



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**PE 306
PESC 590
CSDP/PSDC 346
ELARG 68
COEST 195
COHOM 96
EG 9
OCDE 5**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament Committee on **Foreign Affairs** held in Brussels on 4 June 2014

A meeting on the presidential elections in Ukraine (25 May) and Egypt (26-28 May), attended by Mr Pierre VIMONT, with the presentation of preliminary findings by the electoral observation missions. The generally positive election process in Ukraine was commended by the AFET committee, which considered that the legitimacy of the president-elect should be recognised. By contrast, there was disagreement between the MEPs over the elections in Egypt, with regard in particular as to whether they were free elections and to the support that should be given to the president-elect.

The meeting was chaired by Mr BROK (EPP, DE) and Mr KOVATCHEV (EPP, BU).

Item 1 on the agenda

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 on the agenda

Chair's announcements

There was no announcement from the Chair.

Item 3 on the agenda

Exchange of views on the presidential elections in Egypt with Mário DAVID, Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission to Egypt, Robert GOEBBELS, Head of the EP Delegation to the Election Observation Mission, and Pierre VIMONT, Executive Secretary General of the EEAS

The presidential elections, held on 26-27 May 2014, were unexpectedly extended by one day. Abdel Fatah EL SISI won 96.91% of the votes against his only contender, Hamdeen SABAHI, with a 47.5% turnout. These elections constitute the second phase of the roadmap, after the adoption of the Constitution in January 2014, and before the parliamentary elections due in autumn 2014.

Findings of the EU Observation Mission (EOM)

Chief Observer Mario DAVID (MEP, EPP, PT) and Robert GOEBBELS (S&D, LU) reported on their findings, on the basis of a preliminary version of the EOM report (http://www.eueom.eu/files/dmfile/290514-preliminary-statement_en.pdf). The final version - due within four weeks - should include recommendations to the Egyptian authorities.

In particular, Mr DAVID stated that respect for human rights was an area of concern, especially as regards freedom of association, assembly and expression. He noted however that the election days had passed in a calm manner, and the voting and counting process was properly organised.

Mr GOEBBELS feared that the draft legislation for the parliamentary elections, coupled with the already predominant presidential power under the Constitution, would put Egypt back under the authority of a single party.

Discussion

There was disagreement on whether the elections were free and on the support to be given to Egypt.

The representatives of the EOM and of the EP delegation considered that the elections were free, though not fair, and referred to the following statement in the preliminary report: "While broad support for the roadmap is enduring, based on the widely shared belief that stability should be a priority, opposition to the roadmap or to the environment in which it is implemented has resulted in the non-participation of some stakeholders. This undermined universal participation in the election."

Mr DAVID took the view that the EU should support Mr EL SISI in his objective to deal first with stability, as he is "the person who will enable reconciliation, stability and cooperation with the EU".

The representatives of the EPP (Mr SALAFRANCA, ES) and the ECR (Ms DE MARTINI, IT) supported the preliminary report and stressed the importance of cooperating with Egypt and ensuring stability in the region.

However, German EPP members (Mr BROK and Mr GAHLER), while commending EU relations with Egypt, highlighted the need to push for reforms.

The representatives of the S&D, ALDE and the Greens/EFA considered that the elections were not free since important opponents of Mr EL SISI were not able to participate. Ms GOMES (S&D, PT) took the view that 'democracy was agonising' in Egypt and urged the EU to support civil society. Ms LUNACEK (Greens/EFA, AT) was disappointed by the preliminary report, which in her view was too cautious: "our interests have passed before our values".

Pierre VIMONT confirmed the importance of the implementation of the roadmap and referred to a forthcoming declaration of the 28 Member States. He also indicated that President-elect EL SISI would be sworn in on 8 June and that the ceremony would be attended by several national leaders, mainly from the Arab world; Iran's President Hassan ROHANI has been invited. Mr VIMONT also provided explanations regarding the difficulties encountered by the EOM and the delayed deployment of observers.

Item 4 on the agenda

Exchange of views on the findings and conclusions of the presidential elections in Ukraine on 25 May 2014, and on the latest developments in Ukraine with Göran FÄRM, Head of the EP delegation to the International Election Observation Mission, Tana DE ZULUETA, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, and Pierre VIMONT, Executive Secretary General of the EEAS

Petro POROSHENKO won the elections in the first round with 55% of the vote. Yulia TIMOSHENKO was second with 13% of the vote, followed by the other 19 candidates, of whom one was a woman.

Conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission

The preliminary report is the result of cooperation between observation missions from the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and NATO:

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/119078?download=true>

The OSCE/ODIHR will issue a final report within eight weeks, with recommendations addressed to the Ukrainian authorities.

Mr FÄRM (S&D, SE) and Ms DE ZULUETA commended Ukrainian citizens' determination to vote, demonstrated by the high turnout (60%), and the authorities' resolve to "hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and with a respect for fundamental freedoms in the vast majority of the country." They noted areas for improvement, however, including the media's lack of independence from political or corporate interests.

They highlighted the hostile security environment in Donetsk and Luhansk and armed groups' increasing attempts to derail the process in these parts of the country. They pointed out that elections had not taken place in Crimea, which was not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities.

Discussion

Most MEPs praised the generally positive organisation of the elections, and considered that the legitimacy of the President-elect should be recognised and that the EU should support Ukraine, its President and its people. However, they recalled the need to pursue reforms.

The representatives of the EPP (Mr SALAFRANCA, ES) and of the Greens/EFA (Ms Rebecca HARMS, DE) referred to the importance of the Association Agreement. They also stressed the need to work towards the holding of parliamentary elections, including in eastern Ukraine. Mr GAHLER (EPP, DE) took the view that the EU should advance to the third level of sanctions against Russia.

Mr VIMONT noted that Mr VAN ROMPUY had welcomed the holding of the elections and would attend the inauguration ceremony of President POROSHENKO in Kiev on 7 June. Mr VIMONT considered that the President-elect benefitted from strong legitimacy. Mr VIMONT presented a list of next steps for the EU: supporting national dialogue, working closely with its international partners to ask the Russian Federation to take steps to de-escalate the situation, and preparing a new round of sanctions. He hoped that a decision on a CSDP mission would be taken by the 23 June Foreign Affairs Council, indicated that the EU was committed to signing the remaining parts of the Association Agreement and hoped that an agreement on the conditions of gas supply from the Russian Federation to Ukraine, facilitated by the EU, could be reached by the end of next week. Finally, Mr VIMONT referred to the statement of the Heads of State or Government on 27 May and to the meeting of the G7 on 5 June.

Item 5 on the agenda

Any other business

There was no other business.

Item 6 on the agenda

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 7 July 2014.