

**MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE, EXCHANGES
BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETIES AND CULTURE, OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
– UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
(PA-UfM)**

Barcelona, 23 January 2015

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Executive Summary:

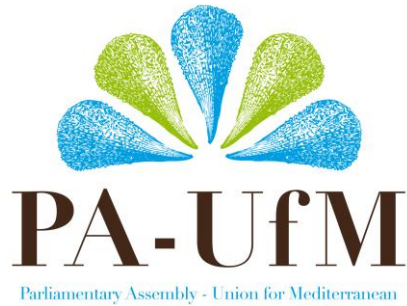
On 23 January 2015, in Barcelona, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean hosted a meeting of the Culture Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), chaired by the Right Honourable Khalid Chaouki.

Participants:

- European Parliament (2 Members): Liliana RODRIGUES and Fabio Massimo CASTALDO.
- Countries of the Southern Shore (5): Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Turkey.
- EU national parliaments (8): Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia.

Proceedings:

The Chairperson of the Committee, Khalid Chaouki, opened the meeting with a welcome address before handing over to the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Fathallah SIJILMASSI, who stressed the importance of coordination between the work of parliaments and governments in the definition of a common agenda for the Mediterranean. The Committee Chair, Mr Chaouki, then gave the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain, Ignacio YBÁÑEZ RUBIO, who noted that migration and economic growth were key issues that needed to be factored into any vision of the coming future, and that international cooperation was needed to transform the migration emergency into an opportunity for growth.



The Chairman of the Committee, Khalid Chaouki, then set out the agenda of the meeting and submitted the minutes of the previous meeting in Rome on 24 October 2014 for approval.

Following the adoption of the agenda and the minutes, the Chairperson opened the meeting, which was dedicated to "Immigration as a driver of growth in the Mediterranean." He presented the keynote reports of: Maite FANDOS, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona (assigned to migration issues); Jordi BACARIA, Director of CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs); Eugenia Ferragina, Editor of the Report on the Economies of the Mediterranean produced by the Institute of Studies on Mediterranean Societies - CNR; and Parvati Nair, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Globalization, Culture and Mobility (UNU-GCM).

The reports were followed by a debate with contributions from the following MPs: Slimane Sadaoui (Algeria), Peter LUYKX (Belgium), Imre SOOÄÄR (Estonia), Maddallah ALTARAWNEH (Jordan), Vincent GALEA (Malta), Adnane Benabdallah, Abdelmalek Aferiat and Larbi Habchi (Morocco), Taayseer Qubaa (Palestine), Liliana RODRIGUES and Fabio Massimo CASTALDO (European Parliament), Antonio Rodrigues (Portugal), Rajić BRANISLAV (Slovenia) and Ali ERCOŞKUN (Turkey). The debate helped highlight some important insights about the need for a common approach to immigration, which, it was agreed, needs to be addressed both as a political issue and as a question of integration. In regard to this, Europe was urged to do more and to recognise that migration, being a global phenomenon, needs to be addressed on the basis of a joint approach. As regards actions by countries of the southern shore, Morocco has been the first to amend its migration law to improve the rights of immigrants, and has adopted measures to manage what is a phenomenon in constant growth. Illegal immigration must be opposed because it creates false hope and fosters criminal trafficking that has turned the Mediterranean into a sea of death. It is therefore incumbent on Members to work towards a common agenda, one that offers concrete solutions and ensures effective liaison between the government and the parliamentary bodies of the countries of the Union for the Mediterranean. During the debate the need was reiterated for culture to be used as a driver of growth, so that growth could become the most effective weapon against terrorism and racism, in that it would ensure full integration and respect for differences.

Finally, the Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Culture Committee would be held in Lisbon on 11 May, ahead of the annual plenary sitting of the Parliamentary Assembly.