



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF
THE UNION FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN**



Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

MEETING
Thursday 30 September 2010
10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Room ASP 5E2
European Parliament
Brussels

MINUTES

The meeting was chaired by Tokia Saïfi (EP).

1. Adoption of the draft agenda (AP 100.770)

The agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the minutes of meetings of 21 May (AP 100.768) and 1 July 2010 (AP 100.769)

The minutes were adopted. Mr Whebee (Israel) noted that there had not been a quorum for the adoption of the declaration on the Middle East on 1 July 2010. The Chair reminded the meeting that, according to the Rules of Procedure, observations with regard to quorum had to be made at the start of a meeting and not at a later stage.

3. Chair's announcements

The Chair reviewed the political committee's activities during the first half of 2010:

- the adoption of a recommendation in Amman in March, where the EMPA changed its name to the PA-UfM;
- a joint meeting with the Committee on Culture in Istanbul;
- an extraordinary meeting on 1 July in Brussels to respond to current events.

The Chair highlighted the impact of current events on the way in which the UfM and its Parliamentary Assembly operated. She expressed a desire that the UfM summit planned for 21 November would take place.

The Chair recalled that the Bureau that met in Palermo in June had had some difficulty in keeping to its agenda. It had not managed to adopt a joint declaration on the situation in the Middle East following the assault on the humanitarian fleet heading for Gaza. She also regretted the virtual absence of discussion with the committee chairs, as was usually the custom, on the choice of topics for recommendation.

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The Chair explained that the extraordinary meeting on 1 July had been called to make progress with regard to the choice of topics for the next recommendation of the Political Committee, which needed to be ready for the next plenary session of the PA-UfM in March 2011 in Rome.

4. Exchange of views on the situation in the Middle East, in the presence of Tomas Dupla del Moral, Director for the ‘Middle East and South Mediterranean’, European External Action Service, European Commission, headed by HR / VP Catherine Ashton

Mr Dupla del Moral spoke about the EU’s role in the peace process, highlighting the fact that the aid provided by the EU had enabled, on the Palestinian side in particular, a negotiating partner to be obtained in the peace process. He stressed the importance of the last Quartet declaration, recalling the European position on Israeli settlements, and he highlighted the importance of the Arab peace initiative and negotiations with Syria and Lebanon in particular.

Mr Qubaa (Palestine) regretted the EU’s absence from the negotiations and the fact that its clear positions, which he welcomed, had not resulted in action.

Mr Triantaphyllides (EP) defended the use of existing agreements to put pressure on Israel.

Mr Peillon (EP) hoped that the Secretary-General of the UfM Secretariat would meet with the Political Committee and recalled that the UfM had other objectives that should not be subjugated to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mrs Daği (Turkey) called for a strong position against the continuation of the settlements.

Mr Haddad (Syria) joined Mr Qubaa (Palestine) in questioning the EU’s absence from the negotiations.

According to Mr Panzeri (EP), there was no alternative to negotiation. He believed that this was now the last opportunity and also called for Mrs Ashton’s physical presence at the negotiating table.

Mr Obiols (EP) noted that the EU did have a presence but was divided.

Mr Konecny (Austria) felt that the issue of settlements was not the problem. The only thing that mattered was reaching a compromise.

Mr Aferiat (Morocco) denounced the failure to apply international resolutions.

Mr Whebee (Israel) condemned the unilateral criticism of Israel. He expressed opposition to the settlements but, at the same time, stated that key issues had to be resolved. He also denounced the continuing arms trafficking into the Gaza Strip.

Mrs Flautre (EP) called for a deadline to be set for the negotiations and hoped that a Palestinian state would be declared once this date had been reached. She invited Mrs Ashton to support President Obama and to support all forces for democracy and for the defence of human rights.

According to Mr Dupla del Moral, the failure of the negotiations could not be attributed solely to the EU. He noted that the EU had not been absent; rather, it had not been invited to the negotiations. He felt that the arms trafficking was not the Palestinians' fault.

Addressing her remarks to Mr Dupla del Moral, the Chair insisted that Mrs Ashton should come to the PA-UfM.

5. Examination of proposed topics for recommendations (confirmation of topics and appointment of rapporteurs)

The Committee discussed and confirmed the three topics chosen last July and appointed the following rapporteurs:

1. The Arab peace initiative: Mr David (EP), Mr Chiheb (Algeria)
2. The role of civil society in the new institutional context of the UfM: Mr Pedret (Spain), Mr Moro and Mr Aferiat (Morocco), Mrs Flautre (EP)
3. Security in the Mediterranean: Mr Panzeri (EP), Mr Rezgui (Algeria), Mrs Daği (Turkey).

6. Exchange of views on the Arab peace initiative in the presence of HE Ambassador Nassim Hitti, Director of the Mission of the League of Arab States in Paris

Mr Hitti felt that the Arabs were partly responsible for the fact that the peace initiative had been neglected. He did, however, highlight the importance of the following factors:

1. The adoption of a high-level initiative despite the divisions between the states;
2. The initiative's global approach, which encompassed all issues (borders, Jerusalem, refugees, water, security);
3. The realism and sequential approach proposed by the initiative;
4. The emphasis placed on the complementarity and not the exclusivity of the rights of the two peoples;
5. The offer to normalise relations with Israel.



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Mr Hitti was pessimistic about the negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis and criticised the lack of agreement on the reference criteria for the negotiations.

Mr Bassiouini (Egypt) noted that Israel had 14 reservations with regard to the Arab peace initiative.

7. Exchange of views on the role of civil societies in the framework of the UfM, in the presence of:

- **Juan Moreno Preciado, member of the European Economic and Social Committee**
- **Charles Kleinermann, Deputy Secretary General of the European Movement, Secretary General of the Medea Institute**

Mr Moreno stated that the Barcelona process had marked the official recognition of the network of economic and social councils and he set out the plans for their transformation into an Assembly of Economic and Social Councils, which should form an integral part of the new UfM structure. He stressed the need for freedom of association and called on the Southern countries to join the ILO conventions on freedom of association and the right to organise.

Mr Kleinermann explained the European Movement's partnership with the Library of Alexandria and the Arab Reform Forum. He raised the issue of the representativeness of civil society movements in the southern Mediterranean and the consequent difficulty of anchoring civil society to an existing structure (EuroMed, AMU, League of Arab States, OIC).

Mr Vella (Malta) wondered why civil society's role had not been institutionalised during the Barcelona Process.

According to Mr Jaber (Lebanon), civil society was only one way of filling the empty space left by the State.

Mr Moro (Morocco) said that he saw the potential for civil society to help overcome the obstacles that were currently hampering the UfM.

Mrs Flautre (EP) underlined the difficulties of engaging and exchanging with civil societies in the South due to visa policies and restrictions on the free movement of people. She highlighted the link between civil society and obstacles to freedom of expression and free movement, along with the potential for the PA-UfM's mediation in this regard.

8. Exchange of views on security in the Euro-Mediterranean area



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Mrs Dađi (Turkey) spoke of the importance of the psychological dimension of security and called for consideration to be given to societies' perceptions, referring to the matter of the Danish cartoons.

Mr Rezgui (Algeria) cited the example of the 5+5 dialogue with regard to security, highlighting the link between the problem of the perceived threat and the issue of free movement.

According to Mr Chiheb (Algeria), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was fuelling perceptions of insecurity. He also recalled the diversity of security issues, referring to the Sahel and to Lampedusa.

9. Date and place of next meeting

27 January 2011 in Brussels
