



INAUGURAL SESSION
Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
Amman, Jordan, 10 - 11 September 2006

FINAL DECLARATION

Adopted by acclamation

The history of the Mediterranean region, which has European, African, Arab, and Middle Eastern influences, bears the stamp of cultural diversity. However, all peoples of the region have common roots owing to shared patrimony, history and memories, which must be made known and valued by all.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has given special attention to questions relating to the Mediterranean region for more than thirty years. During the 1970s and 1980s the IPU held seven Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on European Cooperation and Security (CSCE). In 1990, to carry on the momentum of the CSCE, and to respond to problems and challenges of the region, the IPU set in motion the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM). The CSCM became a process where, in an atmosphere of security and stability, a genuine cultural dialogue and a partnership designed to ensure the balanced growth of the region were developed. Over its thirteen-year history, the CSCM has held four Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, in Malaga, Spain in 1992; Valetta, Malta in 1995; Marseilles, France in 2000; and in Nafplion, Greece in 2005. The members of the CSCM also met twice a year at IPU statutory Assemblies to ensure that a regular dialogue was continued on issues important to the region.

At its fourth and final Conference the members of the CSCM process approved the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, thus providing the region with a parliamentary forum that is uniquely placed to address common concerns and in which Mediterranean parliaments participate on an equal footing.

The participants of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, convened in Jordan for its Inaugural Session, reaffirmed the importance of such a platform for political dialogue and are convinced that the creation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean will, through the development of cultural, economic, social and human exchange, assist in the consolidation and deepening of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the creation in the Mediterranean region of a forum for dialogue between cultures, civilisations and religions.

To this end, the Assembly will have three Standing Committees: a Committee on Political and Security-related Cooperation: Regional Stability; a Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation: Co-development and Partnership; and a Committee on Dialogue among Civilizations and Human Rights. Through the work of its Standing Committees the PAM will tackle issues and challenges prominent to the region such as development, migration, security, self-determination, and the management of common natural resources.

The participants emphasized the following:

- A long-term vision of Mediterranean relations should prevail over short-term interests. It is not only necessary but also possible to maintain a permanent political dialogue between all the Mediterranean partners;
- The Mediterranean region is in essence a crossroads, open to influences and exchanges and therefore to cooperation and security as well as to conflicts and tensions. Cooperation and security are possible and vital, but as can be seen from past and current events in the region, they cannot be taken for granted; therefore all parties of the conflict must be encouraged and urged to re-establish negotiations. To earn the confidence of the peoples of the Mediterranean and give credibility to the partnership in the eyes of the world, the PAM must strive to achieve equitable world peace and security between the peoples in the region and therefore work to end any form of occupation in the region. As representatives of the people, legislators are uniquely placed to promote their interests by fostering dialogue between parties to conflicts. This is essential to reversing the escalation of violence by uprooting and remedying its causes and eventually allowing a return to peace;
- Today more than ever the Mediterranean region needs far-reaching permanent and diverse dialogue. If the second half of the 20th century was marked by the Iron Curtain and the struggle to reconcile a divided Europe, the objective of the early years of the 21st century should be to ensure that the Mediterranean becomes not another permanent fracture line in our history, but rather a bridge between the peoples living on its shores.

The participants expressed their gratitude to the Parliament of Jordan for its hospitality and the outstanding organization of the Inaugural Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, a place where past, present and future are unmistakably interwoven.