



Libya: MEPs urge HR Ashton to recognise rebel Council as official

Plenary sessions

MEPs called on High Representative Ashton to recognise the Interim National Council as officially representing the Libyan opposition. The resolution, by all political groups, also calls on EU Member States to "stand ready" for a UN-mandated no-fly zone over Libya, to prevent the Gaddafi regime targeting the population, and to help repatriate or resettle migrants fleeing the growing violence there.

"EU governments need to stand ready for a decision in the UN Security Council on further measures, including the possibility of a no-fly zone", in compliance with a UN mandate and coordination with the Arab League and the African Union stressed MEPs in a widely-backed resolution (584 in favour, 18 against, 18 abstentions). During the debate, only the GUE/NGL group was against this idea.

To support Libyan rebels and lend them more international credibility, MEPs also called on the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton to "establish relations" with the rebels' representatives in the Interim Transitional National Council and "to start the process to make them official". The European Parliament condemned "in the strongest terms the blatant and systematic violations of human rights in Libya" by Muammar Gaddafi's regime and called upon him to step down immediately.

Migration and humanitarian assistance

Concern at the growing humanitarian crisis which has forced over 200,000 migrants to flee Libya, Parliament appealed to the EU and Member States "to supply air and maritime transportation to help repatriate or resettle migrants, asylum seekers and refugees" from the country, as well as to offer the necessary assistance to the people crossing to Tunisia and helping with their repatriation to their home countries, in line with the International Organization for Migration's appeal.

At request of Italian and Maltese MEPs and despite some initial reluctance from other national delegations, the resolution calls for the principle of solidarity and shared responsibility (as established by the Lisbon Treaty) to be applied to border control. The European Commission should have ready all the necessary "financial, human and technical resources" to assist EU border countries in the event of a mass migratory movement, MEPs said.

Human rights

The United Nations General Assembly's recent unanimous decision to suspend Libya from the UN Human Rights Council, was welcomed by MEPs in a separate resolution on the Council's 16th session, taking place in Geneva until 25 March.

Condemning the gross and systematic human rights violations committed in Libya, they pointed out that some may be even crimes against humanity and ask for "the dispatching of an independent international commission of inquiry to Libya".

EU strategy - further steps

Press release

Adding to their recommendations on the no-fly zone and on how to handle migration, MEPs also proposed that EU governments take the following further steps at Friday's extraordinary Council meeting:

- include a freeze on funds managed by the Libyan Investment Authority and the proceeds of oil and gas sales in the asset freeze imposed by the EU on the Gaddafi regime. Illegally-acquired assets must be investigated and returned to the Libyan people, and
- develop a more ambitious and efficient Neighbourhood Policy that in future prioritises the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, press freedom and respect for basic rights.

Procedure: Resolutions

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