10. Welcomes the reforms in the Moroccan agriculture sector, namely the 'Plan Vert' ('Green Plan') designed specifically to support small farmers by giving them access to modern technology and investment; calls for continued EU support for the improvement of production methods, through the sharing of best practice, and for Morocco's efforts in the area of water conservation;

11. Recognises that Morocco has ratified most of the relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and recently adopted legislation to outlaw child labour; emphasises, nevertheless, that there is still room for improvement regarding freedom of association and child labour; considers that the provisions of the DCFTAs should include assistance with the implementation of ILO conventions and the ratification of unsigned core ILO conventions, e.g. No 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, and initiatives on corporate social responsibility as part of the sustainable development chapter;

12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the agreement is fully consistent with international law and benefits all the local population groups affected;

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13. 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, its Delegation for relations with the Maghreb Countries, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Government and Parliament of Morocco.

Situation in Syria

P7_TA(2012)0057

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012 on the situation in Syria (2012/2543(RSP))

(2013/C 249 E/11)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,

— having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on Syria of 10 October, 14 November and 1 December 2011 and 23 January 2012 and to the European Council conclusions of 23 October and 9 December 2011,

— 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) on Syria of 8 October, 3 and 28 November and 2 December 2011 and 1 and 4 February 2012,

— having regard to Council Decision 2011/782/CFSP of 1 December 2011 concerning restrictive measures against Syria and repealing Decision 2011/273/CFSP [1], and to the Council's decision following the Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 23 January 2012 to reinforce the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime,

— having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 36/2012 of 18 January 2012 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria and repealing Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 [2],

[1] OJ L 319, 2.12.2011, p. 56.
[2] OJ L 16, 19.1.2012, p. 1.

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— having regard to the Arab League's statements on the situation in Syria of 27 August, 16 October and 12, 16 and 24 November 2011 and 22 January and 12 February 2012, its Action Plan of 2 November 2011, and its sanctions against Syria adopted on 27 November 2011,

— having regard to the UN Security Council (UNSC) Presidential Statement of 3 August 2011,

— having regard to the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic of 22 November 2011,

— having regard to the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the SyrianArabRepublicof 23 November 2011,

— having regard to the resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic of 2 December 2011,

— having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

— having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to all of which Syria is a party,

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

A. 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 have continued to respond with targeted killings, torture and mass arrests; whereas cities and towns throughout Syria are being kept under siege and bombarded by government-led forces; whereas access to food and medical supplies has been extremely difficult; whereas many Syrians are facing a deteriorating humanitarian situation as a result of the violence and displacements;

B. whereas the UN estimates that the death toll in Syria has exceeded 5 400 in the course of the 11 month-long uprising, although up-to-date figures are very difficult to obtain because some areas, such as parts of Homs, are completely sealed off; whereas thousands more have been injured, at least 69 000 have been detained, of whom about 32 000 have subsequently been released, and about 12 400 have fled to neighbouring countries; whereas the UN Children's Fund reports that hundreds of children have been killed and hundreds more arbitrarily arrested and tortured and sexually abused whilst in detention;

C. whereas residents inside the besieged city of Homs are under massive continuous bombardment and fear that the regime is preparing to make a final deadly ground assault; whereas on 12 February 2012 Arab media reported that Syrian tanks and artillery were heavily bombarding the city of Hama, alongside the continued assault on Homs; whereas, at the same time, the Syrian authorities insist that they are confronting 'terrorist groups' and will continue until 'order' is restored;

D. whereas the numerous promises of reforms and amnesties by President Bashar al-Assad have never been honoured and the regime has lost all credibility and legitimacy, which has led to widespread calls in the international community for the President to resign;

E. whereas a French journalist has been killed and a Dutch journalist wounded carrying out the vital role of providing independent information on the events in Syria; whereas the Syrian authorities are denying international journalists any further access to the country; whereas testimonials from Syrian refugees, citizen reports from inside Syria and images uploaded from mobile phones through standalone satellite connections continue to be the main source of information coming out of the country;

F. whereas the Arab League decided to seek the support of the UNSC for a political solution in Syria; whereas on 4 February 2012 the Russian Federation and China vetoed a UNSC resolution that backed the Arab League call for an inclusive and peaceful Syrian-led political process; whereas on 28 January 2012 the Arab League monitoring mission in Syria was suspended due to the critical deterioration of the situation;

G. whereas on 18 January 2012 additional EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime entered into force, including a prohibition on the export of telecommunications monitoring equipment for use by the Syrian regime, a prohibition on participation in certain infrastructure projects and investment in such projects, and additional restrictions on transfers of funds and the provision of financial services;

H. whereas on 23 January 2012 the list of persons, entities and bodies subject to EU restrictive measures was extended by adding 22 persons responsible for human rights violations and eight entities financially supporting the regime;

I. whereas in response to the increasing violence and serious security concerns the United States has closed its embassy in Syria; whereas France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium have recalled their ambassadors; whereas the Gulf Cooperation Council and Tunisia have recalled their ambassadors and decided to expel Syrian ambassadors from their capitals;

J. whereas tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Turkey since March 2011; whereas Turkey is playing an increasingly important role internationally in opposing the violence in Syria;

K. whereas the dire situation in Syria is already having a negative impact on the situation in Lebanon, with fears of an imminent spillover across the border, and will consequently affect the whole region, with unpredictable implications and consequences;

L. whereas Russia continues to sell weapons and other military material to the Syrian regime and has a naval base in Syria; whereas the EU has an embargo in force on military equipment for Syria and whereas a Russian ship was intercepted in Cyprus and then according to the Cypriot authorities proceeded to Syria under false pretences; whereas the circumstances of this incident have never been officially and publicly clarified by the office of the High Representative;

M. whereas the UN Human Rights Commissioner called for Syria to be referred to the ICC over allegations of crimes against humanity following December's Special Session of the UNHRC on Syria based on the findings of the report of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry, while the UN Secretary-General stated on 15 January 2012 that the path of repression is a dead end;

1. Deplores the fact that Russia and China have exercised their veto in the UN Security Council to block the draft resolution on Syria, thus voting against the peaceful transition proposal by the Arab League, which was perceived by the Assad regime as licence to intensify the means of repression on the ground, using heavy weapons and indiscriminate force against unarmed civilians; reiterates its call on the UNSC members, in particular Russia and China, to uphold their responsibility to ensure that the violent repression of the Syrian people ceases immediately; continues to support the efforts of the EU and its Member States in this field;

2. Calls on the VP/HR to do her utmost to secure the adoption of a UNSC resolution, working with both Russia and China;

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3. Calls on Russia, the Syrian Government's largest overseas arms supplier, to immediately stop its arms shipments to Syria, and calls on the EU to draw up a black list of companies that deliver arms to Syria; calls on all EU actors in this context to fully respect the European Union code of conduct on arms exports, which is intended to prevent the export of equipment which might be used for internal repression or contribute to regional instability;

4. Condemns once again in the strongest terms the brutal repression carried out by the Syrian regime against its population, in particular in the city of Homs; expresses its deepest concern at the gravity of the human rights violations perpetrated by the Syrian authorities, including mass arrests, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill treatment of detainees, including children; stresses that medical attention must not be withheld from those injured in the violence;

5. Is concerned at the fact that, according to the UNICEF appeal of 7 February 2012 and to the report of 23 November 2011 of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, almost 400 children have died since the beginning of the violence in Syria in March 2011, and almost 380 – some of them under the age of 14 – have been arbitrarily arrested and suffered torture and sexual violence during detention; strongly condemns all violations of human rights, including children's rights, committed by the Syrian military and security forces and calls on the Syrian Government to put an end to all violations of children's and other human rights;

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

7. Reiterates its call for President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to step aside immediately, so as allow a peaceful and democratic transition to take place in Syria;

8. Urges the Assad regime to end the violence against the Syrian people, to remove troops and tanks from cities, and to release all detained protesters, political prisoners, human rights defenders, bloggers and journalists, and afford full access to the country to international humanitarian and human rights organisations, as well as international media;

9. Reiterates its call for prompt, independent and transparent investigations into the widespread, systematic and gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities and military and security forces, with the aim of ensuring that all those responsible for these acts, which may amount to crimes against humanity, are held to account by the international community; takes the view that clear mechanisms for accountability must be at the heart of the UNSC's efforts to end the Syrian crisis, while endorsing once again the call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for Syria to be referred to the ICC;

10. Recalls its support for the Arab League's efforts to end the violence and to promote a political solution in Syria; welcomes the Arab League's decision to step up cooperation with the UN; notes the Arab League's decision to suspend its observer mission to Syriain response to the worsening violence on the part of the authorities;

11. Welcomes the VP/HR's support for the setting up a 'Friends of the Syrian People' contact group of countries for democratic change in Syria, including Turkey and members of the Arab League; welcomes the VP/HR's announcement that she will be taking part in the first meeting of this contact group in Tunisia on 24 February 2012;

12. Calls on the Council to take a joint decision on recalling all ambassadors from Syria and freezing diplomatic contacts with Syrian ambassadors in EU Member States; urges the VP/HR to reinforce the EU Delegation in Damascus with humanitarian capacity, and to do the same wherever else it is necessary;

13. Welcomes the EU commitment to continue to press for increased international pressure on the Syrian regime; supports the Foreign Affairs Council's decision of 23 January 2012 to put in place new restrictive measures against the Syrian regime, and calls for further targeted sanctions;

14. Welcomes the Commission's decision of 3 February 2012 to provide humanitarian assistance (EUR 3 million) to alleviate the suffering of people both inside Syriaand in neighbouring countries;

15. Welcomes and encourages the ongoing efforts by the Syrian opposition to unify outside and within the country, to continue to engage with the international community, in particular the Arab League, and to work on a shared vision for the future of Syria and the transition to a democratic system; urges the EU to step up its political, technical, communication and humanitarian support for the opposition;

16. Calls for a peaceful and genuine transition to democracy which meets the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and is based on an inclusive dialogue involving all democratic forces and components of Syrian society with a view to launching a process of deep democratic reform that takes account of the need to ensure national reconciliation and is therefore committed to ensuring respect for the rights of minorities; calls on the EU to support all attempts by the Syrian opposition to unite and establish a clear agenda for a democratic Syria;

17. Is seriously concerned that intimidation by Syrian authorities may be extending to exiled opposition activists;

18. Welcomes the strong support shown by Turkey for the Syrian population, including by accepting refugees along the Syrian-Turkish borders and allowing the Syrian opposition to organise; urges the VP/HR to make every effort to start discussions with Turkey, the Arab League and the Syrian opposition about arrangements for setting up humanitarian corridors at the Syrian-Turkish borders;

19. 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 Government and Parliament of the Republic of Turkey, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic.

United Nation's Human Rights Council

P7_TA(2012)0058

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012 on Parliament's position on the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (2012/2530(RSP))

(2013/C 249 E/12)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all UN human rights conventions and optional protocols thereto [1],

— having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,

[1] UN Convention against Torture, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance.