Financing ICTs: the MFF

35. Regrets the fact that the sum of EUR 9,2 billion proposed by the Commission for ICT investment through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for the 2014-2020 period will be drastically reduced; stresses that, owing to the new financial circumstances, investments in broadband networks under the Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development are more important than ever and should be increased for the 2007-2013 programming period;

36. Stresses that greater targeting of EU funding for ICT investment is needed and that the funding for ICT in the next MFF should be commensurate with the weight and economic impact of this sector; calls for the share of ICT-related expenditure in the overall MFF to be given higher priority compared with the 2007-2013 period;

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37. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

P7_TA(2013)0378

Situation in Syria

European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the situation in Syria (2013/2819(RSP))

(2016/C 093/18)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,

— having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria of 23 January, 18 February, 11 March, 22 April, 27 May, 24 June, 9 July and 22 July 2013; having regard to the European Council conclusions on Syria of 8 February 2013,

— having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, of 21 August 2013 on the latest reports of the use of chemical weapons in Damascus, of 23 August 2013 on the high urgency of a political solution to the Syrian conflict (reflecting the agreed position of the EU on Syria of 7 September 2013), and of 10 September 2013 on the proposal to place Syria's chemical weapons under international control;

— having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto, the Geneva Protocol (to the Hague Convention) for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva on 17 June 1925, and the standards set forth in the Chemical Weapons Convention,

— having regard to Rule 110(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, according to the United Nations, since the start of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria in March 2011, more than 100 000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed; whereas according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 4,25 million people are internally displaced and there are more than 2 million Syrian refugees, mainly in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq;

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B. whereas on 21 August 2013 a large-scale chemical attack was perpetrated on the outskirts of Damascus, killing hundreds of people, including many women and children; whereas that attack constituted a blatant violation of international law, a war crime and a crime against humanity; whereas information from a wide variety of sources confirms the existence of such an attack and seems to constitute strong evidence that the Syrian regime is responsible for these attacks;

C. whereas the Government of Syria agreed on 25 August 2013, four days after the chemical attack, that UN inspectors could visit the site; whereas UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the inspection team to deliver its findings as soon as possible; whereas the mandate of the UN inspection mission is limited to determining whether or not chemical weapons were used, without addressing the question of who was responsible for this action;

D. whereas on 9 September 2013 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and on 10 September 2013 VP/HR Catherine Ashton, welcomed the proposal for the transfer of the chemical weapons of the Syrian regime to the international community for destruction, a proposal readily taken on board by Russia, Iran and the Syrian regime; whereas Mr Ban Ki-moon said he was considering urging the Security Council to demand the immediate transfer of these weapons and chemical precursor stocks to places inside Syria where they can be safely stored and destroyed;

1. Strongly condemns the mass killing of civilians with chemical weapons on 21 August 2013, which, according to Western intelligence, resulted in the deaths of at least 1 400 people, including 400 children, while noting that different sources seem to indicate that the Syrian regime is responsible for this attack;

2. Points out that in the face of this appalling use of chemical weapons, the international community cannot remain idle; stresses that the proven use of chemical weapons, particularly against civilians, is a flagrant breach of international law, a war crime and a crime against humanity, which requires a clear, strong, targeted and united response, not excluding eventual deterrent measures, in order to make it clear that such crimes are unacceptable and to avoid any further use of chemical weapons in Syria or elsewhere;

3. Welcomes the position agreed by the EU on Syria at the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers of 7 September 2013; stresses that the situation in Syria warrants a coherent common approach by the Member States; calls on the EU and its Member States to discuss further the situation in Syria in the framework of the Foreign Affairs Council and to assess what measures the EU could adopt to support the democratic forces in the Syrian opposition, facilitate dialogue and a common approach with other members of the international community and provide further humanitarian assistance to the population in Syria and in neighbouring countries; emphasises that the EU should pay particular care to reaching out to all relevant actors and promoting a region-wide de-escalation process;

4. Calls on the UN to quickly complete its thorough investigation into the use of chemical weapons in Syria; calls for the report of the inspection team to be sent as soon as possible to the Security Council so that it can discuss the mass killing in Syria on the basis of the conclusions reached by the UN investigation team and assess the measures which need to be adopted as a consequence in order to respond to the use of chemical weapons in Syria and hold those responsible to account;

5. Welcomes the proposal that Syria's chemical weapons arsenal should be placed at the disposal of the international community with a view to having it destroyed as soon as possible, following the ultimatum from the international community, accompanied by a binding resolution of the United Nations Security Council, that in the event of failure to comply, this measure might be imposed on the basis of all the instruments provided for in the United Nations Charter;

6. Believes that the international community should bring about a political solution for Syria which can stop the violence, prevent further use of chemical weapons and promote a democratic transition; calls, in particular, on Russia and China, as permanent members of the Security Council, to face their responsibilities and to facilitate the achievement of a common position and a diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis, without excluding a role for the UN General Assembly whereby it could take up this matter in the event of a persistent blockage in the Security Council; is convinced that a lasting solution to the current crisis in Syria can only be achieved through a Syrian-led, inclusive political process with the backing of the international community; continues to support, in this spirit, the efforts of the EU and its Member States and of UN-

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Arab League Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi to achieve progress in the Geneva II process and in the Security Council; reiterates its calls for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court for a formal investigation; reiterates its call for President Assad and his regime to step aside and pave the way for a democratic transition;

7. Expresses grave concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and the implications for neighbouring countries; urges the EU and its Member States to live up to their humanitarian responsibilities and to increase their assistance to Syrian refugees; reiterates its call for all countries to fulfil the pledges they made at the Kuwait donor conference of 30 January 2013; calls on all parties involved in the conflict to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance through all possible channels, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure the safety of all medical personnel and humanitarian workers;

8. 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, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.

P7_TA(2013)0379

Situation in Egypt

European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the situation in Egypt (2013/2820(RSP))

(2016/C 093/19)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,

— having regard to its resolution of 23 May 2013 on asset recovery to Arab Spring countries in transition [1],

— having regard to the European Council conclusions on the Arab Spring of 8 February 2013,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 August and 22 July 2013 on Egypt,

— having regard to the joint statement of 18 August 2013 on Egypt by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso,

— having regard to the remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the extraordinary meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on Egypt of 21 August 2013, the statements of the High Representative on the situation and developments in Egypt of August and July 2013, and the joint statement of 7 August 2013 on Egypt by the High Representative and the US Secretary of State, John Kerry,

— having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2001, which entered into force in 2004, strengthened by the Action Plan of 2007, and to the Commission's progress report on its implementation of 20 March 2013,

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[1] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0224.