

RECOMMENDATION

on common Mediterranean challenges: cooperation in the field of energy, food security, peace and stability, and migration and human rights

Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

1. Welcomes the fact that sustainable development, with a specific focus on energy, food security and peace and stability, is among the priorities highlighted by the Moroccan presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean;
2. Recognises that Mediterranean countries today face common challenges relating to sustainable development that require high-level multilateral responses and international coordination;
3. Underlines that Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens food security for millions of Mediterranean citizens, and that the rise of food and energy prices risks affecting the political stability of the region; recognises that the Israeli occupation of the Arab lands since 1967, including East Jerusalem, remains a major source of tension and instability in the region and an obstacle to the development of the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

A: On energy cooperation:

4. Stresses that it is urgent to enhance regional cooperation on energy, in accordance with international law, including the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which represents an opportunity for both sides of the Mediterranean to achieve the ultimate goal of fostering integration and social and economic development in the region;
5. Emphasises that the Mediterranean region is home to an increasing population of over 500 million people, which has led to a growing demand for energy; highlights that a major increase in energy demand in the southern Mediterranean countries is expected by 2040;
6. Recognises that the integration of electricity markets, the deployment of renewable energy sources, the promotion of energy efficiency and the development of gas and decarbonised energy markets, can play an essential role in contributing to the diversification of the region's energy mix and can therefore ensure a more secure energy transition, with regard for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals; reiterates that dependence on fossil fuels, including oil and gas, must be reduced as quickly as possible in order to mitigate the already disastrous impact on the climate in the Mediterranean, which is warming 20% faster than the global average, according to the United Nations;
7. Underlines that the still largely untapped potential of natural gas in the Mediterranean region and decarbonised energies could contribute to and foster the achievement of the region's energy transition and climate targets;
8. Notes that producer countries can play a fundamental role in supporting energy importing countries in the Mediterranean basin in alleviating the energy crisis; highlights that some Mediterranean partners have the potential to help all Mediterranean basin countries to diversify gas supplies and contribute to the European Union's energy security; notes, in this regard, that the UfM serves as a platform of positive regional cooperation;
9. Stresses that it is important to work towards the gradual integration of energy markets by expanding knowledge and best practices, reinforcing energy exchanges and interconnection and removing existing and potential barriers for the common benefit of Mediterranean citizens;

10. Calls on the European Union, the European Investment Bank and other international financial institutions to provide increased access to financial support, technology and technical know-how in the energy sector for Mediterranean countries, taking into consideration the disparities among countries in the Mediterranean region;
11. Invites the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to strengthen its work on possible energy cooperation projects between the two sides of the Mediterranean;

B: On food security:

12. Emphasises that the impacts on food security of the unprovoked and unjustifiable Russian war of aggression have exacerbated the already severe economic and social situation caused by COVID-19; recognises that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the blockade it imposes on Gaza, including Palestinians' inability to control land, energy and water resources, and Israel's control of Palestinian borders, which together impose economic dependence on Israel and prevent the free import and export of goods provokes the food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory;
13. Welcomes the UN-Türkiye brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative and its role in mitigating an emerging global food crisis and stabilizing grain prices;
14. Expresses deep concern about the current gap in food supply in several Mediterranean countries;
15. Stresses that the priority of the EU and the UfM member states is to ensure food security and food accessibility for all;
16. Underlines that the EU and the UfM should consider developing a macro-regional strategy for food security in the region; welcomes the FARM initiative launched on 24 March 2022 by the EU, the AU and the G7 to increase food security in the region;
17. Calls on the European Union and the UfM member states to increase their contributions to the World Food Programme;
18. Calls on the European Union and the UfM member states to closely monitor the markets for agricultural and aquatic food products, paying particular attention to price speculation;
19. Insists that as a first priority, the European Union and the UfM member states must cooperate to ensure that no food shortages arise, notably in vulnerable regions, in order to avoid widespread geopolitical instability, and considers that contributing to global food security at this time is a moral duty;
20. Calls on the UfM to organise an ad hoc Mediterranean forum with the Food and Agriculture Organization to discuss international coordination and financial support to importer countries.
21. Considers that the definition of stability is positively correlated with democratic development and respect for the rule of law; reiterates its deep commitment to a free, strong and independent civil society in all Mediterranean countries;

C: On peace and stability:

22. Emphasises the primary role of the Mediterranean countries in strengthening and promoting peace, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region; Calls on UFM members states to abstain of any actions that hinder the food and energy security of any population under its control;
23. Underlines that promoting human rights, the economic and social development of all peoples in the region, with respect to the labour rights as defined by ILO conventions, will contribute significantly to stability, peace and broader security in the region;
24. Expressing its deep concern about the exploitation by Israel, the occupying Power, of the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, the extensive destruction by Israel of agricultural land, including the uprooting of a vast number of fruit-bearing trees and the destruction of farms and greenhouses. Highlights that the Palestinian people has the exclusive right to use the natural resources in the territories under the Israeli occupation. Urges the Israeli authorities to end the Gaza blockade and allow access to fuel and energy necessary for the development of the Gaza economy;
25. Calls for solving the Palestinian crisis on the basis of the international agreed upon terms of reference, the two states solution and the establishment of the independent sovereign Palestinian state on the borders of the 4th of June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital;
26. Urges further joint efforts to strengthen economic, social, cultural and environmental cooperation in the region,
27. Reiterates the link between the availability of financial aid and a stronger mutual commitment to democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development;
28. Express its concern at the persistent tensions in parts of the wider Mediterranean region that have hindered efforts to strengthen security and cooperation and call on all countries in the region to respect the sovereignty and the sovereign rights of the each other in accordance with international law;
29. Reiterates its unwavering support for the two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 lines with Est-Jerusalem as the capital of the independent state of Palestine, and in full respect of international law. Calls for an end to the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the occupation of Palestinian territories through the resumption of genuine peace talks between both sides on the basis of the established parameters for the two-state solution, the Arab Peace Initiative. Condemns the continued expansion of Israeli settlements, in particular the substantial advancement of settlement construction in East Jerusalem, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and represents a major impediment to the viability of and the prospects for the two-state solution; calls on the Israeli authorities to immediately halt and reverse their illegal settlement policy and immediately halt forced evictions, demolitions and seizures of structures in the occupied Palestinian territories, many of which were funded by the EU; calls for the EU to remain steadfast on this issue. Recalls that according to the Oslo Accords and relevant UN

Security Council resolutions, the status of Jerusalem must be decided by the two parties without any action by a third party pre-empting this decision; calls for full respect for the status quo of the Holy Esplanade (al-Haram al-Sharif) in Jerusalem, which was put in place in 1967 and to respect Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's custodianship over the holy sites;

30. Reiterates its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which provides essential services for the protection and human development of Palestinian refugees across the Middle East; calls for the European Union, the Member States and the international community to step up their political and financial support for the Agency, following the recent renewal of its mandate by the United Nations General Assembly.
31. Underlines that security in the Mediterranean is key for European security, as well as for international peace and security;
32. Recognises that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in the levels of development in the region and the overcoming of other obstacles, as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area, will contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through existing forums;
33. Underlines the need to find a new way to manage migration in the Mediterranean, strengthening legal migration channels and tackling the root causes of migration namely the food and energy crisis, high unemployment, climate change and the insecurity which have a strong impact in the flows;
34. Encourages the UfM member states to strengthen their cooperation further in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and in combating international crime, illicit arms, human trafficking and illicit drug production and trafficking. These criminal phenomena pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the possibility of improving the current political, economic and social situation. They also jeopardise friendly relations among states, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the degradation of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society;
35. Condemns the significant involvement of mercenary groups such as Russia's Wagner Group, their role in destabilising the political landscape in the Mediterranean and the war crimes they have committed, as denounced in numerous reports;
36. Encourages the UfM member states to strengthen their cooperation in combating attempts by Russia and its allies to disrupt the rules-based global order and to manipulate public opinion in the third countries;
37. Calls on the UfM to include a specific point on peace and stability in the region in the agenda of the annual regional forum to assess the state of play and to ensure coordination in this field to the maximum extent possible.

D: On migration and human rights:

38. Recalls that the Mediterranean constitutes one of the most active routes for migrants and asylum seekers who, aiming either for better life conditions or fleeing conflict, violence or persecution, embark on long and dangerous journeys to reach Europe;
39. Expresses deep concern for the high number of dead and missing people in the Mediterranean, especially since 2014 to the present date, which amounts to nearly 25.000 lost lives;
40. Encourages the UfM member states to strengthen, alongside the civil society, their cooperation towards greater solidarity and responsibility-sharing mechanisms, especially on maritime search and rescue procedures; on effective and protection-sensitive management of mixed movements; and on alternatives to dangerous irregular movements through additional resettlement places and complementary safe legal pathway for migrants and asylum seekers;