

17.11.06

Declaration of Limassol

Adopted on 10 November 2006 by the members present of the European Association of former members of parliament of the member states of the Council of Europe or the European Union

EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

1. We, former Members of Parliament, reaffirm the European Association's conviction that the consolidation of peace founded on justice and international co-operation is of vital interest for the safeguarding of human society and civilisation. We confirm our attachment to the spiritual and moral values that are the common heritage of our people and that are at the origin of the principles of individual liberty, political freedom and the primacy of law, on which true democracy is based.

Definitions

2. The Mediterranean goes beyond the sea which extends from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Dardanelles and the shores of the Near East; as a region, it includes the States of the Mediterranean's northern and west Atlantic shore (Europe), southern shore and Atlantic islands (Africa) and eastern shore (Asia), in the knowledge that this geographical formula is interpreted with a fair degree of flexibility, as is shown by the example of Jordan.
3. Even if terrorism has not been defined during the latest Euro-Mediterranean summit in Barcelona, in November 2005, one can deduct from the code of conduct signed on that occasion that terrorism is the deliberate recourse - by a person, group or State - to armed and illicit violence usually directed against non-combatant targets, i.e. against civilian persons, political and institutional representatives or property, and intended to produce a feeling of terror within the civilian population in order to constrain or intimidate the authorities or the society, for ends that are normally of a political or religious nature. The term "international terrorism" can lead to the mistaken belief that there is a single form of terrorism with central organisational objectives and structures. This is not the case. It is at the international scale that awareness is required, due to the fact that the "new" terrorists often practise a kamikaze kind of terrorism. The relevant exchange of information has to be organised and a common approach against terrorists by the international community has to be adopted. For us, terrorism is not at all acceptable as "the continuation of politics by other means" and can in no circumstances be justified.

Common Heritage and New Challenges

4. For a long time, the Mediterranean has been an economic and cultural crossroads and has formed an area of common heritage of which its coastal neighbour states seem unable or unwilling to take full advantage. As a place of interaction, trade and transit, it soon acquired great importance and a strategic capital role, becoming down through history also a theatre of conflict, the more so as the development of trade then led to an increasing use of the sea as a transportation corridor. For the modern evolution of Europe, the Mediterranean has been a decisive cradle of cultures and civilisations.
5. With the end of the Cold War, the Mediterranean has become an area benefiting from its own dynamics, especially with regard to security aspects. So it is not surprising to see that NATO - placing the Mediterranean in its strategic concept since 1991, together with the EU and the Council of Europe and the OSCE – take a close interest in the region. The EU policy towards the south of the Mediterranean really began in 1995 with the “Barcelona Process”.
6. With the “Barcelona Declaration” of 1995 and the corresponding Work Programme, an ambitious political blueprint was agreed with a view to the creation of a “Euro-Mediterranean partnership”. The pursued objectives were and still are:
 - a. Political and security partnership, with the aim of establishing an area of peace and stability around the Mediterranean, founded on important principles of international law and resolved to develop the rule of law and democracy, as well as to respect human rights;
 - b. Economic and financial partnership, which is committed to the sustainable and balanced social and economic development of the Mediterranean region and which seeks, through the progressive deployment of a free trade area by 2010 in keeping with the WTO’s provisions, (the EU is providing considerable financial support for structural reforms in the economic and administrative areas under the so-called MEDA Programme – the European Investment Bank is providing loans and special funds made available through its reinforced Mediterranean facility);
 - c. Social, cultural and human partnership, with the aim of developing human resources and promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (in April 2005 the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and the exchange between civil societies was inaugurated in Alexandria).
 - d. These three “baskets” were supplemented in the 2002 Valencia Action Plan by a fourth one: a regional programme focusing on co-operation in the field of justice, combating crime and migration issues.

The Barcelona Process has been supplemented by the “European Neighbourhood Policy” (ENP), which launches political and economic reform programmes, the importance and speed to translate into deeds of which depend on the will of the partner countries. The new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, entering into force in 2007, must be used to reinforce the Barcelona Process.

7. Additional burdens have complicated and continue to complicate the achievement of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership's pursued objectives: various terrorist attacks (from 11 September 2001 in the United States to those that have struck European States, mainly in Spain and UK), the Iraq war, the violation of a series of UN resolutions by various member states and Islamic radicalisation. The pictures from Abu Ghraib and the events surrounding the Guantánamo prison camp have fuelled a moral disaster and have badly damaged the credibility not only of the USA but of the West as a whole.
8. If we had to trace the North-South border today, the dividing line, which is our "Rio Grande", would go through the middle of the Mediterranean basin. At the same time, the southern countries of the Mediterranean are vital political and commercial partners and are also of considerable importance for Europe because of their natural resources (oil, gas and, potentially, solar energy). Poverty, lack of freedoms, democracy and "good governance", demographic explosion, illegal immigration and human trafficking, inequality between men and women, growing religious and political extremism as well as terrorism, all make the region a dangerous arena for the risks and challenges of the world, and especially of Europe. To all that are added political struggles for territorial sovereignty and the possession of essential natural resources such as water and in particular hydrocarbons. Also consider environmental problems caused by complex interaction between physical, biological, climatic, political, social, economic and cultural factors.
9. The promotion of peace and security in the Mediterranean region requires strict adherence to international law and UN resolutions, absolute respect of human rights and termination of all forms of unlawful foreign intervention and occupation.

Responses and Claims of the Former Members of Parliament

10. With regard to values and objectives, we, former members of Parliament, recommend taking as a guide for the Euro-Mediterranean relations – alongside the Barcelona Declaration – the "Millennium Declaration", adopted in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly and reaffirmed by the World Summit of 2005. The Declaration recites certain values that should underlie international relations in the 21st century, namely: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. To translate these common values into deeds, the Heads of State and Government have defined objectives to which they attach a high priority. These are peace, security and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; protection of the common environment; human rights, democracy and good governance. A benchmark for certain aspects of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation is also the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), the ultimate goal of which is to bridge the gap separating Africa from the rest of the world. It advocates the establishment of conditions favourable for growth and sustainable development by ensuring peace and security; democracy and good political, economic and corporate governance; integration and regional co-operation; capacity building.

11. Because the assessment after the first ten years of the Barcelona Process is proving to be mixed due to the progress and deficiencies on both sides, and the introduction of a true interregional dialogue has essentially failed, indeed the most striking aspect of the partnership is a lack of symmetry at the institutional level between the two regions. A redefinition and a new impetus for Transmediterranean relations are required and the creation of a “new Mediterranean identity” should be encouraged. To this end, we, former members of Parliament, welcome the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean which held its inaugural session in Amman, Jordan, in September 2006. The establishment of this Assembly, with its Executive Secretariat in Malta, will provide the region with a parliamentary forum of its own that is placed to address common concerns and in which all national parliaments bordering the Mediterranean littoral participate on an equal footing. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean will, through the development of cultural, economic, social and human exchange, assist in the consolidation and deepening of the democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and the creation in the Mediterranean region of a forum for dialogue between cultures, civilizations and religions.

12. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary, the players involved renewed their commitment to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in Barcelona in November 2005, and adopted a number of initiatives. These are: a general Work Programme for the five next years (in the following fields: political and security partnership, viable economic growth and reforms, socio-cultural education and exchange, social integration, justice and security); a code of conduct for the fight against terrorism; a global response to the migration problem, while seeking to balance the fight against illegal immigration and support for African countries development; and the reaffirmation of the objective of creating a free trade area by 2010. All the partners must take these initiatives seriously, together with their promise to build the partnership on a democratic pact, the model of sustainable, human and balanced development and the principle of “co-ownership”.

13. The EU must demonstrate a stronger political will and do everything it can to transform the new five-year Work Programme into reality in co-operation with the southern coastal states of the Mediterranean in order to achieve, at least approximately, the objective of producing positive results for all the inhabitants of the region and of improving the partnership’s visibility. For that, it is of primary importance that its process of political unity and constitutionalisation be completed and that a true common foreign policy be obtained.

14. Certain reproaches can also be addressed to the Arab side. According to the analysis of the “Arab Human Development Report” published in 2005, reforms certainly achieved some notable results in terms of modernisation in the Arab countries (for example, in addressing the rates of disease and mortality and expanding education), but political deficits still remain. There is an escalation of extremism and terrorism in the world but there are many people and institutions devoted to peace, too.

15. The declaration adopted in Tunis by the Arab League in May 2004, the “Process of Development, Modernisation and Reform in the Arab World”, is welcomed. Corresponding internal efforts should also receive outside support. The unresolved Middle East conflict, however, must not be used as a pretext for a failure to initiate reforms elsewhere.

16. The Barcelona Process embedded in the efforts of the quartet of the UN, the United States, Russia and the EU - must be better exploited than it has been up to now in order to promote the process of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, to call for the rapid and full implementation of the Road Map and to contribute to the realisation of two viable, democratic sovereign states living in security, namely Israel and Palestine. That would also be a clear signal against terrorism. . Even so, we must consider as an important signal for the security and the stability of the east bank of the Mediterranean, that the recent crisis which occurred in the region could be concluded thanks to the sustained political-diplomatic initiative of some European governments and of the European Union, protagonist at last in this so delicate zone decisive for its future and for the peace in the world and to the sending of a military peacekeeping force in Lebanon, under the aegis of the UN. Finally, the events in Iraq and the nuclear crisis in Iran have undermined the international framework conditions for favourable Euro-Mediterranean development; therefore solid solutions are needed, which also guarantee sustainable, human, democratic and peaceful development within those two countries.

17. The Mediterranean should be made an area free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Partner countries should be involved more closely in the European Security and Defence Policy and all Euro-Mediterranean countries (even Israel) should adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The project to establish a “Charter for Peace and Stability” in the Mediterranean region should be completed without delay and should include a general renunciation of violence and armed action.

18. The new financial facility, announced in Barcelona to support reform-minded Mediterranean partners, should be consistently used to strengthen and support democracy and to broader political participation, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, free media and an independent judiciary.

19. We urge a differentiated look at the partner countries and peoples on the southern side of the Mediterranean and on the Islamist movements. A bold strategy is needed to seek to reinforce democratic movements and regimes and win over moderate Muslims for democracy. Following the successes of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas in Palestine in recent parliamentary elections, and in view of their - in part - heterogeneous make-up, prudent actions are needed to exert a positive influence tied to certain conditions (such as recognition of the Road Map). It is unwise to contribute to the aggravations of the living conditions in Palestine.

Fighting Terrorism and Depriving it of its Breeding Ground - Improving Living Conditions

20. People's security must be strengthened, primarily through a more effective anti-terror policy – with due observance of constitutional principles, human rights and international law – and through adherence to the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism agreed in Barcelona in 2005. Actions of all kind of armed struggle against exclusively civil targets with civil victims must be considered as a crime against humanity and punished as such. Deeper co-operation is needed in order to put a stop to the activities of terrorists and terror networks, to protect potential targets, to prevent hostage-taking and to respond better to the aftermath of terrorist attacks. It is important to consider, however, that asserting human rights in the fight against terrorism is ultimately more effective than a rigid fixation on security. The experience of Eastern Europe demonstrates that a resolute approach can effect political change. “Soft power” relies not, as traditional “hard power” does, on coercion and force but on the transmission of ideas, values and norms.
21. Certain fundamentalist concepts deny political pluralism and equal rights for men and women. Their adherents want to have their conceptions applied to the socio-political sphere. We denounce such attempts and firmly reject any religious fundamentalism that entails intolerance, sedition and, in the final analysis, the clash of civilisations. On the other hand, we are making a fervent appeal in favour of tolerance, humanism and intercultural dialogue.
22. One of the main objectives of the development policy is to deprive terrorism of its substrata, its breeding ground. It must examine all ethnic and religious fault lines and help to defuse potential conflict through measures including the cautious fostering of intracultural and intercultural dialogue, encounters and understanding. Combating poverty – in particular by the creation of jobs - and the wide economic, social and racial disparities prevailing in the world is central to the prevention of terrorism and to the slowing down of emigration. Giving people prospects for a better life and enabling them to plan for the future offers an alternative to terror and violence. The goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 therefore has absolute priority. For this reason above all, development policy must be strengthened at all levels in terms of finance, social issues, substance and personnel. There is a greater need now than ever before to promote economic and democratic stability in developing countries and transformation countries through dialogue and partnership-based co-operation, including and in particular in Islamic countries. Lasting results will be difficult to achieve, however, without an enabling national and international climate which is favourable for development. Decisions regarding volumes, the use of instruments and target groups in relation to development co-operation should be made on the basis of such criteria as the upholding of human rights, the participation of the people in political decision-making, legal safety as well as the extent of corruption and development-orientated state action (e.g. level of arms spending). The efficiency of aid, the co-ordination between donors and the consistency between various political components are further required.
23. It is particularly important for “human security” to make better and more effective efforts to improve the life situations of the people of the region, and to promote their social cohesion by, above all, encouraging economic growth in order to eradicate poverty and create employment. The Euro-Mediterranean free trade area facilitates trade as well as the development of industry and tourism; consequently, it plays a decisive role. The measures which must accompany this ambitious project include *inter alia* the strengthening of the

private sector, vocational training, an improved infrastructure, higher and better development co-operation efforts. It must also include the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean energy market for traditional and renewable energies with a “Euro- Mediterranean Energy Agency” including the support for energy and energy efficiency research, the support of South-South co-operation which is already operational via the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l’Energie (OME) created in the Ecole des Mines of Paris and the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Programme (MEDREP) realised in Italy and, above all, adequate efforts by the partner countries themselves. In the times of globalisation, orientations and framework-conditions forming the basis of the free trade zone are the principles of a sustainable, humane development and an international social and ecological market economy, the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the revised European Social Charter of the Council of Europe and the pertinent ILO agreements. Arrangements also need to be put in place to ensure there is no adverse effect on the functioning of the national economies of the countries concerned. It seems to be unrealistic to attain the goal of establishing this free trade area by 2010 unless all the partners make considerably greater efforts in this respect. The European Union must promote preferential commercial agreements and investment agreements to improve the social, cultural and economic conditions of the other bank of the Mediterranean. In order to deprive terrorism of its feeding sources, a particular effort must also be made to promote contacts and initiatives aiming at a better configuration and a more efficient follow-up than was the case up to now, of the objectives of the social, cultural and interhuman partnership, in accordance with the third « basket » of Barcelona.

24. There is a need to develop a Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development, to combat desertification and soil erosion more successfully than hitherto (the serving parliamentarians should make use of the Parliamentary Network on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification created under the auspices of the IPU). There is also a need to promote an effective and integrated water resource management strategy which reflects the linkages between water and other sectors such as agriculture, food, energy, health and climate change, to guarantee universal access to clean water. A realistic timetable is needed to ensure that the Mediterranean is free of pollution by 2020, drawing on the positive experiences and lessons learned from the Baltic and the North Sea. Co-operation with relevant UN organisations such as the UN Environment Programme and the UNCCD Secretariat should be extended. An early warning system for natural disasters should be established.
25. Sustainable Euro-Mediterranean co-development requires a multiplication of the ties between governments, regional and communal communities as well as the various economic players, public and private.
26. Support for the efforts of all the countries in the region to achieve the Millennium Goals should be stepped up, particularly in the areas of education and training, scientific research, gender equality, health and poverty eradication.

27. Immigration should be comprehensively regulated in favour of both sides of the Mediterranean by respecting the rights of migrant men and women. Terrorism – by Islamic extremists in particular – has the power to harm relations between the native population and Muslim immigrants, thus making the latter's interaction, and integration all the more difficult; there the prevention of terrorism, and the fight against it, are imperative. All aspects of illegal migration, including human trafficking, require more intensive co-operation and shared responsibility for the control of migration flows, while ensuring respect for international agreements for the protection of human rights in operations seeking to prevent phenomena of illegal immigration or to respond to them. Sufficient surveillance capabilities should be developed at maritime frontiers and the operational capacity of the EU's external frontier Agency, Frontex, should be reinforced.

28. A common migration and asylum policy, at least closer co-ordination and co-operation, – even beyond the EU – is a need of paramount importance. We support the proposal to set up a Euro-Mediterranean observatory on migration, taking account of the useful experience of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) and of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and using, if necessary, the structures of the North-South Centre for the creation of such an observatory. Since emigration is primarily ascribable to stimulative economic and political factors, the creation of better economic, social and political conditions in the southern Mediterranean area assumes particular importance.

Embarking on a More Realistic Dialogue, Reinforcing the Parliamentary Dimension and Building Bridges

29. In recent years the world has become increasingly polarized along cultural and religious lines. In particular, the September 11 attacks and the subsequent acts of violence and terror (e.g. the London, Istanbul and Madrid bombings, the Van Gogh murder) have created a climate of insecurity and fear. More and more people have started to believe that a clash of civilizations is inevitable and that the « others » have to change their values if we are to live together in peace. This attitude threatens the international environment and creates a vicious circle. The widening gap between the parties puts them on a path of confrontation rather than one of cooperation, while the lack of dialogue and collaboration bolsters existing prejudices and so increases the distance between them. Cooperation against common threats such as terrorism, organized crime and militant radicalism becomes the first victim of such polarization. Its negative impact is also felt by domestic integration policies and efforts to create an open and tolerant society in countries that are home to people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. In this situation, we want to join forces to resist all attempts to play one culture off against the other, to assert the supremacy of any single one, or to propagate a « clash of civilizations ». Such ideologies would soon lead to a conflict in which all of us can only lose. And they prevent us from finding joint solutions to the problems facing us all.

30. The dialogue, the meetings and the co-operation between the public and non-public players in the entire Euro-Mediterranean region, including the moderate Islamic opposition, must be reinforced, by involving parliaments such as the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary

Assembly (EMPA), civil society, the European association of former Members of Parliament, economic, trade union and scientific organisations as well as regional and local administrations. The various organisations and institutions, such as the Council of Europe and its North-South Centre, and especially the Barcelona Process with its institutional modelling (horizontal integration and more intensive co-operation of the countries of southern and eastern shores are to be hoped for) must be used more than before as a forum, even for confidential communications. This dialogue - including the paradigm of sustainable and human development - can be fruitful if Europe meets its neighbours with respect, listens to them, respects their religious traditions and feelings and supports their efforts to develop into democratic states based on the rule of law. In fact, the dialogue on the European side is not simply neutral but must be geared to values and interests that are also reflected in the Millennium Declaration; in issues such as democracy and the equality of women as well as the refusal of extremists political and religious concepts, a clear position has to be taken. Despite many points in common, the image of harmony between the various cultures is too often chimerical; work needs to be done so that “the clash of civilisations”, which is already occurring in our European societies themselves with acceptance or rejection of “the other”, or indifference towards them, be peaceful and constructive. The Charter of fundamental rights adopted by the European Union could inspire the dialogue between the Northern Mediterranean and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

31. Joint action must be taken to combat racism, anti-Semitism, islamophobia, xenophobia, intolerance and extremism which incites hatred and violence – against the “West” but also against “Islam”. A common approach will help to create understanding and entente with others and to fight against distortions of other cultures and their identities.
32. For a better mutual comprehension in the present information society, a common information space must be established for the citizens of both banks of the Mediterranean so as to provide a mutual knowledge of the reality and remove existing stereotypes. The present audiovisual euro-med programme should be enlarged and certain common audiovisual programmes should be installed, particularly through public radio and television.
33. At its meeting in Cairo in March 2005, the EMPA rightly underlined that the Barcelona Process is the sole initiative in the entire Euro-Mediterranean region that has over the past years attempted to create an area of stability and prosperity based on shared values through a new approach to international relations. At the same time it called for a clarification of the institutional and operational relationship between the Barcelona Process, the EU Neighbourhood Policy and the strategic partnership.
34. At its meeting in Rabat in November 2005, the EMPA called for better coordination between all international, bilateral and regional initiatives to ensure that the dialogue between cultures and civilizations can be conducted more effectively. Following on from this, the former Members call for the Anna Lindh Foundation to be better publicized and better use to be made of its potential. Also cultural encounters and exchanges should be stepped up and more effective use made than hitherto of cultural bodies and the foreign schools run by EU countries in the region in order to promote mutual encounters and understanding and help instil universal values. With the same intention, one should reconsider the initiative of the

European Parliament (resolution of 30 May 1984) creating a Euro-Arab university, supported by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in order to facilitate common research and the training of Euro-Arab specialists and experts.

35. In particular, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights must play a key role within the Barcelona Process; the scope of this instrument needs to be extended to include support for the development and strengthening of civil societies and non-governmental actors. Free media play a very important role in every society. Supporting media freedoms is therefore one of the paramount tasks of the EU. A new attempt should be made to appoint a Euro-Mediterranean Commissioner for Media Affairs.
36. The advisory and expert services provided by the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) have proved very useful, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, in the context of legal and administrative reforms and the establishment of democratic, rule-of-law institutions. Such expert advice is not available in the same way in the Arab region to assist transformation processes because there is no counterpart there to the Council of Europe. In this respect the Venice Commission should be given an official mandate for the Mediterranean region.
37. We, former Members of Parliament, urge that greater use be made than hitherto of parliamentary institutions, national parliaments, the European Parliament, the IPU and also parliamentary assemblies such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the EMPA, the OSCE-PA and the NATO PA in order to encourage co-operation in the area of democratization and human rights and to make the general public aware of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This co-operation also includes dialogue with moderate Islamic movements and parties, whose repression by authoritarian regimes was and is often a cause of terrorism. It is to be hoped that the media - particularly in Central, Northern and Eastern Europe – devote more attention to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.
38. On the basis of our experience, we, the former Members, suggest to our serving colleagues that they should improve communication and coordination with each other in their parliaments and committees and combine forces in Euro-Mediterranean policy and that they should seek to reach common positions, including at international level, with like-minded parliamentarians.
39. We, former Members of Parliament, are proposing concrete spheres of activities in order to reduce progressively the considerable existing gaps and to build bridges between the two shores of the Mediterranean:
 - Launching of a campaign called “The Mediterranean, Common Heritage and Future”,
 - Encouraging twinning between cultural institutions (universities, cultural houses etc), regions, provinces, local communities and pen-friend twinning (also by e-mail) between schools,

- Increasing the mobility and enlargement of the meetings between teachers and students from different horizons,
- Teaching history and drafting textbooks in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe (renouncement of historico-cultural prejudices and racist and xenophobic elements),
- Granting southern shore countries the status of observer with the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly,
- Specific activities of the former Members of Parliament associations towards the other side of the Mediterranean.

40. We propose to intensify the existing judicial and police collaboration around the Mediterranean and to create a monitoring system and to submit regular reports for the purpose of evaluating progress towards a true Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

41. Making the Mediterranean a region of peace, stability and prosperity through dialogue, exchange, co-operation and with an integrated concept of development, a goal which affects three continents, is a matter of vital importance for the people of both the north and south of the Mediterranean.