

PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS

The Speakers of Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments attending their 5th Conference, held in Barcelona on 25th and 26th November, 2005;

Renewed, on occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, their adherence to the ensuing Process and their confidence in this forum as a multilateral framework for dialogue and co-operation in its three dimensions: political and security; economic and financial; social, cultural and human.

Welcomed the fact that the Process' parliamentary dimension, which was barely outlined in the Declaration, has taken form through the establishment of two institutions: the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, created on occasion of the Naples Ministerial Conference in December 2003, and this Euro-Mediterranean Speakers Conference. Both are now fully consolidated and host to a number of events that have fostered fruitful debates and initiatives.

Underlined the importance of further progress in developing mechanisms to revitalise the spirit that inspired the Barcelona Declaration, with higher goals in terms of dialogue and co-operation between both shores of the Mediterranean.

Assessment of a decade and perspectives for the Partnership

1. The Barcelona Process is an ambitious initiative whose aims, in the context of a Europe that has changed substantially since 1995, are still perfectly relevant ten years later. Though much has been done during this time towards meeting these aims, there remains a lot of ground to cover. Parliaments must urge Governments to pursue their efforts to meet said goals, especially by ensuring adequate funding in accordance with their importance.
2. Despite the efforts made over the past decade, the economic, social and technological gap between both shores of the Mediterranean has widened. The Mediterranean today is the world's most uneven border. This reality, however, should not be perceived as a shortcoming in a Process that could hardly be expected to resolve the region's complex problems single-handedly, but rather as an

incentive for a boost in foreign direct investment, greater financial support and more efficient technology transfer.

3. The network of Association Agreements between the European Union and Mediterranean countries received unanimous praise. These Agreements have promoted the streamlining of legal frameworks, and their provisions for liberalisation can greatly contribute to the area's development and should foster regional integration, by means of the rules-of-origin cumulation system recently adopted.

It would be highly desirable to step up the ratification procedures for concluded Association Agreements that are pending this final condition to be fully enforceable. These Agreements provide a privileged channel for bilateral relations, reflecting the threefold political, economic and social aspects that are the Barcelona Process' most outstanding and indeed defining feature. It is incumbent on Parliaments not only to ratify the Agreements, but also to encourage their respective Governments to take action regarding this key issue.

4. The goal stated in the Barcelona Declaration to achieve a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010 is far from fruition. However, agreements such as those signed at Agadir in February 2004 are not only effective mechanisms for South-South cooperation, but also an important step towards meeting said goal, which must not only be subscribed in theory, but also actively pursued.
5. Migration and migrants' integration in host societies are issues where the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership can contribute the rich perspective it enjoys by virtue of its cultural diversity and varied economic and social situations. It is essential to develop adequate integration policies that mutually respect the rights of migrants and the host country's civic values and duties.
6. Acknowledging the efforts made towards converting the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) into a Euro-Mediterranean Investment Bank, Speakers believed its establishment on a scale conducive to achieving renewed economic growth in the Mediterranean Partners, would be a clear sign of European Union Member States' political commitment.

Security and stability

7. A number of countries represented at this Conference are still grieving the losses caused by despicable terrorist attacks and none is

free from the threat that looms over the North and South shores of the Mediterranean alike, as recent experience has sadly revealed. Terrorism is a problem shared by all Euro-Mediterranean countries and only a concerted strategy bringing together all parties can be effective in tackling it.

This struggle implies addressing the root causes of terrorism, which have a deep bearing on all the Partnership's spheres of interest; namely, its political, economic and social aspects. European Union Member States' co-operation is essential if Mediterranean partners are to successfully engage the extremist threat.

Parliaments can play a key role in transposing the various existing international legal instruments for fighting terrorism into their national legislation.

8. The Middle East conflict is undoubtedly one of the issues most gravely jeopardising security and stability in the Mediterranean. The current situation does not allow for unwarranted optimism, though it is fair to acknowledge Israeli disengagement from Gaza and the Palestinian Authority's responsible approach as recent indicators that the Barcelona Process, currently the only forum attended by both parties, can and must provide the occasion for a dialogue between them, allowing for progress towards a fair and lasting solution on the basis of full respect of International Law by both parties.
9. The Conference welcomes the momentum generated by the Process in support of political reform undertaken by some Mediterranean partners, who have seen considerable progress in terms of political pluralism and the extension of civil liberties.
10. In the long term, security and stability in the region will be closely linked to the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources such as oil and gas. Depolluting the Mediterranean Sea, water shortages in large areas of the region and the advancing desertification it brings about require co-operation on all levels.

Society, culture and dialogue between civilisations

11. The establishment of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, as a Euro-Mediterranean network of civil society organisations, will allow citizens to engage more closely with the Process, a factor that should improve co-operation and exchanges among participating countries, build up public

awareness of the Partnership's relevance and, more importantly, foster mutual understanding between the peoples of both shores. Only through dialogue can we begin to bridge the gap in mutual understanding.

12. In this sense, the Speakers considered the initiative for an "Alliance of Civilisations", put forth by Spain and Turkey at the United Nations, to be most welcome at a time when there is a pressing need for an intercultural dialogue as defined in the Valencia Action Plan. A dialogue such as this should be established as a prime mechanism for relaunching the Barcelona Process.

Conclusions

13. The Speakers welcomed the fact that the original number of 27 partners to the Process has increased to 35. EU enlargement, believed by some to have shifted Europe's centre of gravity to the East, thus widening the gap between North and South, should, on the contrary, be seen as an opportunity to broaden the scope of Euro-Mediterranean relations.
14. Unanimously renewed their commitment to uphold the highest level of dialogue among Speakers and to ensure this forum stands as a privileged mechanism for understanding and political, economic and social progress in the region.
15. The Speakers also expressed their warmest appreciation to the Spanish Congress of Deputies and Senate for organising the Conference and to the Catalan Parliament for hosting the meeting at its seat.

