

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING
QUALITY OF LIFE, EXCHANGES BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETIES
AND CULTURE
TO THE ASSEMBLY
- 17 MARCH 2007 -**

The Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly,

a) Having regard to the conclusions of the 8th Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs Ministers Conference held at Tampere on 27-28 November 2006 which appropriately reaffirmed the importance of intercultural dialogue, reiterating the commitment of the member states of the Union to substantially increase funding for education and training in the Mediterranean region through assistance programmes, plans of action for the Mediterranean partners and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument;

b) Having regard to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions approved on 20 October 2005 by the 33rd UNESCO General Conference, and in force at the international level starting from March 2007, aimed to translate into law a number of principles proclaimed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration,

c) Having regard to Decision 1983/2006/EC, declaring 2008 to be the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue,

d) Having regard to the "*Alliance of civilisations*" report of the United Nations High Level Group submitted on 30 November 2006,

e) Having regard to the European Commission Communication of 5 September 2006, concerning an environmental strategy for the Mediterranean and the Communication of 7 June 2006 on the Union's future maritime policy,

f) Having regard to the Cairo Declaration adopted by the Euro-

Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Environment on 20 and 21 November 2006,

g) Having regard to the report submitted in Paris on 1 February 2007 by the experts on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

h) Having regard to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990, for the integration of migrant workers;

i) Having regard to the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level adopted in Strasbourg in 1992 by the member states of the Council of Europe,

j) Having regard, in particular, to the Communications of the European Commission of 30 November 2006 on "The Global Approach to Migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy" and of 1 September 2005 on "A Common Agenda for Integration. Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union", and of 6 April 2005 establishing "A framework programme on Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows for the period 2007-2013",

k) Having regard to the texts adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and in particular Resolution 1437 of 2005 on "Migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe"; Recommendation 1768 of 2006 on "The image of asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees in the media", Resolution 1478 of 2006 on "Integration of Immigrant Women in Europe", Resolution 1462 of 2005 on "Co-development policy as a positive measure to regulate migratory flows", and lastly the Warsaw Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe in 2005;

l) Having regard to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on international migration and development, and the protection of migrants, and Resolutions 58/190 and 58/208 on the basis of which it was decided to promote a high-level dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on

international migration,

m) Having regard to the programme of the EU presidencies for the next 18 months emphasising the need "*to focus on integration and intercultural dialogue*", and urging parliaments to act as a driving force to put that principle into practice,

n) Considering the results of the meetings of the Committee in Rome on 6 November 2006 and 26 February 2007,

o) Considering the guidelines laid down by the EMPA Bureau with reference to the work of the Culture Committee and the thematic areas to be debated more thoroughly,

p) Recalling the results of the most recent meetings of the representatives of the governments of the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean on matters relating to environment, culture, education and migration,

q) Recalling that the Barcelona Declaration and its programme of work stresses intercultural and interfaith dialogue, the role of the media in the reciprocal recognition and understanding between cultures, the importance of developing human resources in the area of culture, e.g. cultural exchanges, knowledge of other languages, implementation of educational and cultural programmes that respect cultural identities;

Re: the dialogue between cultures and civilisations and the promotion of cultural diversity:

1. Emphasises the fact that dialogue between cultures, civilisations, philosophies and religions is an absolute priority in order to improve mutual knowledge and to develop cultural relations based on trust and mutual co-operation,
2. Reaffirms diversity as a factor of growth and enrichment, and advocates the need for parliaments on both sides of the Mediterranean to work together to restore to the Mediterranean its proper historical and geographic role as a bridge between civilisations,
3. Emphasises the fact that there is no one single Mediterranean culture but different cultures around the Mediterranean Sea , represented by similar but different features,
4. Recalls that diversity and common cultural expression are highly dependent on the exercise of fundamental freedoms in the countries of origin, comprising freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and respect for minorities, and contribute greatly in terms of cultural expression and enrichment. Cultural expression is also based on the capacity of countries to guarantee social justice, and is also an essential element of social cohesion, particularly in relation to women, who must be given their rightful role also in the field of employment,
5. Endorses the broad definition of "culture" as enshrined in the Preamble to the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by UNESCO, which also includes all the distinctive features of relevance to the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional spheres within a social group or society, such that culture comprises not only the traditional fields of art and literature, but also shared worldviews, value systems, traditions and beliefs,
6. Recalls the substance of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions approved on 20 October 2005 by the 33rd UNESCO General Conference, which, in implementation of articles 8-11 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001,

enshrines recognition of the particular character of cultural goods and services which, as vehicles of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods,

7. Trusts that all Euro-Mediterranean countries will ratify and implement the measures provided for by the UNESCO Convention of 2005, which among other things establishes that UNESCO shall contribute to facilitating the gathering, analysis and dissemination of information, statistics and best practices in relation to the diversity of cultural expression, and create a data bank on the governmental, private or non profit making organisations working in the field of cultural expression. Urges Parliaments of the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries to play a driving role in the phase of actual implementation of this Convention: recalls that May 21 is the World Day of Cultural Diversity and wishes that Parliaments and Euro-Mediterranean institutions take an active part in its celebration,

8. Believes that the spread and sharing of culture can play a central role in preventing terrorism and breaking its ties with society,

9. Supports the "Alliance of civilisations" initiative, promoted jointly by Turkey and Spain under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary General, whose aims are wholly consistent with the objectives and aspirations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,

10. Reiterates the central importance of a fruitful dialogue between the various faiths in the Mediterranean area, based on respect for differences,

11. Welcomes and supports the instruments at the disposal of intercultural dialogue, in particular the "Anna Lindh" Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Euro-Med programmes for intercultural dialogue and the "Mediterranean Programme" promoted by UNESCO,

12. Emphasizes the importance of strengthening and enhancing the role of the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage so that it can increasingly become an instrument of dialogue and a driving force for economic and social development for the countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area: underlines also that intercultural dialogue needs to become a lasting and visible priority

for the European Union and a horizontal priority for all relevant Community programmes, and for the new Neighborhoods Policy,

13. Emphasises the need for the Culture Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean countries to play a key role – also by organizing regular meetings - in every appropriate forum, so that the cultural sector becomes one of the fundamental priorities when negotiating and allocating funding, incorporating culture as one of the sectoral priorities of co-operation agendas both at a national and a regional level,

14. In this framework, endorses the objectives set out in the document *"Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage: priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007-2013)"*, submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Committee in January 2007 and developed within the Euro-Mediterranean Heritage programme; among these objectives it endorses in particular the need for stronger legislative and institutional action, and to keep citizens better informed about cultural projects,

15. Having regard to the fundamental principles of the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 14 May 1954) at its latest session in Vilnius in 2006, recalls the need to safeguard the sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger in territories affected by current conflicts, with particular reference to the recent development in the Old City of Jerusalem, fully respecting the communities living there and in compliance with international law; in this context welcomes the decision of the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, to send a technical fact-finding mission to the Old City of Jerusalem, and welcomes the report issued by UNESCO on March 12, 2007 at the end of its mission,

16. Recalls the need for closer and more regular ties between EMPA and the Anna Lindh Foundation, as well as the need to appoint rapporteurs of the Culture Committee to follow the work of the Foundation; emphasises the need for governments and parliaments to demonstrate a particular commitment - in relation to the priorities over the next two-year period - to the issues of youths, the media, education and training, also in relation to co-

operation between schools, higher educational establishments and scientific research centres,

17. Highlights the facilitating role in the Mediterranean dialogue played by the programmes: *Erasmus mundus*, *Euromed Youth* and the new *Youth in Action* programme, which must be increasingly encouraged and expanded, while emphasising the advisability of increasingly extending the TEMPUS programme to the Euro-Mediterranean countries, urging Euro-Mediterranean Governments to implement the recommendations of the World Summit of Information Society held in Tunis in November 2005 under the aegis of the United Nations,

18. Emphasizes the importance that parliaments should play an active role when implementing the concrete proposals set forth in the Work Programme of the Commission of 12 April 2005, with particular reference to education, vocational training and improving mobility in higher education, and as regards the goal of eliminating illiteracy in the region by 2015,

19. Underlines the importance and effectiveness of decentralized cooperation policies with local authorities and NGOs in the fight against illiteracy, so as to foster education and vocational training and urges the strengthening of this aspect of partnership between the European Union and signatory countries

20. Reiterates its agreement on the contents of the United Nations High-Level Group's "Alliance of civilizations" report and urges that the study of literature and history of different cultures be included in school curricula as well as the teaching of Arabic in European universities,

21. Emphasizes the role of the governments of Euro-Mediterranean countries to guarantee the possibility of wider Internet access in schools, as a means of enhancing mutual knowledge,

22. Welcomes the conclusions of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Euro-Med countries at Tampere (2006) and urges parliaments to play a complementary policy-setting role in that context; to step up the efforts of all the countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region to attain Millennium Development Goals in every area connected in particular with education, information society, women and health,

23. Urges the Ministers of Higher Education and Research in the Euro-Mediterranean countries, looking ahead to the meeting scheduled for June this year, to pursue the path that began with the three Catania Conferences for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean area of higher education and research,

24. Advocates, therefore, the rapid establishment of an area of Euro-Mediterranean culture and education, also in consideration of the role that a Euro-Mediterranean University might play by teaching subjects and organising courses making it possible to integrate knowledge of fundamental importance for a real dialogue between cultures, and also upgrading the major networks which are already operating,

25. Deems, therefore, that EMPA should closely follow this issue also to define concrete and agreed proposals between governments, parliaments and civil society for the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean University,

26. Requests, moreover, as already proposed by EMPA, that euro-mediterranean youth parliamentary meetings be organised on a regular basis along the lines of the Euro Scola programme, to which to convene students from the Euro-Med countries, selected with the assistance of schools and with the coordination of expert organisations in this field, on the basis of the principles of transparency and representativeness, aged between 16 and 18 years (who are therefore not yet entitled to vote or stand for election) in order to discuss and jointly debate issues of particular relevance forming part of the three dimensions of the Barcelona Declaration; the languages of the meeting will be the working languages of EMPA,

27. welcomes the organisation by the German Presidency of the European Council of a Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament, to be held in Berlin between 26 May and 3 June 2007, and takes note that the German Presidency considers this to be a pilot project; recommends that the German Presidency takes into account criteria similar to those mentioned in paragraph 26,

Re: in the field of environmental protection:

28. Reiterates the centrality of the Mediterranean Sea in its twofold significance as an element/symbol uniting different peoples and cultures, and as an environmental resource to be safeguarded,

29. Expresses concern at the increasing deterioration of the environmental balance in the Mediterranean basin, and believes that greater impetus must be given to launching environmental policies throughout the whole region, as a fundamental element of any sustainable development policy,

30. Welcomes the decision adopted in Barcelona by the Heads of State and Government of the Euro-Mediterranean countries on 27 and 28 November 2005, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the Declaration, to launch the Horizon initiative, under which the countries in the region are pledged to stepping up their efforts to substantially reduce pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by 2020,

31. Welcomes the Communication of the European Commission presented on 5 September 2006 on an environmental strategy for the Mediterranean Sea, and stresses the need to provide adequate financial resources for this strategy in the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy,

32. Welcomes the decision adopted by the European Council emphasizing that the EU is committed to transforming Europe into a highly energy-efficient and low greenhouse-gas-emitting economy and decides that, until a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement is concluded, the EU makes a firm independent commitment to achieve at least a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990,

33. Welcomes the results of the meeting of Environment Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean region held in Cairo on 20 November 2006 where a substantial agreement was reached on the top priorities to be achieved under the Horizon 2020 programme, and a roadmap was defined containing concrete actions to be implemented between now and 2013,

34. Draws attention in this regard to the need to achieve an agreement on the control of shipping and the transport of toxic waste, in order to regulate them in a rigorous and binding manner for all the countries in the Mediterranean basin,

35. Emphasises the need to address these measures by including the Black Sea, and to support civil society by encouraging the establishment of permanent partnership networks,

36. Requests the World Bank and the European Investment Bank to continue co-operating under the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program (METAP) by providing that programme with adequate financial resources to combat the degradation of the environment,

37. Believes that parliaments have an important role to play so as to foster the implementation of the measures provided by Horizon 2020, particularly through forms of cooperation, exchanging best practices on legislation in this sector and the adoption of "institutional" awareness-raising measures on environmental issues,

38. Emphasises that in order to be able to respond to the increasingly severe conditions affecting the Mediterranean Sea and the need to give a response to the whole basin, a powerful commitment by the governments and parliaments of every country in the area is of crucial importance to implement common development strategies in every sector that can improve the quality of the environment (including fisheries),

39. Welcomes the work on the Baltic Sea Action Plan, believing that the Baltic and the Mediterranean regions can work together towards protecting and cleaning up the marine environment by strengthening synergies in common fields such as coastal zone management, eliminating pollution hot spots, protecting biodiversity, work towards sustainable fisheries,

40. Therefore urges the parliaments of the signatory states to the Barcelona Declaration to develop dialogue on environmental protection of the marine environment, also at the bilateral and multilateral levels, in order to encourage their governments to implement the international commitments entered into,

41. Proposes that the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly follows the attainment of the goals laid down in Horizon 2020 and the instruments provided for by the principal international Conventions on the protection of the marine environment, particularly by appointing rapporteurs within the Culture Committee,

42. Requests that once the interest of the media has waned, the environmental emergency on the Lebanese coast following the conflict with Israel should not be forgotten, and all the safeguard measures provided primarily by the UNEP report of 25 August 2006 to overcome the environmental emergency in the area should be applied. EMPA reaffirms its opposition to any voluntary military action causing the pollution of our common sea,

On migration:

43. Emphasises the obligation incumbent on all states to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and their families, and reiterates the principles enshrined by the international law,

44. Considers international migration as a key component of the globalisation process, and as a valuable potential for growth and development of both the countries of destination and the countries of origin,

45. Emphasises the fact that the global dimension of international migration calls for dialogue and cooperation between countries, to improve the understanding of the phenomenon of migration and identify the most appropriate ways and means of maximising its positive effects and reducing its negative effects,

46. Fully endorses the need, reiterated in the "Alliance of Civilisations" report published by the United Nations High-Level Group, for a co-ordinated and dynamic migration policy between the countries of origin, transit and destination, wholly consistently with the rules governing human rights, international humanitarian law and international agreements for the protection of refugees,

47. Emphasises the fact that the concept of integration is intended to guarantee social cohesion by recognising diversity in reciprocity, and draws attention to the importance of obtaining nationality and as a means of facilitating the positive integration of immigrants, also in the light of the conclusions of the Tampere European Council in December 2006 which reiterated the objective to offer citizens from third countries who have been

residents in the Union for a long time the possibility of obtaining the citizenship of the member state in which they live,

48. Recognises that the EU member states have made progress in developing national integration policies, but that there still exist obstacles to gaining full access to the educational, social and employment systems, and that the problem of the knowledge of the language of the host country is often the first hindrance to full integration,

49. Therefore encourages parliaments and governments in the countries of destination to adopt policies for teaching the language of the host country to immigrants, thereby preventing marginalisation and encouraging the genuine integration of immigrants and their active contribution in their new community,

50. Also considers the role of the local and regional authorities to be essential, whose responsibilities in the field of housing and education have a direct impact on the integration process, also by making provisions to foster twinning between cities or communities,

51. Urges parliaments to request their governments to sign international legal instruments on migrants, and in particular the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990,

52. Emphasises the importance of legislations in all countries facilitating the returning of immigrants, considering that the knowledge and experience of immigrants can contribute to effective development aid policies for their countries of origin,

53. Invites parliaments to grant voting rights and the right to stand for election to foreign nationals in local elections, within a reasonable timescale, so as to offer legal immigrants a legitimate role in consolidating the society of the host country, and urges the member States of the Council of Europe who have not already done so to ratify and fully implement the 1992 Strasbourg Convention,

54. invites parliaments to support the implementation of migration policies designed to safeguard the fundamental rights of immigrants, as emphasised

by the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, and to promote their social and political integration,

55. Emphasises that a coherent policy for immigration must be accompanied by an integration policy which makes provisions, among other things, for migrants to be lawfully integrated into the labour market, granting them the right to education and vocational training, access to social welfare and health care services, and to participation in social, cultural and political life, further on, such an integration policy shall also require a fulfilment by the immigrants themselves to attain the goals indicated,

56. Calls on the Euro-Med parliaments and governments to emphasise the promotion of integration and the recognition of diversity by running information and sensitisation campaigns to disseminate a better understanding of migration, emphasising the positive contributions made by immigrants to their host society,

57. Invites the media to disseminate accurate information on immigration issues, avoiding false and stereotypical negative images of immigrants, and to foster the local media as a means of promoting the integration and acceptance of immigrants in the communities in which they live,

58. Urges Euro-Mediterranean Governments to streamline and humanize conditions to grant visas namely to promote cultural exchanges and study programmes,

59. Urges parliaments and governments to foster the integration of immigrant women and guarantee the protection of their rights, to promote and implement full gender equality as a fundamental human right,

60. Requests the adoption of an approach based on the principles of partnership and the co-management of migration flows,

61. Takes note of the decision of the Council to establish the European Fund for the integration of citizens of third countries for the period 2007-2013, and advocates increasing the funding for migration policies, with particular reference to integration measures,

62. Invites Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments and Governments to promote the economic development of the Southern shore and technology transfer, and to encourage investments that create new jobs, so as to better manage and organize migration flows”,

63. Stresses the humanitarian costs of illegal immigration as well as the security threats that it poses whilst recognizing the benefits of regulated, legal emigration for host countries in terms of economic growth and on the sending countries as a result of migrants’ remittances,

64. Calls for stronger co-operation amongst all the countries on both shores of the Mediterranean to combat illegal immigration, the trafficking of human beings and the activities of criminal organizations behind it and promote stronger development and stability policies in Africa in order to eradicate the humanitarian problems that give rise to large movements of people, thereby eliminating the main cause of illegal immigration”,

65. Lastly, considers it appropriate to create a logo for the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, that should be easy to recognise and to replace the one currently used for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, symbolising the ideals of peace, dialogue, respect and understanding between civilisations,

66. In order to gain the acceptance and support of the younger generations for the proposal above, and at the same time to spread the knowledge of the work of the EMPA by the general public, proposes to institute a competition to be run in arts schools and academies in the Euro-Mediterranean countries, following procedures similar to those used for the selection of the logo to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.