Mediterranean policy: follow-up to the Barcelona Conference 1995

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs (chairman: Tom SPENCER (EPP, UK)) acknowledged that the Barcelona Conference of 14 December 1995 had been a success and that Parliament's suggestions had been taken on board. However, there was now a need to move on, in both political and economic terms, in order to achieve a 'common objective' - internal and external stability on both shores of the Mediterranean. Thus, in the report by Mr Jannis SAKELLARIOU (PES, D), adopted almost unanimously yesterday by the committee, the Council is called upon to adopt joint actions to facilitate the creation of a political partnership and help achieve greater security. On human rights, an agreement is needed between all members of the partnership, together with a body to monitor it. This body would have the power to guarantee and enforce the agreement. The Commission would have to submit a special report every year on the human rights situation in the 12 countries which had signed the declaration. As a confidence-building measure, common policies on conflict prevention are needed, for which a European civilian peace corps to back up humanitarian measures and a joint civilian monitoring unit should be set up. The latter would be required to study the feasibility of setting up in future a military peacekeeping force which would include all partners who supported the idea. Measures to encourage arms limitation and disarmament in the Mediterranean are needed. Hence the call for the next Conference to demand the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the region. Stability also required economic growth and the EU is asked to take action through the relevant international organizations to reduce the debt of the Mediterranean countries. In addition, everything possible should be done to develop the financial systems of the those countries. Energy and environmental measures should also be considered. Lastly, since everything must be based on mutual understanding, the Commission and the Council are called upon to take resolute action to combat racism and xenophobia within the EU. For this, a contractual framework for immigration and a charter of migrants' rights is needed.