

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE,
EXCHANGES BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETIES, AND CULTURE**

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

Presented by President GRECO

The Committee on improving quality of life, exchanges between civil societies, and culture,

considering

- a) the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the 10th anniversary of Euromediterranean partnership, including a working programme to meet the challenges of the next five years;
 - b) the agreed conclusions for the 7th Euromediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Luxembourg on 30-31 May, 2005;
 - c) its own resolution, approved at the EMPA meeting of 15 March in Cairo;
 - d) the package of proposals on migration policy presented by the European Commission on 1st September aimed at creating a common set of horizontal rules concerning repatriation, to be applied by transitivity all through the EU; establishing a common agenda for the full integration of migrants; strengthening the link between migration policies and development aid;
 - e) the debate held at the sittings of 20th June and 19th September and, more specifically, the contributions by the European Commissioner for environment, Mr Dimas, the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice, Mr Frattini, and the European Commission's officers in charge of cultural exchanges in the context of Euromediterranean partnership:
1. takes note of the European Commission's sometimes negative assessment of Euromediterranean partnership, ten years after the Barcelona Declaration, with special reference to the environmental and cultural exchange policies;
 2. notes that the proposals to relaunch the Barcelona Process, as formulated by the European Commission and resumed and integrated by the 7th Euromediterranean Conference in Luxembourg, are generally valid;
 3. underlines, nonetheless, that such proposals need further elaboration and completion in order to be fully effective.

More specifically, on the subject of protection of the environment and of quality of life, the Committee

4. takes note of the absolute priority given by the European Commission to the Initiative to clean up the Mediterranean Sea, that ought to be completed by the year 2020, following a time table to be approved by 2006, and expresses the wish that the contents and strategies of the

initiative be subjected to a wide debate during next year, involving Parliaments, through the EMPA, civil society and international financial institutions, alongside the Governments of the member countries of the Barcelona Process;

5. believes that such initiative, in order to be thoroughly effective, should be both positive and transversal, as well as financially sound, and that it must be incisively coordinated with other international, bilateral and regional instruments for the environmental protection of the Mediterranean ecosystem;
6. stresses that the multiplication of instances of climate change, often leading to sheer natural disasters, calls for a shared management of environmental and prevention policies. More specifically, the crisis in the water supply sector compels the creation of a truly common water-management policy, that might be launched by an *ad hoc* Euromediterranean Conference and the full involvement of the European Environment Agency;
7. notes the belated integration of association agreements with environmental policies and calls for a speeding up of the process that should lead to progressively embedding the idea of eco-conditionality into the new Neighbourhood Policy that ought to complement the Barcelona Process in the forthcoming years;
8. though agreeing on the absolute need to accelerate the liberalisation of trade and services, with a view to complying with the 1995 Barcelona Declaration criteria for the creation of a Euromediterranean free exchange area, stresses the need for such an acceleration to be complemented with accompanying measures ensuring its environmental sustainability. More specifically, the Committee expresses the wish that the rural development Programme explicitly provided for in the new Neighbourhood Policy be launched simultaneously with the definition of a time-table for trade liberalisation of agricultural products, and that such Programme include sound and effective measures to promote quality agriculture. It also wishes that the process leading to progressive convergence of the Barcelona partner states' domestic legislations with EU environmental standards and law be revitalised and strengthened.

On the subject of policies aimed at strengthening the dialogue between cultures and civilisations, the Committee

9. welcomes the European Commission's commitment to increase resources for the MEDA Program and the new Neighbourhood Policy financial instrument to be detailed to cultural cooperation by at least 50% as early as 2007, and stresses that such an increase should be accompanied by a strengthened dialogue between partner countries

in the Barcelona Process, in order for financial resources and programs to be channelled into long-term, sustainable reform processes, and to be aimed, more specifically, to encourage the right to study of disadvantaged people, such as women and rural populations, and to contribute effectively to the fight against illiteracy;

10. welcomes the commitment to extend the Erasmus Mundus and the Tempus Programmes to Southern Mediterranean countries. It invites the European Commission to provide the necessary instruments in order to enlarge knowledge and awareness of purposes, means and possibilities of such programmes. It also stresses that cooperation among universities could thoroughly benefit from a revitalised process leading to the creation of a true Mediterranean University, and that cultural exchange policies ought to extend from universities to all research centres, possibly through the creation of a Euromediterranean Fund for scientific research;
11. stresses again the brain drain problem in Mediterranean partner States, as part of a migration process often involving the most educated sectors of the societies of origin, and the need to adopt an integrated and complementary approach, synergetically aimed at dealing with higher learning, university cooperation, research and training;
12. calls for more effective coordination amongst all international, bilateral and regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the dialogue between cultures and civilisations. In this field, a fundamental impulse ought to be provided by the “Anna Lindh” Euromediterranean Foundation, through the contribution of its national networks;
13. calls for stronger commitment of all the Institutions of the Barcelona Process, to disseminate results and perspectives of Euromediterranean partnership through publications, events, digital instruments and the involvement of media from both sides of the Mediterranean.

On the subject of migration policies, the Committee

14. takes note of the package of measures tabled by the European Commission in early September;
15. stresses that measures concerning the expulsion and repatriation of illegal migrants should be implemented through more effective partnership with the countries of origin and transit of migrants, also through an acceleration in the negotiations for re-admission agreements, and that relevant orders be implemented in full respect of personal rights;

16. expresses the wish that the envisaged adoption of a European Strategy for legal immigration by December 2005 will help implement measures accelerating the integration of migrants legally resident in the EU, and strengthening instruments for cultural dialogue and the dissemination of principles underlying European citizenship, while fully respecting the diversity and specific nature of migrants' civilisations;
17. welcomes all initiatives improving the link between migration policies and development aid, and recalls that the causes of migration are essentially economic and need to be tackled through structural measures to consolidate and modernize the economies of the countries of origin;
18. stresses again the need to create preferential visa regimes for students, researchers and cultural and economic operators, in order to facilitate exchange of experience and training: therefore, it welcomes the European Commission's proposal to streamline researcher's visas.