



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
Hon. Askin Asan (Turkey)
Head of the Turkish Delegation to PAM

33rd PABSEC General Assembly
12 June 2009 Bucharest, Romania

1st message to thank PABSEC following PABSEC granting observer status to PAM

On Behalf of Ruddy Salles, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and Vice President of the French National Assembly, it is a great honour to be here today in order to formalise the mutual granting of Observer Status for our Parliamentary Assemblies. We, at PAM, consider PABSEC as a sister organisation. You have 12 members, we have 25. We have 4 members in common including my own, Turkey. The Black Sea unites your members and the Mediterranean unites ours. We started cooperating with the PABSEC since our birth in 2006. The Hon. Alexander Dzasohov, PABSEC Vice-president addressed our 3rd Plenary session in Monaco last November and your Secretary General H.E Alexey Kudriavstev visited our Headquarters in Malta last December. And while in Istanbul at the end of January for a Reflection Group on Terrorism, our Secretary General, Dr Sergio Piazzini, paid a courtesy to your headquarters. Today, I am pleased that through these reciprocal arrangements, our two inter-parliamentary fora will grow even closer, exchange ideas and build on each other successes for the benefits of all the citizens of our regions. We look forward to working with all of you.

Thank you very much.



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General debate

MRS PRESIDENT, YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

INTRODUCING THE PAM

Again, let me reiterate how pleased I am that our organisations have exchanged observer status. The door to deeper collaboration between the PABSEC and PAM is now wide open.

I wish to thank the PABSEC for inviting the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean – or PAM - to address today's the general debate. Hon. Ruddy Salles, PAM President conveys his best wishes and asked me to present the PAM on his behalf. As I mentioned earlier, we gather 25 parliaments of the Mediterranean region, from Portugal to Morocco via the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa. We have come a long way since the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCM) process was launched in the early 1990's under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Now in its third year, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean has made great steps in bringing the people of the basin together through the use of dialogue. The decision to establish the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean was eventually taken in Nafplion, Greece in 2005, and its inaugural session was held in Amman, Jordan in 2006. The Headquarters of PAM were officially inaugurated during the Second Plenary Session of the Assembly in Malta in November 2007.

Like the PABSEC, the PAM represents an excellent expression of regional parliamentary diplomacy. It provides the Mediterranean region with a unique forum

that brings together, on an equal footing, the National Parliaments of the Mediterranean littoral states.

PAM's main objectives are to find common solutions to today's challenges and work towards a peaceful and prosperous region for all.

THE PAM STRUCTURE

The detailed work of the PAM Assembly is carried out by three Standing Committees. These Committees issue opinions and recommendations to parliaments and international organizations through the adoption of reports and resolutions. Specific focus is placed on the following strategic areas:

- **First Standing Committee:** Political and Security – related Cooperation, Regional Stability
- **Second Standing Committee:** Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation – Co-development and partnership
- **Third Standing Committee:** Dialogue among Civilizations and Human Rights

The Standing Committees determine their priorities on the basis of the key issues indicated by the Assembly, and each Standing Committee reports regularly to the Assembly on its activities. On certain issues, the Committee may agree to assign the discussion to an Ad Hoc Committee or a Special Task Force specifically created for that purpose. These working groups, composed of a core of 5 to 6 participants, are opened to all interested members of the Assembly in order to ensure the broadest possible representation from the North and the South in debate on any given topic. Some of our working groups have a permanent status, thereby stressing their key importance: our Ad hoc Committee on the Middle East, our Task Force on Gender and Equality issues. As rapporteur on gender issues for PAM, let me say how pleased I am to see a woman – and a young woman - currently presiding PABSEC. The PAM has also appointed a permanent Rapporteur on Water, a resource we all know too well is vital and has become rarer and more expensive and a potential source of great conflicts.

PAM'S SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

PAM is a unique forum whose membership is open exclusively to Mediterranean countries. Although the reports and resolutions adopted by PAM are not legally binding per se, they are a tool for 'soft diplomacy' when dealing with Parliaments, Governments and civil society at large in the region.

The major challenges being faced by PAM countries today are those similar to yours: climate change, environmental degradation, the resurgence of conflicts, irregular

migration, energy issues and the current economic situation. These tough challenges do not start or stop at national borders, and they call for collective effort.

It would be possibly premature if one were to already try to identify striking results from an organisation which is just over two years old. Whilst the normal day-to-day functioning of PAM is now a reality, we are also witnessing constant requests for collaboration from other Parliamentary Assemblies, for example those of the Council of Europe, NATO, the Western European Union, the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Member States (PUIC), the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and other international bodies, including, but not limited to, the UN, the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank, all of which have a direct interest or role in the area.

The chosen approach of sharing best practices will most certainly lead to the transfer of knowledge between the different Member States. Our meetings have become an opportunity for guest speakers from international regulatory bodies, the energy sector, disaster management agencies, the academic world, etc. to share their valuable experience with our members. We hope that this will lead to the strengthening of good governance. The PAM is also attracting key political figures who share their vision for the future of our region.

PAM is very much aware that the lack of an overall peaceful settlement in the Middle East continues to deprive the peoples of the Mediterranean region of security, stability and development. PAM believes in the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side within secure and internationally-recognised borders. PAM is trying to serve as catalyst for new approaches, and hopefully to generate solutions. A high level PAM delegation has recently returned from a mission in the region. I was part of it. New contacts were established with parliamentarians and governments of the region. We will nurture them and lend a support though parliamentary diplomacy renewed efforts for the Peace Process.

Today, you are discussing the role of parliamentarians in dealing with the current economic and financial crisis. Our constituents are either severely hit by it or worried that they will soon be. We paid particular attention to the food crisis that followed as well as to the rise of oil prices and the acceleration of the economic migration from the South. We also dealt with the forthcoming Free Trade area in the Euromed region. This year, our MPs have also discussed the specific role of SMEs as growth engines in the region. In Lisbon, in a couple of weeks, the PAM will be launching a Mediterranean Panel on External Trade with representatives of External Trade agencies and Ministries from both the North and the South of the Mediterranean. Work will pursue with a meeting towards the end of the year in Malta with representatives of international financial institutions. I do hope that we can exchange

ideas, learn from each other. I will certainly convey to my fellow MPs the outcome of your work on the topic in Bucharest.

In closing, I would like to add that complementarity and cooperation between the PABSEC and PAM is of the utmost importance. While we all agree on the importance of a globalized world, this can only happen if we strengthen our regional realities and give people their space within their respective environments, which can then serve as a platform for them to look beyond their local environment towards a more global dimension.

Thank You.