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[DRAFT] MINUTES

of the meeting [of the Bureau] of 9 September 2020, 14:00-16:00

Brussels (Remote meeting)

The meeting opened at 14.15 on Wednesday 9 September 2020, with President David Maria Sassoli presiding.

- The Bureau adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the last Bureau meeting held on 13 February 2019, chaired by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (GNAT), before the transfer of the Presidency to the European Parliament (EP).
- EP President David Maria SASSOLI welcomed the Members of the Bureau, Mr Samil AYRIM for the GNAT, Ms Maria Edera SPADONI, Vice-President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Ms Michela MONTEVECCHI, Senator of the Italian Republic, and Mr Mohamed AL ORABI, Member of the Egyptian Parliament. President SASSOLI also welcomed the presence of the two co-Secretaries-General *ad interim* of the Permanent Secretariat, Ms Fabrizia BIENTINESI and Mr. Luigi GIANNITI.
- The Chair made the following announcements: in the light of the cancellation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) plenary session in Antalya, Turkey, due to the pandemic, and of the fact that it had been impossible to organise another plenary session since then, the EP had accepted the kind offer made by the Turkish Speaker Professor Mustafa SENTOP to the EP President to transfer the rotating PA-UfM Presidency via written procedure. President SASSOLI underlined the main organisational priorities of the new EP Presidency: the renewal of the Bureau and of the Committee Chairs, and the effective setting up of the Permanent Secretariat in

Rome. He also expressed his strong intention to relaunch the political work of the Assembly following a prolonged period of inactivity.

- While underlining the outgoing Turkish Presidency's regret at having been forced by the pandemic to cancel all activities, including the Antalya plenary session, Mr AYRIM expressed his full support to the incoming EP Presidency.

Mr AYRIM also asked the EP Presidency to consider the request, submitted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, to be granted the status of permanent observer to the PA-UfM.

- **On point 4 of the agenda**, the Chair recalled that the four-year mandate of the Bureau and the Enlarged Bureau had come to an end, and that, as stipulated by the rules, they had to be renewed. The EP recalled that the outgoing Turkish Presidency had sent, on 14 February 2020, a call for expressions of interest for the positions of Bureau member and Committee Chair. The President informed participants that Spain for the 'North' and Morocco for the 'South' had expressed their interest in joining the Bureau. The Bureau agreed with the proposal of the Chair that all current members (with the exception of the EP which is a permanent member) would be replaced by Spain and Morocco.
- The Bureau also mandated the Secretariat to relaunch a call for expressions of interest in order to co-opt a second 'Southern' partner.
- Since the decision on the composition of the Bureau and the Enlarged Bureau had to be confirmed by the plenary, the Bureau decided to proceed by written procedure and mandated the Secretariat to inform all PA-UfM partners and to implement the written procedure. The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to inform all PA-UfM partners about the request from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to become a permanent observer and to seek their approval.
- President SASSOLI, on the issue of the renewal of the Enlarged Bureau, informed the Bureau members of the outcome of the call for expressions of interest sent by the outgoing Turkish Presidency. In particular, he recalled that several PA-UfM partners had expressed their interest in assuming the responsibility of Committee Chair. Respecting geographical balance between the 'North' and the 'South', he presented the following proposal for the distribution of responsibilities: Political Committee: European Parliament; Economic Committee: Turkish Grand National Assembly; Energy and Environment Committee: Portuguese Assembly; Culture Committee: Moroccan Parliament; Committee on Women's Rights: Italian Parliament.
- Mr AL ORABI expressed the agreement of the Egyptian Parliament with all the proposals made by the Chair.
- Ms SPADONI concurred and underlined that the PA-UfM Rules of Procedure indeed do not allow for a double mandate as Bureau members.
- Ms MONTEVECCHI also agreed and confirmed the interest of the Italian Parliament in chairing the Committee on Women's Rights. In addition, she reiterated the strong commitment of the Italian Parliament to support the relaunch of the PA-UfM and to

help set up a Permanent Secretariat in Rome. She concluded by underlining the importance of monitoring and promoting the UfM projects on climate change, the environment, employment, youth and women.

- The Chair concluded by thanking the other Bureau members for agreeing to his proposal. Now that the Bureau had adopted the renewals of the Bureau and the Enlarged Bureau, the decision could be put to all PA-UfM partners by written procedure.
- **On point 5 of the agenda**, President SASSOLI underlined the importance of finalising the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat. In particular, he thanked the Italian Parliament for having provided two civil servants to assume the role of Secretaries-General *ad interim* for the transitional period; he asked the two Secretaries-General to ensure a smooth transition when the future Secretary-General was appointed. President SASSOLI recalled the mandate of the two Secretaries-General, i.e. to present an annual report of activities, to draft a new Financial Regulation, to present a staffing plan for the Secretariat and to draft the annual budget. The Chair also mentioned the intention to launch a call for expressions of interest for the position of Secretary-General.
- Mr AYRIM expressed his agreement with the views of the Chair and reiterated his regret that the pandemic had not allowed the Turkish Presidency to fully invest in the PA-UfM as a platform for dialogue.
- Ms SPADONI and Ms MONTREVECCHI also agreed with the Chair. They informed participants that the seat of the Secretariat had been approved at Italian level, and insisted on moving ahead with the appointment of the Secretary-General. They underlined the importance of the PA-UfM Forum for dialogue in the region, and Ms MONTEVECCHI proposed including education and culture in the future agenda of PA-UfM activities.
- Ms BIENTINESI and Mr GIANNITI briefly presented the documents prepared by the Secretariat, with particular attention to the new Financial Regulation.
- Ms SPADONI expressed her gratitude for the work done by the two co-Secretaries-General and expressed her wish for the new office of the Secretariat to be inaugurated soon.
- President SASSOLI confirmed the adoption at Bureau level of the Statute of the Secretariat and its organisation chart, the annual report and the new Financial Regulation.
- Referring to the request presented by Mr AYRIM, the Chair recalled that, as stipulated by the Rules of Procedure, the request to be granted the status of PA-UfM permanent observer from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation would be submitted for approval to all PA-UfM partners.

The meeting closed at 16.00.