Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1731 (2010)[1]
Final version

Euro-Mediterranean region: call for a Council of Europe strategy

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Mediterranean region occupies a strategic position in the European neighbourhood and has historical, cultural, economic and human links with Europe. Peace and stability in this region are of crucial importance for Europe.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterates how much importance it attaches to enhancing co-operation and exchanges with non-member Mediterranean countries and refers in particular to Resolution 1598 (2008) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries, and to its activities designed to contribute to the Middle East peace process. It also recalls that the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe, meeting at their Warsaw Summit in May 2005, expressed their commitment to new intercultural and inter-religious dialogue with neighbouring regions – the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and central Asia – based on respect for universal human rights.

3. In this connection, the Assembly is pleased to note the recent progress accomplished by various bodies, institutions and mechanisms in the task of establishing co-operation between the Council of Europe and non-member Mediterranean states. It particularly welcomes the accession of several non-member states in this region to the Council of Europe's conventions and partial agreements.

4. The Assembly notes that the European Union has embarked on a policy aimed at establishing a partnership with the non-member Mediterranean countries and contributing to stability in the region. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership was launched in 1995 as the "Barcelona Process", which was complemented in 2004 by the European Neighbourhood Policy and placed on an institutional footing through the creation in 2008 of the Union for the Mediterranean, which comprises all the European Union member states and the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

5. The Assembly reaffirms its belief that peace and stability in the Mediterranean region can only be secured in the long term on the basis of democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law, as has been demonstrated by the evolution of the European process both within the European Union, which is founded on these principles, and within the Council of Europe, whose statutory task it is to promote, protect and foster these values and principles. At the same time, the Assembly recalls that the achievement of economic and social development is also a fundamental necessity.

6. It notes that several Mediterranean countries assert that they are committed to these values and principles and show interest in taking advantage of the Council of Europe's experience and expertise in this field. However, these subjects are not among the priorities announced in the multilateral activities of the Union for the Mediterranean, even if the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, which is the founding document of the union, refers to democracy. Apart from this, in its bilateral relations with some Mediterranean states, the European Union refers specifically to the Council of Europe.

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 30 April 2010 (18th Sitting) (see Doc. 12108, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Badré; Doc. 12135; opinion of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Kumcuoğlu; and Doc. 12139, opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mrs Papadimitriou). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 April 2010 (18th Sitting). See also Recommendation 1919 (2010).

7. The Assembly therefore considers that the Council of Europe should intensify its bilateral co-operation in these spheres of activity with any Mediterranean countries which so desire. At the same time, it should take part in the multilateral process of Euro-Mediterranean partnership and make its own contribution to this. The Assembly would emphasise that it is not for the Council of Europe to try to compete with the actions of the Union for the Mediterranean by setting up parallel structures, but to complement it by adding the dimension relating to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, including the transversal issue of gender equality. The Assembly also stresses the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the Mediterranean Basin and welcomes in that regard the positive co-operation it has fostered with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM).

8. The Assembly calls on the Union for the Mediterranean to extend its sphere of activities in order to include the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to involve the Council of Europe in this. It appeals to the European Union and its member states, and the Council of Europe member states taking part in the Union for the Mediterranean, to involve the Council of Europe in its activities.

9. The Assembly reiterates its interest in participating in, and willingness to contribute to, the development of the parliamentary dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations. In this context, it refers to its decision to set up a new status of "partner for democracy", which came into effect in January 2010, and strongly encourages the national parliaments of the non-member states of the Council of Europe taking part in the Union for the Mediterranean to take advantage of the new prospects for dialogue and co-operation that this opens up. It proposes, in particular, to continue co-operating with the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) to promote equal participation of women and men in politics and to combat violence against women.

10. The Assembly welcomes the involvement of the European Union in the action of the North-South Centre, through political and financial support brought by the European Commission and the participation of the European Commission and the European Parliament in the Executive Council of the North-South Centre. It recalls its suggestion in its Recommendation 1893 (2009) on the future of the North-South Centre to endow the centre with a new statute and invites the European Union to consider joining the centre in its proper capacity.

11. The Assembly invites the non-member states of the Council of Europe taking part in the Union for the Mediterranean to take advantage of the Council of Europe's experience and call on its expertise in various areas, and, in particular to:

11.1. accede to the Council of Europe legal instruments open to non-member states, in particular to those in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

11.2. abolish, if they have not already done so, capital punishment;

11.3. join, if they have not already done so, the Council of Europe's enlarged partial agreements such as the North-South Centre, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA);

11.4. join, if they have not already done so, the MedNET Mediterranean co-operation network on drugs and addiction;

11.5. promote dialogue and co-operation between their parliaments and the Assembly;

11.6. promote co-operation between the local and regional authorities in their country and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;

11.7. establish contacts between the Council of Europe and the authorities in their country responsible for questions of justice, sustainable development, culture, education and higher education, youth and sport, gender equality and the rights of the child;

11.8. study, in particular through the North-South Centre, and to use, in the activities of their respective national authorities, the experience of the institutions monitoring respect for human rights (the European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights), as well as of the various independent monitoring mechanisms set up by the Council of Europe, such as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Committee of Social Rights;

11.9. foster contacts between civil society representatives and the Conference of International Non-governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe.

12. The Assembly calls on the member states which are not yet members, as well as the European Union, to join the North-South Centre.