



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (PAM)
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE (APM)
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

Second Plenary Session of the Assembly

St. Julians, Malta
22-24 November 2007

**EXECUTIVE REPORT AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND PLENARY SESSION OF
THE ASSEMBLY**

From 22-24 November 2007, the Second Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean was held in Malta to debate issues at the heart of the lives of the peoples of the Mediterranean.

The Second Plenary Session in Malta was a historic occasion for the PAM, as it not only marked the first working session in the Assembly's history, but also because several important aspects relating to the functioning of the Assembly were formalized. Accordingly, the Headquarters Agreement was signed by the Hon. Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta, and Mr. Abdelwahed Radi, President of the PAM. This Agreement officially recognized the Spinola Palace as the headquarters of the Assembly and seat of the Secretariat, and provided for the Palace to be handed over to the Assembly, thus incorporating it into the legal status of the PAM. The Spinola Palace was also officially inaugurated by HE Dr Edward Fenech Adami, the President of Malta, on the evening of Thursday, 22nd November. At the Second Plenary Session, the PAM Secretariat, with its newly appointed Secretary General, Dr. Sergio Piazzi, also celebrated its first Assembly as an operative organ of the PAM.

The Parliamentary Assembly was inaugurated on Thursday, 22nd November 2007 by Hon. Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malta, who welcomed the members of the Assembly to Malta on behalf of the Maltese Government. During the opening of the Assembly, the President of the PAM, Mr. Adelwahed Radi also gave his welcoming address, and read an introductory speech on behalf of Pier Ferdinando Casini, President of the IPU, who was unable to be present at the opening.

Results of the Second Plenary Session

The Second Plenary Session of the PAM was considered a resounding success as a result of the decisions adopted by the various bodies of the Assembly, the constructive debate and spirit of cooperation that characterized the discussion on the items on the agenda as well as the decisions adopted in the course of the meeting. In concrete terms, the Assembly adopted three resolutions presented by its respective Standing Committees, and approved amendments to its Statutes, Rules of Procedures and Rules of the Standing Committees. The Assembly unanimously accepted Monaco's offer to host the 2008 Plenary Session of the PAM and adopted both the Budget 2008 and

the proposal to establish a Working Capital Fund. Further still, on Saturday 24th November, the French Ambassador, H.E. Alain Le Roy, briefed the Assembly on the President Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union Project.

During the Second Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the following events took place:

Friday 23rd November

The Assembly's Second Plenary Session, and first working session, opened with the adoption of the Agenda.

The Secretary General addressed the Assembly on the activities and functions of the Secretariat.

The President of the PAM introduced the Strategy Paper entitled "Building on Our Common Mediterranean Heritage", containing the proposed work plan for the next five years and the calendar of the meetings of the Assembly and its Committees. This document will be complemented by a "Mediterranean Charter", the content of which is to be elaborated by the members of the PAM in 2008. It will become the foundation stone for the political work of the PAM, laying down the vision and the guiding principles of a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous community of people.

Plenary debate

The plenary debate centered on the issues of security and peace, and the urgent priority of reaching a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict, in a comprehensive manner, by reaching a "two States solution" to the Palestine-Israeli conflict and the so-called Syrian and Lebanese tracks. The issues of migration pressures northwards and its ramifications in the South Mediterranean in terms of human trafficking and the so-called "brain drain" were also raised, and finding solutions to these issues required the united effort and joint commitment of all the member States of the Assembly. The creation of a Mediterranean development bank was supported, which would prioritize the creation of co-development projects and investment in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the South Mediterranean to give youths a future there too. The question of the environment, notably the pollution of the Mediterranean was addressed and the Assembly found it imperative to invest in alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power. The members referred to the wider issue of the effects of climate change on the Mediterranean, especially that of the rising sea level. Members also spoke of the continuing need for integration amongst peoples noting that there were three monotheistic religions in the Mediterranean: Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and that it was important to foster understanding and collaboration between these different religions to bring the peoples of the Mediterranean closer together.

Three resolutions presented by the three Standing Committees of the Assembly were discussed and adopted.

- Mr. George Vella presented the resolution of the First Standing Committee on Regional Issues in the Middle East.
- Mrs. Elissavet Papadimitriou introduced the resolution of the Second Standing Committee managing migratory flows and co-development in the Mediterranean region in a mutually beneficial manner.

- Mr. Learco Saporito presented the resolution of the Third Standing Committee on the role of parliaments in fostering the dissemination of knowledge about the major civilizations and religions of the Mediterranean basin and the promotion of dialogue between them.

In accordance with the provisions of the PAM Statutes and the implementation of the PAM strategy paper, the members established the following Ad hoc Committees and Special Task Forces:

First Standing Committee

- Ad hoc Committee – Regional Issues: the Middle East
- Special Task Force – Energy and related issues

Second Standing Committee

- Special Task Force – Free Trade in the Mediterranean
- Special Task Force – Environment and Climate Change
- Special Task Force – Integrated Resources Management

Third Standing Committee

- Special Task Force – Gender and Equality Issues
- Special Task Force – Dialogue among Cultures and Religions
- Special Task Force – Migration

As agreed during the meeting of the geopolitical groups, national delegations forwarded the names of the members to sit on the above bodies to the Secretariat.

The Secretary General presented the Financial Report for the period 2005-2007, which was commented upon by the members, and 2008 Budget, which was adopted by the Assembly.

Saturday 24th November

French Ambassador Alain Le Roy, briefed the Assembly on President Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union Project, which was then debated by the Plenary Assembly. His presentation warmly welcomed the role of the PAM as the Mediterranean parliamentary platform, which was reaffirmed by all those present. The executive secretariat of the Union, when established, will have to closely coordinate and cooperate with the PAM.

The Assembly called for candidates to host the Assembly Plenary Sessions for the period 2008-2011, and unanimously approved Monaco as host for the forthcoming plenary session of the Assembly in November 2008.

The Assembly approved and adopted amendments the PAM Statutes, Rules of Procedure, and Rules of the Standing Committees.

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean presented his concluding remarks on the Second Plenary Session, after which the session was closed.

Following the closure of the Assembly, a press conference was held in the presence of Mr. Abdelwahed Radi, President of the PAM, Mr. Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta and the members of the Bureau.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Concluding Remarks of President Radi

President Radi concluded that the second plenary session of the Assembly had been an overwhelming success.

The stated objectives of the PAM had been achieved, and there had been constructive debate on the major issues concerning the Mediterranean, the common heritage of all the members.

The Strategy Paper “Building on our common Mediterranean Heritage” was introduced to the Assembly, and the latter committed to draft a “Mediterranean Charter” in 2008 that will become the icon of PAM political work.

The three resolutions prepared by the respective Standing Committees had been adopted.

The members had been appointed by the geopolitical groups to serve on the ad hoc Committees and the Special Task Forces.

The Assembly adopted the budget 2008 and agreed to establish a Working Capital Fund.

The proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure, Statutes and Standing Committees had been adopted.

Monaco had been approved to host the 3rd Plenary Session in November 2008.

The Headquarters Agreement was signed during the handing over ceremony of Spinola Palace to serve as the Headquarters of the PAM in Malta.

The Assembly had learnt more about President Sarkozy’s Mediterranean Union Project, which recognized the PAM as the parliamentary dimension for the Mediterranean region.

As regards the content of debate at the Plenary Session, the President commented that the Assembly had raised a number of critical issues, which he hoped could be overcome to finally achieve the aim of creating a genuine Mediterranean community. Moreover, the Assembly had behaved throughout the course of the Plenary Session in a spirit of solidarity and mutual respect and understanding, forging and deepening bonds that would unite its members in solving its problems rather than divide them. At the close of the session, the President therefore concluded that the members had grown closer both in spirit and substance.

A special thanks was made to the Maltese House of Representatives and Government for its commitment and enormous contribution towards establishment of the PAM. In particular, the Maltese Delegation expressed its gratitude for the selfless contribution of Ambassador Alfred A. Zarb and Mr. Joe Mangion, Diplomatic Counselor to the Speaker of the Maltese Parliament, for their endeavors towards the establishment of the PAM.