

RESOLUTION

on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education

Following the recommendations adopted at the second meeting of the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) (14-15 February 2005, Jordan), the Committee has adopted at its third meeting, held on 12 March 2005 in the framework of the first session of the EMPA in Cairo (Egypt), the following resolution:

- 1. The Committee is convinced that the Barcelona process is directly linked to the Middle East peace process. The stability, development and prosperity of the Mediterranean region depend to a great extent on achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.**

The Committee emphasizes the special character of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which is not just a form of development aid, but rather a project with common objectives and shared responsibility.

The Committee emphasizes that there is a vital and fundamental link between the security, stability and economic prosperity of the Mediterranean region. It therefore calls on all the Euro-Mediterranean partners and the international community involved in the Middle East Peace process to make every effort to put an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to play a more active role in helping in the implementation of the Road Map in order to achieve

the ultimate goal, namely two viable, sovereign States with clearly demarcated borders living side by side in peace and security, one Israeli and the other Palestinian.

The Committee also calls on all the parties concerned to work together to relaunch the Syrian-Israeli and Syrian-Lebanese peace process within the framework of the resolutions and international law in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Peace and security in the region will constitute an essential factor in regional economic cooperation, integration and prosperity.

- 2. The Committee calls for the adoption of effective means to enhance South-South and South-North economic integration by providing increased means of technical and financial assistance and contributions in order to help the Mediterranean partner countries adapt to the regulations and repercussions of the free trade area due to be set up by 2010.**

The enhancement and better utilization of the financial instruments of MEDA II partnership, EIB loans and the FEMIP financial facility are also a decisive factor in the development of the partner countries. In this context it considers the Agadir initiative a key instrument for promoting South-South cooperation, through strengthening and deepening economic regional cooperation, and for fostering trade between the countries of the region, leading in turn to an increase in new investment and export potential as well as the creation of new employment and business opportunities in various sectors.

These efforts should be accompanied by the encouragement of social and development programmes and the opening of the relevant European Union programmes to partner countries.

- 3. The Committee calls for every effort to be made to encourage and facilitate the flow of EU direct investment to the Mediterranean region. This will also facilitate the transfer of the technology and know-how necessary for the countries of the region which will in turn help them develop their economies and reduce poverty, the brain drain and illegal immigration. In this regard the Committee strongly recommends that every effort should be made to support the private sectors in the Mediterranean region, to ensure better access for the region's exports to the EU market and to proceed with a progressive improvement of trade in agricultural products. Special attention should also be given to education, vocational training and respect for equality by addressing all forms of discrimination.**
- 4. The Committee believes that financial, technical and technological assistance plays a key role in the process of reform and the economic and financial development of the Mediterranean region, in particular for the establishment of a genuine knowledge economy and to reduce the numerical gap between North and South . It calls for the funding priorities which must be identified for the next few years to be determined by the time of the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area in 2010.**

In this regard, the Committee supports the establishment of a working party for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP)), which will aim at promoting private sector development and improving the economic and social investment climate in the Mediterranean countries. The Commission has proposed that the EIB, other international financial institutions and representatives of the European Commission should be able to take part in its meetings (where the Committee deems this necessary), exchange views and answer questions from members. It calls on the EU to commit itself to assisting and supporting its partners in achieving their socio-economic sustainable development during the third phase of the MEDA program which will begin in 2007. The Action Plans arising from the EU neighbourhood policy have to play a key role in this regard.

- 5. The Committee is aware that reform has become a vital aspect of the overall policy of the Mediterranean region and considers that reforms are no longer a luxury, but a necessity for the future of the region. The Committee therefore calls for the necessary means to be provided to support the document adopted at Tunis Arab Summit on “The Process of Development, Modernization and Reform in the Arab World”. Such support will consolidate the democratic principles and broaden the base of political participation in the region. It will also enable efforts to be stepped up to improve performance in political, economic, social and educational areas. The Committee believes that the reforms, whatever their nature, have to be carried out from within, by the societies of the region. At the same time, the two sides**

must work closely together to overcome the visibility deficit affecting civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean.

- 6. In the aftermath of the tragic consequences of the Tsunami in South-East Asia, and bearing in mind that this phenomenon has occurred before in many parts of the world including the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Committee calls for a joint effort by all the Euro-Mediterranean partners to create at the earliest opportunity an early warning system for Tsunamis and all other natural disasters in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This early warning system will naturally cover all the costs of Member States considered to be at risk. The Committee calls for existing systems to be used, through developing them or through making use of the experience of those countries that already have such a system. The Committee calls for the immediate launching of a process that will lead to the establishment of such a system.**

- 7. Convinced that scientific and educational cooperation is a necessity for good relations between peoples in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Committee also considers that systems of education developed in this region will play a vital role in its socio-economic sustainable development. In this regard, the Committee calls for an enhancement of educational and scientific cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners, including cooperation between universities and scientific research centers. The Committee also calls the Mediterranean partners to be integrated in the EU educational programmes like the TEMPUS and ERASMUS programmes and**

the other scientific research activities and programmes.

- 8. The Committee calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee within the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly to deal particularly with women's issues in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries and will also analyze the necessary forms of coordinaton with the Euro-Mediterranean forum for women parliamentarians in order to launch a common action with governments of all member states in the Barcelona Process.**

It would like women to be more equitably represented in the committees.

15 March 05