



Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

12.05.2017

RECOMMENDATION

on What's next for the Union for the Mediterranean? Political dialogue, new priorities and implementation of approved projects

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Recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean on

What's next for the Union for the Mediterranean? Political dialogue and new priorities

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean:

1. Takes the view that the UfM's approved project approach is an effective vehicle to build on the situation in the Euro-Mediterranean area; Deems it necessary, nine years after setting-up the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), to contribute to the reflection on the achievements and failures, as well as future prospects and limitations of the UfM, notably due to the existing conflicts in the region and in the light of the political developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region since 2011 in response to the peoples' legitimate aspirations to social rights, democracy and freedom and the economic and social crisis that has affected peoples both in the South and the North of the Mediterranean, while deepening the asymmetries between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea;
2. Points out the intrinsic link between the stability and security of the Mediterranean and that of Europe and stresses the importance of injecting new life into efforts to: (1) bolster peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity by reflecting on the achievements of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in the nine years that it has been in existence, and (2) address common challenges that the Euro-Mediterranean region is facing such as: migration, security, terrorism, violent extremism, human rights, youth employment and the promotion of intercultural dialogue;
3. Firmly condemns all terrorist acts that represent a common threat to both shores of the Mediterranean and that must be fought with determination and within the limits of the legal framework;
4. Is deeply concerned about the general and ongoing instability that has hit the Mediterranean region following years of old and new conflicts that call for an effective response from the international community; notes that without a sustainable solution to these conflicts, a new era of peace and sustainable prosperity is out of the question;
5. Invites the UfM and all the stakeholders, in order to encourage the regional economic and political stability, to promote actions for economic development, job creation and technological cooperation in the Mediterranean basin;
6. Welcomes the adoption by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the UfM member States on 23rd January of the 'Roadmap: UfM, an action-driven organisation with common ambition', which demonstrates a strong political commitment for the years to come; calls on the PA-UfM to work in the same spirit and take on a genuinely key role in inter-parliamentary dialogue and regional cooperation; warmly welcomes this close interaction between the UfM and the PA-UfM, and believes that a permanent and efficient PA-UfM Secretariat is necessary in order to cooperate with the Secretariat of the UfM;

7. Supports the idea set out in the UfM roadmap to revitalise the political dialogue in concert with senior officials on regional issues in order to contribute to defining a strategic, future-oriented vision and to stabilising the region: (1) by agreeing on annual meetings of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and on a stronger involvement of the UfM as an institutional “ecosystem” and (2) by linking issues of security and development more broadly, including the priority given to human development and youth employment, which the Committee notes with satisfaction was at the core of the 2017 UfM Regional Forum;
8. Considers that the issue of violent extremism is crucial in the Euro-Mediterranean region today; in that respect, takes the view that the role that online violent extremism plays is still underestimated and that the international community is under-equipped to deal with it; therefore calls for a discussion to be launched on the issue and for the PA-UfM to support the efforts of the ICCCT in this field; stresses the strategic importance of offering counter discourse to the hate discourse that is too easily found on the Internet;
9. Takes note of the Secretariat's proposal to improve the governance of the UfM by holding annually in Barcelona a 'Regional UfM Forum', at appropriate intervals to be provided by consensus and at least once a year, involving a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, an inter-institutional summit and a forum of project promoters and institutions active in the region as a positive step in order: (1) to give the UfM political and policy guidelines in line with current developments, (2) to improve coordination between all stakeholders and (3) to better assess progress; in this regard, considers absolutely necessary to ensure the active participation of civil society from both shores in this process ;
10. Points out that migration has become an ongoing phenomenon that requires a collective response; welcomes the European Commission’s intention to set up new financial instruments to combat the root causes of migration; takes the view that the PA-UfM should be involved in the setting of the main policy goals of those financial funds and trust funds; calls on the UfM member States to contribute financially to those financial funds as initially suggested by Jean-Claude Juncker in his State of the Union speech on 14 September 2016;
11. Calls, in this context, after coordination with the senior officials and after previously informing them, on (1) the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission and the Secretariat of the UfM to better coordinate the activities of the UfM with those funded by the European Neighbourhood Policy and vice-versa, in particular by effectively involving the UfM in shaping decisions and policies that affect the euro-Mediterranean region; (2) the Secretariat of the UfM to ensure the participation in the UfM ministerial meetings of the relevant committees' Bureaux of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), as well as the coordination and continuation of works from a PA-UfM Presidency to the next one and (3) PA-UfM to seek better coordination between the activities of the Assembly and those of the UfM, whose Co-Presidents would be systematically invited to the plenary sessions and the summits of the Presidents of the Parliaments of the PA-UfM with due respect for their respective mandates;
12. Calls on the PA-UfM to encourage the revival of regional integration in the Southern Mediterranean, in particular the Arab Maghreb Union; points out that regional cooperation is an instrument of peace, mutual understanding and prosperity between states;

13. Welcomes the extension of the UfM Secretariat's activities to intercultural dialogue, mobility and migration; regarding migration, urges UfM member States to rapidly identify appropriate forms for UfM involvement and contribution to addressing this challenge, in the belief that only multilaterally discussed solutions, avoiding military interventions and war, could greatly benefit the Euro-Mediterranean region; reiterates in this regard the determination of the PA-UfM to act in order to stop the unacceptable number of deaths occurring in migration tragedies in the Mediterranean, the need to comply with the international principle of non-refoulement and to ensure safe and lawful routes for asylum seekers and refugees to put an end to the violation of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and of migrants' human rights and to adequately support the countries on the front line of the reception of migrants and refugees, both on the Northern and the Southern shore;
14. Welcomes the efforts to support the coexistence of religions and interfaith dialogue such as the Marrakech Declaration of 30 January 2016, the Sousse Declaration of 20 April 2016 and the Cairo Declaration of 13 March 2017; considers that such efforts provide a basis for common citizenship, which is the most effective bulwark against violent extremism; therefore condemns all attacks by terrorist groups;
15. Fully supports the proposal made by the UFM Roadmap on prevention of extremism and terrorism, to join regional and international efforts to address socio-economic root causes of terrorism and extremism through supporting the development of further projects and initiatives of high impact with a special focus on youth employability and women empowerment;
16. Fully supports the proposal made by the UFM Roadmap to be involved in relevant migration initiatives in the Region in order to ensure the substantial and tangible contribution of the UfM parliamentary activities to addressing this challenge;
17. Invites the UfM, once entrusted of the migration-related mission, to work together with the PA-UfM with a view to support the international response to the current migration challenge by preventing irregular migration, promoting effective return and reintegration policies, enhancing national asylum systems, tackling the root causes of migration and promoting legal channels for migration and mobility; the ultimate objective is to encourage mobility in the region to promote economic and human development and structural reform in the interest of closer economic integration between Mediterranean countries, by linking migration and other domains of cooperation already covered by UfM projects, such as employment, support for SMEs, education and the empowerment of young people and women, while addressing current challenges linked to illegal migration and trafficking in human beings; insists, for any cooperation in this field to be effective, on the need to focus on an the essential security and border control-driven approach, coupled with a proactive and non-militarised approach to search and rescue operations and a long-term vision based on Euro-Mediterranean mobility as a tool for legal migration and integration, for the benefit of all Parties; in this context, cooperation in the field of readmission and returns of irregular migrants should constitute an important element in managing migration and related mobility issues;

18. Stresses the need, with a view to addressing illegal migration and tackling migrant and human trafficking, to step up political cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean at all levels; considers that Euro-Mediterranean mobility could, in the long term, become an instrument for regional integration and economic revival on both the Southern and the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, creating employment and social advancement opportunities and opening up stable, sustainable development prospects;
19. Recalls the urgent need to improve the social integration and employability of young people, as these are the major challenges facing the region and at the same time the vehicles for stabilisation, prosperity and security; also recalls that the problems linked to youth employability in the South and North of the Mediterranean require joint solutions formulated within the framework of effective multilateral cooperation such as the UfM;
20. Warmly welcomes the Foreign Ministers summit of 23 January 2017; considers that meetings of this kind deepen the UfM member States' understanding of their shared problems; takes the view that the Foreign Ministers should regularly meet with PA-UfM to talk and share thoughts on the priorities of Euro-Mediterranean MPs;
21. Calls on the Secretariat to continue supporting the development of regional civil society platforms, which, by allowing the participation of the most active components of Euro-Mediterranean society, may (1) contribute significantly to UfM initiatives, particularly in the new priorities set out in the UfM roadmap as intercultural dialogue, mobility and migration and reinforcing the rights of women as part of actions to protect human rights and (2) set up specific projects that have a direct impact on and for the population in priority areas such as inclusive growth, youth employability, the empowerment of women and sustainable development, including through the promotion of new information and communication technologies;
22. Calls on the UfM to make the human dimension the focus of the process of building a shared Euro-Mediterranean community of peoples;
23. Refers to the Final Declaration of the 12th Plenary Session held in Tangier on 29 May 2016, bearing in mind that the challenge for the PA-UfM is to strengthen parliamentary relations and support the Euro-Mediterranean process so that it can be translated into concrete projects;
24. Recognises the importance of the central role played by the UfM in promoting regional cooperation and regional integration in the Mediterranean region and expresses its satisfaction at the progress made by the UfM in advancing the regional agenda, strengthening the regional political dialogue, by facilitating the implementation of a number of projects with a direct impact on the population, and interacting with all players of cooperation in the region;
25. Calls upon governments to increase their political and financial support for the UfM and its General Secretariat with a view to intensifying their impact and contributing more to regional socio-economic and human development;

26. Fully supports the PA-UfM Bureau decision to contribute from the parliamentary side of the UfM ecosystem to the monitoring efforts on key UfM projects by appointing co-rapporteurs by project, drawn from each of the committees of the PA-UfM and commits to release a report on the projects in its remit once appropriate enquiry of its co-rapporteurs is conducted;
27. Highlight in this context the relevance of the Gaza desalinisation plant project, labelled by the UfM in 2011, and the urgency of its implementation in order to address the urgent water needs of the population in the Gaza strip; requires Israel to guarantee, as member of the UfM, a context favourable for this desalinisation plant and the ENP-financed infrastructures;
28. Welcomes the launch of the project to decontaminate Lake Bizerte in Tunisia and the European Investment Bank's recent support, worth EUR 70 million, for the Euro-Mediterranean University; calls for a progress report to be drawn up on those projects for the next meeting;
29. Notes with satisfaction the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP); Underlines that regional cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood has seen progress through the Union for the Mediterranean and that the UfM has proved to be a valuable forum for political and economic debate, providing a framework for cooperation on issues of common interest and operational projects in the region;
30. Encourages the pursuit of complementarities and synergies between the ENP and UfM activities and calls on the ENP to strengthen its support for the UfM regional cooperation efforts, as it encourages the development of a stronger partnership and synergies with other frameworks and forums such as the Arab Maghreb Union, the 5 + 5 Dialogue, the ARLEM and the Arab League for the Mediterranean, taking into account the strategic link with African countries;
31. Calls on the Co-Presidency of the UfM, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission, the Secretariat, the Bureau, the committees and all the members of the PA-UfM to address these proposals and urges them to respond to them at a future meeting of this Committee.

2016/2017 Activity Report

The Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights held a meeting in Brussels on 2nd March 2017 to discuss the following points:

1. Implementation of projects approved by the Union for the Mediterranean – case study: the desalination plant in Gaza. Exchange of views with:
 - Mr Mazin Gnaim, Head of the Palestinian Water Authority.

- Mr Mr. Michael Köhler, Director, Southern Neighbourhood, DG NEAR, European Commission
2. The Euro-Mediterranean agenda for managing migration in the Mediterranean.
Exchange of views with:
- Mr Mr. Leonello Gabrici, Head of Division “Migration and Human Security”, EEAS.
 - Ms Susanne Mallaun, Head of Unit North, West and Central Africa, DG ECHO, European Commission.
 - Ms Annabelle Roig Granjon , Senior EU Affairs Officer, UNHCR Brussels