



Procedure file

Basic information		
RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	2008/2576(RSP)	Procedure completed
Resolution on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean		
Subject 6.40.05 Relations with the Mediterranean and southern European countries		

Key players		
European Parliament		
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Development	MICHEL Louis

Key events			
20/05/2008	Additional information		Summary
05/06/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
05/06/2008	Debate in Parliament		
05/06/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0257/2008	Summary
05/06/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement
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Documentation gateway					
Motion for a resolution		B6-0281/2008	05/06/2008	EP	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0285/2008	05/06/2008	EP	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0288/2008	05/06/2008	EP	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0291/2008	05/06/2008	EP	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0295/2008	05/06/2008	EP	

Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects		T6-0257/2008	05/06/2008	EP	Summary
Joint motion for resolution		RC-B6-0281/2008	05/06/2008		
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2008)4439	16/07/2008	EC	

Resolution on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

PURPOSE: to propose a new framework for the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean".

CONTENT: the European Council of 13-14 March 2008 approved the principle of a Union for the Mediterranean and invited the Commission to present proposals defining the modalities of what will be called "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". In this context, the Commission has made an analysis of the achievements of the Barcelona process over the last 10 years and its contribution to dialogue, peace, stability and prosperity in this region. They have also taken into account the shortcomings and difficulties in this process of cooperation since 1995.

This communication ([COM\(2008\)0319](#)) sets out the Commission's proposals for developing the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". It assesses the achievements and outlines the future of the renewed processes.

Barcelona Process: assessment: the Barcelona Process has been the central instrument for Euro-Mediterranean relations since 1995. Representing a partnership of 39 governments and over 700 million people, it has provided a framework for continued engagement and development. It is also the only forum where all Mediterranean partners exchange views and engage in constructive dialogue. It represents a strong commitment to regional stability and democracy through regional cooperation and integration, and aims to build on that consensus to pursue the path to political and socio-economic reform and modernisation. However, the persistence of the conflict in the Middle East has challenged and stretched the Partnership to the limit of its abilities to preserve the channels of dialogue among all partners.

One of the main features of the Process is the institutionalised dialogue with different political and economic agents, including civil society, women's organisations and the media.

In economic terms, the EU remains the main partner of Mediterranean countries both in trade of goods and services. Significant progress has been made towards the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area by 2010. Advances have been made in South-South economic integration but progress has been slow and remains below potential. Reforms are therefore needed if the EU's Mediterranean partners are to reap the potential benefits of globalisation and free trade with the EU.

Overall, the Partnership has witnessed a strong promotion of multilateral and bilateral relations, but now needs a qualitative and quantitative change, to spur investment and employment creation and optimise the use of human resources.

Scope and main objectives of the "Union for the Mediterranean": the challenge of a new initiative is to enhance multilateral relations, increase co-ownership of the process and make it more visible to citizens. To do this, it should build on and reinforce the successful elements of the existing Barcelona Process. In this context, the elements of the original Barcelona Declaration should be retained alongside its goals (political dialogue, economic cooperation and free trade, and human, social and cultural dialogue) as well as the 5-year work programme adopted by the 2005 Barcelona Summit (migration, social integration, justice and security). The 2008 annual work programme adopted by Foreign

Affairs Ministers in Lisbon in November 2007 should also be retained.

The new elements of the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" shall be based on a multilateral partnership, focusing on regional and trans-national projects for regional integration and cohesion. It will encompass all EU Member States and the European Commission, together with the other members and observers of the Barcelona Process (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Albania), and the other Mediterranean coastal states (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Monaco).

It will be complementary to the regional dimension of the EU enlargement policy. It will also be coherent and complementary with the EU-Africa Strategy.

This new initiative will give a new impulse to the Barcelona Process in at least three ways:

1. by upgrading the political level of the EU's relationship with its Mediterranean partners;
2. by providing more co-ownership to our multilateral relations;
3. by making these relations more concrete and visible through additional regional and sub-regional projects, relevant for the citizens of the region.

Upgrading of relations: the proposed decision to hold biennial summits of Heads of Government is a clear signal of the intention to upgrade the relationship. In principle, the summit meetings should take place alternately in the EU and in Mediterranean partner countries. The role of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) shall be confirmed as the Parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process.

Increased co-ownership: to build a stronger partnership, as envisaged by the Process, the establishment of a co-presidency and the setting-up of a joint secretariat have been proposed. Establishing a co-presidency would increase and improve the balance and the joint ownership of cooperation and would be compatible with the provisions on the external representation of the European Union in the Treaty of the European Union. For the first Summit (13 July 2008 in Paris), the rotating EU Presidency will hold the Presidency from the EU side. The selection of the co-president from the Mediterranean partner countries will require consensus and their mandate shall be for a period of two years. At the same time, another key instrument for enhancing co-ownership and promoting a more balanced partnership will be an improved system of institutional governance and the creation of a new secretariat. The secretariat shall perform the role of making proposals for joint initiatives to be decided by the political bodies and to ensure the necessary follow-up of project-related decisions taken at the highest level.

Projects and funding: the project dimension should be at the heart of the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". The programmes developed under this initiative should promote regional cohesion and economic integration, and develop infrastructural interconnections. They should constitute visible and relevant projects for the citizens of the region (the communication lists the type of projects that could receive

funding through existing instruments).

The priorities set out in the Regional Indicative Programme for the countries concerned will continue to apply and any potential EC contribution to the new regional projects will not be financed at the expense of the existing bilateral allocations under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument or the Pre-accession Instrument. On the other hand, in order to bring added value to existing arrangements, the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' should be designed to mobilise additional funding for the region, mainly through regional projects. The Commission believes that additional funding for regional projects and activities should come mainly from the following sources:

- private sector participation;
- bilateral cooperation from EU Member States;
- contributions from Mediterranean partners;
- international financial institutions, regional banks and other bilateral funds;
- the Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership Facility (FEMIP);
- the ENPI (approx. € 50 million per year already programmed for the period 2007-2010).

Conclusions and next steps: the Commission invites the European Council at its meeting in June 2008 to discuss and endorse the proposals contained in this Communication. They can then become the agreed position of the EU to be put to the inaugural meeting of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' planned for 13 July 2008 in Paris. The Commission will fully involve the European Parliament and the EMPA in the ongoing discussions on this new initiative.

Resolution on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean in response to the Commission Communication on this subject. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the PES, Greens/EFA, UEN, EPP-ED and ALDE groups. It welcomes the Communication and shares the aim of this new initiative to give fresh political and practical impetus to the multilateral relations of the EU with its Mediterranean partners by upgrading the political level of relations. A reinvigorated Barcelona Process should remain the central element of EU cooperation with the Mediterranean region as the only forum where all its Mediterranean partners exchange views and engage in constructive dialogue. The Barcelona Declaration is a milestone in those relations. Members call on those countries which are not part of the Barcelona Process to share the Barcelona acquis so as to move forward towards the same goals.

Parliament welcomes the Commission's proposal to establish a co-presidency of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean at head of State and Government and at foreign minister level. It also welcomes the Commission's proposal that the EU Co-presidency should be held by the competent EU institutions. The Mediterranean arm of the presidency should be appointed by consensus among the Mediterranean partners and that the country holding the presidency should invite all the States participating in the Barcelona Process to summits and ministerial meetings. Parliament endorses the Commission's proposal to establish a Joint Permanent Committee of representatives from all the participants in the Barcelona Process, which might play an important role in improving institutional governance.

It considers that the proposed new secretariat should be integrated in the Commission services, could comprise officials seconded from all participants in the process. The new secretariat should make the new Barcelona Process more visible on the ground and it should resolutely concentrate on regional projects and should also be able to take responsibility for whole series of tasks. The host country of the secretariat should, however, be required to be committed to the democratic and human rights values of the Barcelona Process.

Parliament goes on to welcome the Commission's proposal to strengthen relations with the EU's Mediterranean partners at political level by organising summit meetings every two years in the context of the Barcelona Process. It feels that the EMPA should be fully involved in the preparation of these summits. The resolution underlines the fact that enhancement of democratic legitimacy is necessary, as is strengthening of the role of the EMPA, the only parliamentary assembly uniting the 27 EU Member States and all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process. The EMPA, as a consultative body, should have the right to make proposals and assessments. Parliament supports participation in the EMPA by the parliamentary representatives of countries which are not part of the Barcelona Process.

It calls for a strong involvement of civil society and social partners' representatives in the institutional framework of the Barcelona Process. The credibility of the European policy of democratisation and promotion of human rights depends on strong and visible support for civil society and democratic political organisations on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. One of the main goals of Euro-Mediterranean policy is to promote the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and political pluralism. In this regard, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has not yet produced the expected results in the area of human rights. The promotion of human rights and democracy must be clearly enshrined in the objectives of this new initiative with a further strengthening of the implementation of existing mechanisms, such as the human rights clause included in the association agreements and the creation of a mechanism implementing this clause in the new generation of agreements, the ENP bilateral action plans and the setting up of sub-committees on human rights.

With regard to projects, Parliament expresses its interest in the opportunities for high-power solar thermal electricity generation in the North African desert and recommends that priority be given to discussion of this at the initial meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean. It also supports other projects such as water desalination in order to facilitate access to drinking water. The projects under the Barcelona Process must be open to all EU Member States and Mediterranean partners, especially if they are stakeholders in specific projects or fields.

Members underline the fact that the EU-Mediterranean partnership cannot focus solely on economic and trade issues. The first pillar intended to contribute to 'peace, stability and prosperity', and the projected Charter for Peace and Stability have not made significant progress. The objective of creating a free-trade area and the liberalisation of trade are not goals in themselves, but have to be accompanied by a strengthening of regional cooperation as well as of social and environmental integration. There must be increased EU support for Mediterranean partner State programmes with the aim of facilitating the establishment of a favourable climate for increased investment and for encouraging young people to set up small businesses, including facilitating access to microcredit. Parliament feels that the support of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) should be enhanced. It points to its proposal for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Development Bank capable of attracting direct foreign investment, which the EU-Mediterranean region is lacking. Participation by the Gulf States, as the first investors in the region, could contribute to realising this objective.

Lastly, Parliament reaffirms the need to boost the status of women in the Mediterranean region through policies which give them a major role in their societies and by promoting gender equality. It stresses that respect for traditions and customs does not need to detract from their fundamental rights.