



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

## **PAM Mission to Cairo, Egypt**

**11 - 13 March 2014**

***Executive Report***

## **Background and Objectives**

The PAM High-level Mission to Cairo was originally 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 Cairo was postponed due to the domestic situation in Egypt at that time.

In view of the recent adoption of the new Egyptian constitution and the ongoing preparation for the Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the PAM Bureau decided in its meeting that took place on the margin of PAM 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session in Marseille, to conduct this mission in March.

The main purpose of the mission was to hold bilateral consultations with Egyptian Senior Government Officials on the latest developments in the region, the democratic transition and the implementation of the road map. And, above all, to confirm PAM's solidarity with the Egyptian people and to offer its support in preparing for and/or monitoring the upcoming elections.

The Mission also aimed at discussing 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 ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations under the auspices of the United States of America.

The PAM delegation, led by President, Sen. Francesco Amoruso (Italy), was made up of the Vice-President, Hon. Tayseer Quba'a (Palestine), the Vice-President, Hon. Maria da Conceição Pereira (Portugal), Hon. Qasem Belal (Palestine) and Honorary President, Dr. Mohamed Abu El Enein (Egypt), Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzi and the Deputy Secretary General for Assembly Affairs, Mr. Mourad Youssry. The Italian Ambassador in Cairo, Amb. Maurizio Massari, accompanied President Amoruso.

Meetings were held with H.E. Nabil Fahmy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt; H.E. Dr. Nabil El Arabi, Secretary General of the League of Arab States; H.E. Dr. Amr Moussa, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States and former President of the Committee of the 50's for drafting the Egyptian Constitution; the Vice President and the Secretary General of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, and H.E. Abdel Nasser Al-Ganahy, Secretary General of the Arab Parliament.

## Summary of discussions

The current political developments in Egypt and in the Middle East were thoroughly discussed during the meeting between President Amoroso, the PAM delegation and **H.E. Nabil Fahmy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt.**

On a national level, Minister Fahmy outlined the major phases of the political transition in Egypt since the 25<sup>th</sup> of January Revolution, in 2011, against the Mubarak regime, and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June against the Muslim Brotherhood regime. He explained that the Egyptian people, with 30 % of the population being youth under the age of 25, are seeking change and demanding a better life. He added that, neither the regime of Mubarak nor Morsi, had listened to the people. That was the reason why people revolted, and they will revolt again against any regime that will not take into consideration their demands for a real democracy that respects the rights of all, indiscriminately.

H.E. Fahmy stressed the fact that Egypt needs continued dialogue among all its political factions through the instruments of law and the constitution. Using force to impose a position or an ideology will never succeed with the Egyptian people. He also referred to the difficult economic situation where tourism arrivals have fallen together with foreign investment. Egypt needs an annual growth of 8 to 9 per cent to return to pre 2011 levels of sustainable development.



Amb. Sergio Piazzi, PAM Secretary General, Sen. Francesco Maria Amoroso, PAM President, H.E. Nabil Fahmy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

The extreme importance of the Mediterranean region to Egypt was highlighted by Mr. Fahmy, adding that Egypt recognizes the value of the idea of the Mediterranean Forum launched in 1992 by the then Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gianni De Michelis. He confirmed that, for Egypt, PAM remains one of the most effective fora for cooperation and that the Ministry is very satisfied with its collaboration with the Assembly. President Amoroso recalled that PAM has been inviting the Egyptian MFA to all PAM events in the last three years due to the absence of a functional Parliament in Egypt, and as clear sign of PAM's consideration of the importance of Egypt in the Mediterranean region.

On the Middle East, Mr. Fahmy indicated that with all the changes under way, both in Egypt and in the Arab world, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains at the top of Egypt priorities. He added that Egypt is following closely the direct peace talks going on under the auspices of the US Foreign Minister, John Kerry, and in close and continuous contact with all parties.

During the meeting, PAM's contribution with a monitoring mission to the upcoming Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Egypt was discussed. PAM's mission on the occasion of the Jordanian elections in 2013 was highlighted by the PAM delegation.

In the meeting with **H.E. Dr. Nabil El Arabi, Secretary General of the League of Arab States**, the importance of cooperation between PAM and the League of Arab States in several domains of interest to the Arab World and the Mediterranean region was reaffirmed.

He also mentioned the necessity to coordinate between all the initiatives in the Mediterranean through a mechanism that PAM and LAS should develop together.

Dr. El Arabi adequately outlined the current political situation in the Middle East and the Arab Spring countries. He expressed his great concerns regarding the peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis notwithstanding the serious commitment shown by the US administration to reach an agreement. In his opinion, the recent position of Israel demanding the recognition of the Jewish nature of the State is considered to be another new obstacle Israel is putting in the way towards a final settlement. He added that this request was never raised before in the negotiations with the Palestinians, or in the peace treaties already signed with the Egyptians and the Jordanians.



Mr. Mohamed Aboul Eneen, PAM Honorary President , Sen. Francesco Maria Amoruso, PAM President, H.E. Dr. Nabil El Arabi, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Hon. Qasem Belal, Member of Palestinian National Council.

He added that the LAS is closely monitoring the political transition in the Arab World. Tunisia, Egypt and even Libya are moving forward, although with a different pace and different problems facing each country. He touched on the Ministerial meeting held a few days earlier in Rome, where it was agreed to extend additional assistance to support the infrastructure,

governance and capacity building in Libya. He added that the major problem for Libya remains to be collecting the weapons from the militias and civilians.

On Syria, he confirmed that the situation remains critical and worrisome. Syria is the only member country of the LAS where the regime did not accept the change demanded by its people. He added that it is difficult to understand why the UN Security Council has not yet passed a single resolution to impose the cease fire. On the humanitarian side, the situation is worsening every day, putting, according to Dr. El Arabi, in a shameful position the international community. Geneva II didn't bring the results expected as the negotiations were based on the concept that "you get the two parties together to agree on a transitional authority". However the Syrian government delegation was clearly not authorized to touch this point and spoke only about terrorism.

PAM invited the LAS to contribute to forthcoming meeting on Human Rights in the Mediterranean, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 24-25 April. Also, a joint Europe - League of Arab States Summit will be held in Athens next June, and LAS would welcome PAM among the key participants. It was also agreed to conduct, in the coming months, a joint PAM-LAS initiative in order to meet other regional actors active in the Mediterranean to ensure coherence and complementarity of action.

Finally, the 5+5 process was reviewed in view of the preparation of the upcoming Parliamentary and Ministerial meetings in Lisbon, next May.

The meeting with **H.E. Mr. Amr Moussa, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States and former President of the Committee of the 50's for drafting the Egyptian Constitution**, focused on the major changes taking place. He expressed his belief that there exists the need for a new regional order, a new security framework and a new cooperation plan. Mr. Moussa stressed on the importance to revive a Mediterranean policy of cooperation, and the necessity to have an inclusive vision to address and resolve social economic and security issues.



Mr. Moussa added that PAM should be able to take up this challenge because it is a forum where people are free to air their views and where ideas can grow to foster integration in the region. We should have this kind of club of the Mediterranean, which should work together based on the original concept of the Barcelona Process with PAM among the key players and mainly in view of the

diminishing role of the UFM and the lack of interest that many countries in the Mediterranean, including France, are showing towards it. On the latter point, PAM made reference to the report prepared by Hon. Michael Vauzelle, at the request of President Holland, which stressed the interest of France for the Mediterranean and the proposed approach.

On Egypt, Mr. Moussa confirmed that the new constitution was drafted to represent all Egyptians. The transitional process should be ready by next summer following the Presidential elections and the General elections for parliament, according to the road map previously set. He added that the next president and regime will have to work within the constitution and he expressed his optimism that Egypt is going forward with these terms.

With reference to the region, Mr. Moussa referred to the current obstacles facing the Middle East peace process, the effort of the American Administration and the importance of Peace to the future of Israel itself. He added that unless the US diplomacy is really strong, no major change will occur.

As for Syria, Mr. Moussa explained that it is the result of the new regional geo-political framework, and that any possible solution to the deteriorating situation in Syria should be regional and not solely at a national level. Russia and the US alone cannot solve the problem. The same applies for Iran, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Unless all these countries work together on a regional framework, there will be no solution in Syria.

During the meeting with **Mr. Abdel Ghafar Shokr, the Vice President of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, and the Secretary General of the Council, Amb. Mokhles Kotb**, the PAM delegation was informed about the outcome of a number of investigative reports on the role of the police forces and the demonstrators, in relation to the incidents that took place during the revolution. The Egyptian Human Rights Council explained how, after the revolution events, a strong civil society has flourished. They underlined the importance of the new constitution and above all its translation into action where basic rights, elections and workers' unions are concerned. A special program with Spain is ongoing to benefit from their experience in the post Franco transition.

PAM briefed the Council on the activities of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Standing Committee, and invited its representatives to play an active role in the forthcoming meeting on Human rights in the Mediterranean. Hon. Pereira also offered to share the experience of democratic transition in Portugal, following the revolution which took place 40 years ago.



Mr. Shokr informed the PAM delegation about the international conference on Women Rights in Africa and the Arab World that the council will organize in Cairo, on 30 April 2014, and extended the invitation to PAM to attend and contribute to the conference.

Mr. Shokr explained that Human rights in Egypt are in danger due to the high level of violence. The Council has a consultative status and that they are now working at how to judge and deal with the crimes of the former regime.

Mr. Shokr concluded by mentioning that it is important to have a road map for democracy in Egypt and to work on providing all the factors needed to assure that the upcoming elections are held in a proper democratic atmosphere. One of these factors is to offer equal opportunities to different election candidates in public media.

PAM extended the invitation to the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights to play a key role at the PAM meeting on Human Rights in the Mediterranean, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 24-25 April

In a separate round of talks, **H.E. Abdel Nasser Al-Ganahy, Secretary General of the Arab Parliament**, said that as a new institution their Assembly has to reinforce its capacity vis-a-vis its member states and the Arab League. He referred to the suspension of Syria from the Arab Parliament and praised PAM's open approach to and engagement with Syria through the channels offered by parliamentary diplomacy.

The Middle East issues concerning the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the Syrian crisis, the events and change processes in Libya and Tunisia, featured prominently during all the meetings, during which major and coordinated efforts by the international community were called for.

Both President Amoruso and Secretary General Al-Ganahy, agreed to strengthen the relations between the two institutions through the signature of an MoU between PAM and the Arab Parliament, based on the MoU already signed between PAM and the LAS.

## **Conclusions and follow up actions**

The PAM high-level mission to Cairo underscores the interest that the Assembly has towards the political developments occurring in the southern part of the Mediterranean. It also helped the PAM delegation to acquire a broader picture with regards to the political situation in Egypt, and the steps being taken to achieve the transitional process road-map.

It has been discussed and agreed during the meetings in Cairo, that PAM will contribute to the upcoming Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Egypt with a monitoring mission, similar to PAM monitoring missions to Tunisia and Jordan.

PAM will be working closely with the League of Arab States in order to activate the institutional framework signed between the two organizations, and it was also agreed to conduct, in the coming months, a joint PAM-LAS initiative in order to create a mechanism that would enable to synchronize all different regional/Mediterranean existing efforts.

PAM also invited the LAS to contribute to forthcoming meeting on Human Rights in the Mediterranean, to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 24-25 April. Also, a joint Europe - League of Arab States Summit will be held in Athens next June. And LAS welcomes PAM among the key participants.

It has also been agreed with the LAS, and upon the request of its Secretary General, that PAM reinforces its cooperation with the legislative dimension of the LAS, represented in the Arab Parliament. This approach was previously discussed between the PAM President and the delegation of the Arab Parliament on the margin of the PAM 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session in Marseille, and was consolidated with the Secretary General of the Arab Parliament during the visit to Cairo. In the coming months, PAM and the Arab Parliament will sign an MoU for further cooperation among the two parliamentary entities.

The series of high level meetings in Cairo gave the PAM delegation the chance to identify the main obstacles facing the transitional period in Egypt. The adoption of the new constitution represents a milestone on the road towards the building of a new democratic Egypt; however other laws and regulations shall be implemented to support the democratic transformation, human rights and good governance.

In the Human Rights sector, PAM will provide the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights with all the assistance needed. PAM will invite the Egyptian Council to all its related functions and meetings, with the aim of exchanging experiences, in order to promote and support Human rights in Egypt.

The Middle East Peace Process, the Syrian crisis, the events and change processes in Libya and Tunisia, featured prominently during all the meetings, during which major and coordinated efforts by PAM and the international community were called for.

The PAM Secretariat will also follow up on this mission with a series of consultations with its member parliaments and other key actors in the region in order to coordinate any assistance that Egypt and its population might require in their quest for more stability, rights and economic progress.

## **PAM Delegation**

1. Sen. Francesco Maria Amoruso, President of PAM, **Italy**
2. Hon. Tayseer Quba'a, Vice President of PAM, **Palestine**
3. Hon. Maria da Conceição Pereira, Vice President of PAM, **Portugal**.
4. Hon. Qasem Belal, Member of Palestinian National Council, **Palestine**
5. Mr. Mohamed Aboul Eneen, PAM Honorary President, **Egypt**
6. Amb. Sergio Piazzi, PAM Secretary General, **Italy**
7. Mr. Mourad Youssry, PAM Deputy Secretary General, **Egypt**
8. Ms. Angela Scaramuzzi, Interpreter at the Italian Senate, **Italy**