



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE**

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

Interim Report on the activities
of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

22 November 2017

Introduction

During the first 10 months of 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean has performed extremely well, focusing its actions on the priority themes identified at its Bureau meetings in Rome and Porto, and subsequently validated at the Plenary Session in Portugal.

PAM's Parliamentary diplomacy tools and standing were used, in 2017, to support political dialogue, confidence building and peace efforts throughout the region, with particular emphasis in the Middle East and North Africa.

The key partnership with the UN Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee proved its value, and allowed PAM to sustain a major international parliamentary effort aimed at facilitating the implementation of the relevant UNSC resolutions to prevent, fight, and contain ISIS, its foreign terrorist fighters, radicalization, and the spread of violent extremism. PAM also took some concrete steps in promoting Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, as well as national reconciliation efforts in Syria and Libya.

Mass Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and Europe represents another topic on which PAM has been particularly active in 2017, namely the cooperation established with the President of the United Nations General Assembly aimed at contributing to the Global Compact. Particularly relevant is also the agreement signed with the Pan-African Parliament to address together this issue.

In addition to its concerns for the security and stability of the region, PAM has developed a model cooperation framework with the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, the IMF, and European financial institutions aimed at sustaining structural investments in the southern shore and the Western Balkans, as well as supporting the further development of SMEs, which are key to employment and sustainable prosperity. With regard to climate change, PAM took upon itself to organise the parliamentary MEDCOP 2017, in order to continue reaffirming the importance of the Paris and Marrakesh COP agreements.

On the question of dialogue of cultures and religions, gender balance, and higher education at the service of regional security and stability, PAM organised a dedicated parliamentary hearing

on the role of religious leaders, with the aim to provide lessons learned and best practices to its members. The PAM Academic Platform continued to attract new members.

The activities of the standing committees are detailed in the text below, and provide additional information on the work program carried out so far.

On the administrative side, the Assembly worked with the available funds, and it is thankful to its members and partners who hosted its activities at no cost to the PAM budget. In the last 10 years, the operational and living costs have increased exponentially, while the budget has remained unchanged since 2009. This requires the implementation, in 2018, of the 10% increase of national contribution voted in Porto, in the absence of payments of substantial arrears.

The basic preliminary financial figures, as of 3 October 2017, are:

Funds received: Euro 672,450 (86.8%) out of a theoretical budget of Euro 774,500 (100%)

Expenditures: Euro 474,874

Arrears still to be received: Euro 431,450

VAT refunds due to PAM: Euro 18,398

Estimated expenditures at 31 Dec 2017: Euro 736,840

1st Standing Committee on Political and Security-related Cooperation

With regards to the activities of the PAM 1st PAM Standing Committee, the Secretariat organized two main activities in 2017. The first one was a Regional Seminar for parliamentarians on the “Evaluation of the role of national parliaments in promoting States’ implementation of the United Nations Security Council’s resolutions on Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters” organized in cooperation with the United Nations. The Seminar, generously hosted by the Italian Senate, was held in Rome on 30-31 March 2017, within the framework of the EU-UNODC Initiative on Criminal Justice Responses to Foreign Terrorist Fighters (2015-2019). The outcome of the seminar highlighted a number of gaps, namely that national legislations adopted to counter ISIS and foreign fighters were still lacking common language and interoperability.

The second activity was a high-level mission to the Middle East, as decided on the occasion of 11th PAM Plenary Session in Porto. The mission took place from 16 to 19 July 2017. Delegates spent 16 and 17 July in Amman, where they held meetings with representatives of UNRWA, the Government, the Senate and the Royal Court of Jordan, and visited the Za’atari refugee camp. On 18 July, the delegation met with representatives of the Palestinian Authority and the PLC in Ramallah. On 19 July, the last day of the mission, the delegation held meetings in Jerusalem with senior officials from UN agencies, the Israeli Government and the Knesset. PAM is at present following up, with its partners in Amman, Ramallah and Jerusalem, a series of dedicated actions aimed at supporting peace efforts to achieve a two state solution.

PAM delegates and staff of the Secretariat also contributed to a number of events to which the Assembly had been invited.

PAM addressed the “Professional dialogue meeting among the civil protection organizations of Jordan, Israel and Palestine”, organised by UN OCHA, in Jordan on 26 January 2017. Sen. Alia Bouran, PAM Vice President, highlighted that, since major natural disasters do not respect borders, it is the responsibility of states to be prepared to provide any assistance that the populations may require following these catastrophes.

From 31 January 2017 to 2nd of February, PAM Secretariat co-organized, together with UNODC and the IPU, the “Regional Conference for Parliamentarians on the Challenges Posed by Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Preventative Criminal Justice Responses” held in Aswan, Egypt. On this occasion, Sen. Amoruso presented both PAM’s approach and a comprehensive overview of counter-terrorism legislation in Italy, and its effectiveness in addressing the various evolving manifestations of the terrorist threat.

On the occasion of its 11th Plenary Session, which was hosted by the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, in Porto, on 23-24 February 2017, PAM delegates adopted two reports and resolutions related to the 1st Standing Committee: one was dedicated to “Counter Terrorism”, while the other one focused on “Security Challenges related to Migration”.

On 21-23 March 2017, PAM participated, represented by PAM Vice President, Hon. Belal Qasem, at the “94th Rose-Roth Seminar” of the NATO-PA, held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A high-level delegation led by PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, participated at the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States, held in St. Petersburg, on 27 March 2017. In his address, on the occasion of the Inaugural Plenary Session, President Roque underlined that international Terrorism is a common threat, an issue that does not have national or regional borders and for this reason, it needs to be tackled through joint and coordinated efforts by all relevant players of the international community, namely Governments, Parliaments and communities. Ties between the two assemblies were strengthened, and PAM and IPA CIS agreed to jointly hold a meeting on counter-terrorism, tentatively, in April 2018.

PAM participated in the Conference for Parliamentary Actions for Nuclear Disarmament, organised by the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), in Vienna on 5 May 2017. On this occasion, PAM Vice-President, Hon. Belal Qasem, stressed that the work of the Assembly on security threats is very active and not limited to terrorism issues, and it follows the international dialogue on disarmament with great interest, a key issue to reach a stable and peaceful Mediterranean region.

The PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, addressed the opening ceremony of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament, held on 8 May 2017, in Midrand, South Africa. This was the first participation by PAM to an event of the Pan-African Parliament, following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Assemblies, at the PAM 11th Plenary Session, held in Porto, last February.

On 15 and 16 May 2017, a PAM high-level delegation, led by President Hon. Pedro Roque, accompanied by PAM Honorary President, Sen. Francesco Amoruso and PAM Secretary General, Ambassador Sergio Piazzì, paid an official visit to San Marino. On that occasion, a number of bilateral meetings and discussions were held in order for PAM and San Marino to finalize the procedures for the accession of San Marino as a full member of PAM.

PAM participated at the 2nd Workshop on Security & Stability in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, which took place in Athens, on 25-27 May 2017, organized by Institute of International Economic Relations of Athens. PAM was represented by Sen. Alia Bouran, President of the PAM 1st Standing Committee, and Hon. Eleni Avlonitou, Head of the Greek Delegation to PAM and Vice-President of the PAM 2nd Standing Committee.

PAM Honorary President, Senator Francesco Amoruso, addressed the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session, held in Tbilisi, on 26-29 May 2017. The session focused mainly on issues pertaining to Eastern Europe, Food and Water Security in the Middle East and North Africa, and Potential Economic Consequences of Climate Change, among others.

PAM President Hon. Pedro Roque was among the keynote speakers at the Plenary Session of the Fourth South East Cooperation Parliamentary Assembly, held on 8-10 June 2017, in Zagreb, Croatia. In Zagreb, President Roque stressed that in the present regional context, PAM's main purpose is to promote international parliamentary dialogue to achieve stable and sustainable political, social, economic and cultural conditions, and in this regard, cooperation is crucial.

A high-level PAM delegation visited the UN Headquarters in New York from 19 to 22 June 2017 for consultations with senior officials of the United Nations in advance of the PAM mission to the Middle East in mid-July. The delegation attended on 20-21 June a special meeting of the UN Security Council / Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) with international, regional and sub-regional organizations, at which Hon. Pedro Roque addressed the CTC, while PAM Secretary General chaired one of the sessions. The high-level bilateral meetings in New York included, *inter alia*, consultations with Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, ASG/CTED; Mr Miroslav Jenca, ASG/DPA; the UNDP team dealing with capacity building and sustainable development in the MENA region; the Chief of Cabinet and the Director of the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General.

On 10 August, PAM Secretary General held a bilateral meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta, H.E. Carmelo Abela. The discussion focused on cooperation with PAM, as well as the application and respect of the Headquarter Agreement and the structural works needed at Spinola Palace.

A high-level PAM delegation, led by President Pedro Roque, participated in the 72nd UN General Assembly on 17-22 September. In addition to the general debate, PAM delegates held a number of bilateral meetings, among which delegates met with the newly appointed Under-Secretary General for the UN Counter-Terrorism Office Vladimir Voronkov. PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzi, also addressed the special meeting on enhancing Africa's response to transnational organized crime.

Hon. Pedro Roque and PAM Honorary President, Sen. Francesco Amoruso, participated at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2017 Autumn Meeting - Mediterranean Forum, held on 3 October 2017, in Andorra. In his address to the Forum, the PAM President referred to the situation in the Mediterranean region as very worrisome. He mentioned the lack of progress in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine and the military developments in Syria and Libya, which are contributing to the instability in the region.

On 6 October, PAM Secretary General Amb. Sergio Piazzzi held a briefing for all Ambassadors of PAM countries accredited to Malta, at Palazzo Spinola in Malta. The briefing focused on the outcome of the recent PAM high-level missions to the Middle East and to New York, to attend the General Debate of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly, as well as on PAM future activities.

PAM Roving Ambassador Florin Urca, participated at the 63rd Annual Session of the NATO PA, held in Bucharest on 6-9 October 2017. In his address, Amb. Urca noted the current PAM activities related to counter-terrorism and migration, and stressed the importance of cooperation among parliamentarians from various international assemblies.

PAM Honorary President, Senator Francesco Amoroso and PAM vice-President, Belal Qasem, represented PAM at the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in St. Petersburg on 14-18 October 2017. On the margins of the IPU Assembly, PAM delegates held a number of bilateral meetings, including with the Egyptian and Syrian delegations. PAM Secretariat has established very close relations with the IPU, and several joint events have taken place recently or are scheduled for the close future.

2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation

With regards to the activities of the 2nd Standing Committee, the main event organized by the PAM Secretariat in 2017 was a High-Level Parliamentary Conference dedicated to Trade Facilitation and Investment in the Mediterranean region. The event, held in cooperation with the WTO, took place in Rabat, Morocco, on 8-9 October 2017 and was kindly hosted by the House of Councilors of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco. The conference explored many important economic issues, such as south-south economic integration, accession of states to the WTO, creating favourable conditions for foreign investment, WTO mechanisms and processes, as well as the role of MPs in engaging with the organization to promote economic integration and prosperity on a regional and global level. The main recommendations resulting from the meeting referred to the general level of trade and investment in the Mediterranean, which need to be further stimulated, especially with regards to intra-regional trade (south-south); SMEs were considered as crucial for the Mediterranean economy in terms of job creation, GDP and purchasing power; the exchange of best practices, lessons learned and success stories would facilitate trade and investments, as well economic integration; the WTO agreement is a useful instrument to facilitate trade; major improvements with regards to legislation on data protection were also indicated as a priority. The Rabat event will serve as a model for a dedicated PAM/WTO/UNCTAD joint conference dedicated to the Western Balkans next year.

On the occasion of its 11th Plenary Session, which was hosted by the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, in Porto, on 23-24 February 2017, PAM adopted two reports and resolutions related to the 2nd Standing Committee: one was dedicated to “Climate Change challenges: after Paris and Marrakech”, while the other one focused on “The impact of Arab Spring on the Economy in the Mediterranean”.

The Assembly also contributed to a number of events to which it was invited.

On 6 February PAM, represented by its Secretary General Amb. Sergio Piazzzi, took part at the Meeting of the Secretaries General of the Parliaments of the BSEC Member States held in

Istanbul. The main topic of the Istanbul meeting was “Cooperation between Parliamentary Assemblies and challenges for the countries of the Black Sea Region. Amb. Piazzini highlighted terrorism as one of the main challenges for the region, and outlined PAM’s unique role in helping parliamentarians address the threat of terrorism, through a number of high-level parliamentary conferences organised in close cooperation with UN CTED and UNODC.

Hon. Michel Vauzelle (France) represented PAM at the 8th Parmenides Forum of the Inter-academic Group for Development held in Genoa, Italy, on 21-23 March 2017. The meeting focused on the need of infrastructure in the Mediterranean, as well as sustainable growth in the region.

PAM, represented by 18 MPs from 9 national delegations and Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzini, participated at the Spring Session of the WB and the IMF. On that occasion, they attended the Global Parliamentary Conference organised in Washington DC on 17-18 April 2017. The Conference addressed a number of key-issues relevant to employment, automatization and macroeconomic prospects for the Mediterranean and at the global level.

PAM participated at the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting on renewable energy and energy efficiency, organized by EUFORES and held in Valletta on 19-20 May 2017. Top speakers from the EU and the Mediterranean region, as well as industry representatives and other experts, gathered to discuss the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency for the climate change challenge and a sustainable future.

On 12-14 May 2017, PAM, represented by Hon. Antonios Balomenakis, member of the Greek delegation to PAM, participated to the 2nd General Meeting of Engineering Association of Mediterranean Countries, held in Rethymos, Greece. The main target of the event was the development of a partnership between European and Arabic Mediterranean countries in the field of engineering by protecting environment and cultural heritage.

On 25-26 May 2017 PAM participated at the 8th Nevsky International Ecological Congress organized by the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPACIS) held in Saint Petersburg, in the Russian Federation. Hon. Eleni Avlonitou (Greece), Vice-President of the PAM 2nd Standing Committee, who represented PAM, stated that climate change, energy and sustainable development, together with food security and waste management, are among the priority issues to which PAM is particularly committed in the environmental sector. She added that PAM has been addressing the topic of Climate Change since its establishment, favouring the implementation of efficient legal frameworks on environmental preservation and protection at both national and regional level.

PAM, represented by Sen. Amoroso and Hon. Yılmaz Tezcan (Turkey), participated at the 5th Mediterranean Convention on Shared Social Responsibility, held in Naples, Italy on 15-17 June, 2017. The event was promoted by an Association among the Participants at the United Nations Global Compact, with the collaboration of the Mediterranean Permanent Forum for Cooperation on Social Responsibility. The event promoted the culture of Social Responsibility as a governance model in public and private, profit and non-profit organizations in order to reconcile economic, social and environmental sustainability. The main themes were sustainable development cooperation and good practices for Human Rights and Environment.

PAM also participated at the 49th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) held in Istanbul on 5-6 July. PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, underlined that the two assemblies, since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, on 9 November 2015, have definitely increased their cooperation and exchanges, not only in terms of content, but also from an operational point of view. The Agreement underlined the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions as inter-connected geopolitical areas for stability, security, democracy, harmonious economic, cultural and social development, as well as for the peaceful cohabitation of their peoples.

On 7-8 September 2017 PAM participated at the 3rd International SDSN Mediterranean Conference (MED Solutions) held in Athens, Greece. In this occasion, Hon. Antonios Balomenakis affirmed that Food, Energy and Water represents a priority for PAM, due to the numerous implications and consequences that it has on several aspects of the daily life of citizens.

3rd Standing Committee on Dialogue among Civilization and Human Rights

In connection with the activities of the 3rd PAM Standing Committee, the PAM Secretariat, together with the Chamber of Councillors of Morocco, organized a high-level visit to Morocco for the PAM delegations representing the member countries of the 5 + 5 Dialogue, from 9 to 11 February 2017. The visit was based on the recommendations and conclusions of the PAM meeting on "Dialogue in the encounter between cultures and religions: the role of politics and education", held on 15 December 2016 at the Italian Senate, in Rome, Italy, during which the Moroccan experience in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism was emphasized. The program included, among others, meetings with senior officials of the Moroccan Government and field visits to relevant institutions and religious monuments of the country. Moreover, a high-level seminar on "The fight against terrorism and violent extremism in the Mediterranean: what cooperation between the two banks? (Morocco as a model)" took place at the Chamber of Councillors to review the Moroccan security approach, the reform of religious affairs and the role of educational institutions in fighting against terrorism and in spreading the values of tolerance and moderation.

The Assembly also contributed to a number of events to which it was invited.

On 20-23 March, the PAM Secretary General represented the Assembly at the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development Conference & Exhibition (DIHAD) in Dubai, which aimed at shedding light on the suffering of children in conflicts and crisis. Amb. Sergio Piazzi underlined the urgent need for reinforced cooperation and consolidated action to address the needs of the millions of children in situations of war, conflict and natural disasters, as well as the importance of education in crisis situations to ensure access to a longer term perspective of employment and stable society. Many relevant bilateral meetings took place on the margins of the event.

On 21 March 2017, all PAM National Parliaments celebrated the "Mediterranean Day". The theme chosen for 2017 was "The role of Education against radicalization and extremism", to underline the growing importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue as powerful tools for achieving stability and peace, and to fight intolerance and extremism, while defending the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

On 1-5 April 2017, PAM, represented by its Honorary President Sen. Francesco Maria Amoroso, participated at the 136th IPU Assembly, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In his intervention, Sen. Amoroso highlighted PAM's conviction that achieving equality for a future of dignity and well-being cannot and should not be confined to purely economic considerations. In fact, defending human rights and fundamental freedoms contributes to combating inequalities in the economic field as well as financial reform”.

On 15 April 2017, on the margins of the Spring Session of the WB/IMF, PAM Secretary General attended also the conference organized by the George Washington University on the "Protection of cultural heritage in the Middle East", at which he presented the recent resolution adopted by PAM at its 11th Plenary Session in Portugal and Resolution 2347 by the UN Security Council on 24 March 2017.

On 18-19 April 2017, PAM participated at the IOM International Dialogue on Migration Workshop in New York. This panel provided participants with the opportunity to discuss the ways in which migration is reflected in major frameworks dealing with the development, humanitarian and human rights aspects of migration, to identify the gaps in coverage across the various agendas, and to determine how the Global Compact on Migration can address those gaps and otherwise operationalize the commitments made to date.

In the framework of the PAM Academic Platform, PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzì represented Sen. Emma Fattorini and addressed the participants at the Spring School of the E-Campus University, in Novedrate, Italy, dedicated to Tolerance and Human Rights. During the event, held from 24 to 28 April 2017, the Secretary General reiterated the PAM commitment for the respect and the promotion of fundamental human rights, as priority issues for the Assembly, which has constantly been engaged in responding adequately to the current challenges, such as migration and refugees crisis.

On 25 April 2017, PAM participated at the “European Defence Roundtable” Meeting, organised in Malta by the Munich Security Conference and the Women Political Leaders Global Forum. On the occasion Amb. Sergio Piazzì, stressed the importance of the role played by the countries on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean in the general concept of Defence issues in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Hon. Dragica Roščić, Head of the Croatian delegation to PAM, represented the Assembly at the Annual event of the Mediterranean Peace Forum of the MEDICON 2017, an initiative held in Croatia at the end of April 2017. In her speech, Hon. Roščić recalled the importance that PAM attributes to the promotion of encounters between cultures and religions as a direct way to achieve peace in the Mediterranean region and in the whole world, keeping in mind that there is no peace without the active participation of all social actors, and above all, the young people, who are able to implement innovative ideas aimed at fostering a culture of peace and non-violence as well as religious and cultural understanding.

On 1-2 June, PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, was among the speakers at the Lisbon Forum 2017, organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, on the theme “Interconnecting People, Managing migration, avoiding populism, building inclusive societies and reinforcing North-South dialogue”. PAM President stressed that dialogue among governments, political leaders, religious leaders, representatives of the civil society, is indeed an instrument intended to reduce tensions and address what the people perceive to be the key issues that affect everybody's daily life. He concluded by stating that PAM focuses its efforts,

and acts as a coordination platform, to ensure cooperation between the UN Security Council and national parliaments.

On 13 June 2017, the PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzzi and the Director General of the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Dr. Michael Spindelegger, signed a bilateral cooperation agreement, during a ceremony held at Palazzo Spinola in Malta. The following day, Amb. Peter Schatzer, PAM Permanent Observer to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna, represented the Assembly at the ICMPD Director General Conference, which took place in Valletta.

PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, represented the Assembly at the 26th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference – “Innovative Science, Sustainable Tourism – Participation and Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”, held in Hamburg on 3-5 September. 2017. Hon. Roque addressed the opening session of the new BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration. He stressed that, due to its geopolitical composition, PAM is strongly committed to encourage enhanced parliamentary cooperation and collective legislative actions in dealing with the problems and challenges related to migration, integration and trafficking. President Roque added that, following to a bilateral meeting between the PAM SG with the new President of the United Nations General Assembly, PAM will also contribute to the drafting of the UN Global Compact on Migration. In this regard, he mentioned the international conference, to be organized by PAM on 16 and 17 November 2017 in cooperation with the IPU and the Parliament of Malta, dedicated to Mass Population Movements from Africa to Europe. Hon. Roque concluded recalling PAM’s readiness to establish a structured cooperation with the BSPC.

PAM also attended the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime - Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, held in Vienna on 6-8 September 2017. The PAM delegation was composed of Sen. Alia Bouran, PAM Vice-President and President of the 1st PAM Standing Committee; Hon. Amir Peretz, PAM Vice-President and head of the Israeli delegation to PAM; Hon. Belal Qasem, PAM Vice-President and head of the Palestinian/PNC delegation to PAM; Hon. Eleni Avlonitou, head of the Greek delegation to PAM and Vice-President of the 2nd PAM Standing Committee; and Hon. Maria das Mercês Borges, Member of the Portuguese delegation to PAM. Sen. Dr. Alia Bouran and Hon. Belal Qasem addressed the Conference on behalf of PAM. Sen. Bouran stressed that on the security side, PAM is strongly committed to finding a political solution to the Syrian and Libyan crises and that transnational organized crime is a growing challenge to security that threatens the very foundations of the rule of law. Hon. Qasem highlighted the human trafficking of both asylum seekers and economic migrants through the Middle East and he affirmed that there still are reports of people stranded in the Sinai Desert.

Sen. Francesco Maria Amoruso, Honorary President of PAM, addressed the 1st Rotaract Mediterranean Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue to bring people together across the Mediterranean, to create new opportunities and to support stable and democratic institutions”, held in Naples, Italy on 9 September 2017. Sen. Amoruso recalled how PAM is convinced that one of the major current priorities is to invest in youth and education and offer them opportunities for discussion and dialogue, in order to face common regional challenges, such as radicalisation. For this reason, PAM has signed a number of cooperation agreements with Universities within the framework of the PAM Academic Platform, in order to facilitate student mobility. Finally, Sen. Amoruso underscored the central role of intercultural education in the fight against hate and violence.

On the margins of the UNGA, President Roque addressed the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting, dedicated to Youth Engagement: The Nexus to Building Inclusive Societies and Sustaining Peace, held in New York on 22 September 2017. In his address, Hon. Roque recalled that PAM shares with UNAOC the conviction that young people can and must contribute in building inclusive societies and in sustaining peace. He affirmed that indeed, new generations have the potential to prevent conflicts and extremism and he stressed the responsibility to educate them to the fundamental and universal values of democracy, human rights and mutual respect.

On the occasion of his participation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2017 Autumn Meeting - Mediterranean Forum, held on 3 October 2017, in Andorra. Hon. Roque stressed that mass migration is both a structural exodus and a time bomb, and not only for Europe, but also for Morocco, Algeria and Egypt, which are now countries of destination. Also in light of this, PAM and the Pan-African Parliament have decided to work very closely to share experiences and strategies to tackle the phenomena in a consistent manner.

On 24-25 October 2017 PAM participated at the "2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference 2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference on large movements of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean: challenges and opportunities". During the event, PAM President, Hon. Pedro Roque, underlined that PAM, due to its geopolitical composition, is strongly committed to encourage enhanced parliamentary cooperation and collective legislative actions in dealing with the problems and challenges related to migration and human trafficking.

At the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in St. Petersburg, Senator Francesco Amoruso addressed the IPU Assembly and highlighted that PAM is convinced that interreligious and intercultural dialogue, together with the acceptance of common fundamental values, like democracy, the respect of human dignity and the rule of law, are the best instruments available to fight the threats of extremism and violence. He affirmed that religious authorities play a pivotal role in the promotion of peaceful coexistence and integration in respect of the national laws of the host country.

The University of Madrid and the Institute of International Politics and Economics of Belgrade, Serbia, also joined the PAM academic Platform in fall 2017.

Concluding Remarks

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and its Secretariat, in the first 10 months of 2017 managed to achieve excellent results, both in terms of quality and volume, as shown by this interim report.

From a financial point of view, PAM has been able to function in 2017 thanks to the exceptional measures adopted in 2016, but not duplicable any further. Therefore, as explained and voted in Porto, and in the absence of the payment of any substantial arrears by member states in 2017, for 2018 the Assembly will increase its budget by 10 % to be able to continue functioning effectively. It must be further noted that PAM budget has remained unchanged since 2009.

It must also be noted that the building that hosts the PAM secretariat in Malta, has been evacuated, on instruction of an independent expert architect, on 20 November 2017, following

a meeting with the PAM Bureau. The building represents a danger for its occupants and it urgently requires major structural works in order to guarantee the safety standards needed for its legal functioning. The expert report has quantified the urgent structural interventions at some 270 000 EUR for immediate consolidation works of the building and ensure the safety of the people working inside and those passing nearby. This amount is not included nor available in the PAM standard budget.

The Government of Malta has committed to provide PAM with an alternative/adequate office space, as a matter of urgency. In the interim, PAM staff will working from their homes. Providing PAM staff with the IT support required to work from home and the cost required to render operational the temporary location, once available, are exceptional expenses and are not included in the PAM regular budget

In 2018, the new budget of PAM will be used to continue carrying out the necessary upgrading of IT support and other materials required for the proper functioning of the Assembly. The budget 2018 does not include provisions for the extraordinary structural works required by Palazzo Spinola.

The Secretariat wishes to thank all those member states that honoured their commitment to the Assembly, which generously hosted its meetings, and provided political support for the further strengthening of PAM position at the regional and global levels.