

## **P6\_TA(2006)0144**

### **Egypt: the Ayman Nour affair**

#### **European Parliament resolution on Egypt: the Ayman Nour affair**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the case of Ayman Nour and on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
  - having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of 28 November 1995,
  - having regard to the communication of 21 May 2003 from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on reinvigorating EU actions on Human Rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners – Strategic guidelines (COM(2003)0294),
  - having regard to the first conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, held in Cairo on 26 and 27 January 2006,
  - having regard to the work programme adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Barcelona Summit on 28 November 2005,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the 5th Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Presidents of Parliaments, adopted in Barcelona on 26 November 2005,
  - having regard to the resolutions adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (APEM) on 27 March 2006 and the declaration of its President,
  - having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2006 on the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to Article 11(1) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 177 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, which establish the promotion of human rights as an objective of the common foreign and security policy,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the promotion of respect for democracy, human rights and civil liberties is one of the fundamental principles and aims of the European Union and constitutes a common ground for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean area,
- B. whereas the EU has defined a European Neighbourhood Policy aiming at enhancing and strengthening political dialogue and integrating partner countries into EU policies in order to promote peace, stability and democracy in neighbouring countries,
- C. whereas the first action plans with Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian National Authority adopted by the Council commit the Union and partner countries to a closer and all-encompassing dialogue and must follow a coherent and common regional

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<sup>1</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2006)0028.

approach; whereas the adoption in June 2006 of the action plan with Egypt, which is currently under negotiation is expected,

- D. whereas it attaches great importance to relations with Egypt and considers fair and transparent elections as the established way to make progress towards a more democratic society,
  - E. whereas it is concerned by the waiving of the parliamentary immunity and the detention of Ayman Nour, Chairman of the Ghad Party in Egypt and recalls its previous resolutions on human rights issues in Egypt, including the case of Ayman Nour,
  - F. whereas the leader of the El Ghad Party and former member of Parliament Ayman Nour and other defendants were arrested after Dr Nour had stood in the last presidential elections and also in the parliamentary elections of November and December 2005, during which intimidation of Dr Nour's supporters was witnessed,
  - G. whereas Ayman Nour, who came second in the last presidential elections, has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for allegedly falsifying some of the 50 signatures needed to register his party,
  - H. whereas it is disturbed by reports that Dr Nour's health has seriously declined due to the hunger strike on which he has embarked in protest at the conditions of his trial and detention,
  - I. whereas it has been decided that Dr Nour's appeal will be considered by the Court of Cassation on 18 May 2006; whereas it is concerned, however, by the fact that the judge who was chosen to head this tribunal is the same one who was chosen to question the Egyptian judges who testified against the government and confirmed the forgery of the election process last November; whereas it proposes that, should Dr Nour remain in prison following the court hearing, an ad hoc delegation from Parliament visit him in prison,
1. Stresses the importance of Egypt and EU-Egypt relations for the stability and development of the Euro-Mediterranean area and welcomes the process of political reform which the Egyptian authorities have undertaken to pursue;
  2. Stresses that respect for human rights is a fundamental value of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and reaffirms the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for promoting the rule of law and fundamental freedoms;
  3. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to act in accordance with the laws of Egypt in the spirit of its professed desire for increased political openness and dialogue; recalls nevertheless the political context in which this trial is taking place;
  4. Urges the Egyptian government to reform the legal framework regulating elections in accordance with international standards providing for freedom and transparency, as well as enabling political groups to be founded and civil society organisations to be represented;
  5. Calls on the Council and the Commission to devise practical arrangements in cooperation with Parliament for regular assessments of compliance with Article 2 of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement by all contracting parties thereto with a view to

bringing about verifiable progress, in particular with regard to regular and impartial monitoring of developments in the field of human rights and the extent to which human rights activists and opposition leaders, such as Dr Nour, are free to act and speak out;

6. Calls for the release of Dr Ayman Nour;
7. Stresses the positive and moderate role that Egypt plays in the Middle East peace process; calls on the Commission and the Council to strengthen this role;
8. Calls on the Egyptian government to establish precise timetables and benchmarks in order effectively to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan and thereby involve and consult organisations working within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network;
9. Urges, in this regard, the Commission and the Egyptian government to include in the Action Plan the creation of a specific Sub-Committee on Human Rights in the framework of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and to establish an efficient monitoring mechanism for the Action Plan once it is adopted;
10. Takes the view that the lifting of the Emergency Laws is an absolute necessity if democracy is to be respected;
11. Strongly supports measures to guarantee academic freedom and freedom of the media and private religious belief, putting an end to discrimination between citizens on grounds of sex, religion, race or any other grounds to be included in the Action Plan; is worried, however, about the growing role of fundamentalism in this area;
12. Takes the view that the Action Plan should include concrete, measurable and time-bound commitments, even if this means prolonging the negotiations beyond the proposed date for the meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council, scheduled to take place on 12 June 2006; calls, in particular, on the Commission and the Egyptian government to tackle in the Action Plan sensitive issues such as the lifting of the state of emergency, the prevention of and the fight against torture, the abolition of arbitrary detention and the reinforcement of the independence of the judiciary;
13. Calls on the Parliament of the Republic of Egypt to engage in a process of democratisation and of enforcement of the rule of law and human rights with a view to it playing a leading role in the region as a future model of parliamentary democracy;
14. Recalls its request, as expressed in its above mentioned resolution of 19 January 2006, to have a follow-up on the conditions and the situation of Sudanese refugees who were subjected to violence in Cairo on 30 December 2005;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Mediterranean countries signatory to the Barcelona Declaration and to the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly.