

The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

European Parliament resolution of 5 June 2008 on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Barcelona on 27-28 November 1995 establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council entitled the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (COM(2008)0319),
 - having regard to the endorsement by the Brussels European Council of 13-14 March 2008 of the principle of establishing the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean,
 - having regard to the Final Declaration of the Presidency of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) and to the recommendations adopted by the EMPA at its fourth plenary session in Athens on 27-28 March 2008,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Naples on 2-3 December 2003 and in Lisbon on 5-6 November 2007,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (COM(2006)0726),
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit held in Barcelona on 27-28 November 2005 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
 - having regard to the Communication of from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled 'Reinvigorating EU actions on Human Rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners - Strategic guidelines'(COM(2003)0294),
 - having regard to its earlier resolutions on the Mediterranean policy of the European Union, in particular its resolution of 15 March 2007¹,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Mediterranean region and the Middle East are of strategic importance to the EU and whereas there is a need for a Mediterranean policy based on solidarity, dialogue, cooperation and exchange, with a view to meeting common challenges and achieving the aim of creating an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity,

¹ OJ C 301 E, 13.12.2007, p. 206.

- B. whereas, at the inaugural summit of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean to be held on 13 July 2008 in Paris, clear guidelines should be set for enhancing the multilateral relations of the EU with its Mediterranean partners, including strengthening working methods and greater sharing of responsibilities,
- C. whereas the analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of the Barcelona Process should be duly taken into consideration so that Euro-Mediterranean relations can be revisited in an efficient way and new impetus given to the Barcelona Process; whereas, in this regard, it is important to address the difficulties encountered in developing cooperation and deepening the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, such as the persistence of conflict in the Middle East, serious political tensions in the region, for example in Western Sahara, the lack of substantial progress made in the area of democracy and human rights and the lack of public awareness of the process,
- D. whereas the overall assessment of the Barcelona Process is that despite its insufficient achievements, compared to the initial objectives, it has potential which should be optimised,
1. Welcomes the above-mentioned Communication from the Commission entitled 'the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean', and shares the aim of this new initiative to give fresh political and practical impetus to the multilateral relations of the EU with its Mediterranean partners by upgrading the political level of relations, through greater co-ownership and enhanced sharing of responsibilities, as well as by developing regional projects responding to the needs of citizens in the region;
 2. Considers that fresh impetus should be given to the Barcelona Process in order to raise its profile and highlight its tangible benefits for citizens and, in particular, for citizens on the southern shores of the Mediterranean;
 3. Shares the view that there is a need for a reinvigorated Barcelona Process, which should remain the central element of EU cooperation with the Mediterranean region as the only forum where all its Mediterranean partners exchange views and engage in constructive dialogue; regards the Barcelona Declaration, its objectives and areas of cooperation as a milestone in those relations; hopes that the new initiative builds on the achievements of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, bringing added value to the process;
 4. Calls therefore on those countries which are not part of the Barcelona Process to share the Barcelona acquis so as to move forward towards the same goals;
 5. Firmly supports the proposed development of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean as a consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean area based on democratic principles and respect for the rule of law and human rights, which should lead to a strong partnership in foreign and security policy;
 6. Calls on the Council and the Commission to make an assessment of the new institution and of the legal implications of this important new initiative, notably in relation to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon;
 7. Gives an assurance as to its readiness to cooperate on setting up an institutional framework for the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean; points out that as one arm of the budgetary authority of the EU, it will be involved in order to ensure that the new framework and its projects are a success;

8. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to establish a co-presidency of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean at head of State and Government and at foreign minister level, appreciating that it will enhance joint ownership of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation; welcomes the Commission's proposal that the EU Co-presidency should be held by the competent EU institutions, stresses that the Mediterranean arm of the presidency should be appointed by consensus among the Mediterranean partners and that the country holding the presidency should invite all the States participating in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean to summits and ministerial meetings;
9. Endorses the Commission's proposal to establish a Joint Permanent Committee, based in Brussels, of appointed representatives from all the participants in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, which might play an important role in improving institutional governance;
10. Considers that the proposed new secretariat should be integrated in the Commission services, could comprise officials seconded from all participants in the process and should bring added value to existing structures so as to strengthen the administrative capacity to support the overall process;
11. Considers that the proposed new secretariat should make the new Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean more visible on the ground and that it should resolutely concentrate on regional projects and should also be able to take responsibility for whole series of tasks, with a view to good governance of the projects;
12. Calls, however, on the Council and the Commission to require the host country of the secretariat to be committed to the democratic and human rights values of the Barcelona Process;
13. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to strengthen relations with the EU's Mediterranean partners at political level by organising summit meetings every two years in the context of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, with a view to adopting political declarations and decisions on the main programmes and projects to be developed at regional level;
14. Is of the opinion that the EMPA should be fully involved in the preparation and proceedings of these summits;
15. Welcomes the Commission's proposal regarding the role of the EMPA, which should become an integral part of the institutional framework of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean as its parliamentary dimension; underlines the fact that enhancement of democratic legitimacy is necessary, as is strengthening of the role of the EMPA, the only parliamentary assembly uniting the 27 EU Member States and all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process; considers that the EMPA, as a consultative body, should have the right to make proposals and assessments; supports participation in the EMPA by the parliamentary representatives of countries which are not part of the Barcelona Process;
16. Reiterates that the development of democracy must be achieved by supporting political reforms and stresses that the credibility of the European policy of democratisation and promotion of human rights depends on strong and visible support for civil society and democratic political organisations on the southern shores of the Mediterranean; calls for a strong involvement of civil society and social partners' representatives in the institutional

framework of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean;

17. Points out that one of the main goals of Euro-Mediterranean policy is to promote the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and political pluralism and considers, in this regard, that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has not yet produced the expected results in the area of human rights; calls therefore on the Council and the Commission to clearly enshrine the promotion of human rights and democracy in the objectives of this new initiative and to further strengthen the implementation of existing mechanisms, such as the human rights clause included in the association agreements and the creation of a mechanism implementing this clause in the new generation of agreements, the ENP bilateral action plans and the setting up of sub-committees on human rights;
18. Points out that the scope of EU-Mediterranean cooperation must also extend to the other Mediterranean coastal states and stresses that the entire Mediterranean identity of other countries needs to be fully recognised;
19. Recalls the examples of initiatives proposed by the Commission, such as sea motorways, the linking up of the Arab Maghreb motorway (AMA), the de-pollution of the Mediterranean, civil protection and the Mediterranean Solar Plan; expresses its interest in the opportunities for high-power solar thermal electricity generation in the North African desert and recommends that priority be given to discussion of this at the initial meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean; also supports other projects such as water desalination in order to facilitate access to drinking water, which is a major concern in many Mediterranean countries;
20. Stresses the need for projects under the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean to be open to all EU Member States and Mediterranean partners interested in taking part, especially if they are stakeholders in specific projects or fields;
21. Calls on the Commission to inform Parliament and the EMPA on a regular basis about how these regional projects are developing and to consider the proposals and evaluations submitted at parliamentary level with a view to raising the profile of the process and increasing take-up capacity and added value for citizens in the region;
22. Underlines the fact that the EU-Mediterranean partnership cannot focus solely on economic and trade issues; points out that the three Barcelona pillars are closely linked; points out that the first pillar intended to contribute to 'peace, stability and prosperity', and the projected Charter for Peace and Stability have not made significant progress; stresses that the objective of creating a free-trade area and the liberalisation of trade are not goals in themselves, but have to be accompanied by a strengthening of regional cooperation as well as of social and environmental integration;
23. Points out that economic policies must be assessed not only in terms of their contribution to growth, but also in terms of the number of jobs they are creating and their contribution to poverty reduction; in this context, underlines the need for increased EU support for Mediterranean partner State programmes with the aim of facilitating the establishment of a favourable climate for increased investment and for encouraging young people to set up small businesses, including facilitating access to microcredit; considers, in this respect, that the support of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) should be enhanced, including information campaigns;

24. Points to its proposal for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Development Bank capable of attracting direct foreign investment, which the EU-Mediterranean region is lacking, and points out that participation by the Gulf States, as the first investors in the region, could contribute to realising this objective;
25. Reaffirms the need to boost the status of women in the Mediterranean region through policies which give them a major role in their societies and by promoting gender equality; stresses that respect for traditions and customs does not need to detract from their fundamental rights;
26. Underlines the need to propose an interesting range of cultural cooperation programmes to the EU's Mediterranean partners through increased use of ERASMUS MUNDUS and Euromed Audiovisual II (2006-2008), which should be stepped up and extended, and, in general, of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument¹;
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the governments and parliaments of the Barcelona Process States.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1).