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Situation in Lebanon

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Hélène Flautre, David Hammerstein and Pierre Jonckheer***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

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, 10 March 2005 on the situation in Lebanon, 7 September 2006 on the situation in the Middle East, 12 July 2007 on the Middle East, and 29 November 2007 on the proposal for a Council decision providing Community macro-financial assistance to Lebanon,

 having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 (2004), 1636 (2005), 1680 (2006), 1701 (2006) and 1757 (2007),

 having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Association 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,

 having regard to Council Decision 2007/860/EC of 10 December 2007 providing Community macro-financial assistance to 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 the statement of the High Representative for the CFSP of 15 May 2008,

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas a stable, fully sovereign, united and democratic Lebanon is of crucial importance for the stability and peaceful development of the whole Middle East,

B. whereas Lebanon is experiencing a protracted political deadlock that is paralysing the proper functioning of the fragile institutions of the country,

C. whereas on 6 May 2008 the Lebanese Government decided to outlaw Hezbollah's extensive telecommunications network, regarded by this group as an integral part of its defensive measures against

Israel, and sack the airport security chief allegedly linked to Hezbollah,

D. whereas violent clashes broke out in some parts of the country and, in particular, in the capital, where Hezbollah militias set up barricades, closed down pro-government media, blockaded the airport and took control of West Beirut,

E. whereas the fighting extended to the Chouf region and to the North, altogether causing the death of at least 65 people; whereas the Lebanese army decided not to intervene and, after a truce was reached and Hezbollah's militias withdrew, gradually took control of the situation and tried to restore order; whereas this fighting was the worst since the end of 1975-1990 civil war,

F. whereas with mediation from the Arab League, led by Qatar, a deal was reached between the parties, and the government revoked its previous decisions with a view to engaging in immediate dialogue on the three outstanding issues of the election of the new president, the formation of a national unity government and the reform of the election law,

G. whereas since February 2005 the country has been ravaged by a series of political killings aimed at further destabilising the situation; whereas Army Chief of Operations General François al-Hajj, who was assassinated on 12 December 2007, was the seventh high-ranking Lebanese to be killed,

H. 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,

I. whereas Article 2 of 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, stipulates that relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement, shall be based on respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of the Agreement,

J. whereas, following the July-August 2006 military conflict, Lebanon still faces substantial financial and economic challenges; whereas on 4 January 2007 the authorities of Lebanon adopted a comprehensive programme of socio-economic reforms; whereas macro-financial assistance amounting to € 80 million, with a view to supporting Lebanon's domestic efforts to carry out post-war reconstruction and bring about a sustainable economic recovery, and in this way alleviating the financial constraints on the implementation of the Government's economic programme, has been offered by the European Union,

K. 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,

L. whereas the situation of the Shebaa farms and the establishment of definite borders between Lebanon and Israel are still pending issues,

M. whereas since the withdrawal of its troops in 2005 Syria has never ceased to obstruct and interfere in Lebanese internal affairs,

1. Expresses its deep concern about the possible grave consequences of the current political crisis and the deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon; stresses the importance of Lebanon's stability, sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and points out that political stability in Lebanon can only be built on the restoration of a climate of confidence between all the parties, a renunciation of

violence and a rejection of external influence;

2. Firmly condemns the conduct of Hezbollah in threatening or using force to secure its broader political goals; expects the perpetrators of the crimes committed during the clashes to be held accountable and brought to justice;

3. Stresses that Hezbollah's practice of acting like a state within a state is incompatible with a democratic system; calls, therefore, on Hezbollah's leadership to make a clear choice and, in compliance with UNSC Resolution 1559, disband and disarm its militias, renounce violence, fully accept the rules of democracy and recognise all state authorities and institutions democratically elected regardless of their ethnic, religious or party affiliation and origin;

4. Welcomes the Qatari-mediated deal reached by the parties in Beirut and strongly supports the ongoing efforts made by the Arab League in Doha, and in particular by Qatar's Prime Minister, to settle the current political crisis with a view to reaching a broad and comprehensive agreement;

5. Deplores the fact that the sitting of the Lebanese Parliament to elect the President of the Republic has been indefinitely postponed and urges all parties to reach an agreement so that the election can take place as soon as possible;

6. Urges the President of the Lebanese Parliament to make every effort to restore the functioning of the institution, which is a basic requirement of democracy, in order to contribute to a dialogue of national reconciliation and to find a compromise solution to the current political deadlock;

7. Resolves, subject to further consideration, to invite all the leaders of the Lebanese parliamentary groups to Brussels in coordination with the Arab League in order to de-escalate the institutional crisis, rebuild confidence and facilitate dialogue with a view to reaching a lasting compromise;

8. Reiterates its call for all 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;

9. Urges the Lebanese Government to make every effort to put an end to all discrimination against the Palestinian refugees and reiterates its call for the international community to increase its assistance so as to arrive at a lasting settlement;

10. Calls for the gradual disarmament of all militias and paramilitary groups and considers it vital that all weapon imports into Lebanon be directed only to the official Lebanese army; reiterates its call for the Lebanese Government to exercise, in cooperation with UNIFIL, full sovereignty and effective control over the borders and the territory of the country in this regard;

11. 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 lasting peace and stability in the country;

12. 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 as well as to establish closer cooperation with civil society in the country, in order to promote further democratisation there;

13. 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 Arab League, the President of the

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Government and Parliament of Lebanon, and the President and Government of Syria.

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