



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture MEETING

Monday 31 January 2011

**Sala do Senado
Assembleia da República, Lisbon**

09.30 - 11.15 First Session

Opening remarks of Eduardo Cabrita, Chair of the Cultural Committee. Welcomed the participants and presented the agenda, followed by the adoption of draft minutes from the meeting in Brussels. A note was annexed to the minutes referring that the Turkish delegation had a reservation concerning the reference to the word “genocide” in Mr. Jean Boghossian’s intervention.

The President briefed the members of the Bureau and Enlarged Bureau meeting held in Rome the week before, referring two main concerns in particular: first, a large discussion took place on the events taking place in Tunisia and the Bureau decided to mourn the victims and support the efforts of the Tunisian people to secure democratic changes and, secondly, it was discussed a point linked to religious tolerance whereas the Bureau supported governments’ efforts against terrorism and reiterated its support of freedom of religion. The Chair informed that the next meeting of the Enlarged Bureau of EMPA will take place in Rome, 3 November. A minute of silence was respected for the victims for freedom in Tunisia, Egypt and in other countries of the region.

Exchange of views on “Immigration and integration: dialogue between the young generations to develop a culture of peace”; (Theme 1)

Charles Buchanan, Board Member of the Luso-American Foundation for Development (FLAD).

In 2009, the Luso-American Foundation created the Euro-Mediterranean-Atlantic Study Group (GEEMA, for short), with its website at www.geema.org. This is a trans-Atlantic and trans-Med mini think tank which organizes meetings and connects with partners, researchers, academics and local associations in the Maghreb countries, and think tanks in the United States concerned with the Med Region. In this way Portugal uses its unique geopolitical position as a pivot for exchange and joint actions between the U.S., Portugal itself and the Maghreb. University groups can research and publish together via the internet. It is only in this way – through massive outreach campaigns, which are non-bureaucratic and low cost, but that stimulate mobility, internet contact and interchange among Mediterranean region countries – that barriers will fall and that contacts and friendships are generated. This is a low cost model that I promote.

I recommend the following principles be promoted by partners in the North, in cooperation with partners in the Southern Med:

- 1 Focus on collaboration to achieve educational reforms to steer education for youth toward employment needs and skills;

- 2 Stress the importance of entrepreneurship education among the young, teach concepts, breed self-initiative, and create diverse hands-on, training programs;
- 3 Expand student exchanges: promote circulation of ERASMUS students;
- 4 Promote training of young leaders/ job promotion / social inclusion throughout the Region;
- 5 Bring E.U. foundations into the picture, forcibly, if necessary, because they are not currently a big enough part of the solution, and they offer special talents to work in this regard;
- 6 Start multiple outreach and think tank type mechanisms to engage the regional youth, and those in the U.S., and develop joint projects, products and publications.

Also, the Luso-American Foundation has supported numerous publications in the field of migration, and proceedings of workshops and conferences held at our Foundation, which included researchers from the Maghreb.

António Vitorino, Former European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs

In recent years, international migration has become a major theme on the international agenda. Its size, its impact, and the complexity of the issue as such can be expected to increase in the future. Migration is by its very nature an international phenomenon that needs a global response. The role of international migration, including as you have mentioned free movement of labor, in sustaining economic growth is another key topic in this debate. It will also be extremely important to link the migration debate with developments that are ongoing in World Trade Organization negotiations. Gender and the rights of women and issues of access to nationality and citizenship rights must also be given adequate attention.

All of these subjects are on the EU political agenda as part of our own response to migration challenges in a globalizing world. The aging and declining of population in Europe and the impact of this population evolution on the European economy are of crucial importance to us when we consider precisely migration policy for the longer term.

Increases in productivity are difficult to predict, it is unlikely that they will compensate for the decrease in the labor force. In the context of a shrinking and aging population, more sustained immigration flows are likely and necessary. Migration is not the miracle solution to population aging, but it needs to be a part of a package that addresses these enormous challenges with which we Europeans are confronted. In addition, conflicts, environmental degradation, fear of persecution, disparities in socio-economic development and in perspective make people move. Many want to come to the EU because it provides a peaceful environment, relatively high living standards, and employment opportunities. Our geographical position, close to many countries of origin and with a long land border, makes it an attractive destination.

Developing a comprehensive policy dialogue with third countries is also a key element of EU policy. This is based on the recognition that no migration or asylum policy can be effective without cooperation with the countries of origin. Thus, it is recognized that combating poverty, respect for human rights, and consolidation of democratic states, improving living conditions, and conflict prevention all need to be integrated as part of a fully comprehensive approach to migration policy, and we are actively engaged in many countries of origin in order to cooperate in this matter.

11.30 – 13:00 Second Session: Exchange of views on the “Dialogue between cultures and religions: towards a Mediterranean charter of values”; (Theme 2)

Mr. Jorge Sampaio, High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations. The UNAOC Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean will convene relevant cultural, economic, social, and political actors to promote mutual understanding and improve mutual perceptions. It will aim to defuse cross-cultural tensions, bridge divides, and enhance security, human development, and intercultural dialogue among societies, institutions and individuals in the region.

The strategy will help generate joint ownership of these goals among key stakeholders. It will further a culture of peace through an enhanced framework for policy development, provide new opportunities to on-the-ground projects, link innovative initiatives across regions, and promote people-to-people contacts and collaboration. By building grassroots civil society capacity and relations across borders, the strategy may also help spur progress in the Middle East peace process.

We need to create new opportunities for new experiences and interaction to build a brighter future for peoples in the Mediterranean region. Transcending our present difficulties in living together is an obligation. Governments, international organizations, key sectors of civil society, faith based organizations, the youth and the media, we all bear a joint responsibility for achieving results and making a difference.

Mr. Mohamed Tozy, Professor of Political Science at the University Hassan II in Casablanca and the University of Aix en Provence,

The Mediterranean has always been considered a 'given' geographical data, but rarely seen as a cultural ensemble. Its fate is often at stake between two diametrically opposing representations: a border that cannot be crossed, delimiting two opposing spaces of civilizations or a utopist 'mare nostrum' drawn from a 'history' that does not refer to the other.

Venturing into a Euro-Mediterranean comparison can be seen as an arbitrary exercise. The familiarity we have with Europe and the Mediterranean would not necessarily spare us from the deconstruction task of research. We cannot insist enough on the risk of such a venture since we decided to work on the Euro-Mediterranean zone and research it as a social science category. Indeed, choosing a representative sample of 13126 people from the Euro- Mediterranean population is an act of good faith more than a scientific one.

Decision taken – though arbitrary – carries a rational intentionality which limits itself and implies reflexive thinking. Such reflexivity is based on a scientific historicism which relies on a deconstruction of evidences and an argumentative definition of its approach.

The empirical work I have carried out sustains our assumption that the Mediterranean is a tangible and complex reality. It confirms as well that diverse populations have constantly rubbed elbows, observed, known and frequented each other within this space. It also sustains that populations continue doing so beyond any previsions, despite obstacles and biases they may encounter. This close neighbourhood has engendered a wide array of situations: from conflict to peaceful confrontation, reaching to interpenetration and syncretism. This work is indeed the first step down this path and calls upon us in more than one way in terms of interpretation methodology and survey design. This work also invites us to humility and caution. For a larger perception of our assets and limits, time as well as patient and skeptical research are required, supported by a deep belief in the solidarity of interpretations and nurtured by a form of humanism more centered on the layout of individuality and subjective human intuition than on the ideas received

14.00 - 13.00 Third Session: Exchange of views on The Mediterranean heritage: the preservation of archaeological sites (Theme 3)

Maria Fernanda Matias, Director of the Gulbenkian Foundation.

For decades, the Gulbenkian Foundation was the only Portuguese institution that financed and promoted actions for rehabilitation of the heritage of Portuguese origin that exists outside our country, as it has happened in the Netherlands, Malta, Morocco, Benin, Kenya, Brazil, Uruguay, Iran, India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia. The project on the stocktaking of the historical heritage of Portuguese origin emerged almost "naturally" as a result of the work that has been done.

More than 2 300 buildings and around 530 sites that are spread around the world, from Los Palos, in Timor, to the Colony of Sacramento, in Uruguay, are evidence of the presence of the Portuguese across the world. Up to this point, information about the heritage of Portuguese origin in the world was insufficient and vague. The project on gathering, in a single *corpus*, all the information concerning the highest possible number of all this architectural and urban vestiges will fill this gap. The work carried out by historian José Mattoso on the demand of the Chairman of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Rui Vilar, started in 2007.

This historical heritage represents a large legacy, which is one of the perennial testimonies of the passage of the Portuguese through the four corners of the world, the fingerprint of the authors of the first globalization, expressed in thousands of examples of civil, religious and military architecture and urban interventions of a unique nature.

This work evolved from the intention of identifying the heritage built outside Europe, by means of an approach that should not be confined to regions over which the Portuguese had formal political control. By gathering the maximum amount of information on the



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



relevant monuments and sites, this work is an *exhaustive* list of the heritage of Portuguese origin across the world.

Conclusions by Mr. Cabrita

Our strategy will be now to circulate the reports with proposed changes to all members of the Committee before March 3rd, when we will have our next meeting, in order to be able to present the recommendations at the Plenary Session in Rome on the following day.

Any other business

None.

Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on the 3 March 2011 in Rome.
