

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
FIRST SESSION
(Cairo, Egypt 12-15 March 2005)
FINAL DECLARATION**

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- 1- The First Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) was held in Cairo, from 12 to 15 March 2005 at the invitation of Egypt's People's Assembly, as a result of the outcome of EMPA's inaugural session in March 2004, and the decisions taken by EMPA Bureau.
- 2- Official delegations from the ten Mediterranean Partners' parliaments, the EU Member states parliaments, and the European Parliament took part in the deliberations. Representatives from the Libyan, Mauritanian, Romanian and Bulgarian parliaments took part as observers. Representatives from the Arab Parliamentary Union, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe took part as special guests.
- 3- The First Session of EMPA was chaired by Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of Egypt's People's Assembly and President of EMPA. The three Standing Committees of EMPA held parallel meetings on 12 March and were chaired by Madame Tokia Saifi (Committee on Political ,Security and Human Rights Issues), Dr. Hashim El-Dabbas (Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education) and the joint chairmanship of Mr. Miloud Chorfi, and Mr. Mohamed EL Mansouri (Committee on Improving Quality of life, Exchanges Between Civil Societies and Culture).
- 4- The inaugural sitting of EMPA was held in the morning of 14 March. The opening address was made by Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. The inaugural sitting listened to statements by Mr. Nicolas Schmit Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Luxembourg, currently President-in-office of the Council

of the European Union, on the topic "Review of the Barcelona Process"; by Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, by Mrs Margot Wallstrom, Vice -President of the European Commission on "European Neighbourhood Policy and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership"; by Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on "The Barcelona Process and EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean Countries"; and by Mr. Fouad EL MUBAZA'A, President of the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies on "Views of Mediterranean Partners Regarding the EU Strategic Partnership". A debate followed each statement and showed the great interest of EMPA Members in the Barcelona Process and their keenness on imparting fresh momentum to the Process in the run-up to the 10th Anniversary of the signing of the Barcelona Declaration.

- 5- The Working Sitting of EMPA was held in the afternoon of 14 March. The Chairpersons of the three Standing Committees of EMPA presented the Final Reports of their respective committees to the EMPA Plenary. Mr. Tragott Schoffthaler, Executive Director of the "Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures" made a statement before the Plenary.
- 6- The general debate at the Plenary focused on the main theme of the First Session: "The EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and European Neighbourhood Policy", and on the Final Reports of the Standing Committees.
- 7- The debates on the statements made at the inaugural sitting, and the general debate at the working sitting allowed participants to:
 - (a) Emphasize the centrality of the Barcelona Process as the main instrument for partnership and dialogue between the Euro-Mediterranean Partners.

- (b) Welcome the decision of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in the Hague on 30 November 2004 that 2005 will be the Year of the Mediterranean.**
- (c) Welcome the Arab League Tunis Declaration on "The Drive of Development, Modernisation and Reform" as the Arab Mediterranean partners' overarching framework for their efforts at pursuing political, economic, social and educational reforms and for their cooperation with international partners in support for those efforts.**
- (d) Welcome the progress made in developing the European Neighbourhood policy, as a policy to enhance the Barcelona Process, provided it does not eclipse either the principles - equality, co-responsibility, mutual respect, solidarity and cooperation - or the multilateral framework of Barcelona.**
- (e) Stress the importance they attach to the extraordinary Euro-Mediterranean Conference which will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process in November 2005, and to the substantive contribution of EMPA to this Conference.**
- (f) Recall the principles undertaken in the Barcelona Declaration, inter alia, that Euro-Mediterranean Partners should "Refrain, in accordance with the rules of international law, from any direct or indirect intervention in the internal affairs of another partner; Respect the sovereign equality and all rights inherent in their sovereignty; Develop the rule of law and democracy in their political systems, while recognising in this framework the right of each of them to choose and freely develop its own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system".**

- (g) Parliamentary debate is based on a free and frank exchange of views on political matters; the Rule of Law and Democracy are the principles governing this.**
- (h) Underline the principle of co-ownership of the Barcelona Process and the often-repeated request of Mediterranean Partners to participate fully in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes within the framework of the Barcelona Process.**
- (i) Praises in this regard the introduction of clauses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in forthcoming agreements and actions plans; underlines that such measures should be implemented by all partners without exception in order to render the Mediterranean a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.**
- (j) Call on the European Union to enhance its efforts to ensure that the financial resources allocated to the Mediterranean region in the framework of the 2007-2013 financial perspectives reach the necessary volume to enable the pursuit of economic and social modernisation in the Mediterranean Partner countries.**
- (k) Reaffirm their commitment to a negotiated solution agreed between the parties to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Road Map and the Sharm El-Sheikh understandings and commend Egypt on convening that meeting; reiterate that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid conference, and the principle of land for peace, should guide the negotiations towards the two-state solution, and that a comprehensive peace must include Syria and Lebanon.**

- (l) Call on the European Union to play a more pronounced political role in the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, given the strategic, political, security, economic and cultural interests of the EU in the region, and the positive impact of peace on Euro-Mediterranean relations as a whole.**
- (m) Invite all Iraqi parties to participate fully and actively in the ongoing political process, and in the formulation of an Iraqi constitution that meets the aspirations of the Iraqi people in a democratic system, and in a free, peaceful, sovereign, unified and prosperous Iraq.**
- (n) Call for the utilization of all means to encourage and facilitate the flow of European direct investment into the Mediterranean region.**
- (o) Underline the necessity for financial and technical assistance, easier access of Mediterranean agricultural and industrial exports to EU markets, and practical translation of facilitating benefit from the four freedoms by Mediterranean Partners into actions, in accordance with the Commission's communication of 11 March 2003, and in the run-up to the completion of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010.**
- (p) Call on the EMPA committees to examine the proposal for setting up a civil protection mechanism combating natural and man-made disasters and submit proposals after appropriate consultations and opinions from national experts of the signatory states of Barcelona process and from the European Commission and Council of the European Union including, inter alia, the implementation of an early warning system for civil protection in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.**

(q) Emphasize the importance of the role of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures in promoting mutual understanding between the Euro-Mediterranean peoples, in eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, in enhancing pluralism and respect for "The Other", in projecting the common heritage of the Euro-Mediterranean region, and in deepening the role of the civil society and non-governmental organizations as boosters for development, modernisation, reform and mutual understanding and respect.

- 8- The closing sitting was held in the morning of 15 March 2005. The sitting voted on the amendments and adopted the Final Resolution of the First Session (Text annexed).**
- 9- Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, President of the European Parliament made closing comments at the closing session. Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly made a closing statement and handed over the Presidency of EMPA to Mr. Josep Borrel Fontelles, President of the European Parliament, who will assume the Presidency as of 23 March 2005 for one year.**
- 10- The participants expressed their sincere thanks to the Arab Republic of Egypt and to the People's Assembly for their hospitality and the excellent organisation of the First Session of EMPA. They extended special thanks and appreciation to Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of EMPA for his dedicated efforts during the term of his Presidency and for the wise manner in which he steered the proceedings of the First Session of EMPA.**

They noted with pleasure the invitation from the European Parliament to host the second session of EMPA in Brussels, and the envisaged extraordinary session in order to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process which, preferably, should take place in the Mediterranean partner region.

11- The Assembly instructed its President to forward this Declaration, together with the annexes thereto, to the presidents of the parliaments and the governments of the 35 members of the Barcelona Process, to those of Libya, Mauritania, Romania and Bulgaria as well as to the EU and other participating institutions.
