

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

20 September 2005

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on the future of the Barcelona Process

Rapporteur: Mrs Tokia SAÏFI, chairwoman

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly:

- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of 28 November 1995 and its programme of work,
 - having regard to its resolution on the evaluation of the Barcelona Process on the eve of its tenth anniversary, adopted in Cairo on 15 March 2005,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Seventh Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Luxembourg on 30 and 31 May 2005, notably points 5 and 21,
 - having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: a Work Programme to Meet the Challenges of the Next Five Years',
 - having regard to the resolution of the European Parliament of _____ 2005 on 'the Barcelona Process revisited',
 - having regard to the debates at the sittings of 15 June 2005 and 20 September 2005,
 - having regard to the considerations raised by Mr Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy at the sitting of 15 June 2005,
 - having regard to Rule 3(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mediterranean policy is one of the EU's external relations priorities; whereas the Barcelona Ministerial Conference marked a historic turning-point in Euro-Mediterranean relations, and 2005 was declared 'Year of the Mediterranean' by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in the Hague,
- B. whereas the Barcelona Process is the only project - in existence for ten years now - in the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole for creating an area of stability and prosperity, based on shared values and grounded in a new approach to international relations that gives priority to cooperation of an ever closer, more solid and more symmetrical nature amongst all the countries and peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region,
- C. whereas from the beginning all the signatory states have considered that the Barcelona Conference laid the foundations of an open-ended and dynamic process based on the principles (equality, co-responsibility, solidarity and joint participation) set out in the final declaration,
- D. whereas, nonetheless, the events of the beginning of this century (the stagnation of the Israel-Palestine peace plan, the terrorist attacks in New York and then in Madrid, London and Sharm el-Sheik, and the Iraq war) have profoundly altered the international scenario, affecting the results of the Barcelona Process,
- E. whereas the Middle East conflict continues to be a major political problem, which the Euro-Mediterranean community cannot afford to leave in an impasse and which is heavily conditioning the effectiveness of the Barcelona Process,
- F. whereas all the Euro-Mediterranean partners have committed themselves to act in conformity with the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as with other obligations arising from international law, notably those deriving from the regional and international instruments to which they are party,
- G. recalling in this connection that the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg recently stressed the importance of 'moving towards common perceptions of the challenges related to democratisation', and drew attention to the

potential role of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in contributing to this objective,

- H. whereas action against terrorism must in all circumstances be compatible with the fundamental freedoms and human rights which it is designed to protect,
- I. convinced that the institutionalisation of the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process should have the effect of revitalising the Euro-Mediterranean partnership,
- J. whereas, despite the budgetary and financial means deployed (EUR 6.4 bn from the Community budget allocated to financial cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners since 1996; EUR 1.8 bn in assistance to the Palestinian Authority since the peace process began in 1994), the economic gap between the two shores of the Mediterranean has widened further,
- K. whereas, despite what has been achieved, the process of political, economic and social modernisation needs to be accelerated in the Arab partner countries, and in this respect, as certain international institutions have stressed, the challenge is enormous: 65% of the population of those countries is aged under 25, and over the period 2000-2010 the number of new entrants into the active population will average 4.2 m each year, or twice the number of new entrants over the previous two decades,
- L. recognising that bilateral treaties of friendship, cooperation and good neighbourly relations, as well as the reinforced political consultation instruments which link many countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region, are factors contributing to the goals of peace, stability and prosperity for the region,
- M. whereas sub-regional North-South initiatives such as the '5+5 dialogue' can contribute to improving the structuring of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership as a whole, and also to reinforcing South-South cooperation between the western and eastern Mediterranean countries,
- N. whereas the weak point of the trade aspect of the Barcelona Process lies in the narrow and static character of trade among the ten partner countries of the southern bank of the Mediterranean, which is a serious obstacle to creating a free trade area by 2010; whereas, in this context, the Agadir agreement on trade liberalisation is a good example of the type of action needed if this objective is to be attained,

1. Welcomes the tangible results of the Barcelona Process, as a unique and far-sighted initiative for peace and prosperity on the banks of the Mediterranean, in both the economic and the political fields; notes that, in the current context, the cooperation philosophy and objectives defined in the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 are even more relevant today for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership;
2. Considers, in this connection, that much has been done since then to achieve those objectives, but that there is still a long way to be travelled, and recalls that the partnership has been more successful in some areas than in others;
3. Believes that the European neighbourhood policy and the strategic partnership for the Mediterranean basin should be integrated into the Barcelona Process so as to prevent dispersal of resources; in this context, calls on the EU Council and Commission to clarify the institutional and operational relationship of these instruments to the Barcelona Process;
4. Wishes to see practical arrangements introduced to enable the Mediterranean partner countries to play a greater part in the official political dialogue, with a view to developing the co-responsibility, proactive attitudes and spirit of mutual learning which should characterise the partnership; believes, in this connection, that the principles of co-presidency and alternation of venue should be implemented as soon as possible;
5. Welcomes the conclusion of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements with the nine partner countries and the signature of the agreement with Syria; believes that these agreements need to become fully operational as soon as possible, and should be complemented by South-South agreements on the Agadir model, thus making it possible to develop genuine interregional cooperation;
6. Calls for the creation of human rights subcommittees in the context of the association agreements, with a view to developing a structured dialogue on human rights and democracy;
7. Appeals as a matter of urgency to those Euro-Mediterranean countries which have not already done so to accede as swiftly as possible to the following UN conventions and protocols:
 - the two optional protocols to the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights;
 - the declaration under Article 41 of the Pact accepting the competence of the Committee on Human Rights in disputes between countries;
 - the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, also withdrawing as many reservations as possible vis-à-vis the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women's Rights;
 - the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
8. Welcomes the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip and the legislative elections in Palestine; believes it essential to create the institutional and material conditions that can ensure an economically viable Gaza strip; calls on the international community, and the EU in particular, to provide firm support for the economic development of that territory and for the rehabilitation of the public and social utility infrastructures, with a view to encouraging productive investment, creating jobs and improving the inhabitants' standard of living and prospects;
9. Welcomes the new and encouraging climate of political dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, the resumption of high-level contacts between the parties, and the joint desire to find a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict with the help of the international community; calls on all the parties involved to seek solutions to the issues

still unresolved by means of direct political negotiations based on the Road Map for peace, as accepted by both sides;

10. Calls on the international community to support this process, which should be based on the solution, as already proposed, of two states, on the relevant UN resolutions, and on the fundamental right of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders; calls on both sides to abstain from all action that might undermine the moves towards a lasting peace;
11. Is fully aware, in this connection, of the concerns of the Palestinian delegation regarding such major issues as security, the decision of the International Court of Justice on the Israeli separation wall (or 'security enclosure'), the refugees, the settlements and the subjects related to the final status of the negotiations; is equally well aware of the Israeli delegation's concerns over such major issues as security; strongly condemns all forms of terrorism and incitement to hatred, whatever their origin;
12. Welcomes the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and the holding of democratic parliamentary elections in Lebanon, as positive elements of political stabilisation; calls on the Lebanese authorities to continue their cooperation with the UN's mission of inquiry into the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri;
13. Welcomes the notion of establishing an 'alliance of civilisations', and stresses the need to confront the causes of terrorism, especially through developing education and supporting the creation of a diversified civil society;
14. Calls on the Ministerial Conference to give a fresh impetus to the fight against terrorism by means of a structured common strategy of the Euro-Mediterranean countries; supports the efforts being made at subregional level by Morocco, Spain and France to create a Euro-Mediterranean police and judicial cooperation network;
15. Stresses that the Euro-Mediterranean parliaments have a key role to play in the fight against terrorism, and believes that they must transpose the various international legal instruments into their national law;
16. Calls, in this connection, for technical assistance to be provided in the framework of the partnership with a view to facilitating the swift and effective transposition and implementation of those legal instruments;

17. Is concerned at the fact that a number of countries have invoked the fight against terrorism in adopting or announcing laws permitting exemptions from their international obligations in the areas of human rights, international humanitarian law, refugee law and the principles of the rule of law; recalls that those obligations include the prohibition of torture and of all forms of degrading treatment;
18. Stresses that it is vital to ease the external debt burden of those Mediterranean partner countries which have undertaken to facilitate the partnership's goals; in this connection, calls on the EU Member States to make more use of innovative debt conversion formulas, involving human resource training or social and environmental projects;
19. Calls for the implementation of the clauses on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) included in the agreements and action plans, by all the partners without exception, with a view to making the Mediterranean a WMD-free zone; calls on all the Euro-Mediterranean countries to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT);
20. Recommends the closer involvement of the partner countries in the European Security and Defence Policy;
21. Notes that stability and political modernisation are linked to the formation of an organised and diversified civil society; welcomes, in this regard, the creation of the Euromed Non-Governmental Platform;
22. Notes that the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly has raised hopes in civil society, since it is an instrument with the potential for generating a new dynamic enabling concrete progress in the area of human rights and democratisation; stresses that the combined efforts of the parliamentary bodies and of civil society should heighten the public visibility of the Barcelona Process;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the forthcoming Extraordinary Summit of Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government, to the EU Council and Commission, to the Parliaments and Governments of the participant countries of the Barcelona Process, and to the European Parliament.