

Draft Declaration of the Summit of the Speakers of the UfM Parliaments

Marseilles, 7 April 2013

We, the Speakers of the Parliaments of the countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), meeting in Marseilles for our first summit on 7 April 2013,

- concerned at the scale of the challenges of democratic transformation in the southern Mediterranean countries and of the economic and financial crisis affecting the EU Mediterranean countries, and at the risk of insecurity and instability in the Sahel-Saharan region,
 - being strongly in favour of further strengthening the role of the UfM as an inclusive project-oriented scheme, which has a tangible positive impact on the lives of the peoples of the region, and applauding the efforts made this year by the UfM Secretariat to implement regional projects in the areas of water management, the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, employment and logistics,
 - concerned, however, at the lack of political commitment to and financial support for the ambitious projects envisaged at the UfM summit in Paris in 2008,
 - convinced that governments on both shores of the Mediterranean must step up their efforts significantly if they are to meet the legitimate expectations of the people to live in liberty and dignity and bring about human, social and economic development that is sustainable and based on solidarity,
 - emphasising that cooperation between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners in the context of the UfM must place all the partners on an equal footing and must be carried out in the service of all the partners, in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual interest,
1. Believe that representative democracies with strong parliaments are best placed to respond to political and economic challenges and to prevent divisions emerging between leaders and citizens; call on the national parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament, therefore, to make support for the parliaments of countries in transition a priority in order to lay the foundations for robust and effective parliamentary democracy in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries;
 2. Consider that the citizens whose views we came to hear at the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Forum in Marseilles are an excellent source of ideas and know-how which States, parliaments and UfM bodies should draw on by establishing a genuine partnership; such a partnership can only be developed on the basis of legislation guaranteeing transparency and freedom of activity for civil society organisations;
 3. Believe that local and regional authorities have a key role to play in supporting the development of sustainable territorial planning policies which take account of local circumstances and in implementing practical and inclusive projects; call on the UfM Member States to step up exchanges of experience and good practice in order to facilitate decentralisation in southern Mediterranean countries as a vital aspect of development and democratic participation;
 4. Consider that parliaments, local authorities, the social partners and civil society should work together to support government efforts to promote regional integration in the southern Mediterranean, where the UfM, through its flexibility, is an indispensable forum to promote regional and sub-regional networks, structures and cooperation projects;

5. Believe that the visibility of the UfM cooperation framework should be enhanced. Its purpose is to devise solutions in the form of infrastructure, environmental, energy, job-creation, youth and educational projects which should have a recognisable public profile. The national parliaments and the PA-UfM should significantly contribute to forging strong political support, thereby enabling the UfM to focus on project implementation, which is its main task. 2013 is therefore the year of projects and we call on our governments to provide the necessary funding and to honour the commitments they made at the UfM summit in Paris in 2008 and as part of the Deauville partnership; take the view that the considerable needs in terms of infrastructures and support to SME in the region all for the creation of a Development Bank for the Mediterranean;
6. Invite the UfM Secretariat to continue seeking synergies with public authorities, international financial institutions and the private sector, especially with a view to identifying new initiatives and mobilising necessary resources for funding UfM projects;
7. Regard as a priority the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean area of vocational training, higher education, science and research; insist in particular that more structural support be given to the consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean University and the implementation of its higher education programmes that are in line with UfM initiatives;
8. Take the view that human dignity, the respect of fundamental rights and gender equality must guide cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, in the interests of rapprochement between the peoples of the countries involved and the promotion of dialogue between cultures, faiths and civilisations as a key factor in the fight against all forms of exclusion, sexism, racism, xenophobia and radicalism; in this respect, wish to see a swift implementation of the planned partnerships for mobility in order to facilitate the circulation of people;
9. Affirm that under no circumstances should the unresolved conflicts in the region continue to be used as a pretext for delaying the real progress which people are looking to the UfM to make with its projects; at the same time, call on all actors, including the EU and the Arab League, to commit themselves to reviving the Middle East peace negotiations; take the view that a just and definitive settlement of this conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions will clear the way for the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the region;
10. Call on the UfM Member States and the partner institutions to work to promote peace, stability and security in the Sahel-Saharan region and the implementation of co-development programmes and programmes to raise economic and social standards in the countries of that region; take the view that effective cooperation and a joint approach based on legal and co-development instruments are essential in order to eradicate terrorism and its links with cross-border organised crime.