

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE, EXCHANGES BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETIES AND CULTURE, APPROVED BY CONSENSUS AT THE EMPA MEETING OF 15 MARCH

The Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture,

Considering

- i. the extensive debate held at the sittings of 22 September 2004 and 31 January – 1 February 2005;
- ii. the observations on migration made by Mr Frattini, Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice, at the sitting of 31 January;
- iii. the information on Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation provided by the European Commission departments, at the sitting of 1 February, and the new partnership prospects launched by the European Neighborhood Policy;
- iv. the three-year (2005-2007) programme of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, presented at the Hague ministerial conference, and the conclusions thereof;

*on the subject of migration*

- 1) Notes that immigration represents a multi-cause phenomenon to be addressed through a common European policy and an effective partnership with countries of origin and transit;
- 2) Takes note of the initiatives by the European Commission, with special reference to the Green Paper on the Management of Economic Migration; stresses the importance of taking all initiative in this field in compliance with the international law and conventions; estimates that the EU and its member States must accept their part of responsibility in terms of reception

and integration; in particular, States should be more flexible and humane regarding visas granting procedures;

3) Expresses the wish that during the debate following the presentation of the Green Paper – which is expected to lead to the adoption of a true European strategy on legal immigration – Mediterranean partner countries will be extensively involved at governmental and society level (including NGOs and associations representing legal immigrants in EU countries); it also expresses the wish that in addressing illegal immigration the often mentioned principle of joint responsibility of partners will be fully implemented as a necessary step to develop a common Euro-Mediterranean strategy; expresses its appreciation for the extensive efforts by countries of transit to eradicate or fight this problem;

4) Stresses that the negotiations on the 2007-2013 financial prospects should be considered a test of EU member countries' willingness to adopt an effective common policy on migration and meet the objectives set in the Hague Programme. To this end, it stresses the need to develop a European approach to share the costs related to the reception of migrants;

5) Recalls that immigration results mainly from economic factors and affirms the necessity to establish a co-development strategy between partner countries on both sides of the Mediterranean;

6) Reiterates the importance of measures and programmes aimed at preventing a brain drain from migration countries by redressing economic imbalances and pursuing policies favouring the return to their countries of origin of those who could contribute to the strengthening of societies and economies of their home countries.

*on the subject of strengthening the dialogue between Euro-Mediterranean cultures and civilizations*

7) Expresses the wish that, in promoting dialogue between cultures and civilizations, the need to identify and maintain a common basis of shared values, indivisible and universal, will be taken into account, while fully respecting each State's national identity as well as cultural diversities, which are always to be seen as a potential value added and an enriching element for the whole area;

8) Believes that the programmes and projects included in the third basket of the Euromed partnership should focus on highly significant topics, including the protection and support of cultural and historic-artistic heritage, as well as cultural diversity; the dialogue and understanding between religions and different philosophical beliefs; the promotion of youth exchanges; a new impulse to intercultural dialogue, also in those EU countries where the phenomenon of immigration has a greater impact; the promotion of the culture of human rights; the promotion of the gender balance principle; a privileged role for the projects addressing the weaker sections of society and promoting literacy programmes and higher schooling rates; the promotion of environment awareness campaigns; stronger involvement of national media in disseminating and advertising the results of Euro-Mediterranean partnership and in granting an objective knowledge of mutual civilizations; a fight against the spreading of wrong perceptions and stereotypes about people on the two shores of the Mediterranean in media and literature;

9) Underlines the central importance of university-level cooperation in the context of the third partnership area; to this end, it calls for intensified exchanges between faculty and students and stresses that the creation of a Mediterranean University might favour a more effective coordination among the various cooperation actors;

10) Reiterates the fundamental need for a debate on the status of women within society and at work leading to the identification of common areas and objectives. In this connection, it invites the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly to examine the necessary forms of coordination with the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Women Parliamentarians, with a view to undertaking a common action vis-à-vis the governments of the partner States of the Barcelona Process;

11) Welcomes the three-year Programme of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, and invites the Foundation to provide information on a regular basis with regard to the implementation of the Programme. It also stresses that, in order to be fully efficient, the Foundation will need a constant and concerted commitment from all national networks.

11) Expresses its satisfaction for the solution to the problem of the Foundation's financing, which currently counts on €1 million from voluntary contributions from all partner States. It hopes that in the future the Foundation will be able to count on a stable funding system, open to contributions from new donors, e.g. local and regional authorities, NGOs and private organisations;

12) Expresses the hope that full synergy may be established between the Foundation and the Parliamentary Assembly, whose members, as they directly represent the peoples of partner States, will be able to give further impulse to cultural cooperation activities. To this end, it deems appropriate for the Bureau to consider involving a representation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in the work of the Foundation's steering bodies;

13) Calls for a new impulse to be given to sustainable development in the Euromediterranean Region, with the objective of the conservation of scarce natural resources, in particular water resources;

14) Takes the view that a strategy based on cooperation for an integrated rural development and on promoting sustainable agriculture is necessary in order to promote social, economic and territorial cohesion and prevent environmental degradation to the scarce and already highly polluted natural resources in the area.