



PARLAMENT TA' MALTA



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

VALLETTA CONCLUSIONS

8th High-Level Meeting of the Parliaments of the “5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue” Member States

Valletta, Malta, 17 January 2019

We, the Representatives of the Parliaments of the countries of the Western Mediterranean Forum (5+5 Dialogue), gathered in Valletta, Malta, on 17 January 2019, at the invitation of the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Malta, to participate in the 8th High Level Parliamentary meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue, organised with the assistance of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and with the participation, as observer, of the Arab Parliament:

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Mediterranean region is a mosaic of traditions, customs and people that throughout the centuries sustained close socio-economic cooperation and transformed it into a uniquely distinct and culturally rich region,

REAFFIRMING our commitment as Members of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue to promote a Mediterranean region that holds the principles of peace, tolerance and sustainable development as the core truths guiding the prosperous development of our shared home, and its people,

RECOGNISING the pivotal political and social strength of active inter-parliamentary meetings in specifically addressing challenges and opportunities faced by Western Mediterranean countries and enabling the exchange of ideas on maintaining a competitive, inclusive and sustainable Mediterranean region, as recalled at the Malta 5+5 Summit of 2012,

RECALLING our latest meeting held in Algiers on 20 January 2018 where we agreed to convert words into action and launch a series of thematic workshops on issues of common concern,

RECALLING the 2015 Valletta Migration Action Plan laying down five priority domains aimed at providing European and African countries with a robust framework for economic, educational, environmental and social cooperation,

CONVINCED that only through dialogue and the establishment of cooperation networks between elected representatives we can ensure that the region progresses towards a brighter and more prosperous future, and

HAVING discussed and exchanged views in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity on how parliaments can contribute to the international efforts mobilised to face the current challenges of the Western Mediterranean, as well as to enhance dialogue, create constructive regional cooperation and deepen inter-cultural relations:

WE DECLARE the following:

The 5+5 Dialogue is a relevant and complementary forum for enhanced dialogue and regional integration within the wider Mediterranean framework of cooperation;

The parliamentary dimension of the 5+5 Dialogue plays a pivotal role in furthering the cooperation required among the countries of the Western Mediterranean forum to strengthen democratic institutions and deepening integration, making the region less vulnerable to instability and external shocks;

More specifically, enhanced political dialogue and parliamentary cooperation will bring the elected representatives of the Western Mediterranean region closer together to develop coherent approaches in relation to challenges and opportunities falling within their mandates, namely:

- **Climate change and sustainable development**

Although the Mediterranean is a relatively small enclave of land-locked sea water, it contains some 6% of the world's marine species, including some of the most endangered kind. The Mediterranean Sea is one of the busiest seas in the world, acting as a major oil and cargo transportation route and as a bridge between the littoral states. Coupled with the competitive fishing industry, intensive tourism activities and pollution flowing from surrounding rivers, the Mediterranean Sea is one of the most polluted seas of the world. Reported levels of pollution and the low renewal rate of the sea expose the Mediterranean region to increased vulnerabilities of climate change.

Projections about the state of the environment by the 2017 UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia's *Arab Climate Change Assessment Report* speak of a substantial increase in temperatures and an equally worrying decrease of rainfall levels. Together, these two elements impact heavily on the environment of the region. In fact, the UN reports presented at the COP24 highlight that the Mediterranean has been identified as the region which will experience a significant reduction in rainfall. This will subsequently increase challenges linked to water, health and food security. The ongoing politico-military instability in some countries and the fragmented approach to issues related to water, agriculture and air quality, as well as the prospects for a new stagnation of a global economy threatened by commercial wars, continue to aggravate the already fragile situation.

Recalling the Malta Declaration on the role of parliamentarians in facing the impact of global warming, adopted in November 2009 and presented the same year by PAM at COP15, we are cognizant that climate change and sustainable development are directly linked to the livelihoods of our respective communities and that the lack of appropriate mechanisms to mitigate the negative effects of climate change could result in tension and violent conflict.

We, therefore, urgently draw the attention of the governments of the 5+5 to the fast-degrading environment of the Mediterranean region and call upon the respective governments to implement legislative and regional mechanisms that safeguard both the land and marine environment. Whilst acknowledging that together with the productive sector and civil society organisations we share responsibility for our common geographical area and future, more than ever we emphasise that effective action can only be implemented when elected representatives push forward timely solutions, and we commit to actively contribute to the forthcoming Summit on this topic announced by the Secretary General of the United Nations. We also commit to explore together the opportunities provided by EU funding and other international financial institutes to foster trade and economic integration among the members of the region.

- **Migration and humanitarian action**

Migration, in particular boat crossings from the South to the North across the Mediterranean Sea, remains a huge challenge for our region that has led to humanitarian crises along the years.

Whilst acknowledging the need to further strengthen the fight against irregular migration through the stepping up of current efforts to stop trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, we strongly support a constructive and long-term approach to migration as we believe that controlled migration can benefit the countries of origin, transit and destination while respecting national sovereignty.

The ongoing debates and the different positions taken by States on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in Marrakesh in December 2018, and the Global Compact for Refugees, show that migration challenges should be tackled in a holistic, coherent and coordinated approach to also address the root causes in the countries of origin.

We recall the Joint Valletta Action Plan adopted in November 2015 which is currently being implemented and monitored by the Rabat Process and Khartoum Process as an important tool to achieve sustainable and long-term solutions to the challenges posed by migration flows. This can be achieved by addressing coherently the five pillars of the Joint Valletta Action Plan namely; the root causes of migration, developing legal ways, improving return and readmission in full respect of international law and the principle of non-refoulement, ensuring protection of migrants and asylum seekers and combatting human smuggling and trafficking.

We therefore call on our respective governments to support, among others, the fruitful implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan and encourage them to support the Rabat Process and Khartoum Process, as well as to encourage a European coherent approach to the migration phenomenon, as essential tools to improve the present mechanisms.

- **Youth, education and employment**

Youth, education and employment are three distinct yet inter-related elements that form the basis of resilient, prosperous and sustainable societies. The Euro-Mediterranean Network for Economic Studies (EMNES) highlights that young people in the Mediterranean experience skills mismatches, rigid regulation, poor labour market conditions, lack of regional integration and non-standard employment conditions, such as temporary contracts. These have a direct negative impact on the well-being and development of the country. The creation of quality jobs and the possibility to provide young people with a springboard into the labour market, and at a later stage to switch between learning, training and employment, is essential to ensure countries nurture a pulsating and young skills-rich generation. However, strong political will is required to promote quality jobs and guarantee that young people are not exploited, disillusioned and do not harbour a growing distrust of the State. Through formal and informal education, vocational training and inter-cultural opportunities beyond national borders, as stated in the PAM Fez Action Plan adopted in 2008 in Morocco, young people can acquire strong intra-personal qualities of adaptability and self-management. In turn, this creates resilient societies capable of warding off any negative extremist ideology and constantly reinventing themselves in the face of technological innovations. We call on our States to address radicalisation and extremism by addressing vulnerable youths suffering from discrimination, economic deprivation and lacking educational and job opportunities.

We thus call on the governments of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue to recognise the importance of integrating youth, education and employment policies and to put in place regional mechanisms and frameworks to facilitate the exchange of students and young entrepreneurs and business leaders. Furthermore, we agree that the region requires an innovative multi-dimensional and comprehensive approach leading to a multiplier effect of positive economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. We consider that is fundamental for this group to remain engaged in this process and to organise dedicated thematic seminars for concrete follow-up.

FINALLY, we extend our most sincere thanks to the Hon. Angelo Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta, to the Maltese Parliament, and the people of Malta for their warm hospitality and excellent organisation, which further strengthens Malta's commitment to promoting dialogue and regional understanding.