


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2002/2166(INI)	Procedure completed
Peace and dignity in the Middle East		
Subject 6.10.04 Third-country political situation, local and regional conflicts		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	PSE MENÉNDEZ DEL VALLE Emilio	11/09/2002
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2522	21/07/2003
	General Affairs	2518	16/06/2003
	General Affairs	2509	19/05/2003

Key events			
10/10/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/05/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
16/06/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
21/07/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
07/10/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
07/10/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0351/2003	
22/10/2003	Debate in Parliament		
23/10/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0462/2003	Summary
23/10/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2166(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/16640

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0351/2003	07/10/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0462/2003 OJ C 082 01.04.2004, p. 0323-0610 E	23/10/2003	EP	Summary

Peace and dignity in the Middle East

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Emilio MENÉNDEZ DEL VALLE (PES, E) on peace and dignity in the Middle East. The report urgently called on both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority not to declare the peace process dead and to commit themselves to the implementation of the "road map" set out for reaching a peace agreement. Should the road map break down in the immediate future, an international mandate in Palestine should be established under the authority of the Quartet (the UN, the EU, the US and Russia), including an international force on the ground. MEPs said that the Palestinian Authority should clearly and firmly come out in support of the new Palestinian government. This government should continue reorganising the Palestinian security forces, re-establish public order and make concrete and visible efforts to dismantle terrorist organisations. It should pursue the reforms it had set in motion and hold free, fair and transparent elections as soon as possible. For its part, the Israeli government should withdraw its military forces from the autonomous Palestinian territories, put a stop to the targeted killings and freeze all settlement activities as well as the construction of the security wall. As an immediate step, Israel should end the sealing off of the Palestinian territories and withdraw to the pre-September 2000 borders. MEPs utterly condemned Palestinian terrorism, saying that the Palestinian Authority should spare no effort to combat it. But they also said the peace process must not be suspended or broken off, as that would be the greatest possible success for the terrorists. They called on the Israeli government to refrain from practices which also result in civilian casualties among the Palestinians. The committee expressed solidarity with all victims of violence. It also called on Palestinian president Yasser Arafat to come out in favour of the road map and to participate actively in its implementation. It opposed any attempt to deport or banish him and condemned any suggestion that he should be physically eliminated, pointing out that he had been democratically elected. MEPs said that a new and final peace treaty should include a precise demarcation of the borders of the two new states on the basis of the 1967 UN Resolution 242. The city of Jerusalem should be declared a cultural and religious heritage of mankind and dual capital of the state of Israel and the future new Palestinian state. It should have an international legal status without division, with the administration of areas originally having a Jewish majority assigned to the authorities of the state of Israel and the administration of areas originally having a Palestinian majority assigned to the authorities of the new Palestinian state. The right of return for Palestinian refugees should be confined to the Palestinian state, with exceptions that may be freely negotiated. MEPs called on all Arab states concerned, especially Lebanon, to enable those refugees who so desire to acquire the nationality of the countries where they have taken refuge. MEPs advocated an increased international presence in the area to help the two parties implement the road map and to identify any instances of non-compliance. To this end, an international force should be sent to the region, subject to the agreement of both parties, under the auspices of the UN and with sufficient and credible resources. As soon as a firm and final peace treaty had been signed, the EU should conclude a close partnership with both Israel and the Palestinian State, including a single market, approximation of laws and use of the euro. ?

Peace and dignity in the Middle East

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Emilio MENENDEZ del VALLE (PES, Spain) and called on both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to commit themselves to the implementation of the "road map" set out for reaching a peace agreement. (Please see the summary dated 07/10/03.) The resolution was voted through by 343 votes in favour, 19 against and 57 abstentions. Parliament declared once again that there could be no military solution to the Middle East conflict. The only possible option is the negotiation of a firm and final peace agreement, without prior conditions and in line with the three phases of the roadmap, based on the existence of two democratic, sovereign and viable states - Israel and Palestine - coexisting peacefully within secure and recognised frontiers and within which the peaceful co-existence of Christians, Muslims and Jews is guaranteed. Parliament went on to condemn the anti-Semitic statements made by the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed to a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, as well as the appalling terrorist attack carried out near the Eretz border crossing in the Gaza Strip on 15 October 2003 in which three US citizens were killed. It felt that, if the Israeli Government wishes to contribute to this peace process, it must refrain from practices which also result in civilian victims among the Palestinians and which, by the same token, obstruct the peace process. In addition, Parliament regretted the Israeli air raid on Syrian territory on 5 October 2003, which is a violation of international law and has escalated and exacerbated the crisis in the region. Parliament asked Israel to help facilitate the enormous and highly difficult task facing the Palestinian Prime Minister in seeking to achieve the objectives set out in the roadmap: only if he enjoys broad popular support among the Palestinian people will the new Prime Minister be able to achieve these objectives and avert the clear danger that failure of the roadmap would result in an unstoppable rise of fundamentalist extremists. Moving to the question of Israeli settlements, Parliament called on the Israeli Government to press ahead with the measures required to end settlement activity, including natural growth of settlements. It is concerned at the continuation of illegal settlements and expropriation of land for the construction of the security fence, which represent a barrier to a peace settlement, since they threaten to make it physically impossible to devise a solution based on two states. The Israeli Government and all political forces in the country must refuse to authorise any funding for new settlements. According to the United Nations, the so-called 'security fence' represents a de facto annexation and is illegal under international law. The barrier initially planned by Israel would cut into 7 % of Palestinian territory in the West Bank. Israel is asked to give an undertaking that the security fence will not be prejudging the final border between Israel and the future

Palestinian state. The parties should show the utmost flexibility in agreeing on the best way to carry out the total evacuation by Israel of existing settlements within Palestinian territory following the return by both parties to the frontier situation as it stood on the morning of 5 June 1967. On the matter of Palestinian refugees, Parliament commended the efforts by several countries in the region to offer support to Palestinian refugees. It called for the Arab League and all Arab states involved to offer support to enable a consensus-based solution to be reached on this delicate issue affecting the entire region. The States concerned should assess how they could enable those refugees who so desire to acquire nationality via residence in the countries in which they have taken refuge. Parliament recommended that the right of return for Palestinian refugees be confined to the Palestinian state, with exceptions that may be freely negotiated, and that the international fund for solidarity and economic aid referred to below should provide a generous and equitable system of compensation for those refugees not wishing to return or unable to do so because their place of origin is located outside of the Palestinian state.?