Relations between European Union and the Union of Arabic Maghreb: coming into force of a privileged partnership

2001/2027(INI) - 11/06/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its own-initiative resolution drafted by Daniel COHN-BENDIT (Greens /EFA, Germany) and Phillipe MORILLON (EPP-ED, France) on the EU and the Arab Maghreb Union. (Please refer to the document dated 22/05/02.) Parliament stressed that the development of civil society must be a cornerstone of the EU/Maghreb partnership, and emphasised the need for direct support to independent citizen associations and local NGOs. Particular attention was given to the conflict in Western Sahara. Parliament expressed the hope that further cooperation between the countries of the AMU can help bring a climate of peace to the region, and above all the Sahrawi people, who have experienced great suffering over the last 25 years. Turning to economic cooperation, Parliament asked that the EU significantly improve conditions for exports from the Maghreb countries, and cooperate with them to promote increased private investment, the establishment of joint ventures and trade liberalisation. It regretted the failure of the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement. Parliament remained convinced that the quest for food sovereignty is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Essential opening-up of markets should be carried out fairly amongst the partners and be balanced by measures to ensure the long-term future of agriculture and regional fisheries. Cooperation should be developed in the fields of public services, such as transport, energy, telecoms and health. Parliament went on to state that it did not consider the proposals at the Barcelona Council of March 2002 run counter to the prospect of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean development bank at a later stage. An EIB office in the region is a positive step. Special efforts should be made to guide investments towards supporting regional and transnational projects in the Maghreb. The Commission is asked to boost the multinational dimension of the MEDA programmes and render them more effective, with the aim of further promoting regional cooperation.