Resolution on Euromed

2003/2578(RSP) - 20/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution reaffirming the need to ensure a mutual awareness and understanding of genuinely equitable cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area. It called on all the Member States to help step up Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary dialogue. The EMPA is the most suitable instrument for this purpose. Parliament called for the Ministerial Conference in Naples to approve the conversion of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum into a parliamentary assembly with consultative Powers. Moving on to the Middle East conflict, Parliament emphasised the urgent need for the cycle of violence to be brought to an end by means of full implementation of the road map and achievement of the goal of 'two peoples, two states'. The establishment of a climate of trust between Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab peoples is of the utmost importance to Euro- Mediterranean relations. Each party to the Barcelona Process must first and foremost work to promote democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly women's rights. Compliance with the provisions set out in the democratic clauses contained in the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements is particularly important. The Commission, the Council and partner countries must place these issues high on the agenda during the Association Council meetings. On this point Parliament drew attention to: - the use of capital punishment and called a moratorium on executions; - the obstacles to the independence of the judiciary and freedom of the media in several partner countries; - the Tunisian authorities' decision to freeze funds allocated by the Commission to the Tunisian Human Rights League, in contravention of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement; - combating illegal immigration and the mafia-type organisations that encourage it, always bearing in mind the principle of shared responsibility and solidarity between the Mediterranean partner countries. Parliament is concerned about the tragedies that occur almost daily in the southern Mediterranean region, specifically in the Spanish coastal region of Andalusia and in certain areas along the southern Italian coast. The Euro- Mediterranean partnership should improve the management of migration flows and border controls and promote efforts with regard to readmission to countries of origin and transit, as well as the provision of the necessary technical and financial assistance. On the question of finance, Parliament stated that the section of the European Investment Bank dealing with the Mediterranean and the Middle East should be expanded into a branch capable of meeting the objectives laid down in the new strategy, with financial assistance from other Mediterranean countries. Parliament noted with satisfaction the recent positive steps undertaken by Libya with regard to payment of compensation which led to the lifting of UN sanctions. Libya and Mauritania should participate fully in the Barcelona Process and accept its principles. The Mediterranean associated countries which have so far stood aside from interparliamentary dialogue must reconsider their position. Finally, the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers must actively work towards a settlement of the conflict in the Western Sahara though the implementation of the United Nations peace plan.