

DRAFT MINUTES

of the meeting of 27 January 2021, 16.00-17.00

**Brussels
(Remote meeting)**

The meeting opened at 16.00 on Wednesday 27 January 2021, with President David Maria Sassoli presiding.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Chair's announcements

President SASSOLI welcomed the Members of the Bureau, Ms Meritxell BATET, President of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, and Mr Habib EL MALKI, President of the Moroccan House of Representatives. He also welcomed the presence of the two co-Secretaries-General *ad interim* of the Rome Permanent Secretariat, Ms Fabrizia BIENTINESI and Mr Luigi GIANNITI.

President SASSOLI informed the incoming Bureau members of the positive outcome of the written procedure proposed to all Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) partners for the final endorsement of the decisions taken by the outgoing Bureau at its meeting in September 2020. There were: the renewal of the members of the Bureau and of the Enlarged Bureau, and the new Financial Regulation. The decision to grant the permanent observer status to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) will be decided on the next PA-UfM Plenary Session.

3. Outcome of the call for candidates for the Bureau of 28 September 2020

President SASSOLI informed the Bureau members that the call for candidates, launched to co-opt the fourth member of the Bureau from the South, had not met with any response. To ensure the continuity of the Bureau's activities, he proposed proceeding with the current three-member composition until a fourth Parliament from the South expressed an interest in completing the Bureau.

Mr EL MALKI expressed his full commitment to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which was needed now more than ever in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He considered COVID-19 to be a severe global crisis, but also an opportunity to reconfigure key economic sectors of the Mediterranean, in particular tourism. In this context, he proposed setting up a Working Group on post-COVID, with the aim of reflecting on the impact of this health, economic and social crisis on the Mediterranean region, and to develop a common recovery strategy.

President SASSOLI welcomed the proposal on setting up a Working Group on post-COVID.

Ms BATET expressed her commitment to strengthening the role of the PA-UfM. She endorsed the establishment of a Working Group on post-COVID and agreed with President SASSOLI's proposal to proceed with the current three-member Bureau. However, she underlined the importance of maintaining an open dialogue with the Southern countries, with the aim of integrating a fourth member from the South and ensuring full balance between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

President SASSOLI closed the discussion on this point, confirming the composition of the Bureau.

4. Appointment of pending Committee Vice-Chairs

President SASSOLI proposed the following distribution of Committee Vice-Chairs: Economic Committee: EP, Tunisia and Morocco; Culture Committee: EP, Italy and Turkey; Committee on Women's Rights: EP, Algeria and Sweden; Committee on Energy and Environment: EP, Algeria and Tunisia; Political Committee: Portugal, Algeria and Palestine, leaving open the possibility for Israel to hold a Vice-Chair position, as is customary, should the Knesset express its interest after the general elections of 23 March 2021; Working Group on Rules and Financing: Morocco.

In the absence of any objections, President SASSOLI confirmed the adoption at Bureau level of the new distribution of Committee Vice-Chairs.

5. Presentation of the PA-UfM 2021 budget

President SASSOLI presented the draft budget and proposed using a silence procedure for the final adoption by the PA-UfM partners.

In the absence of any objections, the draft budget was deemed approved at Bureau level. President SASSOLI mandated the Secretariat to launch and follow up on the silence procedure for the final adoption of the budget.

6. Date and place of the next meeting

To be announced by the Permanent Secretariat.

The meeting closed at 17.00.