



Third Committee  
DR

C-III/PAM/Final-

Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights

28 March 2007

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN FOSTERING THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE  
ABOUT THE MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS AND RELIGIONS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN  
BASIN AND THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEM**

*Resolution adopted by consensus by the Third Committee and by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenary  
Session of the Assembly, 24 November 2007, St. Julians (Malta)*

**The challenge of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the era of  
globalization: considerations and proposals for a development plan for future  
generations**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean,

- (1) *Bearing in mind* all resolutions targeting the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the creation of a global, all-inclusive society of equal citizens that fully enjoy all human rights, including the indisputable right to their own religion and culture,
- (2) *Aware* that globalization is a phenomenon of gradual growth in different kinds of relations and exchanges that started in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century,
- (3) *Convinced* that, to meet today's challenges of globalization, and in particular to benefit from its advantages and to limit its disadvantages, fresh structural consideration is needed of "transnational" policy in order to encourage positive acts of international cooperation that promote social integration in multiethnic environments by fostering intercultural and interreligious knowledge and dialogue,

1. *Pledges to support:*

- (a) **The promotion of peace, democratic empowerment and social and economic development through intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation;**
- (b) **Parliamentary diplomacy** (as a method of action). The Mediterranean basin is the cradle of all our cultures and religions and remains to this day a theatre of considerable cultural and economic exchange. Unfortunately, as we know, the region is also characterized by endless conflicts and disputes on matters of mutual concern. Parliamentarians can and should move beyond high-level diplomacy and conservative, rigid positions and envisage new ways of settling the conflicts and breaking the political deadlocks that are holding back the region's development. The PAM, for example, should implement these principles by inviting Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians to take part in Assembly meetings dealing with matters relating to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict;
- (c) **Inter-parliamentary cooperation** (as a method of action). Where parliamentary diplomacy tackles the problems that divide us, inter-parliamentary cooperation deals with the problems we share. The Mediterranean region is the arena for economic, political, environmental and cultural interdependence *par excellence*. That interdependence characterizes the daily lives of all the region's inhabitants. Their representatives must, therefore, cooperate to draw up shared policies and, if possible, manage problems and resources jointly. In the past ten years, numerous multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed in the region. Unfortunately, however, parliamentarians have little control over this process. From this point of view, the establishment, at the initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and, in 2005, of the parliamentary institution of the Barcelona Process, the EMPA, is all the more commendable. Steps should also be taken to ensure that the two Assemblies undertake complementary initiatives to draw up concrete and effective programmes aimed at dealing with the problems and challenges ahead;
- (d) **Intercultural dialogue** (as a method of action). In acknowledging terrorism as a globally appalling phenomenon, characterized by

massacres all over the world, we highlight the need: (i) to use the tools of culture and intercultural dialogue to bridge the gap between peoples of different and diverse nations; (ii) to curtail feelings of intolerance; and (iii) to embed our conviction that there can be no theological justification for criminal action.

The time has come to promote and strengthen intercultural dialogue, which is especially necessary between peoples in the region. From this point of view, too, parliamentarians, as representatives of the region's peoples, must act on the front line to promote dialogue, and that dialogue must not be limited to the members of our Parliaments. It could take the form of:

- parliamentary forums and hearings;
- inter-university encounters at student and professorial level;
- inter-parliamentary exchanges;

- (e) **Dialogue between civilizations and religions**, which is predicated on the ability to listen, to understand problems, and to promote the role of women and young people in society in the Mediterranean;
- (f) **Intercultural education**. Intercultural education implies an academic project able to act on the profound social changes wrought by the co-existence of different cultures.

In the context of educational and didactic activities related to intercultural education, instruction in religion is of crucial importance in promoting fair behaviour based on knowledge, listening and understanding of "others";

- (g) **Human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. There are, it is true, different models of democracy, but it is equally obvious that there can be no stability or development in the Mediterranean region without respect for human rights and without a democratic society based on the rule of law. The Council of Europe and its parliamentary assembly have acquired considerable experience, from which our parliamentary assembly can naturally benefit. Indeed, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament sent observers to Palestine during the elections, and the European Parliament dispatched observers to the Lebanese elections - cooperation initiatives that were poorly received by some countries in the region - proving that foreign observers can be a factor of

stabilization and that they help further democratic progress in the countries concerned. Such initiatives must be supported and developed by the PAM;

- (h) **Migration.** Migration is an area in which the interdependence characterizing the Mediterranean region is clear for all to see. The PAM, deeply concerned by respect for human rights and for each migrant's, refugee's or asylum seeker's dignity, considers that it is indispensable for countries of origin, transit and destination to coordinate their migration policies and exchange all useful information. To that end, we fully support the establishment of a European observatory on migration and wish to ascertain if, and how, it could address migratory flows affecting the Mediterranean;
- (i) **The fight against terrorism.** The horrendous attacks of 11 September 2001 and after forever changed our concept of security. Terrorism has become one of the biggest threats to security and stability in the Mediterranean, in Europe and throughout the world. The Council of Europe showed that fighting terrorism requires a global vision in which political, legal and economic considerations are associated with social and cultural concerns. The representatives of the PAM must therefore be willing to open up and act in close cooperation with their colleagues from PACE in order to promote more incisive action in the fight against terrorism.