Recommendation to the Commission and the Commission Vice President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A new agenda for the Mediterranean

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE (EPP, ES) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission /High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - a new agenda for the Mediterranean.

The EU's investment in its Southern Neighbourhood is a priority. The security, stability, prosperity and climate resilience of the Union's Southern Neighbourhood will enhance the EU's security, stability, prosperity and climate resilience. Renewed investment in the Southern Neighbourhood and the intensification of the political and strategic dialogue between the EU and the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood will provide an opportunity for close cooperation and synergies between policies for the benefit of both the EU and its Member States and the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood.

Members made a number of **recommendations to the Commission and the VP/HR**, in the framework of the implementation of the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood entitled ‘A New Agenda for the Mediterranean’. The main recommendations are the following:

- mobilise sufficient resources for a rapid and effective implementation of the new Mediterranean programme, based on the objectives and priorities defined jointly with the Southern Neighbourhood partner countries;

- ensure EU visibility in all EU financial resources allocated to the region directly or indirectly, while ensuring financial accountability and include a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget;

- emphasise that civil societies in the Southern Neighbourhood have high expectations of the EU and its Member States as the main political, economic and cultural anchor for political and economic reform and longer-term prosperity;

- strengthen the EU's dialogue and cooperation with the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood in relevant policy areas and promote conflict prevention, peace-building, counter-piracy, maritime security and the fight against terrorism, radicalisation and extremism;

- re-establish the position of EU Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood, reporting to the VP/HR and the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement;

- intensify diplomatic outreach and dialogue with the states of the Southern Neighbourhood and focus on the food security implications of the war in Ukraine in the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood,

engage in dialogue with the Parliament on ways to ensure food security for the Southern Mediterranean countries facing difficulties in this regard and draw up a robust response for this purpose without further delay;

- recognise the multiple challenges facing the region, including climate change, the economic crisis and terrorist attacks;

- prioritise the implementation of strategies to alleviate poverty, increase access to school and higher education for young people and women and ensure adequate funding for schooling for the population at large, and support the development of efficient higher education and vocational training structures;

- target EU support to women with the aim of improving and securing their access to education, training and employment and, more generally, to promote equal professional and socio-economic opportunities;

- support the implementation and ratification of international conventions to combat violence against women and ensure that all EU Member States and countries in the southern neighbourhood sign, ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

- ensure that the EU, its Member States and its Southern Neighbourhood partners implement migration policies that fully respect the human rights of migrants and refugees, as enshrined in international law and regional and national legislation;

- invite the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners to adopt a more coordinated, holistic and structured approach to migration, taking into account the importance of addressing the root causes of forced displacement, to strive to reduce the number of irregular entries into the territory of the Member States and, in the context of relations with third countries, to prioritise the readmission of migrants who do not have a right to remain in the EU, in compliance with non-refoulement obligations and international law;

- establish and urgently develop partnerships and cooperation projects with relevant countries in the Southern Neighbourhood to combat climate change;

- support dialogue and cooperation in the region on sustainable water management, technology and access to water, as well as support increased investment in the region in renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar and green hydrogen;

- support the adoption of common measures for the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of the rich biodiversity of the Mediterranean basin;

- promote an active role for the Union in facilitating dialogue and cooperation between all countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean in the field of energy;

- continue to promote and take urgent steps to enhance the interconnection capacity between the EU and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries producing natural gas and other types of energy, through EU hubs, and promote electrical interconnection;

- develop and support incubators or accelerators in the relevant countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, foster the creation of local start-ups and develop their digital and green capacities;

- make progress in developing a concrete strategy to counter disinformation and propaganda from Russia, China and other regional powers, both in the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood and in the EU;

- include economic and labour rights in the new agenda and focus on decent work, sustainable development and international labour standards;

- promote regional, sub-regional and bilateral integration in the Southern Mediterranean countries;

- implement the new agenda for the Mediterranean by strengthening the Union's support for a free, strong and independent civil society throughout the Mediterranean;

- encourage reforms in the fields of democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance and the fight against corruption, and reaffirmed its condemnation of the use of the death penalty.