

## Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education

### Minutes of the Meeting- 26 January 2015

#### Barcelona-SPAIN

##### *Executive Summary:*

##### - Draft Agenda:

\*Enhancing and strengthening of cooperation with the Secretariat of the UfM”

*\*The economic aspects of migration*

\* The protection and promotion of investments in the Mediterranean

- The meeting was chaired by MP Ali ERCOŞKUN (Turkey).

##### *Participants:*

- European Parliament members
- Southern Mediterranean countries
- European Union national parliaments
- Officials from the European Commission

##### *Attended the meeting:*

- The Chairman of the Committee: Mr. Ali ERCOSKUN, Member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.
- Secretary General of the UfM: Mr. Fathallah SIJILMASSI
- The Vice -Chairman of the Committee: Brice HORTEFEUX, Member of the EP-France.
- The Vice -Chairman of the Committee: Mr. Antonio D’ALI, Member of the parliament of Italy.
- The Vice -Chairman of the Committee: Mr. Ouadia BENABDELLAH, Member of the Kingdom's parliament of Morocco.
- Members of the committee:

**ALGERIA:** Mahdjoub BEDDA, Soumia BELLA EPOUSE CHIA, Abdelkader ZAHALI, Abdelkader ZEROUKI, **AUSTRIA:** Reinhold LOPATKA, **CZECH REPUBLIC:** Ondrej BENESIK, **EP:** Tiziana BEGHIN(Italy), Michela GIUFFRIDA(Italy), Calvet Chambon ENRIQUE,(Spain) Nicolas BAY(France), **ESTONIA:** Imre SOOAAR, **GERMANY:** Heinz-Joachim BARCHMANN, **HUNGARY:** Lajos KEPLI, **JORDAN:** Rodina ALATTI, **LATVIA:** Karlis SERZANTS, **LUXEMBOURG:** DALLOGNOL, **MOROCCO:** Hakima FASLY, Fatna EL-K’HIEL, Mohamed ADAB EZGARI, **PORTUGAL:** Eduardo CABRITA, **SLOVENIA:** Suzana LEP SIMENKO, **SWEDEN:** Adnan DIBRANI, **TURKEY:** Assoc.Prof.Zeynep Armağan USLU, Nevzat PAKDİL, İdris ŞAHİN, Yiğit ALPOGAN, **EESC:** Edgardo Maria IOZIA.

The Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) chaired by Ali Ercoşkun, MP of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey took place on 26 January 2015 in Barcelona.

Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, at his opening speech, stated that the UfM has brought the countries on the table together via projects and their mission is to enhance the synergy and coordination among the Mediterranean countries. Mr. Sijilmassi added that although 29 projects are currently carried out for this purpose and more than 100 projects are submitted for consideration and six ministerial meetings and sixty activities with approximately three thousand speakers have been organized in the 2013-2014 period, the cooperation has not reached the desired level. After pointing out that the Mediterranean region is the least integrated one in the world with regard to the attitudes towards the global issues such as economy, trade, competition and climate change, Mr. Sijilmassi expressed his expectation towards the adoption of political decisions with regard to the future goals of the institution at the Summit of the Speakers to be held by the Portuguese Presidency in 2015 on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Process. Mr. Sijilmassi stated that the terrorist attacks in France is an epidemic that is already spreading and urgent decisions has to be taken vis-à-vis this special issue.

Ali Ercoşkun, Chairman of the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education, stated that active performance of the 20 years old Secretariat in the last period have positive reflections on the region and the success of the projects will be enhanced if detailed information is presented to the member parliamentarians on the ongoing projects. Mr. Ercoşkun expressed his belief that the Summit of the Speakers to be held during the Plenary in May 11-12, 2015 in Lisbon will make a significant contribution towards taking more initiatives in the framework of the UfM. He added that the stability in the Mediterranean known as a basin of peace has been affected in a negative manner by the crisis that occurred in the region as a result of the Arab Spring and the termination of the clashes in Syria, terrorist activities of the ISIS, problems in Palestine, domestic turbulences in Libya and other countries are the common goals of the parliamentarians of the PA-UfM.

After stating that Turkey is one of the countries that is affected mostly by the crisis in the region, Mr. Ercoşkun said that Turkey, with a 900 km. long border with Syria, is currently hosting 1,7 million Syrians and spend 5,5 billion USD for education, health and accommodation needs of these people with scarcely any help from the international society. He mentioned that those people that carried out the Charlie Hebdo attacks have been born and raised in Paris which points out to the problems with regard to integration and their duty as parliamentarians is to eliminate the elements that create this environment. Mr. Ercoşkun added that a principled attitude should be displayed vis-à-vis the losses whether it is in France, Palestine or Syria and all relevant institutions including the UN Security Council has to take initiative in order to put an end to the clashes and get rid of the unrest by pointing out that they act with the motto of “world is bigger than five” by making a reference to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Mr. Ercoşkun presented the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to the approval of the members and proceeded to the first session on the enhancement of the cooperation with the UfM Secretariat after the approval of the agenda and the minutes.

Ouadia Benabdellah, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, stated that the future can be constructed together through projects implemented by the UfM vis-à-vis the regional problems and underlined the importance of the exhibition of a determined stance and enhancement of cooperation. Rodina Alatti, MP from Jordan, said that the refugees coming from Syria created a significant pressure on the labour market and as well as the education and health systems and added that the Jordanian Parliament adopted a series of economic and social decisions in addition to his personal meetings with the French embassy in Amman for the solution of the problems in education sector.

In response to Ali Ercoşkun's demand for information regarding the ongoing projects related with the issue of migration as the Portuguese CiO of the PA-UfM determined it as the primary theme, Secretary General Mr. Sijilmassi stated that as one of the most important countries of the Mediterranean due to its geopolitical position Jordan is ready to give all the support to the UfM in this respect and added that although not solely directed to the immigrants they have some projects realized in the field of education and activities can be made with regard to the immigrants as well.

Eduardo Cabrita, MP from Portugal, stated that important changes are taking place in the region as a very different situation exists in Syria, Libya and Egypt in comparison to the past five years. Mr. Cabrita added that as the future of the EU as a peace and sustainability project is at risk due to the economic problems, issues such as immigration, terrorism and social development need to be dealt together by examining their roots as the cause of the radicalization can only be understood by this way. Antonio D'ali, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, stated that the proposals of the members can be added to the minutes of the previous committee meeting in Ankara and although EU cannot exhibit a common stance vis-à-vis immigration it can only take special decisions with regard to certain regions. Mr. D'ali added that a discussion can be made on the possibility of accessing the resources of the EU on immigration and utilization of some parts of this source.

Underlining that one of the co-chairs of the UfM is the EU Commission, Secretary General Mr. Sijilmassi expressed his belief that the activities of the EU and UfM are in harmony with regard to the immigration issue. Mr. Sijilmassi added that they attribute importance to EU Neighborhood Policy due to its potential to make contribution to new initiatives and projects as the issue of immigration that affects not only the EU members but also the UfM members, needs to be dealt in relation to its other dimensions in addition to security.

Fatna El-k'hel, MP from Morocco, expressing her ideas on the things to be done in order to realize the projects and making proposals to the governments with regard to the enhancement of integration and cooperation, stated that the Barcelona Process that has been initiated in 1995 is based on a political declaration which is unchanged till then. Ms. El-k'hel added that although it is apparent that the enhancement of integration and cooperation will give positive results in economic, social and political dimensions, the level of integration in this region is nearly non-existent in comparison to the regions such as MERCOSUR and sub-Saharan Africa. Ms. El-k'hel expressed that the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez project of the UfM aims to increase the mobility of the young population by making it possible for different cultures to exist together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Ms. El-k'hel concluded that they have been carrying out projects with economic and social content that is implemented towards women and youth.

Tiziana Beghin, MP from the European Parliament, has reiterated the importance of integration and cooperation.

Algerian MPs, Mr. Bedda and Mr. Zahali, said that Algeria has borders with Mali, Nigeria and Libya in 2000 km; immigrants from these countries and the security problems in the border create a serious threat for their countries; they made an agreement with Mali about the return of the migrants, but the current situation in Libya is an obstacle to making a similar agreement. They underlined that Algeria needs help in combating with these problems.

Zeynep Karahan Uslu, MP, Head of the Turkish Delegation and Deputy for Şanlıurfa, stated her uneasiness about that they are only discussing the problem at such meetings and the human tragedy in Syria is just spoken in the EU platforms. She talked about her visit to Paris to protest the Charlie Hebdo attack with the Turkish Prime Minister, because she believes in the importance of demonstrating a common stance to the terrorist attacks. On the other hand, she underlined the fact that when the same day killed two thousand people in Nigeria or she would like to ask why they don't accept as massacres that happened in Syria, the European countries did not want to face the reality in Syria. Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon had already a large part of the burden; 31 thousand people in Şanlıurfa have a new camp. The three countries continue to struggle themselves for the problem but democratic countries continue to ignore them. It cannot be reached a solution as long as the disposal of real steps to resolve the issue. She asked participants to strive for on this issue and to take concrete decisions when they return to their countries.

Nevzat Pakdil, MP, Deputy for Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, said that he is agree with Mrs. Uslu and noticed that only strong countries should not use initiative. The number of immigrants to Europe within the last four years since the start of the Syria crisis is less than the number of refugees accepted in three days by Turkey from the Kopana/Ayn Al-Arab. European parliamentarians need to address on this fact in the high level when they return to their countries. About the massacre in France world leaders raised their voices by coming together and he said that it is a correct stand and the same sensitivity should be shown in similar events. Attacks have not ended in the years in Iraq, serious and concrete decisions should be taken as soon as possible to prevent these deaths. He stated that the situation in Syria is a human tragedy and concerns everyone who has conscience.

Imre Soar, MP from Estonia, said that a significant increase in human trafficking experienced recently; while illegal immigration in the past was done with small diameter, unfortunately now they are being used by large cargo ships. The EU avoids qualify as war those happening in Ukraine but that there is a war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation; , since the beginning of the crisis 5 thousand Ukrainians died, the EU slowly moves on policy-making and in response to such conflicts.

Suzana Lepe Simenko, MP from Slovenia, said that she would start the 2 years master's program of EMUNI. The project has provided a significant amount of funding from EU Horizon 2020. She also expressed that she asked UfM to continue its contributions to EMUNI.

Michele Giuffrida, MP from the European Parliament, expressed his pleasure on the function of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean in the sense of political cooperation. He argued that an effective immigration policy could be applied. In this regard countries should take responsibility and should implement more effective policy.

Mr. Ercoşkun, Chairman of the Committee, said that UfM Secretary Generals sometimes visit the member countries, for example, Mr. Ribeiro, Secretary General of UfM responsible for energy issues, came to Turkey in recent months for talks on renewable energy. He noticed that if they are aware of such visits, the PAUfM members can contribute positively.

Mr. Sijilmassi, UfM Secretary General, expressed that everyone's must fulfill its responsibility to solve the problems in the Mediterranean as a clear understanding from the parliamentarians speech. Unfortunately in the Brussels, when the Mediterranean is mentioned, the main understanding is Neighborhood Policy, however, Mediterranean is not only neighbor but also the center for the Europe. He underlined that parliamentarian who think that the UfM is passive, he replied that members can increase the effectiveness. He emphasized that UfM is the only organization that bring together all stakeholders such as the politicians in the region, bureaucrats, experts, NGO representatives, academics.

In the second session Maria Jesus Herrera, the IOM (International Migration Center) Spain Representative, made a presentation about the issue of "immigration's economic impact entitled". She stated that the 21st century is a start of in terms of human mobility and migration, that it is planned doubling of mobility in the coming period. It will lead to economic, demographic and social consequences. She emphasized that legal and controlled immigration can lead to positive results. On the other hand in the aftermath of crises, forced migration can occur and its management can be difficult. However, the progress about education and employment can be managed; the migration from African countries to Europe will be reduced. According to the OECD, majority of migrants need additional training, many of the European countries prepared the immigration policy without taking into account the demands of the labor market in the country, in fact, OECD data shows that 30% of migrants are employed in Europe by multinational companies, in 2014 IRIS (International Recruitment Integrity System), a public-private sector employment system is started, so that a migration policy include in accordance with the immigration requirements of the countries. In 2013, training courses launched in 50 countries, were given a total of 41 thousand migrants. the immigration research centers have been established by EU support, as well as social networks have been created for immigrants. With Dublin Regulation ( Dublin Regulations ) stated that the union attempted to provide legislation on refugees in EU countries.

In discussion section, parliamentarians said that cooperation on migration should be increased, uncontrolled migration creates integration problems that lead to radicalization. However, freedom of movement, basic human rights such as human dignity cannot be ignored while debating about migration. Short and long-term policy should be separated from each other. The migration is a social movement which is by essentially economic reasons. Parliamentarians stated the significance of the humane treatment of illegal immigrants which can be victims. Some educational projects such as Erasmus is important functions for recognition each other. Migrants contribute to the economy of the country's earnings are converting to invest in their country of emigration. They underlined that asylum seekers and migrants should be separated from each other and immediate measures should be taken for asylum seekers that it loads an unfair responsibility, to especially neighboring countries.

Mr. Ercoşkun, Chair, emphasized that in crisis period about migration, focusing on short-term solution to the crisis and international organizations should focus approach of tangible solutions. He underlined that for the last 4 years, while in the EU countries have 130

thousand as immigration , only 180 thousand people emigrated within 2 days from Kobani to Turkey.

Antonio D' Ali, Vice Chair of the Committee said that a roadmap should be drawn based on the recommendations and will allow immigrants to come to Europe with legally methods.

Enrique Calvet Chambon, MP from the European Parliament, stated that the positive aspects of the country's migration so as to outweigh the negative. He said that migration affects the country very negatively, rapid and uncontrolled migration started out economic and social problems, threaten domestic security. He suggested to prepare the balance sheet, and should be carefully considered about it. Finally he emphasized that today, asylum seekers and migrants are intertwined today , in fact, has emphasized the importance of the distinction between them.

In the third session, Javier Albarracin, IEMed Socio-Economic Policy Unit Director, made a presentation about the issue of "the protection of investments in the Mediterranean and promotion" He stated that the economic crisis in the EU effects of the investment negatively in the south of Mediterranean. The protection of existing investments is essentially important as well as attracting the new investments. Foreign company that has invested in countries that share their bad experiences with other companies and exhibit the worst propaganda for a country. He stressed that in Europe they prefer to invest in neighboring countries, because of the reasons logistics, flexibility and proximity especially in textiles and agricultural industry. He said that despite the economic difficulties in recent, Mediterranean has been able to protect the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI), transparent, of current and reliable economic statistics and a reliable legal system play an important role for the encourage of investors. The Project of ISMED (Investment Security in the Mediterranean) realized by UfM jointly OECD, saw the insurance function in the region. The diaspora is an important added value in terms of explaining the country's economic attractiveness. In countries where FDI is made, noted the extent it would be more valuable by providing employment, capacity building and technological innovation.

In discussion section, parliamentarians emphasized that the investment from Europe is often performed in order to provide cheap labor, and do not provide more added value to the countries. It should be governed by the win-win formula of these investments. Transformation of the modern industry to developing countries from developed countries in order to provide benefit to the both sides of the countries. In the European-Mediterranean region, visa policy becomes more inaccessible by itself and it contributes to the investment of the free trade agreement and the advancement of economic cooperation.

Rodina Alatti, MP from Jordan said that thereby noting the importance of the investment , the parliamentarians should make a new regulations for the promotion of investment. He said that In particular, in the Arab region the promotions and new projects should be produced. He suggested that the new committee should be created for only focusing on this issue.

Mr. Benabdellah, Vice President of the Committee, indicated that financier make an investment to the North rather than South due to the problems with visas. Because of that reason, concrete and specific recommendations should be executed and regional platform should be established about financial issues.

Mr. Ercoşkun, Chairman of the Committee, expressed that in the Mediterranean basin, useful projects are executed for instance FEMIP ( Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership), however, the number of projects need to be increased. Finally, Mr. Ercoşkun was requested from Committee members to convey their views in order to prepare the report before General Assembly of the PAUfM which will be held in Lisbon on 12 May 2015. Mr. Ercoşkun was thanking to Mr. Sijilmassi for the support to the meeting to be held in the center of the PAUfM in Barcelona and closed the meeting.