

13. Association Agreement with Egypt

B5-0740/2001

European Parliament resolution on the conclusion of an Association Agreement with Egypt

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal for a Council and Commission decision (COM(2001) 184)¹,
- having regard to the draft Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the Arab Republic of Egypt,
- having regard to its assent of 29 November 2001 to the proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Arab Republic of Egypt, of the other part (8220/2001 - COM(2001) 184 - C5-0381/2001 - 2001/0092(AVC))²,
- A. having regard to the European Union's long-standing special political, economic and cultural relations with the Arab Republic of Egypt,
- B. having regard to Egypt's crucial Middle East role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with regard to both the peace process and stabilisation of the region,
- C. having regard to the agreement's potential effects, and in particular its role both as an instrument driving forward political partnership and closer relations between the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and as a force for social, economic and cultural development, in a climate of mutual respect,
- D. whereas the reference made to political dialogue between the European Parliament and the People's Assembly of Egypt as a way of ensuring scrutiny of the implementation of the Association Agreement is inadequate,
- E. whereas, despite substantial efforts, progress still needs to be made in the Arab Republic of Egypt with regard to human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of religious conscience, these being areas in which civil society has a major role to play,
- F. Expresses its regret concerning certain paragraphs of the letter from the President of the People's Assembly of the Arab Republic of Egypt on this resolution;
- G. whereas efforts should be made to develop and consolidate a strong civil society which, through its action, could play an effective role in the process of democratisation in Egypt and support the values upon which the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is based,

¹ OJ C 304 E, 30.10.2001, p. 2.

² Texts Adopted, Item 11.

1. Welcomes the conclusion of a draft agreement by the Council and the beneficial consequences, both economic and political, that such an agreement must have for relations between the two parties;
2. Points out that respect for human rights constitutes a vital component of the Association Agreement;
3. Stresses the need to recognise the ability of the Arab Republic of Egypt to play a part in stabilising the Middle East region, and to involve it even more than in the past in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
4. Regrets the fact that the text of the agreement does not make a more explicit reference to relations between the European Parliament and the People's Assembly of Egypt;
5. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to continue and step up their efforts to ensure greater respect for fundamental rights and for the freedom of all faiths, and to enhance the ongoing dialogue with civil society;
6. Expresses deep concern at the arrest, detention and trial of 52 men on grounds relating to their homosexuality and calls upon the authorities to free the 23 men given custodial sentences as a matter of urgency;
7. Calls on the Egyptian Parliament to abolish the death penalty;
8. Calls on the Council and the Commission to devise practical arrangements for regular assessments of compliance with Article 3 by all contracting parties to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, with a view to bringing about verifiable progress with regard, in particular, to regular and impartial monitoring of developments in the field of human rights and the extent to which human rights activists are free to act and speak out in defence of the rights of others;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the Government and People's Assembly of Egypt.