



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
OF
THE UNION FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN



Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

MEETING
Thursday, 6 October 2011
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Room ASP 1E2
European Parliament
Brussels

MINUTES

The meeting opened on 6 October 2011 at 10.00, with Tokia Saïfi (Chair) in the chair.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (AP 100.973)

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of minutes of meeting of 1 July 2011

The minutes were approved.

3. Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that outstanding figures of the Arab Spring are amongst this year's nominees for the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought.

Committee Vice-Chair Whebee called for a moment of silence in memory of the passing of Mohammed Bassiouni, one of the founders of the EuroMediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (PA UfM).

4. Which Euro-Mediterranean partnership to respond to the new context of democratic transition in the Mediterranean?

- **designation of two rapporteurs**
- **State of play of reforms in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan**

The Committee appointed of Mr Obiols (EP), Mr Moriau (Belgium), Mr Rezgui (Algeria) and Mr Aferiat (Morocco) as co-rapporteurs. The Committee will examine the first draft of their recommendations at its next meeting.

Representatives from Algeria, Morocco and Jordan gave a brief overview of the various reforms initiated by their respective governments. In the absence of Parliamentarians from Egypt, Mr



Abdelatty, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Egyptian Embassy in Brussels, discussed the forthcoming elections and a timetable for democratic transition.

- **exchange of views with Bernardino León, EU Special Representative for the South-Mediterranean**

Mr León briefly laid out his mandate, and then proceeded to discuss the EU's response to the Arab Spring with the example of Tunisia. Subsequent discussions focussed on the need for a new EU approach regarding emigration and mobility policies, as well as the need to empower women during the transitional phase and necessary measures to reduce youth unemployment. Participants also expressed their concerns over the possibility of Islamists gaining power as a result of up-coming democratic elections.

5. The situation in the Middle East after the UN General Assembly session - exchange of views with

- **Yacov Hadas-Handelsman, Ambassador of Israel to the EU**

The Palestinian Delegate General to the EU, Leila Chahid, had been invited to address the Committee, but could not attend since Brussels-based Palestinian diplomats were accompanying President Abbas to the Council of Europe meeting in Strasburg. The Israeli Ambassador to the EU Mr Hadas-Handelsman reiterated the position of the Israeli government concerning Palestinian statehood, and spoke of Israel's concerns for the future of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Delegations from Jordan, Morocco and Algeria were quick to remind the Committee of the rights of Palestinians to an independent State and the responsibilities of the international community in safeguarding these.

6. Syria - which strategy for the opposition? Exchange of views with

- **Dr. Hatahet Bassem, Member of the National Coalition to support the Syrian Revolution**
- **Husam Al Katlaby, Member of the Syrian National Council**

This exchange of views represented one of the first opportunities to talk to members of the Syrian National Council (SNC) which was recently formed in Istanbul. Mr Bassem and Mr Al Katlaby laid out the objectives of the SNC which include the formation of a democratic and inclusive government following the peaceful removal of President Assad. Both opposition members stressed the impossibility of talks with the Syrian regime which has resolutely refused to enter into any form of dialogue. Subsequent debates highlighted the SNC's dilemma in calling for the protection of civilians by the international community through the imposition of a no-fly zone over Syria, while refusing any form of outside military intervention. Most Committee members expressed their support for the SNC, with the exception of the Algerian and Italian



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Delegations which called on the SNC to enter into negotiations with the Syrian government. The proposal by opposition members to increase cooperation with the Political Committee of PA UfM and the EP's Delegation for relation with Mashreq countries was met with a favourable response from members.

7. Libya - perspectives after the fall of the regime Gaddafi, exchange of views with

- **Mohamed Farhat, Head of the Mission of Libya to the EU**
- **Adoption of a motion asking for revoking the temporary suspension of Libya's observer status to the PA UfM adopted by the Bureau in Rabat on 11 July 2011**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Libyan ambassador to the EU was unable to attend the committee meeting.

After a short debate, the committee mandated the Chair to write a letter to the PA UfM Bureau suggesting to lift the temporary suspension of Libya's observer status to the PA UfM and invite it to become a full member once a democratically elected Parliament is formed.

8. Date and place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held in Brussels on 26 January 2012.