



**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**



# **RESOLUTION**

of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

on **Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture**

adopted on 21 November 2005, in Rabat (Morocco)

on the basis of the draft resolution tabled on behalf of the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture by Mr Mario Greco, Chairperson

The Committee on improving quality of life, exchanges between civil societies, and culture,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Euro-Mediterranean partnership, including a working programme to meet the challenges of the next five years,
  - having regard to the agreed conclusions for the 7<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Luxembourg on 30-31 May, 2005, which was declared the Year of the Mediterranean,
  - having regard to its own resolution, adopted in Cairo on 15 March 2005 and the resolutions of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights and the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education adopted on the same date,
  - having regard to the package of proposals on migration policy presented by the European Commission on 1 September aimed, inter alia, at creating a common set of horizontal rules concerning repatriation to be applied throughout the EU; establishing a common agenda for the full integration of migrants; and strengthening the link between migration policies and development aid,
  - having regard to the debate held at the sittings of 20 June and 19 September and, more specifically, the contributions by the European Commissioner for the Environment, Mr Dimas, the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice, Mr Frattini, and the European Commission officials in charge of cultural exchanges in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership,
1. Takes note of the European Commission's sometimes negative assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, ten years after the Barcelona Declaration, with special reference to environmental and cultural exchange policies;
  2. Notes that the proposals to relaunch the Barcelona Process, as formulated by the European Commission and taken up again and completed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Luxembourg, are generally valid;
  3. Underlines, nonetheless, that such proposals need further elaboration and integration in order to be fully effective;

More specifically, on the subject of protection of the environment and of quality of life, the Committee:

4. Takes note of the absolute priority given by the European Commission to the initiative to clean up the Mediterranean Sea, that should be completed by the year 2020, following a timetable to be approved by 2006, and expresses the wish that the contents and strategies of the initiative be the subject of a broad debate during next year, involving Parliaments, through the EMPA, civil society, the social partners and international financial institutions, alongside the Governments of the member countries of the Barcelona Process;
5. Believes that, in order to be thoroughly effective, such an initiative should be both specific and horizontal, as well as financially sound, and that it must be effectively

coordinated with other international, bilateral and regional instruments for the environmental protection of the Mediterranean ecosystem;

6. Stresses that the increase in climate change phenomena, often leading to full-scale natural disasters, calls for a shared management of environmental and prevention policies; believes, more specifically, that the crisis in the water supply sector makes it essential to create a truly common water management policy that could be launched by an *ad hoc* Euro-Mediterranean Conference;
7. Notes that integration of environmental policies in the association agreements is lagging far behind and calls for the process of reflexion to be strengthened;
8. Agrees to the need to accelerate the liberalisation of trade and services - with a view to complying with the 1995 Barcelona Declaration criteria for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free exchange area -, but stresses the need for this acceleration to be complemented with accompanying measures ensuring economic and social cohesion and its environmental sustainability; expresses, in particular, the wish that the rural development programme explicitly provided for in the new Neighbourhood Policy be launched simultaneously with the definition of a timetable for trade liberalisation of agricultural products, and that such a programme include sound and effective measures to promote quality agriculture, on the basis of standards set within the Common Agricultural Policy; wishes also that the process leading to the progressive convergence of the Barcelona partner states' domestic legislations and EU environmental standards and law be revitalised and strengthened;
9. Supports the strengthening of cooperation in the field of civil protection and the prevention of natural and ecological disasters in the Euro-Mediterranean region through specific programmes, the knowledge and exchange of best practices and the utilisation and enhancement of the existing Community instrument;

On the subject of policies aimed at strengthening the dialogue between cultures and civilisations, the Committee:

10. Welcomes the European Commission's commitment to increase resources by at least 50% as early as 2007, and stresses that such an increase should be accompanied by a strengthened dialogue between partner countries in the Barcelona Process, in order for financial resources and programmes to be channelled into long-term, sustainable reform processes, and to be aimed, more specifically, to encourage the right to study of disadvantaged segments of society, and to contribute effectively to the fight against illiteracy;
11. Supports the initiatives adopted by the UN and other international organisations aimed at promoting a better understanding between civilisations;
12. Welcomes the commitment to extend the Erasmus Mundus and the Tempus Programmes to Southern Mediterranean countries; invites the European Commission to provide the necessary instruments in order to increase knowledge and awareness of the purposes, means and possibilities of such programmes; stresses also that cooperation among universities could thoroughly benefit from a revitalised process leading to the creation of a true Mediterranean University, and that cultural exchange

policies ought to extend from universities to all research centres, possibly through the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Fund for scientific research;

13. Stresses again the brain drain problem in Mediterranean partner States, as part of a migration process often involving the most educated sectors of the societies of origin, and the need to adopt an integrated and complementary approach, synergetically aimed at dealing with higher learning, university cooperation, research and training, including modern tools and instruments of education, i.e. eLearning;
14. Calls for more effective coordination amongst all international, bilateral and regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the dialogue between cultures and civilisations; believes, in this field, that a fundamental impulse ought to be provided by the “Anna Lindh” Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, through the contribution of its national networks;
15. Calls for a greater commitment of all the institutions of the Barcelona Process to disseminating results and perspectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership through publications, events, digital instruments and the involvement of media from both sides of the Mediterranean.

On the subject of migration policies, the Committee:

16. Takes note of the initiatives unveiled by the European Commission in early September 2005; considers it necessary for the European Union to adopt as quickly as possible a genuine European immigration policy based on respect for human rights, in accordance with international treaties currently in force, which can respond effectively to the challenges faced in this area through dialogue and continuous collaboration with the Mediterranean partners;
17. Expresses the wish that the envisaged adoption of a European strategy for legal immigration by December 2005 will lead to the adoption of all appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to accelerate the integration of migrants legally resident in the EU, which means the right to access to education, training, health, accommodation, work, and free legal assistance where necessary, and strengthening instruments for cultural dialogue and the dissemination of principles underlying European citizenship, while fully respecting the diversity and specific nature of migrants' civilisations;
18. Welcomes all initiatives to improve the link between migration policies and development aid, and recalls that the causes of migration are essentially economic and need to be tackled through structural measures to consolidate and modernize the economies of the countries of origin;
19. Stresses again the need to create simplified arrangements, in order to facilitate exchanges of experience and continuous training; welcomes, therefore, the European Commission's proposal to streamline the issuing of visas to researchers;
20. Considers that cooperation between the European Union Member States and the Mediterranean and transit countries is becoming a very important factor and merits a genuine policy of co-development; calls, therefore, for an extraordinary session of the committee to discuss migratory flows.