

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the Bureau of**  
**the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean**

**Brussels, Friday 8 June 2012**  
**10.00 - 12.30**

Present:

- Mr. Martin SCHULZ, President of the European Parliament (EP) and President of the PA-UfM (President)
- Mr. Karim GHELLAB, President of the Moroccan House of Representatives and Vice-President of the PA-PA-UfM
- Mr. Hameed BAITANEH in replacement of the President of the Jordanian House of Representatives and Vice-President of the PA-UfM, Abdulkareem AL-DOHMI
- Mr. Fernando NEGRÃO in replacement of the President of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic and Vice-President of the PA-UfM, Maria da Assunção A. ESTEVES

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The Bureau adopted the draft agenda without modification.

**2. Adoption of the minutes of the PA-UfM Bureau meeting on 24 March 2012 in Rabat**

The Bureau adopted the minutes without modification.

**3. Chair's announcements**

The Bureau heard the President who gave a short introduction on the purpose of the following exchange of views which comes after the workshop "Union for the Mediterranean: the way forward", a brainstorming seminar that was held the day before in Brussels on the future orientations of the UfM and possibilities for PA-UfM action.

## **Decisions taken**

- The Working Group on Rules is mandated to define the composition of the PA-UfM Committees
- The Palestinian application for the Vice-Chair of the Energy Committee is accepted
- The application ARLEM for a permanent observer status in the PA-UfM is approved and shall be submitted for a formal vote to the Plenary in 2013.

## **4. Maximising assistance for democratic transition in the Mediterranean - exchange of views in the presence of**

- André AZOULAY, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation
- Dr. Werner HOYER, President of the European Investment Bank
- Fathallah SIJILMASSI, UfM Secretary-General
- Štefan FÜLE, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

Mr Azoulay advocated for a renewed Mediterranean partnership based on reciprocity to overcome an approach mainly based on free trade. He challenged the EU to take a strong initiative on Palestine. Finally, he offered the PA-UfM to be associated to organising a big civil society forum in Marseilles in April 2013 and to this end be part of a steering committee, and two preparatory meetings on women in Morocco and on Youth in Turkey.

Mr Hoyer presented the scope of EIB activities in response to the Arab Spring including investments of over €3bn. Yet, loans signed with the EIB decreased. He pledged continued EIB support to the region despite its narrow mandate.

Striking a balance of his first 100 days in office Mr Sijilmassi highlighted that the Secretariat is trying to scale existing projects and to ensure leverage focussing on sub-regional cooperation to avoid duplicating the bilateral ENP approach. Regional integration in the Maghreb could generate an additional 1-2 of the BIP. There is positive momentum for the UfM, but political support is needed. The swift nomination of a Southern Co-Presidency would be a signal in this direction. Sijilmassi insisted on North-South and South-South mobility and advocated for new financial mechanisms to implement UfM projects. He further asked for support to transform the Secretariat into an international organisation. A permanent presence of the PA-UfM at UfM senior officials meetings (SOM) is seen as positive.

Mr Füle stated the need of closer cooperation between the EU, the Union of the Arab Maghreb and the 5+5 framework. He pledged to include parliamentary cooperation more into reporting on the southern neighbourhood. Füle described the UfM as a sleeping beauty in need to be to awaken. He pointed to ambitious programmes for sectorial cooperation in the agriculture and energy fields which are under way. The Commission contributes to strengthening the expertise of the UfM Secretariat. He also stated his readiness to deliver on the planned civil society forum.

In his conclusions the President noted the lack of political will of the executive side to push the UfM forward while suggesting that Parliaments, through the PA UfM, should start filling the vacuum. Furthermore, the President suggested establishing a working group (task force) composed by the European Commission, the EIB, the UfM Secretariat and the European Parliament in order to identify some UfM projects which could be quickly boosted through targeted parliamentary support. In that respect the President suggested to have by early

September an EP liaison officer representing the Parliament in this task force.

President Ghellab agreed with a political steering role for the PA UfM. While obstacles to regional integration are mainly political, the UfM should play a bolder role on sub-regional cooperation. He suggested that the Political Committee draft a recommendation on mobility.