



Rabat, March 2012

RECOMMENDATION

on

Which Euro-Mediterranean partnership to respond to the new context of democratic transition in the Mediterranean?

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The Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

- A. Whereas the popular movements in the Mediterranean region in 2011 resulted in a variety of situations, and whereas the transition processes initiated in many Arab countries are now evolving concurrently with each country's unique regional and national circumstances;
- B. Whereas, however, political and social problems (poverty, discrimination, the rising costs of basic foodstuffs, youth unemployment, etc.) are the root causes of these movements and whereas the legitimate aspirations, expressed by the citizens; in particular, the young people of these countries, to freedom, dignity, democracy, improved socio-economic conditions and respect for human rights, are a feature common to the entire region;
- C. Whereas the participation of all elements of society, including young people and women, in the political process is decisive if the objectives of the Arab popular movements are to be realised;
- D. Whereas the Mediterranean region faces structural challenges of not only a political and institutional nature but also of an economic, social and environmental nature;
- E. Whereas the current financial and economic crisis is affecting the European Union's capability to mobilise resources for southern Mediterranean countries;
- F. Whereas the promotion of economic growth and creation of jobs are crucial to the success of democratic transitions, as is the implementation of democratic systems that are able to encourage economic development and social justice;
- G. Whereas the European Union has reviewed its Neighbourhood Policy in response to recent developments in the southern Mediterranean, in particular by proposing a 40% increase in the overall budget allotted to this region for the period 2014-2020, by offering mobility partnerships that focus on visa facilitation and on readmission agreements, and by proposing negotiations on comprehensive free trade agreements;
- H. Whereas the UfM suffers from structural weaknesses stemming from the expansion of its membership, from paralysis of its governance at the level of summits of Heads of State or Government, and from underfunding that impedes the implementation of its socio-economic projects;
- I. Whereas the UfM nonetheless remains a valuable framework for promoting specific projects aimed at strengthening economic, social and political relations between the peoples of Mediterranean countries;
- J. Whereas the lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to destabilise the region and hinders the promotion of regional cooperation and integration in the Mediterranean;

- K. Whereas the deterioration of the situation in Syria is a source of serious concern, and constitutes a grave threat to stability, security and peace in the region;
- L. Whereas the security situation in the Sahel and the Sahara is deteriorating as a result of terrorism, irregular migration, drug trafficking and organised crime;
- M. Whereas the proliferation of weapons in countries bordering Libya and the rise of armed gangs in the Sahel region has a destabilising effect;
1. Encourages the constitutional and institutional reforms already under way in southern Mediterranean countries to help ensure firm foundations for democracy, good governance, respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and social justice;
 2. Stresses the need to involve women and young people in decisions taken as part of the political and constitutional transition process, and in all future decisions;
 3. Strongly condemns all abuses of power and acts of violence or intimidation committed against citizens, human rights defenders, journalists or civil society;
 4. Reiterates its call on both the transitional governments in question and the authorities of partner States to use all legal and political means necessary to facilitate the repatriation of funds stolen by former regimes;
 5. Emphasizes the decision of the EU Council of 27 February 2012, to give, for the most part, to the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission the responsibility of the "North Side Co-Presidency" of the Union for the Mediterranean, which should lead to a political strengthening of the objectives and instruments of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation;
 6. Notes with interest that the European Council, in its meeting of the 1-2 March 2012, "invites the European Commission and the High Representative to present by the end of the year 2012 a roadmap to define and guide the implementation of the EU policy vis-à-vis our Southern Mediterranean partners, listing its objectives, instruments and action, focusing on the synergies with the Union for the Mediterranean and other regional initiatives"; demands to be fully involved in this political process and properly consulted, namely through the Political Committee of the AP-UfM;
 7. Calls for a new commercial dynamic and better regional economic integration, not only along the north-south axis but also along the entire southern shore of the Mediterranean, in order to improve the political climate in the region, freedom of trade and the movement of persons;
 8. Asks both the EU and the transparently and independently elected authorities in southern countries continually to revise their cooperation as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy to ensure that it responds better to the needs of citizens and supports transitions to democracy notably by ensuring the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, media pluralism, the fight against corruption and the development of civil society; recalls, in this context, the importance of suitable goals for the partnership and calls for the 'more for more' principle to become the expression of goals that have been shared and set by mutual

agreement;

9. Welcomes the EU's willingness to provide technical support and to fund the preparation and organisation of electoral processes at the request of the countries in question;
10. Reiterates its call for better movement of persons through the implementation of mobility partnerships, as envisaged within the framework of the revised Neighbourhood Policy, and calls for the implementation of the European Parliament's proposal to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus programme that would encourage mobility amongst the young;
11. Requests a close and functional link between the UfM and the European Neighbourhood Policy based upon the added value of the respective frameworks whilst avoiding any duplication of competences;
12. Takes the view that the UfM's specific projects in the fields of energy, public transport, SMEs and infrastructure should go hand in hand with economic recovery in countries in transition and respect the principles of transparency and equal rights between the parties ;
13. Supports a pragmatic approach aimed at promoting UfM projects and identifying new sources of funding and investment by its Secretariat;
14. Reiterates its call for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean financial institution for co-development, working in partnership with the European Investment Bank, which would enable the EU to operate more effectively in Mediterranean countries and would also provide better financial support for the EU's priority initiatives in the Mediterranean region;
15. Welcomes the formal presentation, on 21 December 2011, of a proposal for a decision by the Council and European Parliament amending the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in order to expand the EBRD mandate in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region, which will allow the EBRD to support and finance development projects on the southern shore of the Mediterranean; asks the European Parliament to adopt the proposal without delay and to propose an increase in EBRD funds;
16. Calls on the UfM to develop closer cooperation at sub-regional level, particularly in the Maghreb, by utilising existing frameworks such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the 5+5 Dialogue;
17. Takes the view that civil society stakeholders should be closely linked with the UfM's activities;
18. Stresses once again the importance and urgency of reaching a fair and definitive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a prerequisite for lasting peace in the region; requests, therefore, that Israel recognise the Arab Peace Initiative and that peace negotiations be resumed, leading to the creation of an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable Palestinian State that can coexist with Israel in peace and security; demands an immediate halt without preconditions to Israeli settlements which are contrary to international law in

occupied Palestinian territories, which jeopardise the creation of a Palestinian State and its viability; condemns the arrest by Israel of Palestinian Members of Parliament and demands their immediate release;

19. Underlines the pressing need to put an immediate end to violence in Syria, to ensure safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance, and to initiate without delay a Syrian-led political transition process in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people; is opposed to any military intervention and affirms its support for the mission of Kofi Annan, the UN and Arab League special envoy, to broker a political solution to the crisis;
20. Calls for the strengthening of the EU's new security strategy for the Sahel, which was developed in order to improve regional cooperation in the areas of security, development, joint military strategy and intelligence sharing;
21. Supports the efforts made by regional stakeholders to recover weapons dispersed throughout countries bordering Libya that are at risk of destabilisation;
22. Calls for a multilateral strengthening of the fight against human trafficking networks; for respect for international law and conventions on refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian protection; for a policy of combating irregular migration which encompasses not only security aspects, but also a human, economic and social dimension; and calls finally for a thorough analysis of the causes of migrations in order to provide appropriate solutions based on the right to mobility and enabling migrants to migrate using regular channels;
23. Invites governments to work towards the overall objective of restoring trust between northern and southern countries, in order to finalise a revised Euro-Mediterranean Partnership based upon mutual respect; notes that the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, which increasingly brings together democratically elected members of parliament, is ready to play an important and collaborative role in the new regional context and to convey the voice of the public in the Mediterranean;
24. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Government of the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Co-Presidency of the UfM, the Secretary General of the Secretariat of the UfM, the League of Arab States, the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the High Representative/Vice-President Baroness Ashton, the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the European Parliament.