

## **P6\_TA(2005)0340**

### **Political prisoners in Syria**

#### **European Parliament resolution on Syria**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to Article 11(1) of the Treaty of the European Union and Article 177 of the EC Treaty, which establish the promotion of human rights as an objective of the common foreign and security policy,
  - having regard to the Barcelona declaration of 28 November 1995,
  - having regard to the resolution adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly on 15 March 2005 in Cairo,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the accession to power of the current President, Bachar Al Assad, gave rise to some hope in Syria and went some way towards opening up the Syrian political system, which had been dominated by the Baath party for many years,
- B. whereas the European Parliament and its President have already intervened several times in favour of the release of the two parliamentarians Riad Seif and Mamun al-Humsi, who are in an alarming condition and have already served three quarters of their prison sentence,
- C. whereas civil activists Hasan Zeino, Yassin al-Hamwi and Muhammad Ali al-Abdullah will appear before military courts in Homs and Damascus charged with ‘possession of publications of a prohibited organisation’, ‘the establishment a secret society’, ‘the defamation of the public administration’, etc.,
- D. whereas Haytham al-Hamwi, Yassin al-Hamwi’s son, was arrested in 2003, ill-treated and sentenced after an allegedly unfair trial (according to authoritative sources) to four years’ imprisonment,
- E. whereas Riad al-Hamood, a Kurdish civil society activist, Arab language teacher and active member of the Committees for Revival of Civil Society, who was arrested on 4 June 2005 after a speech at the funeral of an Islamic scholar who had died in custody under mysterious circumstances whilst in solitary confinement, is at serious risk of ill-treatment,
- F. whereas in July 2005 the UN Human Rights Committee expressed its concern ‘at the obstacles imposed on the registration and free operation of non-governmental human rights organisations’ in Syria and ‘intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders’,

- G. whereas respect for human rights is an essential element in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
1. Urges the Syrian authorities to release Riad Seif and Mamun al-Humsi immediately;
  2. Calls on the Syrian authorities to drop immediately all charges against Hasan Zeino, Yassin al-Hamwi and Muhammad Ali al-Abdullah, who are facing trial before military courts;
  3. Calls on the Syrian authorities to:
    - (a) ensure that the detainees are well treated and not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;
    - (b) ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
    - (c) ensure that detained or imprisoned persons are given prompt, regular and unrestricted access to their lawyers, doctors and families;
  4. Points out that respect for human rights constitutes a vital component in any future EU-Syria Association Agreement;
  5. Calls on the Commission and the Council and the individual Member States to make clear to the Syrian authorities that the agreement which is currently under negotiation includes human rights clauses which are a fundamental element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and expects concrete improvements in this field on the part of the Syrian authorities;
  6. Calls for the setting up of a subcommittee on human rights with Syria in the framework of the Association Agreement, as has been done with Jordan and Morocco, so as to develop a structured dialogue on human rights and democracy; believes that such a subcommittee would constitute a key element in the Action Plan; emphasises the importance of civil society being consulted on and involved in the work of this subcommittee in order better to monitor the human rights situation; stresses also the necessity for the European Parliament to be closely associated in the work and follow-up of this subcommittee;
  7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Government and Parliament of Syria.