

# The Barcelona Process revisited

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Anneli **JÄÄTTEENMÄKI** (ALDE, FI) on the Barcelona Process Revisited. (Please see the summary of 26/09/2005.) Parliament welcomed the recent communication by the European Commission and shared the conviction that, even if the Partnership has not contributed to the lowering of tensions in the area to its full potential, there is room for improvement and thus the Barcelona Process continues to be the appropriate framework for Mediterranean policy. An effective Euro-Mediterranean policy must be allocated a budget commensurate with its ambitions.

One of the main issues to be addressed is greater participation by all Mediterranean partner countries in the decision-making process of the Partnership, in order to encourage joint initiatives and to strengthen co-responsibility.

Future cooperation must be guided by the EU's security policy requirements or other related needs. The connection between the three areas of cooperation – peace, trade and civil society – needs highlighting; particularly acknowledges here the connection between security and development and the special importance of social and economic issues for people on the Mediterranean's southern rim. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is building on the achievements of the Barcelona Process and is based on the principles of co-ownership and differentiation, should reinforce existing forms of cooperation within the Euromed framework with the objective of offering partner countries the possibility of participating in EU programmes and policies on the basis of jointly agreed priorities and objectives. South-south regional integration is essential to the setting-up of a stable framework for shared prosperity, and that this is the example and experience of the EU. Parliament recalled that one of the main goals of EU Mediterranean policy as well as the ENP is to support and promote political reforms (progress with the process of democratisation, strengthening pluralism and the rule of law, and greater respect for human rights) together with economic and social reforms.

On the matter of trade, Parliament noted that, despite the hopes that existed when the Partnership began, the Mediterranean partner countries have not benefited from the commercial openings in terms of economic well-being and remain in a parlous economic situation. The unemployment rate is very high and the investment rate low, and because the average age of the population of those countries is very low, that situation is having a distinct influence on migratory flows. The economic aspect of the Partnership must be redirected towards social cohesion and sustainable economic development, given that trade liberalisation cannot be the sole objective and must have an appropriate legal framework.

Parliament stressed the importance of responding to the problems encountered by the textile sector by supporting the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It recommended that a Euro-Mediterranean network of schools, training institutes and technical centres specialising in textiles and clothing be set up in for the purpose of promoting technical partnership, training and joint research programmes.

The growth of democracy in the region is one of the key issues for Europe, and Parliament recommended, therefore, that greater use be made of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) – a Community programme which funds various projects – to start up a variety of democracy projects. Encouraging the participation of women in economic, social and cultural fields and in the political activity of each country must be the essential mechanism for consolidating democracy and dealing with discrimination against women.

Migration and social integration of migrants is another key issue of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Association agreements and Neighbourhood Action Plans are adequate tools to promote joint management of the movement of people and migration flows. Parliament suggested in that respect that the new European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) be used to support cross-border cooperation among the partners. All cooperation on migration must be in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. Parliament rejected the principle of creating migration "portals" and/or camps in the neighbouring countries of the EU.

Parliament felt that no substantial progress had been achieved in the field of democracy and human rights and stressed the importance of ENP action plans which aim at defining clear commitments for action for partner countries so as to improve the democratisation process as well as respect for human rights. The Commission must involve Parliament in the assessment of the implementation of the ENP action plans, which should provide for clear suspension clauses covering the eventuality that the benchmarks included in respect of democratisation and human rights are not respected. Furthermore, Parliament stated that the clauses suspending Euro-Mediterranean association agreements in the event of violations of human rights and democratic freedoms should be invoked. In view of the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona process, the Commission is asked to draw up a public report on the implementation of the human rights and democracy policy in the Mediterranean countries upon which to develop the partnership further.