Strengthening the Mediterranean Policy of the European Union: establishing a Euro-Mediterranean partnership

1994/2158(COS) - 28/09/1995

The Conference of Barcelona must contribute to stabilizing the southern flanks of the European Community - it was in these terms that Mr Jannis SAKELLARIOU (PSE, D) commented on the objectives being examined in his interim report on "The Mediterranean policy of the European Community in the context of the Conference of Barcelona", which was adopted unanimously. This ambitious project caused the rapporteur to regret "the restrictive vision of the Council, which intended inviting to the Conference only those States which had agreements with the Community". - Extending participation and opening up a new stage of cooperation: destabilizing factors were on the increase in the southern and south-eastern areas of the European Union. These factors were political, religious, economic, social and military in nature. To confront this problem, and contrary to the wishes of the Council, Mr SAKELLARIOU called for the following to be invited to attend: * The 15 Member States of the European Community and all States bordering the Mediterranean, including Libya (provided that this country honoured its international obligations) and Albania. As regards the five Republics of the former Yugoslavia, these States should be offered the possibility of attending "provided that they recognized each other and had settled their differences". * The following should be invited as observers: all the countries of eastern, central and south-eastern Europe which had concluded European Agreements with the Community, and the Member States of the Arab League not previously mentioned. As far as the European Parliament was concerned, there was a call for the Presidency to ensure that this body could attend in its own right, as was the case with NGOs. Only then would the Conference be able to contribute towards the peace and stability of the Community's southern flanks. By this means the Conference would be paving the way for a new stage in relations between the Community and the countries of the Mediterranean. - One should not forget the "security aspects", which were essential for the development of a global approach of this kind. To this end, the Commission should present a further communication on "security" in this region. This could "serve as a basis for joint action by the Council" in this area - action which should take into account the wishes expressed by Parliament for the consolidation of such an approach. - Towards a global Europe/Mediterranean partnership: if all the aforementioned conditions are met, they will facilitate the establishment of the partnership which has been sought by the Committee on Foreign Affairs. This should be founded on three pillars: - harmonization of EU policies which have an impact in this region - organization of complementarity between the bilateral policies and the policy which the EU has adopted by way of a multilateral framework agreement - greater flexibility in applying the agreements. The harmonious combination of these three factors will promote: - the implementation of "cooperation programmes with Mediterranean partners along the lines of the PHARE and TACIS programmes" - eventually, "to create a free-trade zone" which would be without prejudice to the bilateral agreements signed between the Community and the Mediterranean countries. This being said, compensation measures would have to be introduced which go hand in hand with the reorganization of the economy, particularly in order to deal with the growing unemployment problem. - Institutional support for the actions: once the Conference has been concluded, and if one was to ensure an effective follow-up, a suitable structure would be required to ensure that all the measures are implemented: this will comprise a joint assembly, a council of ministers and a general secretary elected by the joint assembly.