

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

2008/2231(INI)

21.10.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on relations between the European Union and Mediterranean countries
(2008/2231(INI))

Rapporteur: Íñigo Méndez de Vigo

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs as the committee responsible to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Calls for the experience gained in connection with the Barcelona Process to be used in order to inject new energy and vitality into relations between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners, without disrupting those relations;
2. Stresses the importance of maintaining the coherence of institutions and avoiding any duplication thereof, and stresses that the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) should be included within the Union's institutional framework; considers that setting up an autonomous institutional structure could only damage the effectiveness of the process;
3. Supports the principle of co-presidency, on a basis of parity, equality and joint governance, and, on the assumption that the Treaty of Lisbon will enter into force, considers that it should be consistent with the resulting institutional framework regarding the external representation of the European Union and that the biannual summit, the Joint Permanent Committee and the meetings of senior officials are useful tools for injecting greater efficiency and transparency into the Process;
4. Stresses the need for the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) to be given an enhanced role in the process and supports the EMPA Bureau, which in a statement issued on 12 July 2008 called for that Assembly - as a legitimate parliamentary body - to become an integral part of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM);
5. Supports the demands made by the President of the European Parliament, who called in his speech to the Summit meeting in Paris on 13 July 2008 for the EMPA to be given the right to make proposals, to exercise democratic control and to monitor and regularly assess the progress of projects;
6. Calls for the EMPA to be closely involved in preparations for the biannual summit meetings of Heads of State and the annual meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the countries which are members of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM);
7. Considers it essential for the EMPA to be established as the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) establishing for that case a legal basis as suggested by the EMPA and considers:
 - that the EMPA should meet at least once a year;
 - that all members of the EMPA should be able to set up groups drawn up in accordance with political allegiances (in addition to the current division into

parliaments of Mediterranean partners-European Parliament-parliaments of the Member States), which will lead to improved integration and effectiveness;

- that the EMPA should have more precise operational rules and a strengthened permanent secretariat;
 - that it should be mandatory for the EMPA to be consulted for its opinion on the main points and projects relating to the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM);
 - that the Council and Commission should be integrally associated with the work of the EMPA, both at the preparatory stages and during official meetings and plenaries;
 - that parliamentary representatives of countries which are not part of the Barcelona Process should be invited to participate;
8. Considers that the secretariat of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) should be composed of officials seconded from the countries participating in the process and should be integrated into the departments of the Commission; its seat must be selected according to criteria based on operational effectiveness and the host country's compliance with democratic values and financial capacity, as well as the political, financial and social support offered by the national, regional and local authorities concerned; therefore supports the candidacy of Barcelona to host the secretariat;
 9. Considers that the secretariat of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) must be tasked to draw up and manage projects as well as to coordinate the overall process; it shall report to the Euro-Mediterranean Committee and to the EMPA;
 10. Points out that the projects financed in the framework of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) should be supported mainly using Community funds, funds from partner states as well as private financing;
 11. Stresses the need to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Development Bank capable of attracting direct foreign investment for the realisation of projects responding to the needs of the citizens in the region;
 12. Calls for the drawing up of an institutional framework for the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM) to be the subject of extensive consultation and far-reaching discussion involving all the stake-holders involved in the process, in order to ensure that it is based on broad consensus and takes all sensitivities into account;
 13. Considers that, in parallel with the enhancement of the parliamentary dimension, a similar development is required in achieving the involvement of civil society within the appropriate institutional structure of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean (BP-UfM);
 14. Considers that promoting cooperation of that type can also play a positive role as regards the creation and development of other similar regional unions.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	20.10.2008
Result of final vote	+: 15 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Enrique Barón Crespo, Richard Corbett, Andrew Duff, Jo Leinen, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, Rihards Pīks, Adrian Severin, József Szájer, Johannes Voggenhuber, Andrzej Wielowieyski, Dushana Zdravkova
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Costas Botopoulos, Elmar Brok, Carlos Carnero González, Monica Frassoni