

 <p>PA-UfM AP-UpM</p>	<p>PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY – UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN</p> <p>ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE – UNION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE</p> <p>الجمعية البرلمانية للاتحاد من اجل المتوسط</p>
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*Presidency of the European Parliament*

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## **15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - Strasbourg, 13-14 February 2019**

### **Draft Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) was held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, on 13 and 14 February, 2019. The session was chaired by Antonio TAJANI, President of the European Parliament, and later by David-Maria SASSOLI, Vice-President of the European Parliament.

The Bureau was represented by Mr Karim DARWISH representing Dr Ali ABDEL-AAL SAYED AHMED, President of the Egyptian House of Representatives, Mr Şamil AYRIM representing the President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Binali YILDIRIM, and Ms Maria Edera SPADONI, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, representing Roberto Fico, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy.

The meeting was attended by the following delegations:

Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, European Parliament, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

Observers:

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the Arab Parliament were invited as observers.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the PA-UfM was dedicated to the theme: “**Migration and the Status of Refugees in the Mediterranean**”.

The session was opened by **Antonio TAJANI**, President of the European Parliament.

#### **President’s Opening Statement**

**President TAJANI** welcomed the participants of the 15<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean. He highlighted the symbolic value of the location at which the plenary was taking place, outlining that Strasbourg stands for Europe as a shared model of peace, reconciliation and development.

Mr Tajani emphasized the need to work together more closely to overcome conflict, environmental degradation, unemployment and other challenges facing the Mediterranean. He called on the Members of the Assembly to breathe new life into the institution and be at the forefront of cooperative action.

Taking stock of the Presidency of the European Parliament, President Tajani emphasised the creation of the new PA-UfM Secretariat in Rome. He also referenced the fact that the Working Group on Palestine had not been able to conduct their visit to Israel and Palestine as planned.

On refugees and migrants, President Tajani outlined that despite a recent reduction in arrivals, this issue would remain high on governments' agendas for the years to come. The human aspect should be the primary consideration of any policy concerning migrants and refugees. There were two sides to the debate: while European countries could benefit from migration given the low birth rate in the EU countries, one could not forget that European citizens were highly concerned by a perceived loss of culture.

Mr Tajani referenced the idea of "Marshall Plan" for Africa and its potential to fight poverty and help young Africans become entrepreneurs. He highlighted the need to help African countries benefit more from their own natural resources and industrialise.

In conclusion, he called on the Members of the Assembly to become agents of change and cooperation.

President TAJANI then gave the floor to **Dimitris AVRAMOPOULOS**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, and **Nasser KAMEL**, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Mr AVRAMOPOULOS began his address by reminding the audience that the Mediterranean was the birthplace of civilization and of exchange between continents.

Going on to speak about the approach taken by the European Commission, he explained that the Commission had proposed a comprehensive strategy based on solidarity and shared responsibility.

The EU-Turkish Statement had significantly decreased migrant arrivals in Europe from 13.000 persons a day four years ago to 50 to 60 persons per day at present. Commissioner Avramopoulos highlighted the role that partnership and cooperation should play in the Mediterranean region and emphasized that the EU would never become a fortress.

Mr KAMEL discussed the role of the PA-UfM in relation to the Union for the Mediterranean. Both shared a vision of stability, peace and prosperity. The PA-UfM was much more than a mere continuation of the Barcelona process. Instead, it was a new paradigm of dialogue and cooperation. The UfM could support the PA-UfM through sharing policy papers and regional dialogue. the UfM secretary general offered to receive PA-UfM delegations in Barcelona.

**The Assembly then adopted the agenda.**

**David-Maria SASSOLI**, Vice-President of European Parliament, in the chair, thanked all cities that had submitted their candidacy for the seat of the permanent secretariat and updated the members on the progress made on the matter. Two interim general secretaries - Dr

Fabrizia BIENTINESI and Dr Luigi GIANNITI - had been appointed in accordance with the PA-UfM rules.

The Bureau was proposing that permanent secretariat would revise current financial regulations, propose a new draft budget and proceed with a call for contributions if possible during the current year. Efforts for the setting up of the Secretariat would be followed up by the Turkish Presidency, in cooperation with the co-general secretaries, and a new statute will be submitted for endorsement at the next plenary session.

The proposals of the Bureau were adopted by consensus.

Mr SASSOLI continued with the agenda, asking members of committees and working groups to elaborate on their recommendations.

**Mr Gilles PARGNEAUX**, representing Mr Renato SORU, Chair of the Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights Committee, explained that the recommendation had been adopted by consensus during their previous meeting on 16 January 2019. He emphasized the need for long-term management of migration and highlighted recent changes in migration routes across the Mediterranean, with Spain seeing a large increase of migrants. Solidarity was key and the fortress method would not work, especially when it came to relations with Africa. He emphasized four key aspects of the recommendation: 1. Increasing the role of national parliaments in migration policy. 2. Tackling the root causes of migration and creating better living conditions in countries of origin. 3. In the short term, criminal networks need to be dismantled. 4. A shared dialogue in the EU based on solidarity.

**Ms Margarida MANO**, Chair of the Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education Committee, emphasized the need to bring Parliamentarians together to foster dialogue. She called for increased cooperation, as a message of hope, and outlined the need for sustainable development which uses knowledge to create economic and social wealth. She focused on the need to use new technology in order to create a beneficial social and economic development. Technology could be utilized to combat unemployment, to create a start-up culture and even to preserve the future of mankind.

**Mr Mohamed IHOUİYET**, Chair of the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture, said the committee had adopted draft recommendations on 1 February in Rabat, Morocco, and included amendments submitted by some delegates. The recommendation highlighted that the next generations needed to receive training to be able to meet the challenges of the future, and so that they could keep up with the digital revolution. It called for young people to be involved in political decision-making. The chair stressed that the Committee wanted minors and young refugees to be able to attend school in host countries.

**Ms Nacera SADEK**, Vice-Chair of the Women's Rights Committee, replacing Committee Chair Leila CHETTAOUI, argued that women's potential has not been realised, especially when it came to peace building in the region. The recommendation highlighted how women could help fight extremism and illegal immigration. It argued that women needed to hold the highest roles of leadership. Women were especially vulnerable. The recommendation called for the gathering of data on family reunification, the provision of healthcare for migrant women and their access to work.

**Mr Mohamad ABU STETTEH**, Chair of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water, explained that committee had tried to put forward a plan on renewable energy, water and the environment. The Committee discussed projects and papers on pollution and plastic in the Mediterranean as well as issues related to water. He also underscored the impact that migrants could have on receiving countries' health care and education systems.

Mr SASSOLI then invited members to submit any comments or reservations they may have had about the recommendations.

The four recommendations - presented by the Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights Committee, the Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education Committee, the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture, and the Committee on Women's Rights in Euro Mediterranean Countries - were adopted by acclamation.

During the second part of Plenary Assembly, held on 14 February, Mr SASSOLI gave the floor to **Nasser KAMEL**, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, **Sophie MAGENNIS**, Head of Policy and Legal Support at the UNHCR Regional Representation for EU Affairs, and **Manfred PROFAZI**, Senior Regional Advisor for Europe and Central Asia at the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Mr KAMEL outlined the successes of the UfM. Despite the challenge posed by the Arab Spring and the economic crisis, the UfM had been able to promote 54 regional projects that enhanced regional integration in the area of water, energy, urban development and gender equality. The UfM acted as an advisor to UN agencies on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Partners included development agencies from Sweden, Norway, Germany and France. On migration, Mr KAMEL said discussions should not lose track of the root causes of migration such as armed conflict, social and economic factors, overcrowded urban areas and a lack of integration into the world market. Better conditions for youth were key in addressing the causes of migration. He highlighted the launch of the Euro-Med research network on migration, which promoted research and training.

Ms MAGENNIS said migrant numbers had dwindled, despite EU Member States' insistence that numbers were incredibly high. On the contrary, the south of the Mediterranean was affected the most. Conditions in the Mediterranean were dangerous, with an average of six deaths per day. The EU needed to stop applying a boat-by-boat approach and adopt coordinated disembarkation instead. She called for an end of mandatory detention centres and emphasised the need to address the root causes of migration by focussing on development in Africa.

Mr PROFAZI highlighted the fact that migration through the Mediterranean had become increasingly deadly. He called for an end to detention centres, and advocated for open reception centres. Some positive examples included a task force with the African Union, which increased voluntary humanitarian returns, as well as the Valletta Action Plan. There was need for long-term solutions that tackled the following four root causes: war, lack of development, demographics and climate change.

Mr SASSOLI then opened the floor for discussion.

Representatives from Malta, Hungary, Jordan, Cyprus, France, Palestine, Romania, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Greece, Tunisia, Jordan, Spain, Italy, Slovenia and Israel took the floor.

Summing up the debate, Mr SASSOLI outlined two types of problems that had emerged. Dialogue between EU countries in the North was a European problem while dialogue between the Southern states needs to develop proper priorities. There was a unique opportunity to launch a Mediterranean policy on migration, because everyone shared the same problems. He recalled the recent vote in the European Parliament to reform the Dublin Convention, calling for EU countries to take this reform on. He reminded the Members that the European Union had been founded based on a tragedy, and that they should advocate for peace. He adjourned the 15th Plenary Session of the PA-UfM and passed on the Presidency to Turkey which would lead the institution until 2020. Mr Mr Şamil AYRIM, representing the President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, accepted the office and announced that the Turkish Presidency would aim to create a Mediterranean region of prosperity and welfare.