



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

Mid-Year Report
on the Activities of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Mediterranean

July 2014



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On the eve of the summer recess 2014, I have the pleasure to share with all national delegations a brief overview of the activities of the Assembly in the first six months of the year. It is a very concise exercise to keep you abreast of the work accomplished by the Assembly, the Bureau, the Standing Committees and the Secretariat. It also anticipates the PAM commitments for the second half of 2014 that will continue to see PAM involved in a series of own events and international conferences, the details of which have already been circulated in the latest copy of the updated PAM Calendar of Events.

Bureau and Secretariat

The Bureau of the Assembly, under the presidency of H.E. Senator Francesco Maria Amoruso (Italy) held two meetings during the first semester of 2014.

The 23rd Bureau was held in Marseilles, France, on 20 January 2014, at the invitation of the French Parliament, on the occasion of the PAM VIII Plenary Session.

With specific reference to Syria, President Amoruso informed the members that H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi, UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria, had personally requested PAM to use the occasion of the PAM Plenary to ensure the resumption of inter-parliamentary dialogue between Syria and its neighbors. This was aimed at facilitating both the delivery of “depoliticized” humanitarian assistance and the opening of humanitarian corridors, while at the same time creating constructive contacts with Damascus to work towards a pacific solution in the framework of the Geneva II conference. With reference to the peace process in the Middle East, the President reaffirmed PAM’s support for the actions of the UN and the USA. Finally, he noted that the Parliament of the Russian Federation would be attending the PAM Plenary.

PAM Secretary General informed the Bureau that Monaco would probably host the 2015 Plenary (now confirmed), and that the Hellenic Parliament had agreed to host the biennial meeting of Secretaries General of the PAM National Parliaments on 5-6 May 2014, back to back with the next PAM Bureau meeting. That will have been an excellent opportunity for the national parliaments and the Bureau members to take stock of the performance of the Assembly since the last evaluation exercise presented in Paris in February 2011. The Secretariat had already, in December 2013, conducted an internal staff performance report, and a new evaluation questionnaire was being finalized for circulation to national delegations and partners for discussion in Athens. Bureau members welcomed this initiative. Furthermore, a detailed and preliminary PAM 2014 work plan was presented to and agreed by the Bureau members prior to its submission to the Plenary Session.

Reference was made to the ongoing discussions with the Maltese Authorities for the renewal of the Headquarters Agreement and the VAT refund issue, which by the time of the publication of this report (July 2014) has been positively concluded with the publication of a new set of legal provisions for all the diplomatic representations in Malta. The Secretariat has duly expressed, on behalf of the Bureau and PAM, its appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. George Vella, for his personal contribution and assistance, which will help PAM to secure further funds to its activities. Furthermore, the Bureau, aware of the important renovation works on the historical palace hosting the PAM Secretariat, expressed its appreciation to the Government and Parliament of Malta for their commitment in investing in this major project.

The 24th Bureau Meeting was held in Athens, Greece, on 6 May 2014, at the kind invitation of the Hellenic Parliament.

The issue for an Operational Review of PAM, raised by two proposals from Malta and Morocco respectively, was discussed with Malta presenting its position, although not contemplated by the Agenda. The Secretariat is pursuing the necessary preparations for this important exercise. Furthermore, at the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat conducted an administrative study in order to adopt, instead of the traditional IPU system, the NATO PA model for the financial reporting of PAM's annual Budget. This was carried out and a prototype is herewith attached. The document shows costs relative to the functioning of the Secretariat in Malta and those related to the activities of each Standing Committee. This prototype is in English and will be translated in French in the coming months.

The Bureau then reviewed the activities held since January, and which are further explained in the following report on the 3 Standing Committees.

On 5 May 2014, at the kind invitation of the Hellenic Parliament, the 3rd Meeting of the Secretaries General of PAM member states took place in Athens. The event was a unique opportunity to review the relations between national parliaments and the PAM Secretariat; to evaluate the performance of the services provided by the Secretariat; and, in light of past experience, propose new formulas for the mechanisms and dynamics of PAM events, in order to ensure the active participation of all delegations in the preliminary discussions, whose conclusions will be at the basis of the reports and resolutions of the 3 Standing Committees and the Assembly.

The meeting of the SGs was extremely fruitful and useful, and Morocco very kindly offered to host the next meeting in 2016.

1st Standing Committee on Political and Security-related Cooperation and Regional Stability

The activities carried out by the PAM's 1st Standing Committee in the first semester of 2014 have been focused on further assuring that humanitarian aid channels were kept open in Syria and neighbouring countries; on monitoring and supporting the Middle East Peace Process; and on observing the developments in the democratization processes in the Arab Spring States.

With regards to the relevance PAM is dedicating to support the political transition process in the Mediterranean region, on 7 February 2014, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Senator Francesco Amoruso, attended the Presidential Ceremony on the occasion of the adoption of the Tunisian Constitution held at the National Constituent Assembly in Tunis. In his personal invitation to Sen. Amoruso, the President of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, H.E. Mustapha Ben Jaafar, underlined the contribution and the continued support of PAM to the “Tunisian revolution” and the attention afforded to the democratic transitional process.

In line with decisions of the Executive Bureau, in the first half of 2014, the PAM Secretariat has organized a number of High-level political missions during this period, namely, to Cairo, Moscow and the Holy See.

The PAM High-level Mission to Cairo, from 11 to 13 March, was originally intended to be part of a PAM mission to the Middle East, which took place in November 2013, and had included Amman, Ramallah and Jerusalem. The visit to Egypt had to be postponed due to the domestic situation at that time. In Cairo, the PAM delegation held high-level consultations with the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the President of the National Council for Human Rights, and H.E. MR. Amr Moussa, on political developments in Egypt and the region. The Mission also discussed with the Secretary General of the League of Arab States and the Secretary General of the Arab Parliament the latest developments regarding the unfolding situation in Syria, the democratic transition processes in Libya and Tunisia, and the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

On 9 and 10 April 2014, a PAM high-level delegation conducted a visit to Moscow. This represented the last leg of a series of consultations in New York, Geneva and the Middle East region aimed at supporting, through the instrument of parliamentary diplomacy, the Israeli – Palestinian Peace Process, as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the promotion of regional confidence-building through inter-parliamentary dialogue in the Syrian crisis. The main purpose of the mission was to hold bilateral consultations with senior members of the Russian Duma, the Federation Council, and two Deputy Ministers of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussions focused on the latest events in the region and possible developments, and served to review options for the role to be played by PAM in support of international efforts. Among others, PAM Vice-President Hon. Tayser Quba (Palestine) and Hon. Fadia Dib (Syria) attended the meetings.

On 11 and 12 June 2014, a High-level delegation, led by President Sen. Francesco Amoruso, held talks in the Vatican City with H.E. Monsignor Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States for the Holy See on issues related to peace and stability in the Mediterranean region. The delegation also had a brief exchange with H.H. Pope Francis, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, following the recent visit of the Holy Father to Jordan, Israel and Palestine.

On the Middle East Peace Process, PAM remains committed to follow closely the developments taking place, offering all its possible assistance to facilitate direct talks and urging both sides not to react to any provocation that could further jeopardize the already destabilised peace talks. Moreover, the Secretariat keeps close and direct links with Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians, and continue to use every opportunity, during PAM meetings and missions, for them to meet and share options on how to cooperate in the present situation.

PAM also had to take a firm position on situations that, according to its values, represent a major threat to the future of the region and its people. The Assembly condemned with no reserve the cowardly act of

the killing of three Israeli youth and of the young Palestinian boy, expressing its concern over the consequences and escalation of violence in the region, especially against innocent civilians. Furthermore, at the request of a number of its Southern members, PAM also addressed a message to the Australian Parliament and Government expressing their concern about the usage of a new terminology adopted in Canberra referring to “Disputed East Jerusalem” instead of “Occupied East Jerusalem”, and recalled the provisions of the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

PAM also organized and participated in other meetings within the framework of its 1st Standing Committee. The 5th High Level Meeting of the National Parliaments of the Western Mediterranean Cooperation (5+5 Dialogue) was convened in Lisbon, Portugal, on 20 May 2014. The meeting was coordinated, at the invitation of the Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament, by PAM, which is responsible for servicing the parliamentary dimension of the 5+5 Dialogue. Furthermore, three PAM Vice-Presidents, namely, H.E. Ms. Maria da Coceição Pereira (Portugal), Sen. Mokhtar Youcef (Algeria), Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh (Morocco), and PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzzi, also participated at the 5+5 Economic Business Forum and the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs which followed.

The President of PAM’s 1st Standing committee, Sen. Mohamed Halaiqah (Jordan), represented PAM in many meetings associated with the work of the Committee. Among them, there were the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: “Strengthening international support for a just and lasting solution of the question of Jerusalem”, which was held in Ankara, Turkey on 12 – 13 May 2014, as well as the Plenary Session of the UfM Parliamentary Assembly, which was held at the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 9 February 2014.

For the second half of 2014, PAM is in contact with the authorities in Cairo to field a team to monitor the upcoming parliamentary elections in Egypt, expected to take place during the month of October. As soon as possible, another mission to Tripoli will be organized with the aim to meet the newly elected Council of Representatives in Libya to discuss the transition process and to define how PAM can concretely assist this delicate phase.

From 22 to 28 September 2014, since PAM enjoys the Permanent Observer Status to the United Nations General Assembly, a high-level delegation will be heading to New York to take part in the High-level segment meetings of the 69th Session of the UNGA.

In fall 2014, the President, members of the Bureau and of the 1st Standing Committee, are also planning a visit to the Balkans. This mission takes into consideration the request by the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the PAM VIII Plenary Session, in Marseille, for a PAM delegation to visit Sarajevo in view of the lasting political deadlock. After Sarajevo, the team will also visit Slovenia and Montenegro to strengthen cooperation with the respective parliaments. Similarly, a visit to the Spanish Cortes is being envisaged following the discussions with the Spanish delegation at the 5+5 meeting in Lisbon.

2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation, Development and Partnership;

With reference to the activities carried out by the PAM 2nd Standing Committee, the main event was indeed the international conference entitled “Waste Management in the Mediterranean countries - Social, environmental and financial benefits resulting from a better use of resources”. The event, hosted by the Italian Confederation of Industries, was held in Caserta on 30 May 2014 and was followed, the

day after, by the 4th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean.

PAM also opened and addressed the joint PAM-ANIMA seminar on the Diaspora, held in Marseille, France, on 24 June 2014, which tackled the crucial importance of the contribution of foreign communities to the economic and social development.

In addition, PAM participated and contributed to several international events pertaining to the 2nd Standing Committee, among which:

- EC Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Creativity Innovation and IPR in the Textile and Clothing Industry in the Euro-Mediterranean Area (Florence, Italy, 24-25 March 2014). The event represented an excellent opportunity for PAM to strengthen its ties with the EC;
- UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change (Athens, 13 May 2014). The outcome of the meeting will be instrumental for PAM in the preparation of its contribution to the World Climate Change Conference of Paris 2015;
- On 21 June 2014, PAM Secretary General attended in Rome the conference of the “Innovatori Europei”, a high-level political and academic think-tank. The outcome of this conference, dedicated to Challenges of Logistics for Southern Italy, was a set of specific recommendations to the Italian Prime Minister, including the establishment of an Observatory for Mediterranean Logistics and Infrastructures;
- 25th Annual Session of the Crans Montana Forum (Marrakech, Morocco, 19-22 June 2014). On this occasion, PAM Vice-President, Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh, laid the foundations for a structured cooperation with the CMF;
- OME Conference “Building a sound and common energy future” (Rome, 24 June 2014). The meeting took place under the auspices of PAM, which contributed to the event with the active participation of PAM President, Sen. Francesco Amoruso, and PAM Vice President, Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh;
- On energy-related issues, PAM further strengthened its ties with MEDREG and Med-TSO, by addressing their General Assemblies, respectively in Amman and Marrakech, at the beginning of June.

In connection with the future activities of the PAM 2nd Standing Committee, a dedicated conference on the “Relevance of Tourism in the Mediterranean” will be organized by PAM in May 2015 in Malta, co-hosted by the Malta Institute of Management.

In line with the decisions adopted at the Plenary Session in Marseille, PAM will also participate and contribute at a special meeting of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2014 in New York dedicated to the crucial issue of Climate Change. This event, and its recommendations, are important in view of the COP 21 conference to be held in Paris in 2015, in which a common, shared and binding agreement on emissions reduction is expected to be signed. As already done for COP 15, the preparations for PAM’s contribution to the COP 21 Conference in Paris will include, inter alia, PAM’s participation at the Verona Energy Efficiency Summit in October 2014, and the organization of a dedicated PAM preparatory meeting in Marseille, hosted by the French Parliament, as kindly offered by PAM Vice-President, Hon. Michel Vauzelle, on the occasion of the 5th Parliamentary Meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue, held in Lisbon on 20 May 2014. To ensure a coherent approach with other partner organizations, PAM MPs will also attend the IPU parliamentary meeting on this subject scheduled in Lima, Peru, on 8 December 2014, on the occasion of COP 20.

In connection with the broader future programme of the PAM Panel, the Secretariat will focus on the priorities identified by the Steering Committee of the Panel itself during its 4th meeting in Caserta.

3rd Standing Committee on Dialogue among Civilizations and Human Rights

With reference to the activities that the 3rd Standing Committee carried in the first semester of 2014, in fields related to Women, Gender Equality, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Inter-religious Dialogue, the period was extremely rich of events.

On 6 February 2014, in preparation for the PAM Antalya session, H.E. Amb. Peter Schatzer, PAM Permanent Observer to the UN and other International Organization in Vienna, represented PAM at an important conference organized by the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS), of the United Nations Office for Crime and Drugs (UNODC) in Vienna- Austria. The event was on the 10th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Protocols.

On 26-27 March 2014, Hon. Klodiana Spahiu (Albania), represented PAM at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) conference on “Women’s Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress”, which was held in Barcelona, Spain.

On 1-2 April 2014, PAM President Sen. Francesco Maria Amoroso, represented PAM at the Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy and Religion, organized by the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy ICD in Rome, Italy. This Symposium focused on best practices and future strategies for applied cultural diplomacy, as well as strengthening relations between states and communities.

On 24-25 April 2014, PAM organized a High-level Parliamentary hearing dedicated to a number of selected themes related to Human Rights. The meeting was held in Antalya, at the invitation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Senior UN officials, experts, numerous parliamentarians and major stakeholders from the region addressed the meeting, which covered the following topics: Human Trafficking; Modern day Slavery; The consequences of displacement on Women and children in conflicts – protection and assistance; and PAM engagement in Human Rights. The meeting adopted a set of important recommendations, included in the report already circulated to all PAM members, associate members, regional parliaments, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

For what the activities of the 3rd Standing Committee in the second semester of 2014 are concerned, the following events are scheduled:

On 29-30 August 2014, PAM, in its capacity as a member of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAoC), will be represented at the UNAoC 6th Forum to be held in Bali, Indonesia.

On 27-30 October 2014, PAM is preparing to participate at the 10th Anniversary of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation, to be marked at an event in Naples in October, with representatives from 42 countries.

In November 2014, PAM will be participating at the 4th Mediterranean Citizen Assembly (MCA), following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with this large umbrella NGO with key partners from the civil society, on the occasion of their 3th Assembly held in November 2013.

In early December 2014, in line with the provisions of the “Fez Programme”, the PAM Academic Platform in the Mediterranean will be launched on the occasion of an International Conference hosted by the Rector of the University of Catania (Italy).