

10. Common strategy on the Mediterranean region

A5-0008/2001

European Parliament resolution on the Common Strategy of the European Union on the Mediterranean region, as laid down by the Feira European Council of 19 June 2000 (C5-0510/2000 – 2000/2247(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Common Strategy of the European Union on the Mediterranean region, as laid down by the Feira European Council of 19 June 2000 (C5-0510/2000¹),
- having regard to Articles 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 27, and 28 of the EU Treaty,
- having regard to the final declaration of the first Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, held in Brussels on 27 and 28 October 1998,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 October 1995 on the Mediterranean policy of the European Union with a view to the Barcelona Conference²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 December 1995 on the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona³,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 1997 on the joint report by the Presidency of the Council and the Commission on Mediterranean Policy – follow-up to the Barcelona conference⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 1999 on the Commission communication: ‘The role of the European Union in the peace process and its future assistance to the Middle East’⁵, and its recommendation of the same date to the Council on the European Union’s Mediterranean policy⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 March 2000 on Mediterranean policy⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2000 on EU Mediterranean policy in the run-up to the fourth meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Marseilles⁸,

¹ OJ L 183, 22.7.2000, p. 5.

² OJ C 287, 30.10.1995, p. 121.

³ OJ C 17, 22.1.1996, p. 178.

⁴ OJ C 115, 14.4.1997, p. 159.

⁵ OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 282.

⁶ OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 286.

⁷ OJ C 378, 29.12.2000, p. 71.

⁸ Texts adopted, item 1.

- having regard to its resolution of 1 February 2001 on the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament to prepare the fourth meeting of Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministers “reinvigorating the Barcelona process” (COM(2000) 497-C5-0630/2000-2000/22/94(COS)¹,
 - having regard to the Barcelona Declaration and work programme of 28 November 1995 adopted at the Barcelona Conference,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Malta Conference of 15 and 16 April 1997, the conclusions of the Palermo Conference of 3 and 4 June 1998, the conclusions of the Stuttgart Conference of 15 and 16 April 1999, the conclusions of the Marseilles Conference of 16 and 17 November 2000, and the conclusions of the civic forums held in Malta, Naples, Stuttgart, and Marseilles,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the opinion of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0008/2001),
- A. whereas the growing international activity in which it is engaging as a global player with global interests requires the Union to launch and implement a series of common strategies encompassing coherently the approach, the aims and means to be pursued and employed in relation to given geographical areas,
 - B. whereas in view of the change in the historic political context in the early 1990s, and in particular the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the resulting applications by numerous central and eastern European countries to join the EU, balance has had to be restored by strengthening the EU's relations with the South and it has become apparent that a Euro-Mediterranean area needs be brought into being to create a zone of peace and stability,
 - C. whereas on account of these historic processes, the Euro-Mediterranean area, especially the 27 countries party to the Barcelona process which have launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, has become the subject of a new Council common strategy,
 - D. whereas Euro-Mediterranean policy has become a key priority of the EU's external action, as a result of the growing importance of the Mediterranean for Europe in the context of globalisation and of the existence in the Mediterranean region of challenges and problems of particular magnitude in terms of security and peace, inequalities and the need for development, democracy and human rights, migrations and population balance, in a climate of uncertainty as regards the various future possible scenarios in the region should the EU not assume a highly active and energetic strategy for it,
 - E. whereas the Mediterranean is, amongst other things, the South's gateway to the Atlantic for all who have a training, professional or commercial interest in establishing relations with northern Europe,

¹ Texts adopted, Item 11.

- F. whereas, furthermore, a Europe without a specific Mediterranean policy would not only be unstable from a geo-political point of view but would also be unable to play the stabilising role which is of crucial importance to the peoples of the Mediterranean basin,
- G. having regard to the strategic importance of the Mediterranean in view of its cultural, religious, social and economic richness and diversity and the history of its civilisations,
- H. whereas Euro-Mediterranean Partnership operations have lately proved difficult to translate into reality; whereas, however, the partnership policy is conceived in a long-term perspective and its continuity is essential; whereas, furthermore, the difficulties in the Middle peace process must not be allowed to condition substantially the development of the partnership policy,
- I. recognising, however, that the basic approach and instruments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are sound but need to be balanced, revitalised and improved,
- J. whereas the Marseilles conference, despite not yielding major results, has offered an opportunity to relaunch the Barcelona process,
- K. whereas all the factors giving rise to inefficiency in the implementation of the partnership need to be studied thoroughly and the instruments and operating procedures revised accordingly; whereas it is essential to consider drawing up a new generation of programmes,
- L. whereas, in addition, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership operations need to be focused on feasible aims, thereby enhancing their significance as well as their effectiveness,
- M. whereas the level of under-use of resources under the MEDA programme for 1995-1999 was 74%; whereas, accordingly, the Commission should introduce implementing measures aimed at ensuring full take-up of the commitments,
- N. pointing out that the integration of environmental concerns into the Common Strategy is a precondition for sound social and economic development, given the serious problems of the region with water scarcity and quality, desertification, climate change and the deterioration of biodiversity,
- O. whereas it is the results of the MEDA programme as regards aid for economic transition and social development which should form the basis for implementation of the partnership agreements, and not vice versa,
- P. whereas an all-encompassing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, if this were to be achieved, would provide an appropriate counterweight to the enlargement of the Union now in progress; whereas that fact should be taken into account when the time comes to evaluate and relaunch the Barcelona process and determine its priorities, objectives, and the necessary means,
- Q. whereas the Union's foreign policy in relation to the Mediterranean region and in particular the Middle East antagonists has been based on a common strategy with objectives entirely oriented towards the success of the peace process and, indeed, the post-peace process; whereas it is necessary to redefine the Union's role, both in political

terms vis-à-vis the contending parties and in terms of concrete actions to alleviate the plight of the peoples of the Middle East and further reconciliation and trust between the parties,

- R. stressing once again that democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are basic principles on which to develop the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as declared in Barcelona in 1995,
 - S. renewing its call for the Council and Commission to draw up an annual report on human rights in the countries party to the Barcelona process in order to provide a basis for future development of their bilateral relations with the Union and its Member States,
 - T. pointing out that the role of the Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary dialogue should be recognised as one of the important elements of the Common Strategy, and regretting the fact that the EP was not involved when the details of the strategy were being drawn up,
 - U. whereas it is to be hoped that the views of the EP and the parliaments of the Mediterranean region will be taken into proper consideration when the time comes to give effect to the various practical measures and initiatives laid down by the Council and Commission with a view to implementing the Common Strategy,
1. Welcomes the fact that the Feira European Council adopted the Common Strategy of the European Union on the Mediterranean region, which it considers to be in line with the call made in its abovementioned resolution of 30 March 2000 on the reactivation of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation established in Barcelona in 1995;
 2. Notes the conclusions adopted by the Feira Summit on the Mediterranean region, expresses its concern at the lack of clarity in the text but welcomes the fact that, since then, the excessively vague expressions have been fleshed out;
 3. Calls on the Council to take up the commitments agreed at the Barcelona Conference and to take whatever decisions are necessary in order to enable a policy which is consistent with the objectives laid down in the Common Strategy for the Mediterranean region to be carried through;
 4. Regrets that Parliament was not more closely involved in drawing up the strategy adopted in Feira and expects to see a more open approach by the Commission and Council in future to ensure that partnership and dialogue play a meaningful role as the bases for the Mediterranean strategy;
 5. Welcomes the decision to hold the second meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum in Brussels on 8 and 9 February 2001, with the aim of creating, when circumstances permit it, a permanent structure bringing together MEPs and parliamentarians from the partner states;

As regards the EU vision for the Mediterranean region

6. Endorses the Union's aim of achieving an all-encompassing partnership with the Mediterranean region, proceeding from the approach and basic blueprint set out in the Barcelona Declaration and taking into account the shared interests of the parties; stresses

the importance, in line with this spirit, of conferring an overall vision on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and hopes that the negotiations will be endowed with a genuine strategic perspective;

7. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to avoid reinforcing the notion that the EU is interested in the Mediterranean for security reasons alone or that its economic intervention is intended only to open up the markets of the Southern countries;
8. Calls on the Council and Commission not to link access to the MEDA programme to the signature of the partnership agreements, given that this does not correspond to the initial objective of the MEDA programmes, namely to assist the societies of the South in undertaking reforms and thus ensuring their competitiveness in the future free-trade area;
9. Regrets the exclusion from the partnership agreements of both agricultural products and the organised movement of persons;
10. Points again to the need to finance the Union's Mediterranean policy to an extent that will serve to restore the correct relationship between the funds earmarked for the central and eastern European countries (CEECs) and those earmarked for Mediterranean Partners (MNC), in keeping with the decision taken at the Cannes European Council;
11. Calls for the Union to play a much more active role in the Middle East peace talks, in keeping with its substantial interests in the region as such, its influence, its political and economic weight, and its traditional advocacy of mediation, stability, and peace;
12. Expects the European Union to play a much more active role with regard to restoring peace in the Middle East, without which the entire strategy for the Mediterranean region will be in jeopardy; regrets that the Marseilles Conference did not help to defuse the conflict in Palestine;
13. Recommends that the bilateral agreements currently in force should go hand in hand with a multilateral approach to promote both regional integration and South-South trade;
14. Points out, in this regard, the importance of crossborder projects with a view to improving and strengthening regional cooperation;
15. Urges the Commission and Council to study the various possible means of improving the debt situation and, preferably, converting debt into joint development policies to be pursued in collaboration with the Union's Mediterranean partners with a view to the financing, in local currency, of social cooperation projects for civil society, environmental protection and training and employment for young people;

As regards the aims of the Common Strategy

16. Endorses the objectives laid down in the second part of the Union's Common Strategy, which are based on the Barcelona Declaration; considers that the EU's Mediterranean strategy must set out the following priorities:
 - political: the promotion of democracy and human rights, economic, social and environmental progress and the emancipation of women from the various forms of discrimination from which they still suffer;

- economic and financial: the improvement of the financing system under the EU's Mediterranean policy in respect of encouraging direct investment in Mediterranean third countries; encouraging the dialogue and negotiation processes for the partnership agreements and encouraging South-South regional cooperation projects;
 - social and cultural: the development of a Euro-Mediterranean social and cultural area with a view to encouraging dialogue and cooperation between cultures and civil societies in the Mediterranean region;
17. Endorses the explicit commitment to foster the core values embraced by the Union and its Member States (human rights, democracy, good governance, transparency, the rule of law, protection of religious minorities, health protection, decent working conditions and protection of children);
 18. Hopes that, where the agreements are concerned, the Commission will take due account of the fact that reciprocity is one of the objectives to be achieved as a matter of urgency;
 19. Insists on the importance of decentralised cooperation, which embodies the fertility and inventiveness of the initiatives of civil society and contributes to closer ties between the peoples of the Mediterranean; stresses that its contribution to the partnership relaunch was confirmed by the recent Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Marseilles;
 20. Calls for regional and local authorities to be more closely associated with the Mediterranean partnership in the context of decentralised cooperation, as stressed in the final declaration of the third conference held in Stuttgart in April 1999;
 21. Believes that these values would be strengthened in the newly-developing democracy in the Yemen Republic through involvement of Yemen as an observer in the Barcelona process, and hopes that the modalities for such an arrangement will be examined;
 22. Agrees that new key areas of action should be taken into consideration, including for example cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, more resolute support for moves towards transition, liberalisation, and openness in economic systems, security based on regional cooperation, and a commitment to the Middle East peace process;

As regards the areas of action and specific initiatives of the Common Strategy

23. Supports the Council's determination to establish a partnership extending to the security sphere and to build a common area of peace and stability;
24. Endorses the initiatives proposed in the new strategy as regards democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, but hopes that the undertakings set out will indeed be viewed as a *sine qua non* for bringing the partnership into being, and also stresses the complementarity of respect for human rights and the economic and social development process;
25. Affirms its opposition to the use of the death penalty and calls on the Mediterranean partner countries to decree a moratorium on capital punishment; calls on the Commission to undertake initiatives in support of consciousness-raising campaigns aimed at securing a moratorium on capital punishment;

26. Deplores the fact that the Common Strategy contains no initiatives on the environment, and recommends that the Council define a set of strategic medium-term and long-term environmental actions for the Mediterranean;
27. Considers that sustainable water management, which is in the general interest, and maintaining biodiversity are of crucial importance in the region and deserve special attention of a kind which remains to be defined in the strategy;
28. Emphasises the importance of a serious and comprehensive approach to the environment as a cross-disciplinary topic and calls for practical initiatives, since an approach of this kind is a vital precondition for the success of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership;
29. Urges the Council, the Commission and the Euro-Mediterranean countries to promote closer and more regular cooperation and consultation of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development;

As regards the instruments and means of implementing the Common Strategy

30. Criticises the vagueness and weakness of Part IV of the Common Strategy, which specifies the instruments and means to be employed to implement the strategy and focuses chiefly on requirements related to coordination of the existing machinery and instruments;
31. Notes that no reference whatsoever is made to the MEDA Regulation, and hopes that the revision of that regulation will improve its operating efficiency, while enhancing flexibility and decentralisation, and that its revision with a view to simplifying procedures will lead to a qualitative and quantitative improvement as regards expenditure, with greater and more effective emphasis on the regional and South-South dimensions of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; calls on the Commission to check in due course whether the revision has actually met the real needs;
32. Urges the Council and Commission to reconsider, simplify and increase the access of NGOs, associations and the social partners to decision-making mechanisms and the management of the programmes;
33. Supports the proposal to compile and keep an 'indicative inventory' of the Union, Community, and Member State resources to be employed to implement the Common Strategy, but notes that the proposal is vaguely worded and not defined in operational terms;
34. Warns of the risk that confusion might arise when the existing Community, national, and intergovernmental instruments and means are coordinated; calls, accordingly, for effective coordination of those resources, and asks the Council to exercise coherence with regard to the instruments for achieving such a synergy;
35. Considers it unacceptable that the strategy should completely fail to mention the overall budgetary framework to be used to finance the new strategy proper;
36. Deplores the fact that the Mediterranean strategy makes no reference to the budgetary framework, but calls for it to be geared to the implementation of a policy of economic

openness and internal liberalisation in the partner countries accompanied by a sustainable locally-driven development policy designed to create a productive social fabric and infrastructures which take into account the needs of the Mediterranean countries, and for project priorities to meet the objectives and priorities shared by the EU and the Mediterranean non-member countries and not merely economic criteria dictated by the needs of an export-led economy;

37. Notes the decision to allocate a financial package of 5.35 billion euro for MEDA II (2000-2006) and demands that a larger sum be allocated to MEDA, since aid to the Balkans should not be at the expense of the Mediterranean region;

Proposals and initiatives

38. Considers that the establishment of a free trade area cannot be confined to the free movement of goods and capital, but should also involve exchanges, notably of students and qualified workers; stresses the fact that the objective of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is to stabilise the economies and societies of the partner countries;
39. As a first step towards a sustainable Mediterranean policy, calls for sustainability studies to be carried out to assess the social and environmental impact of the economic measures provided for under the free trade zone;
40. Believes that the restructuring of the economies of Mediterranean non-member countries, the promotion of trade in goods and services between Mediterranean non-member countries and the promotion of export-led economies must take place simultaneously;
41. Calls for closer attention to be paid to the South-South partnership and regional integration, in the form of closer decentralised cooperation, cross-border projects and an investment policy geared to local development;
42. Stresses the need to place civil society at the heart of the partnership, and urges that locally-driven development policies be implemented in Mediterranean partner countries with a view to creating a rich and productive social fabric to serve as a springboard for further development and ensure that people will not be compelled to leave their countries of origin, given that individuals must be able to choose freely whether to emigrate or remain;
43. Believes that an effective use of MEDA democracy programmes is basic to the development of a strong civil society in the Mediterranean countries; urges the Commission, accordingly, to find ways to strengthen independent NGOs, associations and the social partners, to enable them to play an active and effective role in helping to improve the democratic social fabric;
44. Calls, in this connection, for the EU delegations in the partner countries to contribute experience and know-how and hopes that support will be given to policies to encourage local human resources training (with particular reference to women's qualifications) and that, at the same time, due account will be taken of the need for a balanced immigration policy;

45. Calls for a realistic increase in staffing levels, both in Brussels and in the Commission delegations in the Mediterranean capitals, with a view to stimulating and accelerating the implementation and execution of the MEDA programmes; considers that a programme must also be set up to receive officials from Mediterranean third countries responsible for preparing MEDA programme dossiers, on similar lines to those already applying to officials from the Member States;
46. Proposes that funding for integration into work activities be introduced for young people in Mediterranean partner countries who, having completed a study or training period in Europe, wish to turn their resulting expertise to account in their countries of origin;
47. Calls for appropriate action to be taken by the European Union in order to help the Euro-Mediterranean partnership countries to implement the cultural and economic initiatives needed to stem the 'brain drain' towards more industrialised countries;
48. Considers that support measures for private investment are necessary, since such investment represents a key factor for the success of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
49. Hopes that a genuine 'Euro-Mediterranean' agricultural policy will be created, with a view to achieving complementarity between the productions of the southern regions of the EU and those of the Mediterranean partner countries in light of the key role of agriculture in those countries and in the countries of southern Europe, which extends to the socio-economic, regional planning and environmental dimensions;
50. Calls on the Commission to study the possibility of implementing a triangular trade arrangement under which non-Community countries may benefit from aid purchased in other non-Community countries that already benefit from tariff reductions for the purpose of exporting the commodities in question;
51. Recommends, however, that typical European products be protected; accordingly rejects every form of counterfeiting and advocates quality labels and clear cooperation arrangements with European undertakings that can potentially protect such quality labels while also stimulating development and skilled employment in the Mediterranean partner countries;
52. Recommends that, under the agreements, the Commission should prohibit European countries from exporting to the Mediterranean partner countries components for foodstuffs or food products intended for stockbreeding purposes and made from substances banned in the European Union;
53. Advises the Commission to establish monitoring systems designed to check that components for foodstuffs or food products intended for stockbreeding purposes which are manufactured in the Mediterranean partner countries for export to EU markets do not contain substances which are banned in the European Union;
54. Condemns all practices linked to drug trafficking or exploitation of prostitution or child labour and calls for stronger action to combat such practices; hopes that workers' social rights will be enforced in those countries, making use of programmes and resources under the Euro-Mediterranean partnership for that purpose;

55. Recalls that both the Barcelona Conference text and the partnership agreements contain clauses referring to progress on the rule of law and human rights; regrets, in this connection, that the Council has not always taken this into account, even where Parliament has drawn the matter to its attention; recommends that the use to be made of funds for development in Mediterranean partner countries be guaranteed, monitored and geared to promoting respect for human rights;
56. Recommends that, in accordance with the relevant agreements, the Commission pay particular attention to the treatment of animals, environmental protection, toxic waste disposal, and the monitoring to be carried out should any nuclear power-stations be commissioned;
57. Recommends that the necessary measures be taken to prevent abusive practices related to the dumping of waste from mainland Europe, especially where such waste has severe environmental effects liable to disrupt the ecological balance of the Mediterranean partner countries;
58. Calls for a new information bulletin to be published to bring Community programmes to wider notice, raise public awareness of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and disseminate understanding of the problems affecting immigrant communities, and for the subject of immigration, in all its aspects (socio-economic, cultural, security), to be examined under the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; asks, in this connection, for consideration to be given to the setting-up of a monitoring office on migratory movements in the Mediterranean region;
59. Calls for specific programmes to combat desertification, improve drinking-water supplies and safeguard and develop the distinctive forms of craft industry;
60. Calls on the Commission to set up a special programme for the purpose of introducing, where possible, or extending aquaculture and the development of the fish sector;
61. Advocates joint pilot schemes for alternative (renewable) energy use;
62. Requests that all Mediterranean non-member countries take part in the future Sixth Framework Programme for research and technological development and recommends that certain European Union programmes seeking to promote transfrontier cooperation be opened up to the Mediterranean countries in the near future;
63. Calls for specific courses on tourism-related activities to be encouraged in collaboration with professional institutes in the Mediterranean countries and qualified Union personnel;
64. Calls for European investment in tourism to respect local traditions including architectural traditions, and for rules and a code of conduct to be enforced in Europe to prevent individuals or European companies from exploiting local labour;

o
o o

65. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Mediterranean countries which have signed the Barcelona Declaration.