



THE VOICE OF PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

4TH PLENARY SESSION  
ISTANBUL, TURKEY (23-24 OCTOBER 2009)



On behalf of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, I would like to welcome all distinguished guests to Istanbul, 2010 European Capital of Culture, a city which brings civilizations together.

It gives us great pleasure to host the "4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean", where colleagues from around the region gather to finalize the activities of the previous year and determine the calendar for 2010.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey aims at creating an international atmosphere in which countries of the world enjoy peace and prosperity based on good relations, stability, and cooperation. For this purpose, our Parliament gives utmost importance to enhancing relations at all levels with parliaments that represent nations and strives for conducting an efficient parliamentary diplomacy.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, which believes in the importance of the contribution of parliaments in providing solutions to problems and preserving peace and stability, actively contributes to organizations instituted to this end.

The Mediterranean region hosted many civilizations throughout the history of mankind and played a unique role in the improvement of the democratic system. The most obvious sign of this is that the world's oldest democratic parliament is located in Patara, a small town affiliated to Kaş, a district of the city of Antalya. As the parliaments of the Mediterranean region have such a longstanding democratic history, I strongly believe that the work we will perform together for our common future is of great importance.

In today's world where all local and global components are more and more interrelated, Mediterranean parliamentary diplomacy offers a fresh approach to international diplomacy, through the help of its historical heritage.

Turkey has always supported and will continue to support, initiatives towards enhancing cooperation and dialogue in the region.

Distinguished Colleagues, I wish that you will enjoy your time in Istanbul, 2010 European Capital of Culture, a bridge among different faiths and cultures with its history of thousands of years.

H.E. Mehmet Ali Şahin  
Speaker, Turkish Grand National Assembly



A warm welcome to all my colleagues from the parliaments of the Member States of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

Our 4th Plenary Session is yet another milestone in the continuation of the process for the establishment of closer ties and further cooperation not only at the parliamentary level, but also through the executive arms and civil society of the countries surrounding the region.

PAM works as an instrument at the service of the peoples of the Mediterranean, as well as their elected representatives, in order to contribute to the primary objectives of peace and prosperity in the region.

I would like to thank the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and its Speaker, H.E. Mehmet Ali Şahin, for the excellent organization of this weekend's meetings in Istanbul, a city at the crossroads of cultures. I am convinced that this historical setting will serve as an inspiring background to our discussions during the next few days.

I am confident that all participating parliamentarians have come to Istanbul as a sign of their own conviction, and that of their respective parliaments, that PAM is becoming more and more the key instrument in the definition of the region's status at a global level.

I wonder whether, now that we have reached the 4th Plenary Session, we should continue to refer to our organization as a young institution since our Assembly has shown in these last years how active PAM could be within its remit, so much so that the last twelve months have confirmed how PAM can effectively contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the most pressing issues in the region.

I am also really proud to have led two important missions during my first year as President of PAM, namely, the fact-finding mission to the Middle East in May, and the visit to New York and Washington, DC, only a few weeks ago.

Finally, I wish to thank the Bureau members and all those parliamentarians who actively participated in our meetings of the Special Task Forces and Standing Committees. A special thanks goes to the Secretariat staff for their hard work, as well as the organizers within the Turkish Parliament for their commitment to the Plenary Session and for their hospitality.

Hon. Rudy Salles  
President, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

## PAM Bureau on Mission to the Middle East

From 18-21 May 2009, a high-level PAM Bureau delegation visited the Middle East on a fact-finding mission. The Egyptian and Jordanian Parliaments, the Palestinian National Authority, the Knesset in Israel, the French Ambassador to Israel and UNRWA, were all instrumental in facilitating the visit to the region.

The delegation was particularly impressed by the extent of the destruction in Gaza, as most of the buildings are damaged, and people are still living in tents. "The destruction will stay for long, and the major problem is that almost nothing is allowed to enter," said Dr. George Vella, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Middle East, in line with information received from UN officials onsite.

While in Cairo, the delegation met with Hon. Ahmed Ben Helli, Deputy-Secretary General of the League of Arab States, who spoke on the organization's role in both the Arab Peace Process and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Ambassador Robert Serry, High Commissioner of the United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East (UNSCO), later welcomed the members in Ramallah. He provided the parliamentarians with a firsthand picture of the situation on the ground.

The delegation also had the privilege to be received by H.E. Ahmed Abou El Gheit, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, who discussed Egypt's role in the inter-Palestinian dialogue and efforts by his country in response to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, H.E. Riyad Al-Maliki, Minister of Information and Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, who spoke on inter-Palestinian dialogue and the status of Jerusalem while lending his support to parliamentary diplomacy and H.E. Naser Judeh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, who expanded upon the Arab peace initiative.

In Cairo, H.E. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt, met with the members of the delegation, and discussions focused on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Bureau also held a working dinner in Amman with Hon. Abdulhadi Majali, Speaker of the Jordanian House of Representatives and current President of EMPA. On this occasion, Presidents Salles and Majali declared their intention for the two Assemblies to collaborate in a structured and regular manner. A joint declaration was issued to this effect. While in Amman, the delegates also met with members of the Palestinian National Authority, including representatives of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Palestinian National Council.

An important meeting was also held with H.E. Reuven Rivlin, Speaker of the Knesset, who reaffirmed Israel's position on the major issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A briefing to the Ambassadors resident in Malta was held at the conclusion of the mission. Dr. Vella will be presenting his report and resolution on the mission for adoption today.



## The Mediterranean: Education and Information towards New Alliances

The President, Hon. Rudy Salles (France), and Secretary General, Dr. Sergio Piazzi, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), addressed the participants attending the launching ceremony of the "Ulysse 2009" Mediterranean voyage on 8 October in Malta.

The objective of the voyage was to celebrate some of the key figures of the region who, by their own journeys and intellectual and spiritual influences, have fertilized the vitality of Mediterranean culture and identity. The event was organized by the French Embassy in Malta, the House of Representatives of Malta and PAM Secretariat

on the initiative of the French Ambassador Daniel Rondeau.

Greeting the audience, Hon. Salles expressed his pleasure at attending the beginning of a voyage which symbolizes hope and friendship for the people of the Mediterranean. The President stated that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean is proud to be taking part in "Ulysse 2009", which will celebrate well-known authors and intellectuals while cruising the harbors of the Mediterranean and calling at a number of capitals throughout the region.

Speaking during a roundtable discussion, entitled "A New Alliance", to conclude the day's activities, Dr. Piazzi described PAM's mission and outreach activities, stating that "alliances are a must, and this is why the PAM Bureau and Assembly have consistently pushed for the harmonization of legislations of our Member States".

Reflecting upon PAM's relations with other organizations, Dr. Piazzi affirmed that the Assembly's "alliances show that people consider PAM to be a serious and reliable partner." He posed the question of how an alliance can work internally to solve common problems, and how it can work externally to project ideas to organizations with similar aims. The Secretary General suggested that PAM can use these relationships and serve as a platform for discussion between all those parliamentary organizations interested in the Mediterranean, such as the Assemblies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Parliament, and the Western European Union.

"If an alliance is to succeed," Dr. Piazzi continued, "it cannot work in isolation". He also stressed that one country alone cannot solve, for example, the issue of climate change. Alliances must play a major role encouraging people to work together to find and implement strategies which mitigate the effects of climate change. Finally, Dr. Piazzi reached out to the guest speakers, especially those from the academic and literary fields, stating, "We can only achieve peace and prosperity with all of your help, as you all have the unique ability to educate and to inform."



# PAM HIGHLIGHTS IN PICTURES



← French Foreign Minister at PAM Headquarters, 27 February 2009



↑ PAM Bureau meeting with members of the Palestinian Legi-



PAM Bureau at the Residence of the French Ambassador to Washington, 1 October 2009



↑ PAM Bureau with the UN Secretary General at his office in New York, 30 September 2009



← Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between PAM and the League of Arab States, 13 October 2009



## THE PAM PRIZE 2009

The PAM Prize for Excellence in the Mediterranean is awarded each year to individuals, organizations or institutions who contribute through their actions to establishing bridges among the peoples of the region so as to foster understanding, mutual respect, socio-economic cooperation, political dialogue, confidence building and conflict solutions. This year, the PAM Prize was awarded to the following four actors whose work greatly influences the positive development of the region.



**His Excellency Daniel Rondeau, writer and Ambassador of France to Malta**, is the recipient of the PAM Prize for his continuous promotion of dialogue throughout the Mediterranean region, as well as for his support to the regional and international endeavours of PAM. Ambassador Rondeau was also instrumental in the drafting of the *Charter of the Mediterranean*, the political manifesto of the organization. His Excellency has also written and widely published articles and papers on the region, and was also the mind behind the recent "Ulysse 2009" Mediterranean voyage.

**UNRWA, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East**, has been carrying out programmes and delivering services for the past 60 years to the over 4.6 million people it assists. UNRWA provided full logistical support to the PAM Bureau delegation that visited the Gaza Strip during a fact-finding mission to the Middle East in May 2009.



**The Jordanian military field hospital** was sent to the Gaza Strip upon the directive of His Majesty King Abdullah. A group of highly-competent specialists offer their medical services to the local population. The PAM Prize is being awarded to underline their commitment to providing humanitarian services in the region.

**The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (MAI)**, Italy, is the Italian seat of CIHEAM (Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes). MAI and CIHEAM contribute to the development of the Mediterranean area through new approaches to research, the coordination and involvement of the players of rural development, and the elaboration of inter-sectoral strategies. MAI constantly endeavours to prove that peace and collaboration are feasible.

