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Plenary sitting

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU strategy towards Iran
(2014/2689(RSP))

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on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

B7-0000/2014

**European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy towards Iran
(2014/2689(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, in particular to its resolutions of 10 March 2011 on the EU's approach towards Iran¹, 17 November 2011 on recent cases of human rights violations in Iran², 2 February 2012 on Iran and its nuclear programme³ and 14 June 2012 on the situation of ethnic minorities in Iran⁴,
- having regard to the joint statement made by Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton and the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on 24 November 2013 in Geneva, and to the statement by the Vice-President / High Representative on 12 January 2014,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 October 2012 and 16 December 2013, and to the amendments to the restrictive measures in place against Iran, as decided by the Council at its meeting on 20 January 2014,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 March 2011, announcing the implementation of restrictive measures targeted against those responsible for grave human rights violations,
- having regard to the statement by the Vice-President / High Representative on the liberation of Nasrin Sotoudeh and other prisoners of conscience in Iran on 19 September 2013,
- having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 October 2013 and his recent statement on 22 January 2014 warning of the 'sharp increase in hangings in Iran', and the 10 September 2013 Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) on the Situation of the Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/68/377),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on a Digital Freedom Strategy in EU Foreign Policy,
- having regard to the Declaration on Free and Fair elections, unanimously adopted on 26 March 1994 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of which the Iranian Parliament is a member,
- having regard to the United Nations' General Assembly Resolution on human rights in Iran from 19 November 2013, which 'Expresses deep concern at serious ongoing and

¹ OJ C 199 E, 7.07.2012, p. 163.

² OJ C 153 E, 31.05.2013, p. 157.

³ OJ C 239 E, 20.08.2013, p. 43.

⁴ OJ C 332 E, 15.11.2013, p. 102.

recurring human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran', including but not limited to the arbitrary, frequent and ongoing use of the death penalty,

- having regard, the UN resolution on the World against violence and violent extremism adopted on 18 December 2013,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 24 November 2013 in Geneva, VP/HR Catherine Ashton, together with the foreign affairs ministers of the E3/EU+3, reached an interim agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran (hereafter referred to as Iran) on the nuclear issue (detailed in the Joint Plan of Action); whereas on 10 January 2014 the E3/EU+3 reached an agreement on the implementation modalities for the Joint Plan of Action; whereas the six-month implementation period of the Joint Plan of Action is crucial and requires simultaneous and reciprocal action from both sides;
- B. whereas the presidential elections were not held according to the democratic standards valued by the EU; whereas, however, President Hassan Rouhani has signalled readiness for a more open and constructive relation between Iran and the West; whereas, besides the nuclear deal, various topics including human rights and regional security need to be discussed between the EU and Iran;
- C. whereas the commitments made in the Joint Plan of Action are only a first step towards a more complete solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and aim to reduce immediate tensions, creating more time and space for a comprehensive diplomatic solution; whereas Iran's nuclear activities were in contradiction to previous UN Security Council Resolutions;
- D. whereas internal political developments in Iran and the interim agreement on the nuclear issue has opened a window of opportunity for both reforms within Iran and an improvement of external relations with the EU;
- E. whereas negotiations on a comprehensive trade and cooperation agreement and on a political dialogue agreement between the EU and Iran started in 2002; whereas this process was interrupted in 2005 as a result of revelations concerning Iran's clandestine nuclear activities and the country's refusal to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);
- F. whereas the human rights situation in Iran is still characterised by the continued, systematic violation of fundamental rights;
- G. whereas Iran has one of the youngest populations in the world, including more than 7 million children under the age of six;
- H. whereas Iran still refuses to cooperate with several United Nations bodies on the human rights issue for instance by denying a visa to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and preventing him from fulfilling his mandate in independent manner;

On the nuclear issue

1. Welcomes the Geneva interim agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on Iran's nuclear programme; considers it vital that all parties continue to engage constructively in the negotiating process so that the final comprehensive agreement can be concluded within the agreed time frame;
2. Stresses that there can be no alternative to a peaceful negotiated solution that addresses concerns of the international community regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and regional as well as Iran's security sensitivities;
3. Welcomes the decisions taken by the Council at its meeting on 20 January 2014 with a view to implementing the Joint Plan of Action, in particular the provisions for partial sanction relief; stresses the crucial importance of reliably monitoring Iran's implementation of its commitments to the Joint Action Plan; believes that, once a comprehensive agreement ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program is reached, nuclear-related sanctions against Iran should be gradually removed;

On perspectives for EU–Iran relations

4. Stresses that more constructive relations with Iran are contingent on the progress in the full implementation of Iran's commitments according to the Joint Plan of Action; hopes that the progress in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and in the negotiations of the Geneva agreement will pave the way for more constructive relations between the EU and Iran, including over issues of regional concern such as the civil war in Syria, the fight against all forms of terrorism and its causes, but also in areas like economic development and trade agreements, rule of law and human rights promotion;
5. Calls on the EEAS to undertake all preparatory work for the opening of a Union delegation in Tehran by the end of 2014; strongly believes that it would be an efficient tool of influencing the Iranian policies which would also support the dialogue on the issues such as the human and minority rights;
6. Invites the Council, depending on substantial progress of the negotiations on the nuclear issue, to start a discussion on specific steps that could lead to an improvement in bilateral relations between the EU and Iran, including a possible future contractual framework for these relations and the development of sectorial cooperation, for example by focusing on the development of civil society and the private sector in Iran as well as in the areas of the fight against narcotic drugs, while ensuring suspects receive a fair trial and are not subjected to the death penalty; environmental cooperation, technology transfer, infrastructure development and planning, education and culture, child protection and health, as well as common initiatives to promote and protect human rights; is concerned with the possible outbreak of infectious diseases such as polio and measles especially among children and urges the EU to ease access to relevant medication which has otherwise been difficult to obtain because of the sanctions;
7. Notes with particular concern the worsening environmental situation in Iran notably

when it comes to water shortage, desertification and air pollution and invites the EU to facilitate cooperation between European and Iranian research institutions, environmental organisations and cities;

8. Notes the importance of the Iran trade for many medium-sized European companies and underlines that such trade should positively contribute to the implementation of the action plan;
9. Invites the Commission and the EEAS, in the meantime, to use all EU tools available to make a concerted effort to empower and develop civil society in Iran and to increase exchanges of students, artists and other visitors, as well as cultural and academic exchanges and promote youth participation and civic engagement; to achieve this, invites more exchange and cooperation between the EEAS and relevant branches of the Commission such as DG DEVCO;
10. Calls for a more independent EU policy towards Iran, while coordinating with allies and partners;

On regional issues

11. Considers that Iran should use its considerable influence in Syria to stop the bloody civil war and calls on Iran's leadership to adopt a constructive role in the international efforts to finding a solution to the Syrian crisis; considers that Iran should be involved in all discussions to that end, provided that it shows commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to the crises in Syria and in the region;
12. Considers that greater engagement between the EU and Iran based on credible implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and, in the future, of the comprehensive agreement, could be beneficial in terms of stabilising the situation in the Middle East; encourages the EU, in particular, to facilitate dialogue between Iran and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council;
13. Takes the view that the EU, the US and Iran should develop their cooperation in Afghanistan, in particular on the issue of drug trafficking and humanitarian issues such as the protection of refugees and to ensure the protection of human rights gains in order to achieve a sustainable peaceful solution for the conflict; recalls that Iran hosts approximately 3 million Afghan refugees, and calls on Iran, UN agencies and the international community to ensure the respect for their basic rights;

On human rights

14. Welcomes the release of several prisoners of conscience in Iran, including the human rights lawyer and Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh, and calls on the Iranian authorities to release all imprisoned human rights defenders, political prisoners, trade unionists, labour activists, and those detained after the 2009 Presidential elections; notes with interest President Hassan Rouhani's initiative to formulate a Charter of Citizens' rights; expresses, however, continued grave concern regarding the human rights situation in Iran, in particular the widespread allegations of torture, unfair trials, including of lawyers and human rights defenders, and impunity for human rights

violations; expresses alarm with regard to the high number of executions in 2013 and 2014, including those of minors; notes that most of the 2013 executions were carried out during the last five months of the year; condemns the restrictions on the freedom of information, association, expression, assembly, religion, academic freedom, education and movement, as well as the repression and discrimination on the basis of religion, belief, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, that persist inter alia against Ba'hai community, Christians, apostates and converts;

15. Takes the view that the Charter of Citizens' Rights should fully comply with Iran's international obligations, particularly in what regards non-discrimination and the right to life, strengthening the prohibition of torture, ensuring full freedom of religion and belief, and guaranteeing freedom of expression, which is currently restricted by the vaguely formulated provision of the 'national security related offence';
16. Calls, therefore, for the EU to mainstream human rights in all of its relations with Iran; believes that a high-level and inclusive human rights dialogue with Iran should be part of the future policy framework of bilateral EU–Iran relations; calls on the EU to start human rights dialogue with Iran that would include the judiciary and security forces as well as clearly defined benchmarks against which progress can be measured; calls on the EU to support fully the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran and calls on Iran to give him an immediate and unconditional entry visa; encourages UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay to take up the invitation by the Iranian authorities to visit Iran; calls on Iran to declare a moratorium on the death penalty;
17. Underlines that any future EP delegations to Iran should be committed to meeting political opposition, civil society activists and having access to political prisoners;
18. Emphasises the importance of creating an environment conducive to the proper functioning of civil society organisations, including a reformed legal framework; calls for the EU to make maximum global use of the EU Human Rights Guidelines, including the EU guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, and of the new flexibility provided by the European instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights (EIDHR) 2014-2020 and the potential of EU' and Member States newly established European Endowment for Democracy, in order to support Iranian human rights defenders and civil society organisations;
19. Joins the urgent call of 772 Iranian journalists to the Iranian President to live up to his promise and allow the reopening of the Association of Iranian journalists;
20. Encourages the EU to explore the possibility of extending technical assistance, in partnership with international organisations, to Iran to assist in the reform of the Code of Criminal Procedures currently envisaged by the Iranian Parliament; expresses concern in particular over detainees inability to access an attorney during interrogations and over the serious allegations of abuse taking place during pre-charge and pre-trial detention as well as over the trials of civilians before revolutionary courts; stresses that the independence from political interferences and ensuring a free trial are key in developing a modern criminal procedural code and essential in addressing human rights issues;

21. Calls on Iran to cooperate with the international human rights bodies and its NGOs by acting upon the recommendations of United Nations and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as well as enabling missions of the international human rights organizations;
22. Is of the opinion that women's rights should without fail remain an area of special focus in any dialogue between the EU and Iran; considers that, despite the progress already made, the situation of women in Iran remains marred by unacceptable discrimination, in particular on legal matters, as well as with regard to family laws and their participation in economic and political life;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the government and parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.