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ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

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EXECUTIVE REPORT

DAY ONE

Opening of the Plenary Session

In his welcome note, **H.E. Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues**, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, welcomed all delegates to Portugal and to Porto, which he described as “the beautiful city of freedom”. The city, as the stage for the PAM Plenary meeting, is an important sign of the decentralisation of parliamentary activities and its political relevance. With its location on the Atlantic, and the proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, Portugal actively participates in the dialogue amongst cultures and peoples of the world. With its maritime vocation, and as part of the great family of Portuguese speaking countries, and the strategic link between the Maghreb and Europe, Portugal values the role of PAM in the 5+5 dialogue. The speaker referred to the recent appeal to the European Union to pay more attention to the Southern Mediterranean shore, and stressed the importance of a common policy towards Syria, Libya and other countries in crisis, in order not to consider the Mediterranean as the cradle of terrorism but of civilisation. He also called for more solidarity from Europe in welcoming migrants and refugees, stressing the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, who do not need walls but bridges. This should work on both sides, i.e. Europe welcoming refugees in a time of humanitarian emergency and, at the other hand, North Africa and Middle East countries enforcing the respect of human rights of ethnic, religious and political minorities. It is essential to tackle the deepest roots of migration, not through isolationism and battles between regional powers. Portugal is looking, for more cooperation between intelligence services, technical and military training, partnerships for education and culture, multilateral and multidimensional solutions, all of which aim at securing lasting, peaceful solutions for human development. PAM must continue to exercise the culture of dialogue, to inspire governments, regional and international organisations, as no time is to be lost.

In his address, **Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh**, PAM President, thanked Portugal for the hospitality, and extended a special welcome to the delegates of the partner countries and institutions: the Pan-African Parliament, the Maghreb Consultative Council, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), the Holy See, the Russian Federation, San Marino, the Sovereign Order of Malta and Romania. He thanked the civil protection services of Palestine, Israel and Jordan for their participation.

Being at the end of his term as PAM President, in accordance with the principle of rotation between North and South, he stated that this experience had been an intense one and he has seen the role of PAM growing in the international arena during this year. Despite scarce resources and reiterated challenges in the region, cooperation with the UN was intensified on international issues of common concern, such as terrorism, COP 22, as well as with the European Court of Human Rights of Strasbourg on human rights.

Cooperation with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP / MAP) has intensified, in parallel with the increased cooperation with the World Trade Organisation and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), mainly on foreign investments and regional economy. The EBRD has recently invested approximately Eur 4 billion in partner countries and had also allocated, at PAM’s request, a sizeable amount to tackle the Gaza water problem.

Crises in the region, such as Libya, the impasse in the Israeli - Palestinian peace process, the

dialogue on the Cyprus reunification, the civil war in Syria, and the refugee flows are the real concerns for PAM. PAM member parliaments should increase their efforts on issues such as humanitarian assistance, and be the voice of this Assembly. All delegations should participate as much as possible in external events, and also in the work of the PAM Standing Committees and other regional assemblies. Cooperation with OSCE-PA will focus on joint electoral missions in the region, while cooperation between PAM and the Pan-African Parliament, for future joint activities, is to be formalised soon. Cooperation between the Mediterranean and Africa is also essential, and PAM should continue to work along this path.

Hon. Renato Sampaio, Head of the Portuguese Delegation to PAM, welcomed the PAM President and Secretary General, the Portuguese members, and all PAM delegates to Porto. The agenda included important subjects such as migration, cooperation, science and innovation. Since the Mediterranean unites different cultures and civilisations, and for centuries has been a commercial route, the sea should not be allowed to become a basin of tragedy. Socio-economic crises in the Euro-Mediterranean area require active and decisive parliamentary diplomacy, and PAM with its member countries – with a population of 550 million people - was tasked with promoting peace and security for the democracies of the region.

H.E. Mgr. Rino Passigato, the Apostolic Nuncio to Portugal, conveyed the best wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis. The Holy See, an Observer to PAM, renewed its commitment to support PAM's goals for peace, security and stability, and based on the respect for basic human rights and human dignity. Since its very start, PAM has emphasised the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, in particular through the work of the 3rd Standing Committee on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights.

Pope Francis, speaking recently on the theme of security and peace, had underlined his conviction “*that every expression of religion is called to promote peace*”.

Education and social assistance in poverty and conflict affected areas should contribute to common wellbeing, and religion should not be used to foster hatred, violence and death. “... *One can never kill in God's name.*” PAM plays a key role in confronting the threat of terrorism, addressing its root causes, whether social, political or economic. Religion based terrorism is often linked to significant social poverty. Government leaders should also ensure that conditions for any form of fundamentalism are limited by social policies that give a special place to the role of the family, and underscore the investment in education and culture, in order to bring about the authentic social harmony that is essential for achieving coexistence in a multicultural society.

The message by **H.E. Antonio Guterres**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was read by Hon. Mohammed Abou EL Enein, PAM Honorary President. In his message, the UNSG expressed the importance attached to the work of PAM in the rapidly changing world. The message pointed to the important UNSC Resolution 2178 that restricts the international flow of terrorist fighters and aims at preventing violent extremism. Future reinforced cooperation between the UN and PAM is welcomed in the wider context of supporting socio-economic progress and promoting respect for human rights, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals so all people may benefit from a healthy planet.

The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between PAM and the Pan-African Parliament was followed by a statement by the President of the Pan-African Parliament, **Hon. Roger Nkodo Dang**. With 54 Member States and its Headquarters in South Africa, with Morocco having just returned to the African Union, the functioning of the Pan-

African Parliament and its challenges are quite similar to PAM's ones, with focus on issues such as youth migration from Africa, climate change, and the search for humanitarian solutions for both countries of origin and destination of migrants. The Mediterranean is the bridge to Europe and more "humane" relations have to be established. Conflicts that are so called "ideologies-based" are not related to religions, which should instead be a uniting force. PAM President's influence to bring the MoU to fruition is appreciated, and the Pan-African Parliament looks forward to future cooperation and activities with PAM.

Presentation of the work of the 1st Standing Committee on Political and Security-Related Cooperation, and Activities for 2017

Sen. Alia Bouran (Jordan), President of the 1st PAM Standing Committee and Chair of the session, thanked Portugal for the hospitality and the delegates for their hard work in the activities of the 1st Standing Committee. She summarised PAM's participation in various important events in 2016, such as the 16th OSCE Conference in Vienna on combating human trafficking; or the NATO-PA Seminar in Rome on the online radicalisation promoted by ISIS. This has been relevant to consolidate the PAM – NATO-PA cooperation. The Chair had represented PAM in the Professional Dialogue Meeting among civil protection and civil defence of Jordan, Israel and Palestine on the emergency management, which was organised by OCHA under PAM's auspices. PAM had participated as well in the regional workshop for parliamentarians on violent extremism leading to terrorism, organised by the Parliament of Egypt and the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in cooperation with PAM and IPU.

Furthermore, PAM will attend and co-organise events with major organisations, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) on counter terrorism. Furthermore, at the request of the UN Security Council CTC, and in cooperation with UNODC, PAM will organise a high-level conference on the evaluation of implementation by national parliaments of the UN Security-Council Resolution on terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters. This involves a pivotal role for PAM in global parliamentary diplomacy, such as the forthcoming high-level mission to the Middle East and, as soon as the situation will allow, to Libya. PAM will also continue to be engaged in activities of election monitoring.

Keynote address by **H.E. Hon. Isabel Santos**, Portugal, Vice-President of OSCE- PA. Hon. Santos welcomed all participants to Porto and conveyed the greetings of the OSCE Parliament, which was in plenary session in Vienna. With regard to the topic of "Migration, Cooperation and Security", she stated that views of parliaments differ on the key agenda-item of migration, which needs to be prioritised, as security is deeply rooted in socio-economic development for the nearly one billion citizens in the OSCE region. Therefore, the links to the Mediterranean region are of high relevance as per the Helsinki Final Act. PAM is one of the key fora for a discussion on the shocking tragedy of lives lost in crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and the forced displacement of 65 million people, including 20 million refugees, of whom 86% are hosted in developing countries and only 14% seeking refuge in developed countries, mostly in Europe. So the efforts of Europe are not comparable to those of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Among the 28 EU Member States, as of today only 160,000 refugees have been hosted and are waiting in Italy and Greece for relocation, but the lack of leadership, courage and capacity to build a common policy and response means the crisis is facing everyone.

As it is doubtful that efforts by Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan will be sustainable, therefore it is important to support these neighbouring countries in hosting refugees. International

responsibilities are assumed to be mandatory, as the sharing of responsibilities under international law and, therefore, creating dignified conditions for refugees. Legal channels for migrants have to be opened in order to provide a safe passage. The world is facing an old problem, with new intensity, to find new global solutions rather than closing borders, which only feeds trafficking networks of those fleeing poverty and violence through dangerous maritime channels.

In several shelter centres, people had been seen being lost and scared and asking for shelter, they were not showing any signs of extremism or terrorism. Common records and databases must be set up to counter the profits from criminal human trafficking and attacks on our common values. Solutions have to be found through intercultural and interreligious dialogue, by solving conflicts and creating better economic opportunities in the countries of origin and those hosting refugees. The urgent question is whether we want to save lives and how to help the flow of affected people who need political stabilisation rather than the demonisation of migrants and refugees, and the xenophobic approach by radical groups. The will and capacity to work in solidarity are under test, and nobody should be left behind. Referring to the Helsinki Final Act, the speaker closed by stating that history will not evaluate us for what we are saying today but what we will do tomorrow.

UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)'s Executive Director, Jean-Paul Laborde (by video-message) spoke on the value of international cooperation, the global complexity of terrorism, and the new measures required to fight it. Parliaments have an important role to play in agreeing on legal instruments to fight terrorism, incorporating also the rule of law. UN SC Resolution 2178, stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, has to be included in all countries' legislation. PAM should continue to play a critical role in all these efforts, including through the meeting to be held at the end of March in Rome with a focus on legal instruments to be developed, and in which PAM, which can be a model for all parliaments of the world, together with the UN will play an important role.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on "Counter Terrorism" - Rapporteur **Sen. Luigi Compagna (Italy)** referred to the PAM meetings in Monaco and Bucharest in 2015 when participants attempted to see how counter terrorism legislation could be harmonised in different countries. The difficulty encountered was that terrorism must be fought without neglecting the rule of law and human rights, which makes member parliaments sensitive to checks and balances. PAM continues to work intensely through several measures and modes, linking now the question of terrorism to migration, while there should be no cause and effect relationship. Terrorists are moving around freely throughout the world, but it is not a correct comparison portraying terrorist acts, especially after 9/11, as kamikazes, as in Japan during WW2. The situation is becoming more complicated and not every aspect can be addressed easily, as ISIS has a territorial dimension. Cynical merchants of death find it easier to fight their causes through the death of innocents. Targeted killings of individual groups of terrorist fighters are not a solution for national systems to counter terrorism. The solution is in fine-tuning legislations, again not an easy task. The role of some media is often relevant in creating an environment conducive to violence. One should recall that the life of foreign fighters was made easier by certain media, as military action - after its initial success - has helped to expand the terrorists' influence throughout the world. PAM and OSCE-PA have to work together to expand on an international legal definition to criminalise terrorism. Furthermore, a resolution has been pushed through OSCE-PA to allow for the involvement of the International Criminal Court in cases of suicide terrorism.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on "Security Challenges related to Migration".

Rapporteur **Hon. Maria das Mercês Borges (Portugal)** introduced the draft report, which had received additional contributions from Turkey and Greece. The document addresses some of the most serious and complex challenges facing the Mediterranean region with regard to refugees and migrants, which require the mobilisation of all Parliamentarians and all citizens. Looking for safe places, the many refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea face countless dangers. This situation now attracts global attention for reasons of insecurity, violence and terrorism, and has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, accompanied by incredible sufferings and deaths. Migrants and refugees are facing animosity and lack of trust, and PAM is working with the UN and NGOs to monitor and improve their conditions of refugees. The dimension of the human drama is such that it requires everyone to do his/her utmost to address those critical issues in relation to refugees and economic migrants, who have fled out of extreme despair, moving to situations often leading to sexual exploitation and forced labour.

In 2016, more than 300,000 people attempting to reach Europe took the route of the Mediterranean Sea, resulting in more than 5,000 deaths, and already 272 deaths have been registered in the first two weeks of 2017 alone, thus illustrating the crisis of the Mediterranean countries. The potential terrorists hiding among these poor people are no more than a very small fraction. The draft resolution on “Security challenges related to migration” stresses the need to show our best to carry out what we are able to offer as Parliamentarians.

The Chair of the session opened the debate.

Palestine: The Geneva Conventions and the rights of all people and of the Palestinians to establish an independent State must be kept in mind in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. It is important to refer to the decision of the last Security Council meeting on the subject, where the Palestinian delegation called for a meeting to cooperate with the Security Council and which resulted in Resolution 2334 on the protection and implementation of the two-state solution. There is also a need to activate the decision of PAM to work together to fight terrorism, probably at a next joint meeting.

Jordan: At present, 1/3 of Jordan’s population consists of refugees (1.3 million), causing a financial burden and pressures on the infrastructure, which must be shared by other countries. The situation is similar to that of Lebanon as a destination country for refugees.

Turkey: The impact of the Syrian crisis on the region, and the territorial integrity of Syria are points to be considered. Turkey is targeted by terrorist organisations that have become a common and global threat. Criminal law procedures against conspirators are needed to fight terrorist organisations operating from many countries. In hosting more than three million Syrian refugees, with its open door policy, Turkey provides free social services – such as education and healthcare - and has granted them the right to work. It has already spent over USD 25 billion from its own resources against the USD 512 million of foreign aid received so far. International burden’s sharing with Syria’s neighbouring countries is needed, and the EU and Mediterranean governments should share responsibilities and do more in providing sustainable support and resettlement for refugees.

One specific remark on the report came from Tunisia, requesting to change the mention of “fighters” in the report into “criminals”, and remove the words “secular” and “Islamic” be when referring to education in Tunisia. The Rapporteur agreed, as it was not intended to sound as a criticism on Tunisia’s remarkable progress.

The role of parliamentarians as representatives of their populations in counter-terrorism legislation was highlighted. Malta strongly advocated for PAM to be included in inter-parliamentary consultations on counter-terrorism. It will strive for counter-terrorism policy to be mainstreamed in European and other international fora. Malta offered its parliament as a platform for future discussions on this topic. Policy reforms must recognise migration and border control as leading challenges for the region and beyond, requiring a global approach. The Malta Declaration by the EU Council in 2017 focuses on requirements to provide measures to secure borders and disrupt the criminal business model of traffickers.

Syria appealed for cooperation to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. It put the question forward what international support will be given to its citizens if the infrastructure is destroyed and no more energy or basic supplies are available, due to military terrorism and extremist groups. To fight terrorism, a ceasefire is needed and not a foreign military intervention, as the Syrian government believes in social justice without differentiation between people.

According to Greece, terrorists should not be indicated as freedom fighters, and none of the parties should receive any support without accepting a negotiated solution to any ongoing conflict. Local wars are the basis for most of the larger conflicts, and the causes for refugee flows. Peace, without victory for either side, is, therefore, the only possible solution.

Egypt stressed that the country has worked for the last two decades to protect the Middle East and stop plans aimed at dividing the region. Islam is not to be blamed for terrorist groups, and Egyptian armed forces are working to protect the region against terrorism, within a global strategy of security and economic development, as well as of culture and social development, by stressing truth and cooperation. The nature of Al Qaida and ISIS is the same, and a new cultural strategy is needed in order to bring an end to ISIS. The fighting carried out by ISIS is not only against Christians but also against Muslims.

Cyprus referred to the vital importance of national security, as foreign fighters and extremism have contributed to a new environment with threats of terrorism of a transnational nature. Although Cyprus has access to a wide range of instruments and measures of counter-terrorism, also with its status as EU member, it is still facing an additional challenge related to the lack of control over 37% of its territory due to the Turkish occupation. No counter-terrorism policy can be successful if not addressing social and cultural roots of conflicts, and the rule of law is needed to achieve social justice and a peaceful and flourishing society.

Morocco stressed the need for strategic and economic cooperation between the south and North shores, as terrorism goes beyond regional settings. Morocco deals with the threat by means of training sessions and workshops to prepare a security plan, under the legal framework, has adopted laws respecting human rights and ensuring fair trial to inmates, and by using a cultural and religious approach based on overcoming religious, cultural and racial differences between people. To stop such conflicts, measures that give more power to regional parliaments to stop trafficking of people and weapons are needed. Morocco is a host country to migrants and refugees, and H.M. the King has stressed that the economic link between Morocco and Africa needs to lead to the African development and stability. National governments must be pushed to provide a final solution to adopt policies that respond to issues of migration and security.

Algeria referred to the problems of insecurity and terrorism that have no national borders, but

which require coordination and commitment to be fought. Institutions fighting against xenophobia and violent extremism, which go beyond national responsibilities, and steps to reinforce democracy and the rule of law, are the best way to overcome extremist discourse and prevent terrorist attacks. The problems of Mali or the Sahel must be addressed, and the responsibility between both countries of origin and the hosting ones must be shared as far as migration is concerned.

The PUIC SG stressed the common interest in strengthening cooperation with PAM in particular on the common responsibilities and mandates to override national and regional interests, including security, human rights and economic issues. International solidarity needs to be enhanced to find solutions to combat terrorism and violence. This includes stopping the financing of terrorism and taking dedicated measures to tackle root causes, eliminating social injustice and expanding the civil society's role. Furthermore, national legislations must conform to international instruments.

Russian Federation referred to interaction on progress with PAM in the Mediterranean region. Proximity of the Russian Federation with the affected region requires cooperation to fight threats of ISIS, terrorism and human trafficking, and to develop peace and security in the Middle East region. US foreign intervention in Afghanistan, Syria and Libya has created difficult situations, spreading to the neighbouring region. Consolidated efforts are needed to promote an international anti-terrorist front and restore stability in the Middle East and North Africa, to fight against the roots of conflicts, stop the flow of migration and terrorism. Russia is taking the political process forward through UN Resolutions and by supporting the meeting in Kazakhstan to solve the Syrian conflict and find a peaceful solution.

Syria followed up with suggestions to address the Syrian situation and develop real cooperation to ensure all Mediterranean shores will be secure and without conflict. Promoting cultural exchange and working together to fight borderless terrorism can help in achieving this goal. A halt to sanctions on Syria and bringing an end to terrorism are called for by discussions among politicians. It is necessary to reopen embassies and organise a PAM Standing Committee visit to Syria to assist in establishing a legal framework on fighting terrorism accepted by all. Furthermore, the situation in Palestine must be solved to end terrorism, and to fight extremism in other countries.

Voting on the two reports and resolutions led to their adoption by consensus by all members.

Project of OCHA, under PAM auspices, of the Professional Dialogue between senior disaster managers of Israel, Jordan and Palestine: the project was presented by Mr. Yussie Shapiro, of the National Emergency Management Agency of Israel, Brigadier Khaled Alshebailat, of the Jordan Civil Defence, and Major General Yousef Nassar, Director General of Palestine Civil Defence. The project aims at providing enhanced national and regional emergency response preparedness, leading to more resilient societies. Disaster management is used as a platform for dialogue, focusing on strengthening the interoperability and collaboration in disaster response and preparedness, and further improving the level of preparedness of the humanitarian actors on the ground. The project activities and regional collaboration form a holistic path towards improved regional preparedness and effective response mechanisms to help save lives of affected populations. Some 200 participants will take part in the simulation exercise.

To date the Project has succeeded in building cooperative and collaborative relations among Israel, Jordan and Palestine, culminating in six meetings to discuss gaps in the regional

response framework, guidelines for information exchange, challenges bringing humanitarian assistance into the region – preparedness, coordination and access – as well as common events/training courses. Proposals for a regional earthquake early warning system and an operational regional flood alert system have already been prepared. The participants also discussed the joint forest fire simulation exercise (EU MEFF, facilitated and supported by the Ministry of Interior of France), to be held from 22 to 25 October 2017 in the region. All PAM delegates praised the initiative and committed to support it further.

Presentation of the work of the 2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation, and Activities for 2017

Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal), President of PAM 2nd Standing Committee and Chair of the session, listed several important events to which PAM contributed in 2016, including the strengthening of PAM’s cooperation with international institutions to share best practices and lessons learned, such as the IMF, and legislations related to the energy sector. He referred to the cooperation with WTO and EBRD, mentioning a joint conference to be held in Morocco at the end of June 2017. This will bring additional credibility to the work of PAM and hopefully economic growth of the region. He also mentioned the creation by EBRD of the Eur 60 million trust fund to support, at PAM’s request, the water desalination project in Gaza as well as the meeting in Washington DC of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and IMF on the global economy and impact of instability on the region’s slow economic growth. The issue of climate change is a priority for PAM, and the Assembly participated with six delegates in COP22, in Marrakech. The conference was aimed at bringing the Paris Declaration into real action. On that occasion, PAM had announced its plan to hold annual meetings of Parliamentary MEDCOP. In 2017, the 2nd Standing Committee will focus on strengthening existing partnerships for economic cooperation, which includes a joint event with Confindustria (Italy) in organising the “3rd Meeting on Waste Management – need for an integrated regional approach”, to be held in Rome in the second half of the year.

Keynote address by **H.E. Ms. Teresa Ribeiro**, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal, on “Economic cooperation in the Mediterranean”. She was introduced as a great promoter of regional cooperation, and stated to be highly appreciative of the work of PAM. She quoted an Australian historian “*no salted water extension had such a great influence in modeling the world as we know it today as the Mediterranean...*” The Mediterranean is the cradle of our world, in the middle of fighting between civilisations - a place where the three major religions meet, with shared knowledge and culture, which brings people together. Even before southern European countries joined the EU, several partnerships with Mediterranean countries already existed, in particular for economic cooperation. The region has, however, less than 5% of global trade and one of the lowest degrees of integration, due to several devastating crises in the Southern Mediterranean region. The young and qualified population faces many problems due to the lack of appropriate financial instruments and employment. Countries should be open to welcome refugees, and Portugal has already doubled its quotas. Portugal is continuing its cooperation with Southern and Southeastern countries of the Mediterranean, also pressured by the commercial sector, with a joint agenda for development. The peace challenge continues to be a priority, as are climate change and the youth employment, with hopes of a decent life. There are also problems with media and social networks demanding joint solutions to mitigate threats to global security. In these fora, PAM can and must have a valuable contribution.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on “Climate Change challenges: after Paris and

Marrakech”, introduced by **Hon. Laurence Dumont** on behalf of the Rapporteur, **Hon. Michel Vauzelle (France)**. She referred to the PAM “2009 Malta Declaration” presented in Copenhagen on the occasion of the COP15, and to the efforts made by PAM on the issue of climate change as well as to the Kigali Agreement of October 2016, which was the follow-up to the Paris meeting with regard to emissions reduction. On that occasion, it was agreed to replace hydro-fluorocarbons (HFC) by more planet-friendly energy sources.

PAM participated also in COP 22 in Marrakech, where it promoted binding legislations, and committed to fight against climate change impacts, also by putting in place several initiatives and solutions. This represents a turning point in that it commits wealthier countries to provide financial support to poorer countries, to allow for the necessary adaptations. PAM will need to continue to collaborate with other stakeholders, and to follow up on the Paris recommendations, for which the 2nd Standing Committee is invited to continue its work and liaise with civil society to ensure their voice in negotiations are heard. It is also important to discuss the possibility for PAM to facilitate the organisation of a MEDCOP 23, before the next UN COP event that will take place in Germany.

Members were invited to vote in favour of the draft report and resolution.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on “The impact of the Arab Spring on the Economy in the Mediterranean”, presented by **Hon. Momo Čolaković**, Head of the Serbian Delegation, on behalf of the Rapporteur, **Hon. Aleksandra Maletić (Serbia)**. The report updates on the progress of the Mediterranean economies, particularly those of the Arab Mediterranean countries, six years after the uprising in the Middle East region, including the present situation related to unemployment, the status of women, and the cost of the Arab Spring to the regional economies - estimated at USD 614 billion - due to loss in growth of capital, of which over USD 260 billion in Syria alone. The fall in oil prices is seriously affecting oil-producing countries’ economies, in particular Saudi Arabia and Libya. The democratic transition of Tunisia is impacting the employment sector, in particular for the young people and women of working age (44.5%), while specific social traditions make female employment difficult in some communities. The influence of the economic crisis of 2008 in Europe is still and mostly felt in the Western Balkan region. This represents a challenge in connection with foreign direct investments, as these are conditioned on stability considerations in the region. On several occasions, PAM was thanked for its important role in addressing the economic crisis in the region, as political stability and transparency are key factors, and national parliaments can play an important stabilising role.

The Chair of the session opened the debate.

Palestine stressed that it is important to do things and not just be speaking, and welcomed in particular the PAM push for project for fresh water supply to Gaza.

Morocco expressed concern about the environment, with future generations being denied a clean nature, due to the failure to solve the problem of global warming. As Morocco is very affected and vulnerable, it has already joined international efforts in Rio aimed at creating dedicated legislation and initiatives for Northern Africa. After the Paris Conference and COP22 held in Marrakech, it is necessary to find a solution to ensure a future for younger generations, which requires solidarity with most affected countries. Morocco advocated for assistance to countries with specific problems.

Greece stressed the fact that there are historical issues of the Mediterranean region, and that Greece has been facing consequences of the severe economic crisis in the last years, and has

undertaken measures of austerity. Southern European countries have met several times and created a common front against austerity, in support of economic growth, through employment and trade. Within the EU context, and besides the Mediterranean Transatlantic Trade Agreements, more innovative ideas and greater involvement of highly educated people are pre-requisites. A good example is the “Engineering Association of Mediterranean Countries” based in Italy, a member of the PAM Academic Platform, which is developing a partnership between countries from Europe and the Middle East on engineering, protection of environment and cultural heritage.

Syria referred to the improvement in bilateral and regional relations that should also lead to economic growth. Economic crises are responsible for wars, and it is necessary to get out of the spiral with concrete resources and not just ideological insights.

Algeria referred to the issue of climate change and desertification, for which the enforcement of the Paris agreement is needed. In the context of the economic crisis, Algeria is against referring to Arab “Spring” as it was everything but a “spring”, because the question is who benefitted from the period, as it did not result in any job or wealth creation. It only created damage to the economies of the region. It is now necessary to work for a win-win situation for all parties.

Malta highlighted the parliamentary aspect of the upcoming meeting of the EU Chairpersons of the Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee, to be held in Malta on 6 April 2017. The purpose is to explore the economic and social impact of climate change, the costs of action and non-action, and the opportunities it creates for non-state actors. The Mediterranean is one of the most susceptible regions to climate change, and advances are lacking to counter it by Mediterranean standards. A project based approach with involvement of the private sector and addressing waste management issues to reduce emissions of landfills can contribute to improvement, while parliamentary diplomacy and new partnerships are needed to further promote cooperation on the issue.

Israel stressed the need to find ways to engage the political will to translate opportunities into realities, and find the best examples of dealing with problems by exchange of expertise.

Turkey expressed concern for the overall degradation in the region due to adverse effects of climate change, which requires international cooperation and a holistic approach for trans-boundary issues. Joint implementation must also take place in combination with work on desertification. Technology must be shared to promote resilience and capacity building to the most affected and deprived countries.

Morocco's second intervention referred to the COP22 Meeting in Marrakech to put the Paris Agreement into action, where the challenge will be to provide for environmental justice in parliaments and governments, in order to find sound environments for their citizens to achieve seamless development. Morocco has organised a scientific forum so that its legislation can enforce the Paris Agreement, although some of the problems of gas emissions cannot be solved with the current challenges. PAM should also develop environmental diplomacy and enforce the Marrakech conclusions, and translate words into actions.

Jordan stated that the country suffers from the impact of climate change, soil erosion and lack of rainfall and it is assisting 660,000 registered out of 1.3 million Syrian refugees, making up 20% of the population and consuming 25% of water reserves. Although 160,000 Syrian

refugee children are attending school, some 30,000 are still not receiving education. Jordanians share their limited resources with the refugees, but want the world to know how much the country does in this regard.

The Mediterranean Citizens' Association provided the perspective of the citizens that the disillusion in the region has to do with youth and women in Europe. It requires initiatives for improvements in the Mediterranean, to be able to bring back, among others, traditional diets of the region, in the interest of the health of the people, and as measures to deal with climate change. The delegate also expressed hope that the recent protests in Barcelona on migration and refugees policies will have an impact, as people deserve a place in a better world.

Voting on the reports and resolutions: both reports and both resolutions were approved by consensus.

Presentation of the work of the 3rd Standing Committee on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights, and Activities for 2017

Sen. Emma Fattorini (Italy), President of the PAM 3rd Standing Committee and Chair of the session, expressed sadness over the loss of Professor Franco Rizzi, Secretary-General of UNIMED, a leading personality, and Professor Ugo Di Capua, a long standing friend of PAM and Director of the PAM-sponsored Underwater Archaeological Programme in the Bay of Naples. She called for a minute of silence in their honour.

PAM Activities in 2016 included the PAM meeting in Strasbourg on Human Rights to discuss human rights protection, as well as the PAM meeting on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, with regard to fighting violent extremism and terrorism, and focus on the Moroccan experience on peaceful coexistence amongst religions, and its attention to the role of education, held in Rome at the Italian Senate. The visit of the PAM delegations of the 5+5 Group of Dialogue to Morocco also focused on the fight against terrorism and violent extremist through the role of the State and training programmes for imams. PAM has also invested in strengthening cooperation with several institutional partners on the promotion and protection of human rights. In 2017, PAM will participate in DIHAD and has received a number of other invitations from both IGOs and NGOs, and members are encouraged to participate in external events to promote the role, mandate and visibility of PAM. She also referred to the great value of interaction with Academic Institutions that can yield fruit through international dialogue.

Before proceeding with the debate and voting on the reports and resolutions, the floor was given to **Prof. Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo**, Rector of the University of Porto, for his keynote address on “The role of Universities in the Dialogue of Civilisations”. He considers dialogue of civilisations as one of the major issues, if not the major issue, of the moment, with basic questions about life in our “small global world” and challenges for the young generation and the “Millennials”, and conciliation of cultures and civilisation. In his view, seeing life in cycles of forty years means some disruptions in science and technology, major political changes, and increase of life expectation, all of which brought about destabilisation in Europe. The world has become a global market economy, with changes in the concept of individual career development and of education. He posed digital versus social networks: digital led to powerfully connected movements, manipulation of society and a multi-polar world with increased mobility leading to “spiritual territories”. Young people will live, work and study longer, think global, and move far away. However, he wondered whether, with increased life expectancy, quality of things improves. The world now has to face challenges of migrants,

large-scale regional wars, increased hunger and refugees, and peace and security are more at stake. Making reference to the “Clash of Civilisations” paper by Samuel Huntington (1993) and that by Ralph Flewelling on conflict and conciliation of cultures (1951), he believes we are learning from tragedies and we should not underestimate the power of the word and of vote, mostly in the West, and be strong enough to counter the impact of error. Porto University gives its students’ mobility and diversity, such as through the Erasmus programme, providing the basis for human freedom and interaction. The University is very committed to culture and sports, and with more than 4,000 students from 129 countries, the value of mobility is confirmed, while the profile of Porto is that of a safe and affordable city of innovation and technology.

Message from **H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**, High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), delivered by Ms. **Nihal Saad**, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the High Representative. The message pointed at the linkages between intercultural dialogue, human rights and sustainable development, and stressed the value of intercultural dialogue and respect for diversity to promote reconciliation, defuse tension, and make peace prevail. The SDGs should be achieved together with dialogue among civilisations. Such dialogue is an unavoidable outcome of globalisation, with increasing challenges to a harmonious society in such growing diversity and movement of people. Rights of minorities have become parts of current tragedies, with marginalisation and other imbalances. UN GA Resolution 59/23 of 2004 calls for interreligious dialogue and alliance among civilisations, but now a clash of ignorance has replaced a clash of civilisations. The media, in addressing migration-related issues in a way shapes our perceptions, and social media platforms do this with regard to minorities and migrants. UNAOC is monitoring hate speech and launched its #SpreadNoHate initiative in 2015.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on “Protection of cultural heritage” Rapporteur: **Hon. Gabriela Canavilhas (Portugal)** pointed out that culture is the cement bringing us together and nothing else, but in the Mediterranean region it has become a target of man-made destruction, and has been at the forefront of war rather than peace. Cultural diversity and multiculturalism should be promoted rather than being seen as destructive acts of faith. Destruction such as of the Buddha statues in Afghanistan and the Iraqi Library, the attacks on the Cairo Museum, and the destruction of Palmyra and Aleppo are examples of damage to cultural heritage. They are considered as war crimes and their actors must be prosecuted. The protection of cultural heritage is part of humankind and should be regarded as such, as a fundamental human right. “A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive”, as was said after the destruction of the Kabul Museum. *Cultural genocide* is a concept that PAM should be on the forefront of fighting against, and a matter to be considered as such in International law whenever it comes up in the political discourse.

The **SG** reminded in this context that the first official PAM document was called “*building on the common heritage*” and is still a very valid document for reference.

Debate on the Report and Resolution on “Freedom of expression and freedom of religion: the religious pluralism in the Mediterranean region” was introduced by the Rapporteur, **Hon. Badreddine Abdelkafi (Tunisia)**. He defined the word “freedom” as a magical one and a condition to live with dignity if free from undemocratic leadership. The report with its guidelines is the outcome of the PAM meeting held in Strasbourg together with the European Court of Human Rights, and the PAM meeting in Rome. Building bridges to guarantee the peaceful coexistence among people is a common need for all, as is religious freedom, which is

a basic human right and which is stated in all conventions. Limits to religious freedom and freedom of expression are known. Relations between religions and states are also part of the report, with focus on the Mediterranean and MENA region. Traditional examples of relations between States and religions are not necessarily spelled out by country, but religion should be part of the tool to achieve peace and stability. Cross-cultural communication and inter-religious negotiations, which were subject of a PAM meeting held later in 2017, should allow for such discussions on the various legal frameworks to address the question effectively. The speaker also mentioned that one result would be a draft resolution and a series of recommendations for adoption.

The Chair of the session opened the debate.

Malta strongly agreed that cultural heritage is a common heritage of humankind and Malta was very active on the issue in the context of the Law of the Sea discussions. This was first mentioned in the preamble to the 1954 Convention of The Hague on protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. In 1956, the High Contracting Parties undertook to prevent any form of theft or vandalism against any form of cultural property. The question remains, however, what can be done if perpetrators of such damage are non-contracting parties. The missing link needs to be addressed.

Greece mentioned that the present wars in the Middle East and Northern Africa are not the first occasion where cultural heritage was intentionally destroyed, but that the main difference is now the video technology. It is “*cultural genocide*” in the broader region covered by PAM, and Greece proposed that PAM uses this term in international fora.

Palestine referred to the freedom of expression that the Palestinian people do not enjoy, while one should also take note that religion is permanent but politics is subject to change and often misuses religion for political purposes. If we kill religion, we kill politics as well. Citizenship should be priority and all citizens should be treated equally.

Morocco mentioned the country’s experience in the context of security, and the visit of PAM to Morocco. The delegate called for the report on freedom of religion to include reference to the mixture of religion and extremism not only by Islam but by all religions, and to refer to the confusion between religion as a faith and religious fundamentalism as ideology. This would require some re-writing. We should also keep in mind the right of mankind, such as regarding destruction of cultural heritage in the North of Mali and the right to its protection.

Jordan pointed out that its literacy rate is at a high of 94% as is the gender balance of 55/45 female/male in University attendance. Jordan did organise an international conference to combat the work of ISIS and dry up its financial resources that are often coming from looting and selling of items of cultural heritage.

UNAOC sponsored a two-day meeting of religious leaders from the three monotheistic religions to an inter-faith dialogue in Alicante, resulting in a joint statement. This resulted also in practical actions, such as the unimpeded access to Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, with the help of the Knesset. The speaker believed that religion and politics should be separated, and that religious leaders have a specific role to play in conflicts, such as in the Palestinian question.

In response to the comments, the Rapporteur on Protection of Cultural Heritage called on members to sign the relevant international conventions, if not yet done so. A new convention on cultural property is under preparation by the Council of Europe, which will bring adjustments to fill the blanks in the current conventions.

In his final comments, the Rapporteur on freedom of expression pointed out that the way forward will be very long, but fixed pillars around which to structure the work ahead now exist.

The SG mentioned two conferences organised by PAM on the issue of cultural heritage, one of which coincided with the capture of Palmyra by ISIS. He also referred to the PAM debates on the destruction of cultural heritage by non-state actors, such as ISIS. The respective reports will be circulated among members. Regarding the proposal for PAM to adopt the term “*Cultural Genocide*”, PAM was also the first organisation to use, years ago, the term “*Environmental Refugees*”.

The draft Reports and draft Resolutions on agenda-items were both approved by consensus.

DAY 2

Chair: Sen. Lhou Lmarbough, PAM President

Vote on the candidature submitted by Romania to become full member of PAM

The President introduced the vote with the note that the application of Romania was received in time by the Bureau and met all requirements. The accession of Romania as the 28th full member of PAM was endorsed by consensus. The President added that San Marino is foreseen to be joining in the near future, to be hopefully followed by the return of Spain.

The delegate of Romania appreciated the immense potential of PAM activities as a forum for inter-cultural dialogue, and considered strong partnerships with the Mediterranean countries of great importance. Romania was satisfied becoming a full member of PAM and having the opportunity to work towards strong economic cooperation in the region.

Vote on the amendment proposal to the Statutes submitted by France

The amendment concerning the potential move of the Secretariat from Malta was opened for debate. The proposal had been discussed in the Bureau meeting last year and was now submitted for decision by the Assembly.

France and Malta were invited to speak, followed by a technical comment by the SG.

France had suggested, at the Rome Bureau meeting, to propose a new siege for the Secretariat of PAM Headquarters, which resulted in the suggestion for France to consider hosting the HQ. One of the reasons given was that France is closely connected to countries affected by crisis and facing a common enemy, i.e. terrorism. Europe should show much more solidarity with the Greece and Italy in welcoming refugees and offer aid to save their lives. France had proposed a major conference to focus on measures to create a consensus to prevent growing migration due to terrorism, war and climate change, together with Morocco post COP 21, and together reflect on and acknowledge the problem of youth in need of support in finding employment. PAM should be more visible and promote its valuable work, i.e. by lectures at Universities, and be more open to the public to bridge difficult gaps. France had presented to the Bureau meeting in Rome, in line with the Statutes, the proposal to host the PAM Secretariat, and had received a favourable opinion from Algeria, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and Portugal.

Marseille was proposed, with its unique image of an open community, hosting all Mediterranean peoples and full of Mediterranean history and struggle against racism. A new HQ agreement would have to be negotiated between the French government and the new PAM President to ensure that all PAM members could enter France with all diplomatic guarantees (e.g. Syria); all Secretariat staff would receive diplomatic status, and all the Assembly members would be granted parliamentary immunity. It would represent a new stage in the fight against terrorism through a strong alliance between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The PAM President clarified that, in compliance with the PAM statutes, the Bureau had given a favourable opinion but it could not endorse the proposal, for which the Plenary is the legitimate body.

Malta expressed concern that the way the matter had been handled was not in line with the PAM statutes and could not be agreed to as highlighted by France. Based on features of the French proposal, Malta deserved appreciation for the way it actively supports and hosts the PAM Secretariat. The Assembly had not received sufficient assurances to justify the HQ move as several applications should have been invited to host the Secretariat, accompanied by details of materials, rent, human resources, maintenance, privileges etc., to be issued. These were then to be reviewed by the Bureau and a recommendation to be submitted to the Assembly for selection by consensus. This was how Malta in 2006 was selected, and the HQ agreement can only be ceased by mutual agreement by the two parties. France would only present its support package once the move would have been endorsed. Malta hosts several high-level meetings and international/foreign institutions, whereas Marseille is mostly hosting consular representations. Malta is also currently holding the EU presidency, has a flourishing economy and strong reputation, offering the necessary security, and a good flight network to the satisfaction of many bodies seeking to settle in Malta.

Furthermore, the joint agreement spells out the juridical status of PAM in Malta for the duration of the agreement since 2007, with premises rent free, privileges, diplomatic status, etc., and was the basis for obtaining the observer status of PAM to the UN. The agreement will expire in December 2019 and has no provision for unilateral termination, and Malta has no intention to terminate it before its legal expiry date. The Assembly can only make any change after the expiration date. Malta is now becoming member of the Bureau, and is an active host and member and provide strong support to PAM's work.

Malta called on the Assembly not to vote in favour of the amendment in the interest of PAM in view of the lack of a transparent package offered by France.

The President clarified that there was no relation to political issues, but the proposal for a move was based on technical background only and did in no way understate the value of Malta. He proposed to analyse the issue before a vote by the Assembly, after unanimity by the Bureau in Rome.

The SG thanked both France and Malta for their interventions, which showed interest for PAM. Technical aspects have been studied by the Secretariat for the Bureau as stated in the various agreements and statutes, as prepared with the IPU in 2005-6, and the concern is coming down mostly to finances. The expert review of PAM's work over the past ten years shows a very positive report compared to other regional organisations, and it recommends that, if better conditions for hosting the Secretariat were obtainable, these should be considered. The limited budget of PAM, with smaller fees from most members (from Eur 110,000 each from Italy and France to Eur 11,000 as the lowest annual contribution), cannot carry the cost of the maintenance and necessary rehabilitation of a 16th century building, estimated at an initial expense of Euro 100,000, while also the increase in cost of living is not offset by an adjustment of the budget since 2009. The present budget allows the extension of contracts of only three professional political staff, while the cost of travel – essential for the functioning of PAM - is relatively high seen the limited network of direct flights to and from Malta. Therefore, the only option to operate with the present budget is to resort to looking for better conditions. In reply to a query, the SG referred to Article 7 of the HQ agreement between the Government of Malta and PAM, reading that the agreement can be nullified by mutual consent. Furthermore, Article 8 states that in the event of the Siege being moved from Malta and the bilateral agreement being terminated by mutual agreement, any material property remaining ceases to be enforced. France was the only country of those that had approached the SG to have followed up with a concrete proposal.

Malta responded that an article in a contract cannot be taken out of context; so only after termination of the agreement in 2019 can the Secretariat be moved.

The President offered to share relevant documentation for the sake of transparency.

France expressed dismay with the outcome of the discussion that was damaging the image of PAM. France had proposed to host PAM on the basis of sovereign rights of the Parliament and PAM. Technical problems have to be solved, not the least with regard to accessibility of Marseille versus Malta.

The President invited other delegations to intervene, to which there was no response. He announced that the draft amendment of Article 23 of the HQ agreement proposed by France, although meeting time requirements, would be submitted to a vote by the Assembly due to the lack of consensus in the Assembly, in line with the PAM statutes. Five votes were given per delegation of two or more (all except Albania and Tunisia who received one vote each), President referred furthermore to Article 15 of the statutes, stating that decisions must be taken by consensus. However, in case of lack of consensus, paragraph 2 states that a vote with at least 4/5 in favour will decide the outcome.

The result of the voting procedures is that out of the 87 votes delivered, 51 were in favour of the proposed amendment and 31 against, which means 4/5 was not reached, for which reason the draft amendment was not adopted.

Election of the PAM President for the next two years: only the candidature of the President of the 2nd Standing Committee from the North Group, i.e. Hon. Pedro Roque of Portugal, had been received, who was elected by acclamation and consensus.

Nomination of the new members of the PAM Bureau involved two vice-presidents from the South Geopolitical group who had been elected: Sen. Tahar Kellil of Algeria and Hon. Belal Kassem of Palestine. Furthermore, Sen. Alia Bouran of Jordan was re-elected as the President of the 1st Standing Committee. Sen. Lhou Lmarbough was elected as President of the 2nd Standing Committee.

From the North Group votes were on countries: Israel, Malta and Serbia were elected.

The SG elaborated on the new Vice-Presidents of the three Standing Committees: Based on the PAM customary procedures, there will be one Vice-President of each Standing Committee, to assist in networking and in the future meetings. Proposed and endorsed were:
1st Standing Committee: Hon. Nathalie Amoratti-Blanc of Monaco
2nd Standing Committee: Hon. Eleni Avlonitou of Greece
3rd Standing Committee: Hon. Badreddine Abdelkafi of Tunisia

The outgoing President clarified that Rapporteurs also need to be identified by the Secretariat to work with the three Standing Committees' Presidents.

Address by the new PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, former PAM Vice-President and President of the 2nd PAM Standing Committee. Speaking in Portuguese as the language of emotion, he greeted all and stated he was sure that the new Bureau members would provide great contributions. He expressed appreciation for the remarkable work carried out by his predecessor, often during very difficult times. He also appreciated Portugal's Parliament President who, despite representing a different party, had helped to reach consensus in the

Parliament on his candidature. It is cultural harmony that is bringing all together, despite religious and other differences.

PAM represents 500 million citizens, facing mainly political and security problems with an impact far beyond the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean is to be the sea of union, and people of goodwill are to be given a voice in the peaceful solution of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict as well as for the agreement between the parties on Cyprus. He pledged PAM will also work on the gap in representation, i.e. by Spain hopefully being able to rejoin PAM by 2018.

Presentation of PAM 2017 Activities and 2016 financial report by Amb. Sergio Piazzi

PAM Secretary-General took the floor after the vote on the future of the PAM Secretariat location, thus bringing clarity to the financial needs of the Assembly. In 2016, PAM was able to support delegates in their work, despite limited resources. Egypt, France, Italy and Morocco had hosted meetings for the Assembly. There were also opportunities for MPs to attend other important events, such as a second induction seminar on human rights organized in cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, which followed that of 2015 with OHCHR, again at no cost to PAM.

With regard to the calendar of activities for 2017, he needed to remind members of his request for national parliaments to host a next Assembly and other meetings, which cannot be at the cost of the Secretariat due to a lack of resources. As for the past, due to the lack of such offers, the SG had been requested to look for alternative options for MPs to be able to meet and progress with the work of the Assembly. The Government and Parliament of Spain will manage the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue this year. As Spain is not a member of PAM, the SG has requested the Cortes' assistance to organise a meeting of the parliamentary dimension at the margins of the next 5+5 Foreign Ministers meeting. Should Spain not agree, PAM will organise the parliamentary meeting of the 5+5 in another country. Morocco has already been asked for support with the organisation of other 5+5 meetings on issues of migration, security and education. If useful, and if invited, PAM could participate together with OSCE-PA in the monitoring of the Referendum in Turkey. Such participation is relevant for PAM's visibility and mandate.

While the next COP will be hosted by a non-Mediterranean country (Germany), a MEDCOP will have to be organised as agreed, and France and Morocco have offered to host, while national parliaments are invited to cooperate on the preparations.

The new UNSG decided to reshape and strengthen the way the UN is working on issues of terrorism, and proposed to create a new office for counter-terrorism, moving the CTITF Office and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre out of the Department of Political Affairs but not affecting relations with other bodies such as CTED dealing with counter-terrorism. PAM will need to closely work with the new UNSG to assume this responsibility.

In 2016, PAM participated in 42 events, of which 13 by MPs alone, 24 by MPs with the Secretariat, and 5 by the Secretariat or the SG to represent the President or the Bureau, or to prepare for PAM activities. The cost to the Secretariat budget for duty travels was some Eur 70,000 compared to Eur 90,000 in 2015, when PAM organised / attended 70 international activities. PAM has had to cut completely the activities of the Academic Platform, as funds were not sufficient to cover basic needs of the Secretariat, which is unfortunate as the work of PAM on educational issues is relevant. So, the decrease in spending by Eur 20,000 in travel

does not mean saving money, as no scholarships could be mobilised (i.e. Eur 200,000 in 2015 were mobilised for Tunisian and Egyptian students). Fortunately, the Region of Fez-Meknes will host the PAM conference for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Fez Programme in 2018.

After adoption by the Bureau, the 2016 preliminary financial report and the tentative 2017 budget were submitted to the Assembly for a vote. In this context, in 2015, the Bureau had agreed on an increase of 10% of the budget, that dated back to 2009, but was never implemented, because it was not endorsed by the Assembly, in the hope that the arrears due by many countries would be settled. However, this has not happened as four countries (Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, and Syria), have failed to pay their arrears, although they managed to regularly pay to the IPU. Therefore, the Bureau has once again approved the proposal, and this increase is now a requirement for the Assembly to endorse. This increase is also a consequence of the decision not to move the Secretariat, as a number of structural expenses for continuing the administrative work in Malta must be carried out. These new expenses are not included, nor were foreseeable, in the standard budget, as they were directly linked to the vote on the location of the Secretariat. These include the urgent maintenance works in the building in Malta, the replacement of the IT hardware dating from 2008, and the replacement of the ten-year-old car, among others. He added that part of the VAT issue with Malta has been solved and hoped that also the outstanding amounts including arrears (some 18,000 Eur) before 2014 will be refunded in the near future, with the assistance of the Maltese delegation.

Concerning financial figures, due to late or non-payment of national contributions, in 2016, staff costs amount to Eur 433,000, after leaving vacant three posts; operational cost is Eur 126,000 as in 2015; external activities cost some Eur 70,000 – a decrease from Eur 90,000 in 2015 – bringing the total expenses to Eur 631,000, representing a cut of Eur 81,000 over 2015.

Furthermore, the Erasmus program provides six students for internships at PAM. The services of the Senior Advisers, based in Malta and elsewhere are at no cost to PAM, as are the Permanent Observers in Cairo, Vienna, New York and Geneva, where the alternative office of the SG is located. New liaison offices are being opened in Rabat, Rome and one with UNSCO and UNRWA HQs in Jerusalem for the Middle East, on the model of those in Paris and Cairo. PAM is still looking to fill the vacancy for a bilingual (English / French) secretary in Malta since mid-2016, but no suitable applications have been received so far. The assistance of all delegations is required, since recruiting a staff from abroad is much more expensive than a local contract.

While at the same time last year Eur 452,000 in assessed contributions had already been received, only Eur 113,000 have been received so far in 2017, which means that the financial resources are now sufficient only till the end March. The SG encouraged all members to ask their parliaments to transfer the annual fees as a matter of urgency. He explained that the PAM budget has to be formally endorsed in order to allow some delegations to pay their contributions, for which a technical solution needs to be found. While the budget cycle goes from January to December, national parliaments can pay only after the endorsement of the Assembly that takes place in February. If it is not possible to advance the Assembly towards the end of the year, then the preliminary vote must be delegated to the Bureau. Without receipt of the outstanding payments and the additional budget, the Secretariat will not be able to continue its work. Furthermore, the Secretariat is housed in a beautiful historical building, for which the Government of Malta has taken care of the external maintenance of the building

itself. According to the HQ agreement, PAM has to pay for internal maintenance, but recently valuable frescoes from 1724 that need research and restoration have been reported to exist in the building. Discussions are ongoing with the Maltese authorities to see how they can cover this additional cost. At the same time, several major improvements inside the building – due to cracking walls and crumbling painting – and upgrading of IT hardware, replacement of AC units and the service car are needed, for which no provision was made in the budget. For this reason, an extraordinary increase in the budget is already required.

The financial report covering 2016 and the one proposed for 2017 were approved without exception.

SG's term was expiring at the end of 2017. The Bureau has requested the SG to continue to lead the PAM Secretariat and invited the Assembly to renew his term by four years, for which he will need to take the necessary steps for renewal with the UN, of which he is a staff member, once approval by the Assembly is received.

His extension was adopted by acclamation without any questions.

2017 PAM Prize laureates Award ceremony included only one prize awarded to Dubai Cares and accepted by the CEO, H.E. Tariq Al Gurg. He said he was honoured and humbled having been selected for this award, which he considered as a concrete recognition of the passion and dedication of Dubai Cares, a philanthropic non-for profit organisation based in the UAE, working for quality primary education in developing countries, specifically in the Mediterranean region. Its aim is to eradicate poverty through education, building schools, water and sanitation, school feeding, quality education through teacher training, literacy, and gender equality through girls' education programmes in countries where there are problems. In the past ten years, the organisation has benefitted 16 million children in 45 developing countries, six of which in the Mediterranean region.

Closing remarks

Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh, PAM President, invited the new PAM President and the Prime Minister of Portugal to join him on the podium. He pledged to continue working with the Bureau and all partners with the interest of the Mediterranean in mind. Furthermore, he greeted the new member Romania and added that San Marino would join PAM in the near future. He thanked the PAM Secretariat, and also the regional assemblies for their extensive participation. He was looking forward to the report on the three-day visit and meeting in Morocco on the fight against extremism and terrorism, a topic at the core of the PAM, also relevant for future activities of the 1st and 3rd Standing Committees. Morocco will always be willing and available to host the next MEDCOP, and he suggested for the meeting to be held in Quarzazate, in view of the PAM world level event previously sponsored by H.M. the King. He appealed to the national parliaments to try to host some of the PAM events to increase PAM's dynamics. He thanked the Portuguese Government and Parliament, the city of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, and all those helping in organising the event allowing for efficient proceedings. He paid tribute to all staff helping in all activities, as soldiers in the shadows, and also the interpreters for their work.

In conclusion, he announced that in 2018 the PAM Plenary Session will be held in Romania and in 2019 in Serbia.

New PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque (Portugal) expressed thanks to several members of Portugal, the speakers such as the OSCE delegate, the Dean of Porto University, the Mayor of Vila Nova de Gaia, the Protocol staff, the interpreters, the PAM SG, and all the staff of the Secretariat. He closed the Plenary Session by thanking again for the trust in him by his election, and paid tribute to the outgoing President for the hard work resulting in increased importance of PAM. He also thanked his colleague MPs for showing trust from all political parties; and for the work carried out by Portugal and the PAM Secretariat.

Portugal is a welcoming country bordering the Mediterranean countries with 15th and 16th century discoveries, Mediterranean by nature and Atlantic by location, with the Mare Nostrum motto of all different but all equal; different by language or religion, but common by cultural heritage and values, facing similar problems. The ongoing war in Syria has led to the destabilisation of a large region and the largest flow of people since WWII, requiring a common solution. Terrorism is also a real cause for the large flow of refugees, who are not the origin but the victims of terrorism. The Sahel region faces multiple challenges that have led to millions of people seeking refuge, often at unbearable hazards. All migration events are paving the way to dangerous nationalist rhetoric regarding the future of the planet. Support for the two democratic states living in peace side by side within recognised borders is the only solution for the Israel – Palestine conflict. He called for moderation and goodwill on both sides to lead the peace process that PAM members can provide. The progress in the negotiations for the reunification process in the Cyprus status is welcome, and he hoped that a peaceful outcome for the dispute will be achieved.

PAM is the forum where parliaments of the region work together for security, stability, development and peace in the Mediterranean region.

H.E. Antonio Costa, Prime Minister of Portugal, stated it was a great honour for Portugal to host the 11th PAM Plenary session, and wished all an excellent stay in Portugal. He congratulated the new and outgoing Presidents for the election and the performance on behalf of PAM. The main value of PAM is the parliamentary democracy for open dialogue on the Mediterranean region's priority issues. He welcomed Romania as new full member of PAM. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of State, in 2016, visited several countries in the Mediterranean region, and appreciated the role of PAM in strengthening the region's confidence in promoting security and economic development. He referred to the pressure of the refugee flows on hosting countries, the economic problems and financial constraints due to the fall in oil price and increased costs. Forced or irregular migration is one of the major challenges of these days, including the security of the area and the free movement of people. The use of the Central Mediterranean route by refugees is increasingly of concern, despite the decrease in the choice of the Eastern Mediterranean route. Portugal shares international protection responsibilities and was the fifth EU member in providing relocation, but is fully aware of the fact that responses must go far beyond the crisis directly affecting countries which are hosting refugees.

He referred to the work of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in Lisbon promoting solidarity, support to civil society and democracy. The Centre also focuses on global education, for which Portugal is hosting more than 100 Syrian University students and sponsoring 50 more in third world countries. He invited all Mediterranean countries to join the group of friends of the mechanism, to create emergency response capacity through education but also deep cultural values promoting social inclusion and fighting radicalisation and extremism.

UNESCO's initiative on cultural genocide is relevant as is the value of cultural heritage in international relations. Terrorism is a crime, independent of where it takes place and for whatever reason. Portugal continues to support the work of PAM through actions, material

and human resources, while interaction with the Pan-African Parliament is also relevant for the regional stabilisation. He also referred to the 5+5 Group of Dialogue's work in promoting respect for human values. The Mediterranean agenda is supposed to be a positive one, and he hoped for PAM to be able to continue working for the region's citizens.

In concluding the meeting, the outgoing President thanked all delegations present for the work done.