



# EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



Brussels, 27 March 2006

## RECOMMENDATION

of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

### **on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture**

adopted on the basis of the draft tabled on behalf of the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture

by Mr Mario GRECO, Chairman

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## **The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly**

- *having regard to* the Committee’s earlier resolutions adopted in Cairo on 15 March 2005 and Rabat on 21 November 2005,
- *having regard* in particular to paragraph 20 of the Rabat resolution, which calls for a special Committee sitting to be focused on the discussion of migration flows,
- *having regard to* the European Commission’s communication of 30 November 2005 entitled “Priority actions for responding to the challenges of migration: First follow-up to Hampton Court” (COM (2005) 621 final),
- *having regard to* the conclusions of the European Council held in Brussels on 15-16 December 2005, and particularly the document “Global approach to migration: Priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean”, annexed to those conclusions,
- *having regard to* the Declaration of the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly of 6 February 2006, on the publication of offensive cartoons in some European media,
- *having regard to* the draft resolution on "Civil Protection and Prevention of Natural and Ecological Disasters in the Euro-Mediterranean Region" tabled by Mr. Antonios Trakatellis on behalf of Working Group no. 5,
- *having regard to* the draft resolution on the ways in which the Assembly may take part in the bodies of the “Anna Lindh” Euro-Mediterranean Foundation on the dialogue among cultures, tabled by Mr Bernard Deflesselles on behalf of Working Group no. 6,
- *having regard to* the letter sent by Mrs Hélène Flautre to the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Borrell, on 16 November 2005, calling for the establishment of a “Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament” in Strasbourg,
- *having regard to* the statements of Mr Franco Frattini, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, during the meeting with the Committee on 27 February 2006 and the debate which followed,

### **On the management of migration flows:**

1. Acknowledges the initiatives announced by the European Commission and the decisions taken at the Hampton Court informal Council meeting and at the European Council in Brussels on 15-16 December 2005;
2. Welcomes the commitment made by the European Union to strengthen co-operation with the partners of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, some of which have been transformed from transit countries into terminals of massive migration flows; also underlines that this co-operation should take the shape of a partnership, within which policies and programmes should be developed and implemented through the

participation of all members and in compliance with the principle of solidarity and shared responsibility, to build capacity to better manage migration;

3. Reaffirms the need to contextualise migration, taking into account in the first place the requirements of countries of origin, in order to devise a world-wide strategy tackling the economic, political, social and environmental factors of massive flows;
4. Urges the member States of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to define a co-development strategy, which will address the fight against poverty, conflict prevention, the consolidation of democratic States and respect of minority rights - in particular the rights of women and children;
5. Reaffirms the imperative need to adopt an urgent and integrated strategy to tackle clandestine migration, having as its priorities: an improvement of infrastructures in countries of origin, as it is indispensable for development, an increase of productive investments in developing countries of the Southern shore and an increase of European funds allocated to promoting social services in Southern shore countries, in particular education and health care;
6. Underlines the importance of increasing European financial and material aid to co-finance the programmes aimed at Southern shore countries, in order to reactivate and promote the development process, and to rehabilitate national industries; underlines also the need to find a structural solution to debt, which represents a great obstacle to development in its economic and social aspects;
7. Welcomes the measures proposed for the fight against trafficking in human beings, with particular reference to coastal patrolling and satellite detection technology sharing, in the expectation that these technologies are implemented mainly for prevention purposes, in order to detect the places of origin of illegal migration and to take effective action against organised trafficking, and considers it essential to create or update legislation for this purpose;
8. Underlines that the commonly felt need to ensure a legal framework for the management of migration flows should never be detrimental to the respect of those fundamental rights to be indiscriminately applied to all migrants, including illegal migrants, and of individuals' rights to seek asylum as well as their safe return;
9. Formulates the wish that task forces and appropriate funding be set up soon in order to tackle emergencies in case of massive and unexpected inflows of migrants and to provide basic services like interpretation and health assistance; in this respect migrants' reception facilities must be run on the basis of shared principles, founded first and foremost on absolute respect for the dignity and rights of migrants;
10. Welcomes the adoption of European legislation establishing a common procedure for asylum seeker assessment and invites EU Member States to duly harmonise their regulations and administrative structures, if they have not already done so;
11. Recommends the establishment of a burden-sharing mechanism that coordinates the sharing of the burden of asylum seekers among EU member States in proportion to size, population density and GNP;

12. Strongly underlines the need for new legislation aimed at combating illegal migration to be accompanied by equally significant bills to regulate legal migration flows and integrate legally resident workers;
13. Recalls that, although there can be no doubt that it is up to individual States to establish quotas of migrants to be integrated into their domestic labour markets, it is desirable that rules and principles for the access of migrants to such markets be established by common agreement and that common measures be developed to combat the illegal exploitation of workers holding an official work permit;
14. Emphasizes that the management of migration flows will be all the more effective if it is accompanied by a detailed analysis of the available workforce and the tools and opportunities provided by European and recipient country legislations; for this purpose, it would be necessary to prepare a strategic plan for recruiting workers, taking into account the long-term effects of the brain drain from the country of origin;
15. Agrees that a process of civic integration of migrants is needed, to be founded on the knowledge and understanding of and compliance with the legal norms of the host country, but also on the protection of migrants' cultural heritage, which represents an invaluable contribution to the wealth of experiences and values which should inform any modern society;
16. Affirms the need to promote an integration policy based on the non-discrimination of migrants, and on ways to combat racism and xenophobia;
17. Maintains that it is essential to develop a European strategy for integration, to be translated into effective housing policies and guaranteed access of migrants and their families to education and social services; hopes therefore that, following the negotiations on the Financial Perspective for 2007-2013, the amount allocated to integration funds will not be very different from the proposal of the European Commission;

**On the religious dimension of the dialogue among cultures and civilisations:**

18. Underlines that freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and freedom of religion are precious values for democracy that need to be equally safeguarded, a fundamental part of one's own identity and fundamental principles of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; they should always be exercised within the limits of the law, and with responsibility and respect for human rights, religious feelings and beliefs; they suppose a genuine dialogue and harmony among different cultures, faiths and creed;
19. Condemns the contents of the cartoons published in a number of European newspapers, which are all the more inappropriate in that they fuel an arbitrary and unacceptable identification of Islam and terrorism; on the other hand, condemns, in the strongest possible terms, violence and aggression against people, embassies and symbols of national or European identity; in no circumstance can such acts be justified;
20. Calls on all Barcelona Process countries to ensure that media are fully involved in the dialogue for a better mutual knowledge among different civilizations and are

encouraged to abstain from any representation of cultures and beliefs which could strengthen mutual ignorance and lack of understanding;

21. Calls on governments to strongly condemn any form of violence, racism or xenophobia and to promote peaceful dialogue and work towards the construction of a democratic, pluralist and tolerant society;
22. Welcomes the initiatives announced by the EU's Austrian Presidency, which has organised a meeting between the *imams* of the main European mosques and a major conference on the fight against racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance; hopes that these initiatives will revive European negotiations on the fight against any form of intolerance and requests that a delegation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly be invited to attend such events;
23. Looks forward to the creation of an *ad-hoc* committee, including wise persons and experts from both shores of the Mediterranean, to strengthen mutual knowledge among peoples and inter-cultural dialogue and mediation, and calls on the "Anna Lindh" Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to take action conducive to the establishment of such committee;
24. Urges all political representatives of member States of the Barcelona Process to abstain from any action or attitude which might offend religions and/or provoke any hostile acts in respective public opinions, thereby nurturing a vision of relationships between the two shores of the Mediterranean based on the clash and conflict of civilisations instead of dialogue;
25. Invites the Member States of the European Union to support non-governmental organisations of migrants of Mediterranean countries in order to encourage them to play an important role in favour of inter-cultural dialogue in the countries of destination as well as in the countries of origin;
26. Welcomes and supports any initiative, such as the "Alliance of Civilisations", initiative co-sponsored by Turkey and Spain under the aegis of the UN Secretary General, and the "Amman Message", and believes that these initiatives can be instrumental in reinforcing the aims and objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with a view to promoting intercultural dialogue.

**The Committee finally:**

27. Supports fully the resolution of the Working Group "Civil Protection and Prevention of Natural and Ecological Disasters in Euro-Mediterranean Region" and calls on member States of the Barcelona Process, as well as on the Council, the European Commission and the Euromed Ministerial Conference to fully consider it in order to reinforce co-operation in the field of civil protection, taking advantage of the various national capacities and of partners' means for action in the field of civil protection;
28. Supports fully the resolution of the Working Group on "Ways for the EMPA Assembly to participate in bodies of the "Anna Lindh" Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between cultures", and requests the EMPA Presidency to develop actions to make the conclusions of the Group fully operational;

29. Welcomes the proposal to promptly host a “Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament” on the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, with the full involvement of the organisations active in the sector of cultural exchanges among the young, and hopes that other initiatives will be soon developed also by resorting, whenever possible, to existing tools like the European Parliament’s Euroscola Programme.