

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

16.2.2005

B6-0108/2005

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

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on behalf of the UEN Group

on the European Union's relations with the Mediterranean region

European Parliament resolution on the European Union's relations with the Mediterranean region

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration and its work programme of 28 November 1995, adopted at the Barcelona Conference,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the other Euro-Mediterranean conferences,
 - having regard in particular to the conclusions of the last Euro-Mediterranean Council, held in The Hague on 29 and 30 November 2004,
 - having regard to all of its previous resolutions on the subject,
 - having regard to the next meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly, to be held in Cairo from 12 to 15 March 2005, which for the first time will bring together representatives of the parliaments of the Mediterranean countries, as well as representatives of the European Parliament,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the 1995 Barcelona Declaration and the commitments stemming from it were a crucial turning-point for relations between the Mediterranean countries, and whereas its principles are still valid today as a mainstay for those relations,
- B. whereas ten years after its adoption, the programme of the Barcelona Conference should nevertheless be assessed and possibly adapted to the new geopolitical situation, which is quite different from that of 1995, with a view to making Euro-Mediterranean relations even more effective,
- C. whereas the New Neighbourhood Policy, recently launched by the European Union as a basic strategy for creating special, closer relations with neighbouring countries, must be seen as complementary to the Barcelona process and must take its results into account,
- D. whereas the adoption of the new National Action Plans, which take due account of the specific features of individual countries, can bring added value to the general strategy for the strengthening of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in all sectors,
- E. whereas the radicalisation of the Middle Eastern crisis over the past few years has, from many points of view, stalled multilateral political dialogue in the Mediterranean area,
- F. having regard to the different, positive attitude taken recently by the Islamic Republic of Libya, which is still an observer country in the Barcelona process and which has shown tangible signs of wanting to adhere to the spirit and the principles of the Conference,

- G. whereas on an economic level the Barcelona process has been the launchpad for a multilateral strengthening of instruments, creating an important network of agreements geared to the establishment of a free-trade area,
- H. having regard to the need to advance cultural, religious and social dialogue between the partners on both sides of the Mediterranean and to extend that dialogue to new but politically important sectors such as the control of nuclear arms proliferation and the fight against terrorism,
- I. having regard to the launch of the parliamentarisation process in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, which could make civil societies in the Mediterranean countries involved more aware of the strategies and objectives of the entire process,
- J. whereas the effectiveness and strength of the process launched in Barcelona will depend on the granting of adequate financial resources under the future financial perspective, in order to continue, with the new instruments to be adopted, the positive dynamic created in the final stage of implementation of the MEDA programme,
- K. having regard to the need to create an appropriate structure which, by developing the mechanism already existing in the Union, can effectively coordinate national civil protection systems,
- L. whereas, lastly, attempts need to be made to clearly define the common rights and values on which the framing of common policies is to be based, even though the relevant forms and dynamics might differ between the various countries,
1. Stresses the strategic importance of the process launched at the Barcelona Conference to create an area of stability, peace, economic progress and social, religious and cultural dialogue in the Mediterranean area, which still needs to be one of the genuine priorities of the European Union's external action;
 2. Reiterates its essentially positive view of the progress achieved in the three major sectors – political, economic and social – in which multilateral dialogue has been developed between the Euro-Mediterranean countries, albeit aware that much more can and must be done, with both realism and ambition, to complete the actions begun;
 3. Is aware that, within the multilateral framework, regional stability needs to be further promoted, through processes of cooperation and integration which, starting with the better-prepared countries, can subsequently cover more extensive geographical areas;
 4. Is also aware that an increasing number of civil society sectors in all Euro-Mediterranean countries need to be involved in the Barcelona process, with the aim of spreading and sharing certain principles on which the partnership is based and raising the profile of the entire cooperation process among the public;

5. Considers it essential that the new financial framework of the European Union should earmark sufficient resources for developing programmes and projects which, in the wake of the good results obtained with the MEDA programme, especially in its final years, can help achieve the objectives of the Barcelona Conference;
6. Welcomes the commencement, within the general framework of the dialogue process launched in Barcelona, of the parliamentarisation stage, which will allow representatives of the various Euro-Mediterranean peoples to meet and discuss common topics, and to put forward their conclusions at the Euro-Mediterranean Council;

Political aspects

7. Welcomes the recent stand taken by the Libyan Government, which has shown that it wants to distance itself tangibly from international terrorism, which it had fuelled itself in the past; in that regard, considers the lifting of the trade embargo measures against Libya to be a significant step for the country's future full inclusion in the Barcelona process;
8. Considers that the neighbourhood policy launched by the European Union with the neighbouring countries must not be detrimental to the progress of Euro-Mediterranean relations, in terms of shifting political priorities, but should represent a broader strategic context, in which the Barcelona process must continue to be the key element of Euro-Mediterranean relations;
9. Takes the view that the future National Action Plans are a valid instrument for closer cooperation which, taking account of national circumstances and the social and economic development of each individual country, will be able to adapt aid, programmes and social and cultural dialogue to the specific features of the partner country in question;
10. Considers it important to extend the political dialogue between all Euro-Mediterranean partners to new, highly topical subjects, such as the control of nuclear arms proliferation and the fight against international terrorism, which require the active involvement of all countries;
11. Is aware of the fact that, in many cases, despite the high number of conferences at the level of foreign ministers and sectoral ministers, the political dialogue process has lacked continuity and a certain sense of responsibility on the part of many local governments in the programmes which directly concern them;

Economic aspects

12. Welcomes the results achieved in the economic field with a view to creating a free trade area in the Mediterranean; welcomes, in particular, the conclusion of association agreements between the European Community and all its Mediterranean partners, which are paving the way for closer cooperation and dialogue in many sectors; hopes that the association agreements with Algeria, Lebanon and Syria, signed but not yet ratified, will soon enter into force;

13. Is aware of the continuing difficulties in launching the free-trade area among the countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean; welcomes particularly, therefore, the signing and entry into force of the Agadir Agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco, which lays concrete foundations for multilateral economic cooperation between several Mediterranean countries, and hopes that the example set by these countries will soon be followed by other partners;

Social and cultural aspects

14. Considers that social and cultural dialogue in the broad sense, by enabling countries to get to know each other better, should open the way to the sharing of an ever-increasing number of fundamental principles and values; in that respect, welcomes the establishment of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, to be based in Alexandria, Egypt, and financed by the MEDA programme, which will be able to play an important role in fostering ever closer cultural exchanges;

15. Takes the view that much remains to be done with regard to the modernisation of the administrative and political structures of the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, and to the formation of a civil society in which the greatest possible number of members of society feel, and are, represented;

16. Believes that democracy in the broad sense should be encouraged in all Euro-Mediterranean countries, but is aware of the different circumstances in each country, which may thus call for individual forms of development geared to a greater opening-up to society;

17. Is aware of the fact that demographic pressure and the differences in economic development between the two shores of the Mediterranean, not to mention the poverty of other African peoples, are forcing ever-increasing numbers of hungry and desperate people to try to emigrate to Europe;

18. Considers, nonetheless, that South-North emigration, in the interest of the emigrants themselves, should be governed by certain rules and adapted to the real needs and absorption capacities of the immigration countries; calls, therefore, on the authorities of the coastal countries of North Africa to cooperate in curbing illegal immigration, which often ends in tragedy for those involved;

19. Stresses the need to increase actions to benefit young people, who account for 25% of the population in many countries on the southern shore, in the form of specific training programmes to be carried out in Mediterranean countries experienced in student exchanges; considers it likewise appropriate to encourage the movement of artists and operators who can raise awareness of the cultures of their respective countries, and hopes, therefore, that the MEDA programme itself, or the new financial instrument, will also be able to finance agencies around the Mediterranean area for the protection of the cultural heritage;

20. Supports the idea of establishing an agency to coordinate existing civil protection systems in the various Euro-Mediterranean countries, able to act as an early warning system in the

event of natural disasters and to intervene swiftly in order to deal with the aftermath of a large-scale natural disaster;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Parliaments of the Member States, and the Governments and Parliaments of the other Barcelona Conference signatory countries.