Press release | 18.04.2013

Responsibility to protect (R2P)

EP calls for 'European Consensus'

The European Parliament today adopted a recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P). Speaking after the vote, EP draftsperson/rapporteur and Green foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"The EP has today sent a strong message to EU governments and the foreign policy high representative to adopt a 'European Consensus' on the 'Responsibility to Protect', with a view to clarifying what the principle means for EU foreign policy and the EU's role in its implementation. The cacophony of European responses to the upheavals of the Arab Spring and the mass atrocities and violations that followed clearly underlined the need for a common EU approach.

"The EP has today urged the EU to reinvigorate the principle of R2P and promote its inclusion in EU foreign policy. This implies: establishing a 'European Consensus' similar to those on development in 2006 and humanitarian aid in 2008, which commits EU institutions and member states to coordinate their respective policies on the basis of common guidelines; establishing a R2P focal point within existing structures; targeted training of EU delegation staff for the early detection of situations of concern; increased exchange with civil society on the ground; an annual report on the implementation of R2P and the suitability of EU instruments for this.

"MEPs have highlighted the preventive character of the principle and the importance of promoting non-coercive measures. The EP also recommended the development of criteria to be followed when acting to implement R2P (notably, the third pillar including military interventions), such as the proportionality of any intervention, a thorough balance of consequences and ex-ante clarity of the political objectives. Council also needs to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms of the implementation of UN Security Council mandated missions.

"The ball is now in the court of the Council and high representative Ashton. They must respond to these proposals, which were adopted by an overwhelming majority."

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