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Report on my last visit to Libya

02 - 05 November 2012

I arrived in Tripoli on Friday 2 November 2012 for a visit in my capacity as European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Libya. I had been invited by the European Union Delegation to address the opening session of the **Induction Program** that the EU is organizing for members of the elected **General National Congress of Libya**. However that session, foreseen for 5 November, had to be postponed for two days. Unable to stay until then, I have instead sent a message (*see attached text*) that was read out by the EU Ambassador in Tripoli, Peter Zsoldos.

My programme in Libya included visits to **Zintan** and to **Benghazi**, as well as meetings at the **General National Congress** and with the **United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative** (UNSG SR), Mr. Tarek Mitri, before my departure on Monday 5 November. I also met with two EU-funded International NGOs that are currently engaged in crucial work around Libya: **Mines Advisory Group** (MAG) and the **Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**. I was assisted by Ambassador Peter Zsoldos and his team at the EU Delegation. The Libyan Foreign Ministry (Mr. Salah Farid) also helped me in setting up the program, besides providing transportation and security throughout my stay.

Introduction

Libya is a country that has made clear progress on the road to democracy since the country's liberation from the regime of Muammar Gaddafi.

Libya's **first democratic elections** since the fall of Gaddafi's regime took place on the **7th July 2012**. Despite the security risks, they were massively participated and peaceful, with the EU Election Assessment Team in Libya (led by MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorff) considering them a remarkable achievement, even more so given the inexperience of the country with elections.

As a result, a **General National Congress** (GNC) of 200 members was elected, tasked with drafting a national constitution and approving an interim government. **Prime Minister Ali Zidan** has been appointed and a **government was just sworn in last week, on 14 of November**.

The speed at which the Libyan transitional authorities have had to learn on-the-job has been challenging. And the task of securing the country - a priority clearly identified by all Libyans - is daunting, since the Army and Police forces left by the dictatorship were just nominal: in fact, **security**, as much as insecurity, has been in the hands of uncoordinated militia (katibas) formed out of the rebellion which toppled Gaddafi.

A major setback was encountered with the **murder of the United States Ambassador Chris Stevens** and three other American diplomats in an attack orchestrated by terrorists, taking advantage of the security vacuum, in Benghazi, last September 11. The Libyans massively repudiated such act: all my interlocutors stressed that the huge sacrifices that the Libyan people paid for their liberation from Gaddafi would not be in vain and emphasized they would not allow extremist or destructive elements to hijack their people's revolution.

1. Zintan Governing Council

On 3 November, accompanied by Khaldoun Sinno, Head of the Political Section at the EU Delegation in Tripoli, I travelled to Zintan (two hours south of Tripoli) to visit an arms securing project supported by the EU. Upon hearing of our presence in the town, the **Zintan Governing Council (ZGC)** sent someone to ask us to meet with its members.

I addressed the ZGC stressing the positive impression the international community retained from Libya's successful democratic elections of July and pointed out how the recent tragic events in Benghazi, culminating in the death of Ambassador Chris Stevens, had boosted critics of the Libyan revolution around the world and in Europe, many running to brand Libya as a failure and misusing it as a perverse result of international intervention, diminishing the Libyan people struggle for freedom. To counter this, a Libyan government empowered to secure the country and start democratic reforms would be crucial. In view of the upcoming local elections in Zintan, I outlined that the European Union was able and willing to work with the local authorities and the Libyan Government in helping to build institutions and bring progress to the country and the region.

The Council members stated their **eagerness to build a strong working relationship with the EU** and expressed their thanks for the role that European partners played in toppling the old regime and working to help Libyans establish democracy. Under Kaddafi, Libya not only lost many lives, but it also lost valuable relationships internationally; it was time to rebuild these relationships.

Councillors also highlighted how Libyan and North African security must be very relevant to European security, and stressed how Zintanis, and indeed Libyans, need assistance from European partners in order to address security challenges and the influx of foreigners. They thanked the EU for the support given to the work being carried out in the region by MAG (see below) to help secure a dangerous weapons depot nearby and to persuade families to hand over weapons stacked during the war. They stressed that MAG needed much more support, so that its crucial work could progress faster as the elimination of the danger required.

The Council also regretted the tragic incident that occurred at the United States Consulate in Benghazi, stating that Ambassador Stevens was a good friend of Libya and that the attack was a despicable, criminal act, repudiated by the Libyan people.

The focus of local councils such as the ZGC has very much switched from fighting to now creating local administrative capacities, they noted.

The ZGC Head claimed that Zintan is now the most secure city in Libya. The authorities need support to be able to provide essential services to the people, like telecommunications, water, electrical infrastructure, and develop any activities creating jobs. He pointed to the urgent need

for a mandated Libyan national government to set up a national strategy for the provision of these basic services, the modernization of infrastructure and economic and social development.

The relationship between local authorities and the two elected Zintani GNC members is good, according to the ZGC. Zintan is a very close-knit, family community, which lost 348 men in the war against Gaddafi. The town wants now to move forward and develop, ZGC leaders stressed.

Khaldoun Sinno reiterated to the ZGC the willingness of the EU Delegation to engage with local actors such as themselves, tailoring activities to their specific needs. The Head of the ZGC said a committee was already formed within the ZGC to coordinate cooperative efforts with partners such as the EU.

2. Zintan - MAG, Mines Advisory Group

Mines Advisory Group - MAG is a specialized NGO that works in war-torn communities around the world to reduce the impact of conflict on peoples' lives. In Libya, MAG started working in 2011 during the revolution, mainly on clearing unexploded ordnates (UXOs). Now it also helps collecting weapons that families have stored at homes and provides risk education to the communities on the dangers of these war remnants.

Djadranka Gillesen, Country Director of MAG in Libya, and some of her team brought me to a **Gaddafi arms storage area (ASA) 30 kilometres south of Zintan**. This site, named Al Qaa after the nearby village, is vast, taking up almost 6.5 million squared metres of desert and containing a total of 72 arms storage bunkers (ASB). These large, Romanian-built, concrete ASBs are dotted around the ASA and each contain an immense and varied arsenal of weapons and ammunitions, from large surface-to-air missiles, to mortar rounds, cluster bombs and anti-personal mines, to small arms and light weapons. During the Libyan revolution, when NATO bombed the ASA at Al Qaa, UXOs and sub-munitions were sprayed from each ASB, some up to a range of two kilometres away from the site of the ASA.

MAG men and women (Canadian, Lebanese, Dutch and other European) live in the nearby city of Zintan since last year and speak of warm integration with the local community.

The Al Qaa ASA is now under full-time guard - but not walled - by a unit of the Zintan Military Council with whom MAG articulates. However, there was a period following last year's conflict where a huge threat was posed to the region by it. The ASA contains huge quantities of weapons and ammunition that are highly valuable on the black market for arms. Both opportunists and organised criminals have been removing items from the ASA, adding to the problem of the proliferation of arms around the country and indeed the region. Also, curious locals and scrap collectors venturing into the ASA constitute a persisting problem. Brass and copper found in the ASA is valuable for scrap collectors, but items being collected contain highly volatile propellant. Unfortunately, despite the coordinated efforts of MAG and the local Military Council to secure the site, these risks persist today due to the vastness of the ASA and the quantity of UXOs and other weapons littering the area.

The EU has just provided funding for an excavator that MAG shares between their operations in Zintan and Misrata (some 250 km apart). However, due to the size of the task at hand in making safe these two ASAs, MAG requires more of heavy equipment to be able to continue clearing the destroyed storage bunkers. The NATO campaign has left highly dangerous material buried as far

as three feet underground and the size of the destroyed bunkers means that these structures require the necessary equipment in order to clear them.

MAG's other main donors in Libya include the Norwegian, Danish and Spanish national governments. However, due to financial pressures in Europe, some of these partners are curtailing their support once existing agreements expire. MAG is finding weapons of war from countries of origin across Europe, including Spain, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Romania, Russia, etc... .

The General from the Zintan Military Council who is in charge of guarding the Al Qaa ASA expressed concern about how, despite intensive MAG and local efforts, the quantities of arms being moved around freely is simply too large. And people do not realize the extent of the danger.

MAG experts said that at the current pace of work, it will take 6 years (!!!) to clean up and secure the area! And this is just one of many more ASAs scattered all over Libya!

3. Benghazi

On 4 November I travelled to Benghazi, despite warnings received from the EU Delegation in Tripoli, unable to send anyone with me since it had to abide by strict security instructions. There are several flights linking the two cities daily (1 hour flight), so I flew in the morning and returned at night, accompanied by my trainee-assistant Adam Eshahawi.

Prof. Iman Bughaigis, one of the 9 women activists who started the revolution in Benghazi by demonstrating against Gadaffi, whom I had met in previous visits, kindly assisted me and set up a program of contacts. I met with a range of personalities who have been involved in transitional governance in Libya:

- Mr Jamal Ben Nour, Former Head of the Benghazi Local Council
- Mr Ramadan ElDrissi, Justice and Construction Party
- Dr Ahmed ElJehani, Former member of the Stabilisation Team
- Mr Atia S. Lawgali, Deputy Minister of Culture and Civil Society in the NTC Government
- Dr Younis Fanoush, promoter of a coalition of small elected parties to GNC
- Mr Fathi O. Terbil, Minister of Youth and Sports in the NTC Government
- Mr Mohmed S. Bohedma, Commissioner in the High National Elections Commission Libya

There was calm and normalcy when I crossed the city and I spent most of the day having meetings at the lobby of the main local hotel, the Tibesti, without any disturbance. At sunset I visited the American Consulate, to try to understand the circumstances in which the attack occurred and to pay tribute to Ambassador Chris Stevens and the other victims.

I was told by my interlocutors that there is a palpable anger in Benghazi over their city now being seen as a hotbed for violence and radicalism, given the steady stream of high profile attacks happening there over the past months, with the tragic death of Ambassador Stevens being the most infamous and making the city now make world headlines for all the wrong reasons.

They also stressed that credit must be given to the city's inhabitants for the mass protests that were staged following the American diplomats killings, in a show of unity against such heinous

acts, forcing radical groups to leave the city. Now many people speculated that at any moment Benghazi or the neighbouring region could be the target of a USA drone retaliatory attack. For the most part, blame is being placed on the failure of central Libyan authorities to take decisive action on matters of security, with Benghazi activists complaining of a disturbing prevalence of Gaddafi-era practices persisting in the making of important national governance decisions at the highest level.

As a result of the power vacuum, Benghazi is watching several groups, inspired from abroad, seize the opportunity to assert influence on the future direction of the country. This was manifesting itself in different ways, namely ultra-conservative Islamists becoming more active in the city; their increased visibility has had results ranging from vigilante behaviour and actual attacks and shows of force, to an increased number of women being forced by husbands and relatives to appear fully covered in public places. This is causing tension around the city, since Libya's revolution was a grassroots, popular revolution and these groups have emerged later on in the liberation and transition process to stake a claim to power.

3.1. Benghazi - Perceptions about the elected GNC

The newly elected GNC is criticised in Benghazi, because it is seen so far as being largely ineffective and agonising over procedural issues, rather than building a framework for real change. There is an opinion among Benghazi-based activists that the work of the GNC needs to be monitored and more structured.

Criticism of the GNC is qualified though, in light of the tasks that they are carrying out on matters relating to the formation of the new Libyan government and drafting the nation's constitution. These are cited as major factors for the lack of impact that GNC members have had on local matters. There is also concern surrounding the live daily television broadcasts of sessions of the GNC, as the display of arguments among members about their pay rates and holiday periods are beamed to an increasingly anxious Libyan population.

Libyan authorities also face the difficulty of getting the nation's citizens to begin to trust the political establishment and namely emerging political parties.

The **National Forces Alliance** is seen as a rather personalized instrument, as "Mahmoud Jibril's party", the party of the first TNC president installed as soon as the revolution started (he was the first representative of the Libyan revolution to come to the EP, in March 2011).

In the July elections the Alliance polled very well, winning 39 seats in the GNC, as opposed to the 17 won by the **Justice and Construction Party** (said to be Muslim Brotherhood inspired). Although this party works as a democratically structured entity, this played against the party during the election campaign, due to a general mistrust of political organizations by the Libyan public, seem to vest their belief in the symbol of the individual; that explains, according to some of my interlocutors, the broad support received by the **National Forces Alliance**, with people justifying a vote for Mahmoud Jibril as the man to bring Libya forward.

My interlocutors in Benghazi remembered that these are the very early stages of the Libyan path to democracy and that Libyan voters are still identifying the people and parties who deserve their preferences. They also noted that, in terms of processes and voting, the **Justice and**

Construction Party enjoys a larger level of support in the GNC, coming from members who were elected as independent individuals, not as members of any party.

It was claimed that the performance of Benghazi-elected GNC members has been thus far poor, in light of election promises that were made. The electorate has been left disappointed because they were promised security and prosperity, but GNC members are seen to not be delivering on these promises. In fact, they simply cannot. However, it must not be underestimated how successful the elections themselves were, with several women being elected (33 in 200 GNC members) nationally and the electoral process being universally considered very clean. All parties are proud of what was achieved in the elections.

In Benghazi, the manner in which the 60-member constitutional drafting committee will be formed is a contentious issue. Prominent actors there realise that the equal representation on the committee of 20-20-20 respectively from Libya's three main regions, is principally a result from political pressure from Libya's east. However, there is unease as to how exactly this committee will be formed, whether on an appointment or election basis; and on what criteria candidates for participation will be selected, and by whom.

3.2. Benghazi - Perceptions on the new national government

There was growing frustration in Libyan public opinion relating to the necessary next steps for the country. There is certainly a realisation that Libya needs a functioning government to begin work immediately in order to address the many challenges facing the nation. However, following the many lives lost in liberating Libya from Muammar Gaddafi, people need to see this new administration as legitimate and not containing individuals whose reputations have been tainted due to strong past affiliation with the previous regime or indeed due to having been involved in criminal acts under Gaddafi.

There was wide public outrage around Benghazi with the nomination by Prime Minister Ali Zidan of Ali Suleiman Aujali for the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs. He was Gaddafi's Ambassador to Washington for decades. My interlocutors felt that he was far too close to the old regime to be considered fit to be in the national government following the revolution.

Along with Mr Aujali, Benghazi has seen two other nominated members of the new government who are from the city referred to the Integrity Commission for screening as to their fitness to take up their posts regarding past-affiliation with the Gaddafi regime: these are nominated **Justice Minister Salah Bashir Margani**, and nominated **Interior Minister Ashour Suleiman Shuwail** (the latter was already found unfit and dismissed from the governing team). My interlocutors agreed they were not the best choices, for different reasons.

Overriding in Benghazi is a feeling of marginalisation by the new authorities. This is an issue that does not seem to be going away for the Eastern city; in fact, it seems to be burning stronger as time passes. Relations between east and west only stand to become more frayed if a government is formed that is seen as unacceptable by the people who started the revolution in the east. After their city was heavily oppressed by Gaddafi and as the birthplace of the revolution, the people of Benghazi feel that they are entitled to more attention and support from central powers and the international community than that which they are currently being afforded.

Decentralizing governance to the local level is a priority. Yet, all my interlocutors dismissed as marginal and not representative of the aspirations of the people of Benghazi the attempts to launch a so called **Federalist Movement** (using 2011 Sakharov laureate Mr. Mohamed Al Zenoussi as a front figure) to call for the partition of Libya. Some even viewed it as instrumental for Gaddafi loyalists.

3.3. Benghazi Local Council

The Benghazi Local Council has gone through a transition of its own since the fall of Gaddafi. During the revolution, the Council consisted of volunteers working with very limited resources to simply try and keep society functioning. This was based on a collective revolutionary sense of purpose. Now, however, after the success in the conduct of local elections (and EU support for their organisation was much appreciated), partisan alignments and religious ideologies have come into contention within the elected Local Council, none of its members having ever worked together before and agreed on a "job description".

My Benghazi interlocutors noted that the new Council is too much engaging in their supervisory role - e.g. advising on and monitoring moral and religious issues - while not enough fulfilling their executive role; i.e. to take actions to administrate and develop the city. Yet, the new Local Council is working under better conditions, is legitimated by elections, more supported by laws that have been passed by the NTC, and has a larger budget than the preceding Council; these conditions are expected to improve. But the efforts of the Local Council are highly constrained by a lack of existing networks through which the Council might function and channel resources locally; and a bureaucracy affected by deep-rooted inefficiencies: under Gaddafi's regime, people were actively discouraged from engaging in organized work and indeed organising at all. This has now left deep scars, with people finding it extremely difficult to independently work and collaborate as functioning groups.

Furthermore, many in Benghazi feel that there were serious missteps made by the National Transitional Council (NTC) in selecting its provisional cabinet and deciding how that cabinet operated. This has resulted in crippling the administrative capacity of both local and national authorities; resulting in direct negative impacts on many Libyans' lives at a time of crisis.

4. Contacts in Tripoli - National reconciliation efforts

On the final day of my trip, I visited the Tripoli offices of the **Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**. The mediation and consultation activities of the Centre in Libya are directly funded by the EU; and they are currently engaged in work that is critical to the reconciliation effort in Libya, and indeed the greater transitional effort.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Libya has been opening discourse with and between contending parties on salient issues such as the suspension of all four **Tuareg** Congressmen from the GNC, conflict between **Tawerghans** and the city of **Misrata**, the siege of **Bani Walid**, and minority rights in the constitution. Some of these issues are still highly sensitive and need time to cool down before meaningful reconciliation efforts can take place, but on a broad range of issues the Centre has been successful in its mediation efforts and parties have generally been very willing to the help that is on offer.

At the Centre I with met with **Bani Walid community elders** who had been involved in the mediating efforts to break the violent conflict which had resurged in the last weeks and was having a devastating impact in the city inhabitants. The situation in Bani Walid had escalated rapidly and there were communication breakdowns between authorities in the city and national authorities. Following this last break up of conflict, it is clear that it will be very difficult for the Libyan government to take an active role in facilitating dialogue and reconciliation in Bani Walid -- this will rather need to be done by organizations and individuals who are seen as impartial to the conflict. However the government must find a way to engage in rebuilding and support efforts following the siege of Bani Walid.

5. Meeting with GNC Deputy President, Dr Giuma Atigha - The drafting of Libya's Constitution

On 5 November in Tripoli, I met with Dr. Giuma Ahmed Atigha, originary from Misurata and the **First Deputy President of the General National Congress**. Dr. Atigha stressed that the elaboration of a new constitution is now a very important topic in the Libyan democratic process. He insisted that the Libyan authorities are ready and happy for help from the EU and exposure to different European experiences and solutions.

Ambassador Peter Zsoldos stressed the eagerness for the EU to start working with a functioning new government, namely to ensure the allocation of an EU existing budget to programs which can contribute to enhance GNC members capacities, including the possibility of bringing to Libya constitutional experts from the Venice Commission and the EU MS. And also to bring Libyan GNC members and staff to the EP and European national parliaments to share experiences with a view to assist in the process of the drafting of the constitution, learning about the legislative and overseeing role of a parliament and about the organization of parliamentary work.

Dr Atigha was very interested in that personal exchange. And he stated that the **constitutional drafting committee members, in the 20-20-20 regional representation**, should be swiftly appointed, noting the lack of time and difficulties entailed in another national election process. Rather, members will be nominated by the GNC. After the formation of the government is complete, he said authorities must focus on that to start working on the constitution. A plan must be reached on how to incorporate peoples' opinions. A draft constitution once ready will be distributed to all civil society and must be widely discussed all around the country, before final adoption.

6. UN Special Representative in Libya, Mr. Tarek Mitri

Accompanied by Ambassador Zsoldos, I visited Mr. Tarek Mitri, the Lebanese new UNSG Special Representative in Libya, who just recently replaced Mr. Ian Martin. He was in close contact with Prime Minister Ali Zidan and was following the negotiations the designated Prime Minister had to conduct in order to be able to swear in a Government as widely acceptable as possible. I relayed the perceptions I had been given in Benghazi, realizing that the UN, too, has been restricted in its movements in the East.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Essentially the most pressing situation for Libya at the beginning of this month was the **formation of a government with a programme and with the decisiveness to govern**. This will have far-reaching ramifications for the immediate progress of the country depending on how this process unfolds. It is certainly not an easy task to strike the desired balance between regional representation, sufficient non-affiliation with the former regime, and necessary competence to govern among cabinet members. But as was evidenced in the successful national elections, the Libyans are a pragmatic people. Despite the unconscionable levels of terror and pain under which they lived for so long, they realise that in order for the country to move forward, meaningful and decisive action must be taken at the highest national level. They also realise that the eyes of the international community are scrutinising their revolution more than ever now, following the killing of Ambassador Chris Stevens and other American diplomats.
2. This sense of urgency is also felt in the need to move ahead with **the drafting of the constitution**. Current Libyan political leaders are learning from their past mistakes marked by bickering, un-cohesiveness and indecisiveness. Libyans are now also aware that there are plenty of resources being offered by external partners to support the constitutional process, governance capacity and institution building, including in the priority field of security.
3. The launching of the EU-funded Induction Programme for GNC members is an example of how the **EU can assist in capacity-building for Libya's new politicians**. It is time to supplement this Programme with a range of personal exchanges with reciprocal visits involving experts, parliamentarians, government members and officials.
4. Particular attention and support must be given to **supporting women politicians and professionals become effective and visible in the Libyan political process** - this is a most important way to counter the very patriarchal reactions and the politically guided actions conducted by some forces with a view to drive back Libyan women from the very active role they played in the Revolution. And this is a crucial way to ensure that the new constitution and ordinary legislation to follow will fully respect the human rights of women and gender equality.
5. Exchanges with a view to **share European experience** should be also promoted by the EU **at the level of municipal governance**, given the essential role played by local councils in Libya in securing, administering and developing their cities and surrounding areas. There is tremendous eagerness in Libyans for that interaction with Europeans and that also will afford mutually beneficial opportunities, including in the economic and trade fields.
6. **Benghazi**, the city where the revolution was born and the main cultural and political cradle in Libya, **cannot be sidelined**, with security or any other justifications. Security restrictions which were reinforced following the killing of the American diplomats must be reviewed and should lead to explore any ways to keep regular contacts with Benghazi personalities who are and will be relevant in defining the governance of Libya, and to promote their involvement in any political initiatives and programs promoted by the EU with Libyans. The idea of a **"Europa House" in Benghazi** joining consular, cultural and economic representations of the EU and MS, which was put forward by the AFET/SEDE Delegation who visited Libya last February, should be turned into reality as soon as possible.

7. Despite realising that a proper government was not yet in place in Tripoli, I did bring up with my different interlocutors in Libya some major challenges faced by Libyans that are, as well, a source of concern for international and European public opinion. Libyans, I stress, are more than open, are eager for interaction with Europeans on all these matters and on every area where personal exchange and sharing of experiences can assist them in gaining capacities for local and national governance.
8. One such major concern relates to **transitional justice** for the thousands of war prisoners still languishing in prison, stressing the interest should have in enlisting international support for reform of the judiciary and the legal system and for the credibility of any trials to be conducted in Libya, including that of Saif Al Islam and other top Gaddafi people responsible for crimes during his rule or the revolution. I also stressed the obvious implications of progress in the field of transitional justice for promoting **national reconciliation**, apart from any specialized support needed to overcome major conflicts such as those opposing the Thawargans to Misuratans or involving the people of Bani Walid and other cities or tribes too easily labelled as Gaddafi loyalists.
9. Another major European concern was, I emphasised, the **conditions to which migrants continued to be subjected in Libya**, particularly appalling and discriminatory against sub-Saharan people. This was also a concern for my Libyan interlocutors, who were very conscious of the inability of Libyan official structures to prevent the afflux of foreigners through the huge and porous borders and the totally inadequate detention facilities in which thousand were kept. They were very conscious of the need of Libya to provide **a proper legal status for migrants** working in Libya, realising that the development of their country will require migrant labour and will a magnet for more people to come. But clearly in view of the so many questions demanding urgent resolution in Libya, this is not a matter high in the priorities. Also, there seems to be little awareness that it is an international obligation of Libya, despite of having yet to ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of Refugees, to ensure that **refugees and asylum seekers** must be identified among the foreigners present in Libya and afforded appropriate protection and respect for their rights. I spoke about these problems in an interview I gave to the **Libyan Herald**, a most widely reaching electronic media (*see link below*). This is an area where pedagogic interaction by the EU with the Libyan Government members, parliamentarians, officials and civil society is much needed, but certainly not with the narrow and self-serving approach that enforced previous attempts by the EU to negotiate with Gaddafi a readmission agreement.
10. Several of my interlocutors stressed the importance for Libyan people to see the new Libyan authorities achieve some progress in **assets recovery** regarding the national wealth spread by the Gaddafi regime in investments and bank accounts abroad. The role to be played by Europe in cooperating in such endeavour was highlighted. **The EP was expected to keep watching** that European authorities, governments as much as financial institutions, would disclose information and cooperate in full transparency. Libyan interlocutors stressed that by acting in a transparent way, Europeans would be giving a major contribution to fight corruption in Libya, allowing the Libyan people to also keep under close control that process and not allow entrenched corrupt practices to keep misusing the public funds.
11. Following the revolution, when an army and police forces to protect communities was needed, a decisive central leadership was absent: organising of armed groups occurred locally and indiscipline in these newly formed brigades was, and remains, rife as each day goes by. The threat to the stability of the country posed by armed militias that operate beyond a centralized grows. It is clear that in the new government, the relevant ministers assuming the portfolios of the Interior, Defence and Justice will need to be clearly mandated to take all the necessary and

difficult steps to incorporate all parties in the difficult task of forming effective security forces. This will require a **DDR program for militia members** and support and investment for **training and the establishment of command structures in the National Army, Police and border security forces**. The good thing is that Libyan society and political leaders seem to be fully conscious of it and welcome European support in that sense.

Regarding the massive program needed to help Libya **collect, control and secure the vast arsenal of weapons** still spread around the country and in the hands of civilians, **the EU and its MS must do much more**: after all, is it as much **about EU security**, as Libya's security, what is at stake.

Pressure must be applied by the EP and the HR/VP on EU member states to take **a hands-on approach in aiding Libyans in this process of making their country safer**; particularly when arms manufactured in a particular Member State are being found in large quantities in Libya as a result with business done with the Gaddafi regime.

Ana Gomes, MEP

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Link to Libya Herald: "Europe will fully support Libya if it respects human rights":

<http://www.libyaherald.com/2012/11/06/europe-will-fully-support-libya-if-it-respects-human-rights-ana-gomes-european-parliament-rapporteur-on-libya/>