian security forces violently dispersed two large protest camps which had been established by supporters of the Brotherhood outside Cairo's Rabba al-Adawiya mosque and in Nahda Square; whereas this occurred despite mediation efforts made by the EU and led to a further escalation of the political and human rights crisis; whereas some pro-Morsi supporters were reported to have been heavily armed and used live ammunition against police and local residents; whereas the violent clearing of the sit-ins led to hundreds of dead and injured; whereas a one-month state of emergency was declared on 14 August 2013; whereas the interim government has announced the launch of an independent investigation into the events;

G. whereas the violent dispersal of the sit-ins was followed by tragic sectarian violence committed against Egyptian Christians, notably by Muslim Brotherhood supporters; whereas the Egyptian security forces were accused of having failed to protect churches and Coptic communities against predictable reprisal attacks;

H. whereas a heavy crackdown has been conducted against supporters of Mr Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood; whereas thousands of Brotherhood members, including its entire leadership and Mr Morsi, have been arrested over the past two months and hundreds have been charged with inciting violence or murder; whereas the Interim Prime Minister Hazem Beblawi has evoked the possibility of legally dissolving the Brotherhood;

I. whereas the newly established 50-member committee tasked with amending the 2012 constitution includes only two Islamists and 4 women; whereas the first draft amendments presented by 10 legal experts have been criticised both for removing the main religiously tinged provisions and reinforcing the autonomy of the armed forces;

J. whereas acts of terrorism and violent attacks against security forces in the Sinai have been increasing; whereas the Egyptian Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim was the target of a bomb attack in Cairo on 5 September 2013;

K. whereas media outlets critical of the security forces or supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood are facing a brutal crackdown; whereas the offices of several TV channels have been raided by security forces in the past six weeks; whereas on 3 September 2013 four TV channels were banned from broadcasting; whereas five journalists have been killed, 80 have been arbitrarily detained (with 10 still held) and at least 40 news providers have been physically attacked;

L. whereas Egyptian NGOs have denounced grave threats to human rights since 30 June 2013, including the arrest of up to 85 children in connection with the clashes between pro-Morsi demonstrators and the security forces; whereas these children are reported to have been detained with adults in remote police stations, charged with acts of violence and prevented from having access to lawyers;

M. whereas Egyptian women are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of prolonged political crisis; whereas female protestors are often subject to violence, sexual assaults and other forms of degrading treatment, while women's rights activists face threats and harassment;

N. whereas the social, fiscal and economic environment in Egypt has steadily continued to deteriorate;

O. whereas the EU is Egypt's leading economic partner and its main source of foreign investment and development cooperation; whereas the EU-Egypt Task Force has agreed on a major assistance package of EUR 5 billion for 2012-2013; whereas the EU's policy towards Egypt is prone to be misused by radical currents on both sides in Egypt for propaganda purposes;

P. whereas in line with the European Neighbourhood Policy as revised after the Arab Spring, and notably the 'more for more' approach, the EU's level and scope of engagement with Egypt is incentive-based and therefore dependent on progress with regard to the country respecting its commitments on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality;

Q. whereas on 21 August 2013 the Foreign Affairs Council tasked the High Representative to review EU assistance under the ENP and the Association Agreement on the basis of Egypt's commitment to the principles that underpin them; whereas the Council decided that assistance in the socio-economic sector and to civil society would continue, but that the EU's cooperation with Egypt would be readjusted according to developments on the ground;

R. whereas the European Court of Auditors concluded in June 2013 that the Commission and the EEAS had not been able to manage EU support to improve governance in Egypt effectively;

1. Expresses its deepest concern at the situation in Egypt following the military coup d'état against President Morsi and the country's further deviation from its democratisation course;

2. Condemns the political intrusion of the Egyptian army into the country's arduous transition process and calls for the immediate lifting of the state of emergency and the full transfer of power back to democratically elected civilian authorities;

3. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the grossly disproportionate use of force by the Egyptian security forces and the tragic loss of life during the dismantlement of the Rabaa and Nahda encampments; condemns also the ensuing brutal clampdown on Muslim Brotherhood supporters by the Egyptian military with the assistance of the police forces and parts of the judiciary; considers that the mass detention and repression of the Brotherhood's leadership diminishes the prospects of a negotiated and sustainable

solution to the political crisis and further entrenches uncompromising positions on all sides; calls for the release of Mr Morsi and other members of the Muslim Brotherhood;

4. Deplores at the same time the fact that the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood failed to prevent a number of its supporters from committing acts of violence against the security forces and those perceived as political opponents, in particular the Coptic community of Egypt;

5. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the violence against the Coptic community and the destruction of a large number of churches, community centres and businesses throughout the country; expresses concern that the authorities failed to take adequate security measures to protect the Coptic community in spite of many warnings of a sectarian backlash; points to the historical pluralism of Egyptian society and asks the Egyptian Government to take urgent measures to ensure that peaceful cohabitation between the diverse communities in Egypt can quickly be restored;

6. Points out that President Morsi failed to deliver on democratic expectations and to respond to the pressing needs of the people of Egypt, and failed to fight terrorism and Islamic extremism, in particular in the Sinai Peninsula; stresses that the EU had been complacent as regards the Morsi administration in failing to honour its commitment to an incentive-based approach in its relations with Egypt, including the possibility of applying the 'less-for-less' principle;

7. Stresses the urgency of a process of national reconciliation, including all moderate political and social forces in Egypt, without which the largest country involved in the Arab Spring will stray further from the democratic transition process initiated in 2011; stresses the particular responsibility of the interim government and the military forces to refrain from taking any measures which aggravate the social and ideological divisions in Egyptian society, notably by ending its revanchist crackdown against the Muslim Brotherhood and by criticising publicly any acts and pronouncements stoking social tensions; calls on moderate elements in the Brotherhood actively to support and participate in this process; calls on all sides to curb the incendiary rhetoric and to commit to peaceful political expression;

8. Expresses its strong concern about the constitutional drafting process, which has so far failed both to include all components of the Egyptian political spectrum, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, and to ensure adequate women's participation; stresses that an inclusive, gender-sensitive and transparent constitutional process is indispensable in order to lay the foundations for a truly democratic and stable new Egypt, guaranteeing the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens of Egypt and promoting inter-religious tolerance and cohabitation;

9. Is gravely concerned by the deteriorating media environment in which journalists are facing arbitrary arrests and physical attacks, and in which media outlets critical of the interim government or supportive of the deposed Morsi government have been raided and closed; calls on the interim government to uphold freedom of the media, to release all journalists who have been arbitrarily detained, and to take urgent action to protect journalists and to investigate and prosecute all acts of violence committed against reporters;

10. Stresses that a genuine and independent civil society is of fundamental importance in supporting the peaceful and inclusive political and social transformation of the country; calls on the Egyptian authorities to allow civil society to operate freely, including by ensuring that the committee tasked with writing a new NGO law produces a draft which is in line with international standards; supports the call by regional and Egyptian NGOs for a fact-finding mission by the Arab League to investigate the recent acts of violence in Egypt;

11. Expresses deep concern at the reported arrest of dozens of children in relation to the crackdown on Brotherhood demonstrators, and calls for their immediate release;

12. Calls on the interim government to cooperate fully with UN human rights procedures, including by approving pending requests to visit Egypt by several special rapporteurs, to respond positively to the visa requests filed a month ago by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and to approve the opening of a regional bureau of the OHCHR in Egypt, as promised by the Egyptian authorities two and a half years ago; calls on the interim government to extend an open invitation to all UN Special Rapporteurs to visit Egypt, as extended by Tunisia in 2011;

13. Calls on the EU institutions and Member States to make clear that a return to an authoritarian security regime in Egypt is unacceptable and to urge the interim government to demonstrate a credible commitment to engaging effectively in a democratic transition process, notably by delivering on its roadmap pledges to revise the constitution and to hold elections in line with international standards, by upholding the freedom of assembly and association, by lifting the state of emergency, by launching a credible, independent investigation into the deadly violence since 3 July 2013, by ending the clampdown on dissent and opposition forces and by releasing all political prisoners, including Mohammed Morsi; urges the High Representative and her services to resume their mediation efforts, in close liaison with regional actors; insists that EU assistance to Egypt is reviewed in a differentiated manner with the aim of freezing or delaying all ongoing or planned programmes from which the Egyptian regime, including the military and closely connected industries and businessmen, benefit or would benefit;

14. Welcomes the decision by the Foreign Affairs Council of 21 August 2013 for Member States to suspend export licences to Egypt for any equipment which might be used for internal repression, to reassess export licences and to review their security assistance with Egypt; regrets nonetheless that this decision was long overdue and calls for clarification of the scope of this decision and its implementation; calls on the Member States strictly to implement the EU Common Position on arms exports as well as the human rights provisions in the Arms Trade Treaty, and to suspend immediately any arms exports and security assistance to the Egyptian police, armed forces or any other security force;

15. Calls for a profound review of the EU's engagement with Egypt commensurate to the current political and human rights crisis in the country and, in the interim, calls for the suspension of all Commission and EU Member State assistance programmes to Egypt that do not directly benefit independent civil society and the most vulnerable groups of the population; requests that the High Representative report back to the Parliament on the outcome of the review of the EU's assistance to Egypt, which was requested by the Foreign Affairs Council of 21 August 2013; reiterates, in this regard, its profound dismay at the recent assessment by the European Court of Auditors of the EU's support for governance and human rights in Egypt; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to drastically review their assistance programmes to Egypt in light of this report;

16. 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 parliaments and governments of the Member States, and the President, government and Shura Council of Egypt.

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Press release

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