

*Thursday, 27 October 2011 - Strasbourg*

*Explanations of vote:*

Motion for a resolution [B7-0542/2011](#)

Pino Arlacchi (S&D ), in writing . – I voted for this resolution because, as freedom of religion and thought are universal values and essential elements of democracy, I believe it is important to take a clear position on what is happening in Egypt and Syria. Egypt is a key partner of the EU in the Arab world, and this text expresses our deep concern about the violent incidents of 9 October 2011, during a peaceful march organised by Coptic Christians in Cairo, which resulted in the death of 25 persons and 300 people being injured.

I consider the setting up by the Egyptian government of a fact-finding committee to investigate these incidents to be of primary importance. With regard to Syria, we strongly condemn the Syrian regime's brutal repression of its population and ask again for President Bashar al-Assad to step aside in order to open the way to the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Syrian people. It is also important to note that the ongoing events in Syria are accompanied by actions aimed at inciting inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflict and increasing sectarian tensions. Consequently we encourage the Syrian opposition forces to reconfirm their commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms and, notably, freedom of conscience and thought.

[source: [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) ]