27. Agrees with the Ombudsman that a concise statement of public service principles would contribute to a culture of service and would promote citizens' trust in the EU civil service and institutions; looks forward to the Ombudsman's statement of public service principles, on which he is currently consulting his national colleagues and other interested parties;

28. Proposes that this statement of public service principles be disseminated as widely as possible and made easily accessible to EU citizens, so as to reassure them of the EU's commitment to protecting public services, which are a feature of their day-to-day lives;

29. Considers, nevertheless, that adopting common binding rules and principles on administrative procedure within the EU's own administration, as already called for by the first European Ombudsman, and the introduction of the service principle in this context would be the best way to ensure a lasting shift in the administrative culture of the EU and expects, therefore, the Commission to make the presentation of a draft regulation to this end on the basis of Article 298 of the TFEU a priority;

30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of the Committee on Petitions to the Council, the Commission, the European Ombudsman, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to their ombudsmen or similar competent bodies.

Situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities

P7_TA(2011)0471

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2011 on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities

(2013/C 131 E/12)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt and Syria, in particular of 15 September 2011 on the situation in Syria [1], 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 [2], and of 17 February 2011 on the situation in Egypt [3],

— having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2011 on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion [4],

— 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,

[1] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0387.
[2] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0333.
[3] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0064.
[4] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0021.

— having regard to Council Decision 2011/522/CFSP of 2 September 2011 amending Decision 2011/273/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Syria [1], Council Decision 2011/523/EU of 2 September 2011 partially suspending the application of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic [2], 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 [3], and Council Regulation (EU) No 1011/2011 of 13 October 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria [4],

— 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;

Egypt

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 2011 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;

[1] OJ L 228, 3.9.2011, p. 16.
[2] OJ L 228, 3.9.2011, p. 19.
[3] OJ L 228, 3.9.2011, p. 1.
[4] OJ L 269, 14.10.2011, p. 18.

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 2011 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;

Syria

L. whereas, since the start of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria in March 2011, the systematic killings, violence and torture have been dramatically escalating and the Syrian army and security forces continue to respond with targeted killings, torture and mass arrests; whereas, according to UN estimates, over 3 000 people have lost their lives, many more have been injured and thousands detained; whereas many Syrians are facing a deteriorating humanitarian situation as a result of the violence and displacements;

M. whereas it is still the case that no international journalists and observers are being allowed access to the country; whereas reports from Syrian human rights activists and images from mobile telephones are the only means of documenting the widespread human rights violations and systematic attacks, both targeted and random, against the peaceful protesters and citizens in general in Syria;

N. whereas ongoing events in Syria are accompanied by actions aimed at inciting inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflict and increasing sectarian tensions; whereas there are reports that estimate that the Christian population in Syria may have dropped from 10 to 8 percent; whereas thousands of Iraqi Christians came to Syria to escape targeted violence in Iraq; whereas many Christians in Syria fear that they will become victims of sectarian violence in the country; whereas Christian communities have an important role to play in the democratisation of the country;

O. whereas, in its conclusions of 10 October 2011, the Council welcomed the efforts of the Syrian political opposition to establish a united platform, called on the international community also to welcome these efforts, and noted the creation of the Syrian National Council (SNC) as a positive step forward; whereas the National Committee for Democratic Change has also been created in Syria;

Egypt

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 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 Common Position on arms exports; urges the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to urge Member States to fully implement and comply with the requirements of the Common Position;

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;

Syria

13. Firmly condemns the disproportionate and brutal use of force against peaceful protesters and the systematic persecution of pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders, journalists, doctors and medical personnel; expresses its deepest concern at the gravity of the human rights violations perpetrated by the Syrian authorities, including mass arrests, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, disappearances and torture, including of children, which may amount to crimes against humanity; reiterates its call on President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to relinquish power immediately to allow a democratic transition to take place in Syria with a view to launching a process of deep democratic reforms;

14. Expresses its sincere condolences to the families of the victims; commends the courage and determination of the Syrian people and strongly supports their aspirations to achieve full respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the guarantee of better economic and social conditions;

15. Reiterates its call for an independent, transparent and effective investigation into the killings, arrests, arbitrary detention and alleged forced disappearances and instances of torture by the Syrian security forces in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are held to account by the international community; takes the view that the UNSC should refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) with the aim of seeing justice done for the Syrian people and preventing more people from falling victim to these practices; calls for full access of international humanitarian and human rights organisations as well as of the international media to the country and underlines the call made by Syrian opposition forces and demonstrators for the sending of international observers;

16. Is deeply concerned about the situation of Christians in Syria, in particular their safety; condemns actions aimed at inciting inter-confessional conflict; urges the current and future Syrian authorities to provide reliable and efficient protection for the Christian communities;

17. Stresses the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria, and notably freedom of religion, belief, conscience and thought; expresses, in this context, its support for the Christian community in the country and, at the same time, encourages this community to play a positive and constructive role in the ongoing events in Syria; encourages also Syrian opposition forces to declare or reconfirm their commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and notably freedom of religion, belief, conscience and thought;

18. Welcomes the positive statement made by the Council on the efforts of the Syrian political opposition to establish a united platform; reiterates its call on VP/HR Ashton, the Council and the Commission to further encourage and support the emergence of organised Syrian democratic opposition forces both within and outside the country;

19. Welcomes the commitment of the EU to continue to press for strong UN action to increase international pressure; reiterates its call on the members of the UNSC, and in particular Russia and China, not to block a resolution condemning the use of lethal force by the Syrian regime and urging that this use of force be ended, and to put in place sanctions for failure to do so; strongly supports the EU decision of 23 September 2011 to adopt additional sanctions against the Syrian regime; underlines the necessity for the EU to stand ready to adopt further measures in order to assist the Syrian people who are striving for a democratic future through peaceful means;

20. Welcomes the condemnation of the Syrian regime by Turkey and Saudi Arabia and Turkey's role in accepting refugees;

21. Strongly condemns the acts of violence, harassment or intimidation of some Syrian citizens taking place on EU territory and recalls that the right to protest freely and peacefully in safety is fully guaranteed in the EU Member States, including for those protesting against the rule of President Bashar al-Assad;

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22. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China, the US Administration and the US Congress, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Current developments in Ukraine

P7_TA(2011)0472

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2011 on the current developments in Ukraine

(2013/C 131 E/13)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Ukraine,

— having regard to the 2010 Country Progress Report on Ukraine and to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Review of 25 May 2011,

— having regard to the statement by its President on the sentencing of former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, on 11 October 2011,

— having regard to the statements issued on 5 August and 11 October 2011 by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the verdict in the case of Yulia Tymoshenko,

— having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership summit held in Warsaw on 29/30 September 2011,

— having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and Ukraine, which entered into force on 1 March 1998, and to the ongoing negotiations on the Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which is intended to replace the PCA,