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EU relations with the Mediterranean region

European Parliament resolution on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
 - having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 and its work programme,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the ten Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers' meetings,
 - having regard to the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA),
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on reinvigorating EU actions on human rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners - strategic guidelines (COM(2003)0294),
 - having regard to the conclusions of the civil forums organised in parallel with those ministerial meetings,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Barcelona process, over the last ten years, has provided a framework for a partnership between the countries and peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean,
- B. having regard to the strategic importance of the Mediterranean for the EU, in the light of the need for a Mediterranean policy based on solidarity in order to face the multiple shared challenges of peace, stability, terrorism and security, mutual understanding, the fight against trafficking in people (including clandestine and illegal immigration), and the objective of creating a shared area of prosperity,
- C. whereas the Barcelona Declaration commits the participating countries to establishing a regular dialogue on political, economic and social questions and human rights,
- D. whereas the EU has defined a new European Neighbourhood Policy aimed at enhancing such partnership, giving a further opportunity to deepen relations, strengthening the political dialogue and integrating partner countries into EU policies in order to promote peace, stability and democracy in neighbouring countries,
- E. whereas the first action plans with Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian National Authority adopted by the Council commit the Union and partner countries to a closer and all-encompassing dialogue and must follow a coherent and common regional approach,

- F. stressing that the resumption of dialogue between the parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides a valuable opportunity for achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement, which would be a boost for the whole Euromed process,
 - G. whereas on 19 October 2004 the Commission and Syria formally concluded the negotiations for an EC-Syria Association Agreement, thus bringing to an end the phase of bilateral agreements provided for in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership,
 - H. taking note of the Council Common Position 2004/698/CFSP of 14 October 2004¹ lifting the restrictive measures and the arms embargo against Libya, which paves the way for the full involvement of that country in the Barcelona process,
 - I. whereas the transformation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum into the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), with three committees, strengthens the parliamentary dimension of the Euromed process, thus enhancing its democratic accountability; whereas the creation of this new body should enhance the overall dialogue between the two regions,
 - J. appalled by the assassination of Rafik Hariri and concerned by the situation created in the Lebanon by this criminal act,
 - K. concerned by the waiving of the parliamentary immunity, and the detention, of Ayman Nour, President of the Ghad Party in Egypt,
1. Welcomes the decision of the ministers that 2005 is the Year of the Mediterranean, and calls on the Council and Commission to make a renewed effort to enhance democracy and contribute and promote the necessary political, economic and social reforms in the Mediterranean countries;
 2. Considers that the political dialogue envisaged has not yet led to tangible results throughout the region; regrets that the human rights aspect of the Barcelona process has not been developed sufficiently while the situation in numerous countries shows no sign of improvement; deplores the failure to comply with the human rights clause in the Euro-Mediterranean agreements; reiterates its call for the Commission to draw up a public annual report on human rights in the Mediterranean countries, as a basis for further developing the partnership;
 3. Calls on all the countries of the region to work in close cooperation in order to face the growing challenge of immigration in a spirit of shared responsibility;
 4. Calls on the Commission to design the new 'neighbourhood' financial instrument in a transparent manner, in cooperation with the partner countries and with the involvement of the Parliament and the EMPA, so as to make it truly capable of giving an impetus to development and encouraging investment;
 5. Welcomes the creation of the Euromed non-governmental platform for the civil forum, which will hold its constituent meeting in April 2005 in Luxembourg; stresses, in this

¹ OJ L 317, 16.10.2004, p. 40.

respect, the importance of developing close cooperation with this platform by inviting its members regularly to present their views within the EMPA;

6. Calls on the Commission to involve it in assessing the implementation of the action plans;
7. Is of the opinion that the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights must play a crucial role in promoting the EU's founding values as part of the Barcelona process and urges the Commission to assume its responsibilities and ensure compliance with the human rights clause in the agreements;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote women's rights when implementing their financial and technical assistance to the partner countries, in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Development Programme report;
9. Takes note of the forthcoming signing of the EC-Syria Association Agreement, which commits Damascus to deep and substantial reforms with a view to starting a genuine process of democratising Syria's structures; calls on Syria not to tolerate any kind of terrorism, including its support for the military wing of Hizbullah, and to refrain from any interference in the Lebanon's domestic affairs; calls on Syria to withdraw its troops from the Lebanon immediately, as stated in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and will treat this condition as crucial to its assessment when the time comes to sign the EC-Syria Association Agreement;
10. Calls on the Council to consider sending a delegation of EU observers to monitor the elections in the Lebanon;
11. Strongly condemns the attack which killed the ex-Prime Minister of the Lebanon, Mr Hariri, and his escort and announces that it will pay close attention to the findings of the international inquiry now underway;
12. Calls for the release of Dr Nour; considers that the waiving of immunity of a Member of the Egyptian Parliament and his detention undermine the spirit and the letter of the association agreement between the EC and Egypt; calls on the Commission, the Council and the High Representative for the CFSP to bring every influence to bear to remind the Egyptian authorities of the spirit of that agreement;
13. Calls on Libya to take the necessary steps and give the necessary undertakings, including releasing without delay the foreign medical workers held in prison, to allow it to be fully included in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, thus contributing to the enhancement of the Barcelona process;
14. Welcomes the latest positive developments in the Middle East conflict, since they will have a decisive impact on the full development of the whole Euromed partnership, and calls on all partner countries to make every effort to support the resumption of dialogue and firm up the Road Map;
15. Calls on the Council and Commission, in their relations with the Mediterranean partners, to make concrete proposals for progress on security, making use of elements of the European Security Strategy and the crisis management instruments already in place at the Commission;

16. Expresses its satisfaction at the increasing and considerable improvement in the performance of the MEDA funds;
17. Stresses the importance of promoting and extending the trans-European networks, especially in the fields of energy and transport, for relations and cooperation with the Mediterranean partners;
18. Supports the proposal to set up a Mediterranean early warning system for disaster prevention, in the light of the lessons learnt from the tsunami that hit south-east Asia;
19. Believes that the signing of the Agadir agreement between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan in February 2004 is a positive indication of the strengthening of the axis of South-South cooperation as a complement to that of North-South cooperation; and urges all the countries in the Mediterranean region to consolidate their relations, including trade relations, and, if necessary, remove any obstacles thereto;
20. Wishes the Council to take a decision to organise a Euro-Mediterranean Summit meeting of Heads of State or Government to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process; underlines the importance, in this context, of the parliamentary dimension of this process and calls on the EMPA, which is to meet in Cairo from 12 to 15 March 2005, to schedule an extraordinary meeting to join in commemorating this 10th anniversary;
21. Looks forward with interest to the inaugural session of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures; is convinced that the Foundation can make a contribution to increasing mutual understanding and making the most of our common heritage;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Mediterranean countries signatory to the Barcelona Declaration, and the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.