



ASSEMBLEA PARLAMENTARE DELL'UNIONE PER IL MEDITERRANEO



**PRESIDENZA
ITALIANA**



Rome, 21 January 2011

Bureau Declaration

On the occasion of its meeting, held under the Italian presidency on 21 January 2011,
the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean,

- *mourns* the victims and *expresses* full solidarity with the Tunisian people and their democratic aspirations, which should be pursued in a peaceful way and in pursuance of full compliance with rule of law principles; *invites* all parties involved to use moderation and restraint, in order to avert further violence and create an environment conducive to dialogue;
- *noting* that Ms Afifa Salah, Chairperson of the Committee on Women's Rights in Euromediterranean Countries, and Mr Menaouar Khemila, Co-chairperson of the Working Group on the Transformation of FEMIP into a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank, were unable to attend today's meeting owing to the recent events in Tunisia;
- *hopes* that a dialogue will soon be started with all political and social stakeholders in the country, in order to restore fundamental freedoms, ensure the right to free information and call new and free elections in due time, allowing for adequate preparation;
- *welcomes* the preparedness of the European Union to provide assistance to Tunisia during the transition, including through election assistance and monitoring, if so requested by Tunisian authorities;
- *considers* the Union for the Mediterranean as one of the appropriate fora to discuss developments in Tunisia and their repercussions on the whole region. Such events have highlighted, amongst other things, the need to redouble efforts for greater economic integration of the region, so as to foster the well-being of the population;
- *reaffirms* that freedom of worship and the protection of the rights of religious communities, as an expression of fundamental human rights, must be respected and defended by all governments and all societies throughout the world;
- *expresses* solidarity to the States and civilian populations recently targeted by severe terrorist attacks that must be firmly condemned because they are aimed at suppressing freedom of worship; *invites* governments to make every effort to



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ensure unfettered freedom of worship and the personal safety of all believers, be they Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or of any other religion;

- reaffirms the commitment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean to place freedom of worship and inter-religious dialogue among its priorities and calls upon the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Union to pay equal attention to such issues, also through approving and funding appropriate projects in the framework of the neighbourhood policy;
- instructs the committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean to give in-depth consideration to inter-religious dialogue, freedom of worship for religious communities and the protection of human rights, in anticipation of the Plenary Assembly of 4 March 2011.

Sen. Renato SCHIFANI
President of the Italian Senate
Co-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

Mr Gianfranco FINI
President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies
Co-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

Mr Abdelwahed RADI
President of the Moroccan Chamber of Deputies
Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

Mr Gianni PITTELLA
Vice President of the European Parliament
Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

Sen. Abdel-Hadi MAJALI
Member of the Jordanian Senate
Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean