Euro-Mediterranean relations: meeting of Foreign Ministers, 22-23 April 2002, Valencia

2002/2057(COS) - 11/04/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament approved a resolution drafted by Pere ESTEVE (ELDR, Spain) for the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministers in Valencia on 22 April on the Barcelona Process. (Please refer to the document dated 19/03/02). Members proposed a reinforced Euro-Mediterranean political dialogue on subjects which should include the new ESDP, in the context of mutual security; conflict prevention; the threat of terrorism; the promotion of democracy; the fight against poverty; maritime and transport safety and drug-trafficking. Parliament deplored the serious violations of human rights observed in various partners in the Barcelona Process particularly those countries where the human rights situation had worsened after the signing of the relevant association agreement. It pointed out the incongruent situation where borders are closed between certain Mediterranean partners, since this goes against the spirit of the Process, which is seeking to establish a genuine free trade area. The MEDA programme should encourage initiatives to promote structural reforms in the economies of the partner countries in order to make these economies more complementary and encourage particularly trade in agriculture and energy. Parliament went on to call for the swift implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean regional water programme, which, with MEDA funding, should improve the management of drinking water resources, and irrigation management. On the Middle East conflict, it is vital for all the Mediterranean partners and the EU to be more closely involved with efforts to find solutions, given the potential of the Barcelona Process as a special instrument for dialogue and cooperation between the Union and the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. With regard to the institutional arrangements, an annual summit of heads of state and governments is proposed, as a forum for debate and political impetus at the highest level. There should also be established a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, which could operate in plenary assembly and in JPCs. A Euro-Mediterranean regional MEDA-LOCUS programme should be launched, to encourage cooperation at all levels between administrations, local bodies and civil society in line with the ropsoials put forward in the Euromed Pact in February 2002.