



Athens, 27 March 2008

# **RECOMMENDATION**

of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

on :

- **the situation in the Middle East**
- **the Union for the Mediterranean**
- **the evaluation of the action plans in the framework of the five-year programme**
- **the implementation of the code of conduct on countering terrorism**
- **parliamentary contribution to peace in the Middle East**

adopted on the basis of the draft tabled on behalf of the Committee on Political Affairs,  
Security and Human Rights

by Ms Tokia Saïfi, Chairwoman and by the rapporteurs :

Mr Alberto Antunes, Portuguese delegation  
Ms Zeynep Dagi, Turkish delegation  
Mr Robert Del Picchia, French delegation  
Mr Yassine Jaber, Lebanese delegation  
Mr Edward McMillan Scott, Member of the European Parliament  
Ms Afifa Salah, Tunisian delegation

*The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly,*

- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of 28 November 1995 establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled 'Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: a work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years' (SEC(2005) 483), presented at the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 2005,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European parliament entitled 'Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: a New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours' (COM(2003)0104), the communication to the Council and the European Parliament on 'Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy' (COM(2006)726) and the communication to the Council on 'Action plans under the European Neighbourhood Policy' (ENP) (COM(2004)0795),
- having regard to the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) since 2004, and in particular to the Commission progress reports on implementation of the ENP of 4 December 2006 (SEC(2006)1504/2, SEC(2006)1507/2, SEC(2006)1508/2, SEC(2006)1509/2, SEC(2006)1510/2, SEC(2006)1511/2, SEC(2006)1512/2),
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled 'The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: time to deliver' (COM (2006)620 final),
- having regard to the conclusions of the 9th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Lisbon on 5-6 November 2007,

**On the situation in the Middle East**

Lebanon

1. Remains concerned by the current political situation in the Lebanon; deplores the fact that the sitting of the Lebanese Parliament to elect the President of the Republic has been postponed yet again and urges all the parties to reach an agreement so that the election can take place as soon as possible;
2. Supports the efforts made by the League of Arab States, and in particular by its Secretary General, to settle the current political crisis with a view to ensuring that the election of the President of the Republic takes place and that the institutions function normally again;

## Israel/Palestine

3. Is fully aware that in order to reach a sustainable and durable peace on the Arab-Israeli conflict it is indispensable to end the occupation of 1967 territories, which is at the root of the conflict, according to the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338;
4. Expresses its dismay at the current situation in the Occupied Territories and in Israel and at its negative impact on the ongoing negotiations on the peace process; condemns the attacks carried out by both sides and disapproves of the disproportionate use of force by Israel against civilians in Gaza;
5. Expresses its condolences to, and all its sympathy for, the families of Israeli and Palestinian victims;
6. Deplores the intolerable violation of international humanitarian law and recalls that, pursuant to the provisions thereof, all occupying powers are responsible for the protection of civilian population;
7. Calls for the blockade to be lifted immediately so that supplies can reach the Gaza Strip and people and goods can move freely;
8. Calls upon Israel to put an end to its settlement plans, in particular around East Jerusalem, which further undermines the peace negotiations and the efforts to build confidence between the parties;
9. Calls on Israel to give effect to previous international resolutions relating to the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the latest being the judgment of the International Court of Justice declaring the Israeli separation wall illegal and requesting its removal;
10. Urges all parties to put an end to violence, resume the political process resulting from the Annapolis Conference and honour their obligations under the Road Map, so that an independent, democratic, viable, contiguous Palestinian State, at peace with Israel, can be created; pays tribute in this connection to Egypt's mediation efforts;
11. Demands that the European Union strengthen its political role in the region and commit itself more to a long-term policy, as part of its partnership, in order to give its financial solidarity meaning and considers it unacceptable that the results of this financial solidarity are destroyed by military action;
12. Demands the immediate release, by Israel, of imprisoned Palestinian parliamentarians and ministers; stresses in the meantime the importance of obtaining measures to help them, in particular by calling for visiting rights and by establishing a group to follow up initiatives and visits;

## **On the Union for the Mediterranean**

13. Takes note of the conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 13 and 14 March on the Union for the Mediterranean and welcomes the fact that a fresh impetus has been given to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; calls on the European Commission to integrate the EMPA, as the partnership's parliamentary body, into the proposals that it will submit to the Paris Summit of 13 July, and considers in this connection that the EMPA should be invited to take part in that meeting;

## **On the evaluation of the action plans in the framework of the five-year programme**

14. Stresses that the European Neighbourhood Policy is an instrument that should be continued and improved, as a consistent basis for establishing closer relationships between the European Union and its neighbours, within the framework of the Europe-Mediterranean partnership;
15. Considers that it should deepen the development of and improve the instruments in question, and follow up concrete application/implementation in different countries, in order to assess the specific results obtained thereby;
16. Welcomes the entry into force of the action plans that have already been agreed with partner countries, as a way of deepening and putting into effect the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; underlines therefore the importance that both civil society and EMPA bodies evaluate these action plans; notes that the action plans already in progress confirm the importance of this regional instrument as a significant boost to the creation of democratic societies that fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and gender equality;
17. Supports strongly the process of consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean area based on democratic principles, respect for the rule of law and defence of international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the role of women in society; considers that the firm establishment of such principles must be supplemented by a strong partnership in the areas of foreign and security policy, in tackling terrorism, and in solving the conflict in the Middle East;
18. Stresses how important it is that all national parliaments of EU Member States and of partner countries take part in, and actively contribute towards, EMPA's work in the interests of a structured and ongoing dialogue concerning the process of peace and stability of development in the region;
19. Stresses the importance of the ongoing involvement of the national parliaments in the process of assessing the action plans and making proposals for better implementation thereof;
20. Recommends that political cooperation between the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership be deepened and stepped up with a view to boosting the capacity of this geostrategic region to help meet the major challenges facing the world today;

21. Encourages the southern Mediterranean countries to pursue their reforms to strengthen the institutions which are guarantors of democracy and the rule of law and calls upon them to take appropriate measures to modernise the judicial systems and to consolidate the independence and effectiveness of the courts;
22. Encourages the efforts of Southern Mediterranean countries to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms through:
  - the conclusion of nearly all the international conventions in this field, ensuring comprehensiveness, complementarity and interconnection between the civil and political rights, on one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights (such as the right of employment, housing, education and development) on the other hand, and the establishment of instruments and institutions able to ensure their protection and promotion and the dissemination of this culture;
  - the consolidation of women's rights, further developing laws to protect them, and enhancing their presence in the public life;
23. Supports efforts to strengthen the dialogue both between parliamentarians of southern countries and their European counterparts and by means of a regular and periodical political dialogue between the European Union and southern countries and within the framework of the Association Council, while striving to respect the specificity of each party, and insists that the dialogue between the various parties involved be objective and comprehensive and based on the values of partnership;

#### **On the implementation of the code of conduct on countering terrorism**

24. Reiterates the condemnation of terrorism, which can never be justified in any of its manifestations and under any circumstances, whether it is committed by individuals, organizations or States;
25. Considers combating terrorism a common objective, which should be vigorously pursued:
  - in conformity with international agreements on human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian law, as well as in accordance with the democratic principles governing the organisation of public authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership countries,
  - with no stigmatisation on the basis of nationality, culture or religion;
26. Notes with satisfaction the existence of a lively political dialogue on the implementation of the Code of Conduct, which helps develop a joint approach to the challenges and implement concrete projects under bilateral cooperation; calls on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership countries to make the necessary efforts to achieve genuine multilateral cooperation;

27. Calls in this connection for the EMPA, and in particular its Committee on Political Affairs, to shoulder the task of assessing to what extent its Member States' anti-terrorism laws are compatible with international human rights legislation;
28. Considers it essential to take measures to prevent radicalisation and to further deepen the inter-civilisation dialogue, which must be primarily oriented towards youth;
29. Deplores any offence to the religious sentiments of any community and condemns any attempt to incite religious or racist hatred; calls for freedom of expression and the press to be exercised in a responsible manner;
30. Considers that the implementation of the Code of Conduct will be substantially facilitated when "terrorism" has finally been defined; hopes fervently therefore that the Euro-Mediterranean partnership countries will be able to find a common position, on the basis of both Article 1 of the Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism and the definition of terrorism contained in the draft general conventional on international terrorism;
31. Encourages the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to combine their efforts to continue the debate on how best to achieve convergence of views on an assessment and definition of terrorism, since this would very much facilitate the framing of an international consensus on the major principles likely to speed up the conclusion and adoption, by the UN, of the general convention on terrorism;
32. Considers that prevention is the most effective means of fighting terrorism, starting with the adoption of a global approach in international relations based on peace, conflict resolution, the end of occupations, security, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and development and education based on humanist values, which will eradicate the root causes of terrorism and the conditions that facilitate its propagation, including settlement of conflicts and termination of all forms of occupation that incite and keep in place all types of terrorism, essentially by human development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, expanding the field of consultation and participation, combating poverty and promoting comprehensive and lasting human and economic development for the benefit of all and all regions;
33. Supports the recommendations of United Nations special committee charged with drawing up a general convention on terrorism concerning the holding, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a high-level conference on terrorism to enable an international strategy to be adopted to combat this scourge, to eradicate its causes and to establish a code of conduct providing a precise definition of terrorism and committing all the signatories;
34. Underlines that combating terrorism largely depends on the methods adopted to counter this phenomenon, the most important of which being: no countering of violence by violence and no exclusive reliance on security solutions;

35. Considers that the role of media is important in providing protection from terrorist acts through the propagation of the values of human rights and fundamental freedoms and democracy, tolerance, non-discrimination and equality and the use of various modern means of communication;
36. Appeals for further cooperation between the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean in the fields of political dialogue including human rights, security cooperation, judicial and customs cooperation and at the level of financial structures;
37. Condemns the widespread confusion between terrorism and Islam, and expresses its sorrow for the offences and the defamation campaigns based on that confusion;
38. Reaffirms that the fight against this confusion should be based on lasting and equitable economic development, the intercultural dialogue and the role of civil society in respect of actions intended to prevent terrorism;

### **On parliamentary contribution for peace in the Middle East**

39. Underlines the role of the EMPA (the only parliamentary assembly uniting all parties involved in the Middle East peace process), in particular:
  - its ability quickly to adopt strong political stances against aggression by one member against the other and in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms and rule of law should be improved,
  - fact-finding EMPA missions and follow-up delegations should be actively encouraged in order to support the Assembly's political stances and to promote the implementation of UN resolutions and the Middle East peace process in order to pave the way for a just and lasting solution,
  - the organisation of a special plenary session debate on assessing the implementation of the peace process from the 'Annapolis Conference' onwards should be considered;
40. Notes that the EMPA enhances relations between countries and the quality of debate between political parties;
41. Recommends, as regards the influence of national parliaments on their executives, that there be greater parliamentary scrutiny of national foreign policies notably by:
  - setting up committees of enquiry on expenditure for resolving the Middle East conflict, including its impact on the resolution of the conflict,
  - regularly assessing the foreign policy followed by their government in respect of the peace process,
  - supporting, assessing and monitoring international efforts to achieve a Middle East Peace Process,
  - putting pressure on governments to stop using unwarranted force and violating human rights and fundamental freedoms;

42. Recommends that a protocol be established on the values, conditions and principles behind political groupings and, hence, on national elections results based on that protocol;

43. Demands respect for immunity of parliamentarians;

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44. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the European Commission, the Parliaments and Governments of the countries participating in the Barcelona Process and the European Parliament.