



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN



Rome, 4 March 2011

RECOMMENDATION

of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

on the following topics:

- 1. On the recent popular uprisings in the Arab countries**
- 2. On the role of civil society in the institutional framework of the Union for the Mediterranean**
- 3. Security in the Mediterranean**

Rapporteur topic 1: Mrs Tokia Saifi (EP)

Rapporteurs topic 2: Mr Pedret (Spain), Mr Aferiat (Morocco), Mr Moro (Morocco), and Ms Flautre (EP)

Rapporteurs topic 3: Mr. Panzeri (EP), Mr. Rezgui (Algeria), Ms. Daği (Turkey)

On the recent popular uprisings in the Arab countries

- A. Whereas, since the beginning of the year, people – in particular young people – in many Arab countries have overcome their fear and are expressing their legitimate aspirations for freedom, improved socio-economic conditions and respect for their dignity,
 - B. Whereas, since their leaders were toppled, Tunisia and Egypt have begun a transition process whose outcome will shape the political development of the entire region; whereas the European Union has a special role and responsibility in this context,
 - C. Whereas the Libyan people have been subjected to an unacceptably violent level of repression that has cost hundreds of lives,
 - D. Whereas communications tools such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as the internet in general, which are important ways of mobilising people, are still blocked in some places,
 - E. Whereas the wealth of some countries has been systematically plundered by irresponsible leaders while sections of the population are prevented from enjoying their fair share of the economy's benefits, are living in poverty and are suffering as a result of endemic corruption,
 - F. Whereas the European Union shares part of the responsibility for this situation, in particular because in implementing its policies it has confused the status quo with stability and given priority to intergovernmental relations,
 - G. Whereas the Union for the Mediterranean has thus far been unable to live up to the expectations of people on both sides of the Mediterranean,
1. Expresses its solidarity with the people aspiring to the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and social justice; wholeheartedly supports any moves towards a transition to democracy coming from within the societies themselves;
 2. Is extremely concerned about the situation in Libya and roundly condemns the violence used against people in the country; welcomes the sanctions agreed by the United Nations Security Council on 26 February 2011 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, including referral to the International Criminal Court, an arms embargo, travel bans and asset freezes; wishes to see these sanctions applied immediately;
 3. Takes the view that the people and states concerned should be free to choose the path they want to take towards political, economic and social reform, including establishing election timetables to ensure a smooth transition, with the people's aspirations being taken into account in the long term; points out that the right to peaceful demonstration is inalienable; calls on governments to give a genuine guarantee in respect of freedom of information, expression and association, including free access to the internet and other means of communication;

4. Calls on the transition governments concerned and the authorities in partner countries alike to use all the legal and political means necessary to help repatriate misappropriated funds and put them towards new social justice policies;
5. Is convinced that relations between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean should more than ever take the form of a genuine partnership based on the promotion of shared values and objectives; calls on governments to take full advantage of the push for democracy that is taking place in Arab countries, as it is an appropriate time to achieve that goal and to make the involvement of civil society players in the formulation of policies a structural, priority axis of the UfM;
6. Calls on the European Union to launch an operational initiative endowed with adequate means in order to address the humanitarian crisis triggered by concentrations of refugees both within and outside the borders of Libya;
7. Welcomes the involvement of women in the uprisings in the Mediterranean and insists on the need for women to participate in decision-taking during the process of political and constitutional transition; insists on a guarantee that women will be present at all levels in the future structures of democratic governance;
8. Reiterates its support for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean development and investment bank devoted to accompanying political and economic reform; calls on the European Union to increase the endowment for its financial instruments and to focus them, as a matter of priority, on the partner countries undergoing democratic transition;
9. Calls on the governments of Union for the Mediterranean to respond effectively to the historic challenges currently facing the region; to this end, calls for top-level cooperation to be relaunched immediately, for the post of Secretary-General to be filled as soon as possible, and for a wholesale review of its instruments to be carried out to allow a rapid response to be made to the political changes that are taking place alongside a significant change in economic and social conditions; calls to this end on the governments of the Union for the Mediterranean to define and consolidate Euro-Mediterranean projects in the food, health, migration and finance sectors;

On the role of civil society in the institutional framework of the Union for the Mediterranean

- A. Having regard to the importance of civil society in all of the countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the importance of civil society structures, whose solidity must be ensured to enable peoples to act and participate in the major decisions which shape their future,
- B. Having regard to the events in several UfM countries, notably Tunisia and Egypt, which clearly raise the issue of the central role of civil society in people's lives and its historical importance,
 - 1. Acknowledges the need to involve civil society in the UfM's various bodies and to treat it as a source of constructive proposals and initiatives; calls on civil society on both shores of the Mediterranean to forge closer links with a view to achieving better regional cooperation and greater understanding of cultures and civilisations, while taking care to preserve their identities and to respect specific social, economic, environmental and cultural factors, to make the Mediterranean a haven of stability and peace,
 - 2. Regrets that the UfM has not so far fully taken into account the role and aspirations, in particular the democratic and social aspirations, of civil society on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean in drawing up and implementing its policies and activities by attaching more importance to its relations with repressive regimes; emphasizes the disastrous consequences of this approach for representatives of civil society, in particular the absence of any protection for players henceforth considered legitimate;
 - 3. Considers that the UfM has the responsibility to reform so as to meet popular expectations and to contribute actively to supporting the processes of democratic transition currently under way aimed at ensuring the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, the struggle against impunity, the fight against corruption and respect for fundamental freedoms;
 - 4. Considers the Anna Lindh Foundation report entitled 'Euro-Med Intercultural Trends 2010' and its recommendations to be important policy instruments for civil society stakeholders, public institutions and anyone wishing to see closer links between the two shores of the Mediterranean and mutual respect for cultures
 - 5. Welcomes the implementation of the regional programme 'EuroMed Civil Society 2010-2013', supported by the European Commission and implemented in collaboration with the EuroMed civil society platform and its partners, and which aims, among other things, to foster the development of civil society in the Southern Mediterranean; believes that the project will help build the institutional capacity of civil society organisations, with a view to fostering systems for dialogue and collaboration between civil society stakeholders and national, regional and local institutions, and will facilitate the establishment of a network for cooperation and partnership between civil society in the countries of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean,

6. Welcomes the achievements of the EuroMed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, held in Rome on 10-12 November 2010, whose final declaration is of the utmost importance, and the establishment of the UfM Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, which, according to Article 1(1) of its statute, ‘intends to serve as the expression of organised civil society with consultative powers in the Union for the Mediterranean’,
7. Points out that the European Economic and Social Committee already holds the status of observer at the UfM Parliamentary Assembly,
8. Welcomes the inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean Social Dialogue Forum, which held its first meeting in Barcelona on 11 March 2010, bringing together representatives of the social partners in UfM countries, the ETUC and BusinessEurope,
9. Notes the existence of numerous Euro-Mediterranean organisations and institutions linked to civil society and reflecting today’s social and political reality; believes that the time has come to establish the necessary links between civil society and the UfM Parliamentary Assembly, which is the political representative of the peoples of the UfM,
10. Recommends a pragmatic and flexible approach in cooperation between the UfM Parliamentary Assembly and civil society organisations; invites – with a view to creating a permanent, structured relationship between the Assembly and civil society – the Assembly to entrust its Bureaux and the Committees with fostering this relationship or to look into how to set up a specific body for this purpose and the related budgetary implications.
11. Stresses the importance of actively promoting exchanges between civil society on both shores of the Mediterranean and calls in this connection on the EU to adopt all the necessary measures to increase and facilitate the mobility of civil society players so as to develop, support and consolidate NGO networks throughout the region;
12. Considers that the Assembly and its Committees should listen to civil society representatives by holding hearings before adopting draft recommendations; believes, furthermore, that the Assembly and its Committees should consult with civil society before examining texts on economic and social affairs,
13. Considers that the Assembly and its Committees should be free to call on civil society to submit reports to monitor the effectiveness of their resolutions and decisions,
14. Instructs its Chair to forward this recommendation to the Government of the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Secretary-General of the UfM Secretariat, the League of Arab States, the Council of Ministers of the European Union, High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton, the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the European Parliament.

On Security in the Mediterranean

- A. having regard to the 1995 Barcelona Declaration where participants express their conviction "that the peace, stability and security of the Mediterranean region are a common asset which they pledge to promote and strengthen by all means at their disposal";
- B. having regard to the fact that in terms of security, this commitment has yielded productive cooperation in managing migration flows and transit migration as well as in combating terrorist threats in the Mediterranean while being unable to solve persistent territorial conflicts including in the Middle East;
- C. having regard to the wider security challenges faced by the populations of the UfM Member States including energy and food security, natural disasters, epidemics, drugs and human trafficking, cyber security, and all kinds of intolerance and discrimination;
- D. having regard to the 2009 UNDP Arab Human Development Report - Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries - and to the Human Security concept, which responds to the abovementioned challenges;
- E. having regard to the Alliance of Civilisations which is recognised by the United Nations as valuable initiative to encourage tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilisations and peoples,
 - 1. Endorses a comprehensive approach to security whereby the political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental conditions in which people live are responsive to human rights and democracy; thereby enabling peoples to contain or avert threats to their lives, livelihoods and human dignity; therefore underlines the urgency of political reform in order to achieve social and economic development, fight against poverty and ensure food security in the Mediterranean; in this context it is important to work for a new partnership policy in the Mediterranean involving a broader support in the future including through the ENP and the UfM, by means of projects and measures to stimulate cooperation, exchange and investment in the region;
 - 2. Reminds that such a comprehensive approach to security must also seek to eliminate the ideological breeding ground of security risks; welcomes in this regard the adoption of the Regional Mediterranean Strategy of the Alliance of Civilisations in Malta, November 2010 as an important instrument to achieving this goal; emphasizes the importance of strengthening the intercultural dialogue and encourages the Anna Lindt Foundation to pursue its work of promoting and fostering mutual knowledge by means of exchanges between the north and south coasts of the Mediterranean;
 - 3. Recalls that combating of terrorism and fundamentalism as well as the adoption of migration control measures cannot take place to the detriment of civil liberties and fundamental rights and requires taking into account the human, economic and social dimension as well as the respect of human rights and democracy beyond narrow security concerns; reiterates to this end previous calls by the PA UfM for visa facilitation as a means to regulate migration flows and for promoting the protection and integration of legal immigrants;

4. Firmly believes that civil society must be associated to formulating and implementing a comprehensive response to human security challenges; the setting up of appropriate mechanisms of dialogue is essential to this end;
5. Considers that the UfM framework is still an untapped resource of effective multilateralism benefitting all citizens and calls for the UfM civil protection dimension to be deepened and widened so as to promote risk management at appropriate levels in all UfM Member States;
6. Recognises the valuable work of specialised centres for risk management; however, deplores the lack of communication between experts and decision makers; therefore invites the UfM to explore ways of bundling existing resources, strengthening their link with political decision making structures and enhancing their visibility to the citizens;
7. Welcomes as a concrete step in this direction the decision by the European Commission and UNDP to set up a regional Crisis Response Centre and Early Warning System during 2011-2012 at the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States in Cairo in order to promote the exchange of information and cooperate on the identification of mutually acceptable solutions to crisis situations.
8. Calls UfM Member States to provide for operational flexibility by endorsing variable geometry in the area of civil protection in order to enable specific and geographically limited initiatives; therefore invites the UfM to explore avenues of enhanced sub-regional cooperation between UfM Member States with shared interests;

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Instructs its Chair to forward this recommendation to the Government of the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Secretary-General of the UfM Secretariat, the League of Arab States, the Council of Ministers of the European Union, High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton, the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the European Parliament.