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Proceedings of the Parliamentary Conference

Building democratic security in the Mediterranean: common challenges, shared responsibility

Dubrovnik, Croatia, 6 November 2018

Actes de la Conférence parlementaire

Renforcement de la sécurité démocratique en Méditerranée : défis communs, responsabilité partagée

Dubrovnik, Croatie, 6 novembre 2018



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CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

Assurer la durabilité de la gouvernance démocratique et des droits de l'homme
dans le sud de la Méditerranée

Financé
par l'Union européenne
et le Conseil de l'Europe



Mis en œuvre
par le Conseil de l'Europe

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Opening Session: Mr Gordan Jandroković, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament

Esteemed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Madam Pejčinović-Burić, Esteemed Members of the Croatian Parliament, Esteemed Mayor of Dubrovnik, Mr. Franković, Dear guests,

I welcome you wholeheartedly on behalf of the Croatian Parliament and in my personal name. I especially welcome the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Madam Liliane Maury Pasquier, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Madam Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni, the President of the Venice Commission Mister Gianni Buquicchio and all members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I also extend a warm welcome to our colleagues from the parliaments of the Southern Mediterranean countries. It is a pleasure to welcome you all.

I am pleased that today's conference on the cooperation among states from the "northern" and "southern" coasts of the Mediterranean is held here in Dubrovnik and that with it we are concluding the parliamentary dimension of the Croatian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Due to Croatia's geographic position, history and cultural heritage, "Mediterraneanism" is an essential element of our identity. Our broader Mediterranean dimension, besides being characterised by the geographic position, is also shaped by the historic continuity of life on the Adriatic Sea, the role the Dubrovnik Republic had over a period of five centuries and, consequently by the influence on the economic, cultural and political development of the wider Mediterranean area.

I am glad that you will have the opportunity to hear more about it during the informal part of this Conference.

Due to this strong Mediterranean feature of its identity Croatia has always been striving to contribute to developing firm ties and cooperation with Mediterranean countries, especially those on the southern coast. Even before we became member of the European Union we had been politically supporting the idea of strengthening the Barcelona Process, which is today the Union for the Mediterranean, and advocating the inclusion of all Mediterranean countries. Allow me to mention here the important role of the Croatian Parliament in the establishment and work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. As for the Council of Europe, we welcome the fact that it has recognised the need to cooperate with southern Mediterranean countries. We commend the Council's unique approach and its programmes designed to help southern Mediterranean countries strengthen sustainable democratic governance. Here I must highlight the partnership with the European Union and the joint support initiative - the *South Programme*.

Dear colleagues,

For Europe, the Mediterranean region has always been a strategic priority. Due to their position – the three continents – Europe, Africa and Asia – centred around the Mediterranean Sea – have always been predestined to cooperate. The very meaning of the name Mediterranean, deriving from the words *medius* and *terra*, indicates that the role of this sea is to connect these three continents and peoples, making dialogue and cooperation a necessity.

As throughout history, the Mediterranean still deserves and must have a prominent position among European policy priorities because of its strategic political and economic position, particularly in the light of new global challenges. Peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean region are vitally important for Europe. The importance of these aspects is underpinned by the fact that Europe was built on the common desire of countries and peoples to share and jointly promote the same values – peace, freedom, stability, democracy, rule of law, human rights protection, economic progress and prosperity, solidarity, cooperation and togetherness. Europe has been a stable continent for more than sixty years because it upheld these values. Our continent is stable and safe inasmuch as are the neighbouring countries, and hence the need of Europe to support its neighbourhood. Long-term peace and stability may be achieved with what the Council of Europe has recognized as democratic security – reinforcing societies' resilience through efficient and independent judiciary, freedom of expression, freedom of association and strong civil society, stable democratic institutions, inclusive society and democratic citizenship. And therefore, democratic security must be a responsibility shared by all democratic countries.

The Council of Europe has extensive expertise and experience in all the areas mentioned and stands ready to share them with all societies that wish to achieve the standards of developed democracies. We at the parliamentary level can make a significant contribution in bringing about democratic security. Especially we in Croatia are very open to cooperation and sharing our experiences. From the events in the recent past Croatia has gained unique experience with respect to democratic transition. We have demonstrated that the transformation to a country of democratic security enjoying the company of most developed countries can be achieved within a relatively short period. The democratic transition processes that Croatia has been through,

especially in terms of its politics, economy and society, can be beneficial to every country going through similar processes.

In the end, I wish that today's Conference will be an open, substantial and friendly exchange among partners. I am confident that it will provide a solid foundation for further dialogue and cooperation with our southern Mediterranean partners.

Thank you. And enjoy your stay in Dubrovnik.

Session d'ouverture: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Monsieur le Président du Parlement, Madame la Vice-première ministre, Madame la Secrétaire Générale adjointe, Monsieur le maire de Dubrovnik, Mesdames et Messieurs, Chères et chers collègues,

C'est un honneur et un immense plaisir d'intervenir à l'ouverture de cette conférence co-organisée par l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe et le Parlement croate dans le cadre de la Présidence croate du Comité des ministres du Conseil de l'Europe.

Comme vous le savez, le Conseil de l'Europe est la plus ancienne et la plus large organisation paneuropéenne qui regroupe aujourd'hui en son sein 47 Etats – l'intégralité des Etats européens à l'exception du Belarus. L'objectif du Conseil de l'Europe est de promouvoir l'idée d'une unité européenne autour des valeurs et des principes que sont la démocratie, l'Etat de droit et le respect des droits et des libertés fondamentales. Toutefois, bien que nous nous appelions Conseil de l'Europe, nous menons depuis de nombreuses années une politique d'ouverture en direction de notre voisinage. Le but de cette politique est de partager les expériences, notamment dans le domaine de la démocratie, des droits humains et de l'Etat de droit, avec toutes celles et ceux qui souscrivent à ces valeurs et les respectent.

Nous avons développé de nombreux mécanismes de coopération : les Conventions et les Accords partiels élargis comme par exemple la Commission européenne pour la démocratie par le droit (la Commission de Venise), ainsi que des forums d'échange intergouvernementaux et interparlementaires.

L'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe – un des organes statutaires et le bras parlementaire de notre Organisation – regroupe en son sein 648 parlementaires venant de tous nos Etats membres, mais aussi des parlementaires observateurs ainsi que les partenaires pour la démocratie – un statut dont bénéficient déjà certains Parlements des Etats de la rive sud de la Méditerranée –. C'est dans ce contexte de dialogue et de coopération interparlementaire que notre Conférence est organisée.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

L'objectif de notre rencontre aujourd'hui est d'analyser ensemble les défis à la sécurité démocratique dans la région de la Méditerranée afin d'y trouver des réponses communes, dans l'esprit de notre responsabilité partagée pour la stabilité, la sécurité et la prospérité de cette vaste région géographique qui est la nôtre.

En effet, la Méditerranée – mare nostrum ou « notre mer » – comme elle était appelée à l'époque romaine – fut au fil des siècles un lien entre les peuples et les cultures. La magnifique ville de Dubrovnik – riche de son histoire et de son héritage culturel – en est un parfait exemple.

Historiquement, la Méditerranée a été un lieu d'échanges et d'opportunités, mais aussi un théâtre d'affrontements et de divisions. Aujourd'hui encore, les conflits en Syrie et en Libye, ainsi que la crise des réfugiés constituent un aléa permanent pour la stabilité régionale. Il est donc de notre devoir d'assumer nos responsabilités politiques et de chercher ensemble des solutions aux défis sécuritaires et démocratiques auxquels nous sommes confrontés.

Nos efforts ne peuvent être efficaces que si nous sommes guidés par les mêmes principes – la démocratie, la dignité humaine et les droits fondamentaux, ainsi que l'Etat de droit – autant de valeurs universelles qui font partie de notre héritage commun. Développer un système de gouvernance fermement ancrée dans ces valeurs – c'est ce que nous appelons promouvoir la sécurité démocratique.

Toutefois, nous ne devons pas oublier que ces valeurs ne sont jamais acquises et qu'il n'existe pas de modèle démocratique unique applicable à tous les pays et à toutes les situations. Il revient à chacun de trouver son propre chemin vers la démocratie ; néanmoins le partage des expériences et l'échange de bonnes pratiques permettent à tous d'avancer plus rapidement.

Récemment, de grandes transformations politiques ont commencé sur la rive sud de la Méditerranée. Elles sont le résultat de mouvements populaires menés par des femmes et des hommes qui aspirent à plus de liberté, de dignité et d'égalité. Elles ne se feront pas en un jour – le changement prendra du temps et il faudra encore surmonter de nombreux obstacles. Une chose est sûre néanmoins : ces changements sont irréversibles, même si l'avancement semble parfois être ralenti ou même bloqué, notamment par des situations de conflit ou de guerre civile.

En tant que parlementaires – représentant-e-s élu-e-s de nos concitoyennes et concitoyens – nous sommes en première ligne de ce processus de transformation. Notre responsabilité est donc de traduire les valeurs et les principes que nous défendons et que nos électrices et nos électeurs réclament dans des actions concrètes : des changements constitutionnels et législatifs, des plans d'action de lutte contre la corruption, des réformes de décentralisation ou encore des projets d'engagement avec la société civile. C'est pour parler de ces actions que nous sommes réunis aujourd'hui ici, afin de partager nos expériences, s'enrichir mutuellement pour mieux avancer ensemble.

Mesdames et Messieurs,
Mes chères et chers collègues,

Je terminerai mon allocution en soulignant de nouveau l'idée du partage à laquelle je souscris particulièrement. Nous le savons toutes et tous, il n'y a pas de démocratie parfaite. La démocratie est toujours une œuvre inachevée et, pour bien avancer sur son chemin, il est essentiel d'apprendre les uns des autres. Aussi, n'y a-t-il pas meilleure occasion qu'une conférence comme celle-ci et je voudrais remercier celles et ceux qui l'ont organisée de nous offrir aujourd'hui la possibilité de développer de nouveaux contacts et de tisser de nouveaux liens amicaux et durables.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

Opening session: Ms Marija Pejčinović-Burić, Vice-President of the Croatian Government and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Jandroković, president of Croatian Parliament, Ms Pasquier, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, All esteemed members of parliaments, Ms Battaini Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, Mr Mato Franković, Mayor of Dubrovnik, Dear participants and guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you here today in my capacity as Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers at this important Conference organized by the Croatian Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the City of Dubrovnik, under the auspices of the Croatian Chairmanship to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Building and achieving a democratic security in any country or region is a complex and long-term process without instant solutions to be applied. All democratic societies are based on the respect of human rights and the rule of law. Democracy is a prerequisite for lasting peace, tolerant and inclusive societies. As Secretary General Jagland rightly pointed out in his last Report, countries with non-functioning democracies will not only harm their citizens but they may have negative consequences for the stability and security of their neighbours and whole regions or continents.

With this in mind, Croatia has defined priorities of its Chairmanship. Three of our four priorities are directly connected with promoting and strengthening functional democracies, namely, efficient protection of rights of national minorities and vulnerable groups; decentralisation in the context of strengthening of local government and self-government, and fight against corruption.

The protection of national minorities, and their rights and freedoms, is an integral part of international human rights protection. Efforts and engagement in the field of human rights represent an investment for stability, democratic security and peace in Europe.

To enable local and regional government institutions to deliver the best possible services to their citizens, they must have the necessary competences, financial resources and qualified administration. Sometimes, this requires the reform of the local and regional self-government structure in order to strengthen the administrative and financial capacities and autonomy of local and regional self-government units, expand their self-government competences and strengthen their independence in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

During its Chairmanship, Croatia has encouraged the sharing of experiences and knowledge about local self-government reform and the strengthening of the capacities of local and regional institutions. With a view to finding the most effective solution in this respect, a conference on the topic of strengthening local and regional self-government, with an emphasis on decentralisation and cross-border cooperation was held here, in Dubrovnik, on 25 May 2018.

Furthermore, democratic institutions must comply with highest ethical standards and be free from corruption to secure their legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the electorate. Corruption is a socially unacceptable phenomenon, which directly jeopardises human rights, destroys morals and endangers the stability and economic advancement of the state. In addition to being contrary to positive legislation, it is also a deviation from fundamental principles of society.

This is why Croatia decided to organise - in cooperation with the Group of States against corruption, or GRECO - a high-level conference under the title: "Strengthening transparency and accountability to ensure integrity: united against corruption", which took place in city of Šibenik last month.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Mediterranean region is a region remarkably rich in history, culture, traditions and inter-cultural experience. It is a region of moderate climate, great diversity of natural life and a large number of sites, monuments and customs protected by the UNESCO.

However, nowadays, the Mediterranean space is mentioned primarily in the context of rising security challenges we all witness. Besides severe political and security crisis, there are new threats appearing and the instability increases.

We believe the sustainable peace requires an integrated approach based on coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities, with particular emphasis on gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution.

In addition, it is our strong belief that cooperation with civil society can help create a social climate that is not conducive to the dissemination and strengthening of violent extremism and terrorism, especially cooperation in the promotion of tolerance, human rights, the rule of law, democracy, good management, and inter-religious dialogue.

Only by cooperation and partnership we can respond to security challenges of today and guarantee the peoples of the Mediterranean the future they deserve, the future we deserve.

Madam President, Respected members of the PACE,

I am confident that this conference will be an additional proof that main organs of the Council of Europe - Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and Secretary General - are able to bring real improvements in various aspects of the Council of Europe work when they join efforts, as they do here, today. With this in mind, I wish you a successful conference.

Session 1: Ms Dragica Roščić, Chairperson of the Croatian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here today in Dubrovnik, representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, at this important conference on building democratic security in the Mediterranean. It is evident that the security of all the nations in the Euro Mediterranean region is closely interlinked and that we must address our regional challenges through increased international cooperation, including, and especially, on the inter-parliamentary level, as MPs have a key role to play in ensuring our collective security.

As you know, PAM is an international organization that brings together the parliaments of 30 countries from the Euro-Mediterranean region on an equal footing, to forge political, economic and social cooperation among its members in order to find common solutions to the challenges facing the region, and to create a space for peace and prosperity for its peoples.

Dear colleagues,

There are many challenges to security in our region, which mainly stem from the instability caused by regional conflicts in Syria, Libya and the Middle East.

The military defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq has been a milestone towards stabilising the region. However, the war continues and we must remain vigilant of the evolving nature of the terrorist threat.

Recently, during high-level bi-lateral meetings with senior UN officials on the margins of the 73rd General Assembly in New York, PAM was informed that many of the terrorists who were fighting in Syria and Iraq were granted safe passage to Africa. Terrorist organizations are dramatically increasing their presence in the Sahel and throughout sub-Saharan Africa, up to Mozambique, spreading death and violence. This is accelerating population movements northward.

This is a major cause of concern for the future stability of the Euro-Mediterranean region, and PAM will examine the nexus of security and population movements, at a PAM dedicated meeting, in cooperation with the UN and the EU, which will take place in Turkey next June.

Through our work with the United Nations on foreign fighters, PAM has identified the fact that lack of harmonization among national legislations on counter-terrorism of our states is causing operational barriers to international cooperation to track, capture and prosecute terrorists. For this reason, PAM regularly organises dedicated meetings, with the cooperation of UN and the EU, to address these gaps.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The conflict in Syria resulted in the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the Euro-Mediterranean region since World War II and, as part of its mandate, PAM supports all efforts leading to national reconciliation and conflict resolution.

PAM continues to be a bridge between Damascus and the rest of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as Syrian delegates remain as active participants in our initiatives, which enables them to regularly interact with fellow parliamentarians of the region, European Institutions and International Organisations.

PAM supports the international and UN-lead efforts to facilitate the processes of national reconciliation and constitutional reform in Syria. Only through a transparent and inclusive process can there be a true resolution to this conflict, and a stabilized Syria is absolutely essential for the security of the entire Euro-Mediterranean region. In this regard, PAM welcomes the outcome of the recent meeting in Istanbul of the leaders of Turkey, Russia, France and Germany, and the established international consensus and roadmap to end this crisis.

There is also an urgent need to invest into reconstruction and economic development, so that the civilian population which has been displaced by the conflict can begin to rebuild their lives upon their return home.

Dear colleagues,

The continued instability in Libya has also led to a humanitarian catastrophe in terms of casualties, irregular migration, proliferation of illicit arms and human trafficking, and a haven for terrorist activity both in Libya and in the broader Sahel region.

At the last PAM Plenary Session in Bucharest, Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Syala provided a unique opportunity for all our delegates to hear, first-hand, about the complexities of the situation in Libya, the roadmap towards political unity and consolidation of state institutions. He also used the opportunity to ask for reinforced international help towards these efforts, as Libya is struggling to go through this process on its own.

PAM is committed to the UN, the Libyan government, and the parliament to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue. Our Assembly also supports the international efforts to bring Libyan factions to the table of constructive dialogue, such as the upcoming conference organized by Italy in Palermo.

Dear colleagues,

PAM has been also closely following the situation in the Middle East, including through dedicated missions. We have observed with concern the consequences of the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, the cuts to the budget of UNRWA, and the persistent level of violence on the Gaza-Israeli border.

In this regard, PAM has employed the instrument of parliamentary diplomacy to assist in this situation. Recently, and with the help of our delegates from both Palestine and Israel, PAM responded to a request for assistance by the UN, and facilitated the dispatch of medical aid to Gaza.

Additionally, most recently at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, PAM managed to arrange an encounter between the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas; the chief Palestinian negotiator for the peace process with Israel, Saeb Erekat, and PAM Vice President Hon. Amir Peretz, former member of the government of Israel.

Dear colleagues,

As it is evident, there are many challenges to security in our region, last but not least is the new climate of Cold War between the USA and Russia, or the recent verbal confrontation between the EU and Turkey.

PAM remains committed to continue its work with all the relevant stakeholders, especially with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with which we envisage a common initiative next year, to support through parliamentary diplomacy the multi-lateral efforts towards peace, stability and security in our region.

I thank you for your attention.

Session 1: Mr George Loucaides, Chairperson of the ad hoc Sub-Committee

Dear Colleagues, Dear friends and representatives of the MENA countries, Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to take the floor to convey my own thoughts on some of the challenges we are discussing in this conference here today:

First, it is important to say that democracy cannot be imposed, imported or exported. Nor is there a given or superior democratic model that can be replicated by the rest of the world. Democracy is achieved and its content determined through the free will of the peoples, the citizens of each country. Our duty as PACE therefore, and Europe as a whole, is to encourage and support democratic steps and achievements that people from countries of the Mediterranean have reached.

We must also realize that it is an illusion to think that democracy can instantly deliver remedies to all illnesses. But democracy is the only way forward. Thus, whenever the desire for change is coming from within, from the ordinary citizens and the peoples, this can bring concrete results not only in the field of democracy and the rule of law but also could lead to profound changes in the provision of basic state services such as education, health care and social welfare, that can improve the lives of millions of people.

On this basis, PACE, should continue to assist in consolidating democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the region, through the tools at our disposal. Closer institutional co-operation with the core activities of the Council of Europe will better prepare Mediterranean countries for meeting challenges in the democratic process.

It is encouraging - and the presence of a number of MENA countries here today testify to this- that people covering the whole Mediterranean region from North Africa to the Middle East, are now more engaged than ever before. We will continue to support this engagement and commitment to this platform of democratic dialogue. PACE support needs to cover all segments of the population and especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Strengthening the role of women in the political process for example, is also crucial; tackling corruption, ensuring media pluralism and independence is also vital; giving an effective voice to civil society, reporting on abuses of power and maintaining checks and balances, are all of paramount importance.

Secondly, democracy is not only about governance in the internal affairs of a state. It is also about relations between countries. Democratization should take place in the international relations and particularly as regards the respect of the sovereignty and equality of all states, the principle of non-intervention and international law. We must underline this, as the recent history of Mediterranean countries clearly demonstrates that the problems and challenges faced by the Maghreb countries and countries of the Middle East have also occurred by the interference of third countries and their allies in the wider region. The pursuit of these states' national interests, but also powerfully vested strategic and commercial interests and alliances that these countries seek to protect at all costs, have had negative effects on democracy, pluralism and diversity, migration and, of course above all, on the prospects of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

In this context, the ongoing conflict and proxy war in Syria continues to exacerbate religious and political tensions in the region. Yemen's civil war fuelled by foreign powers with little concern for the plight of the Yemeni people has created an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy. The lack of a political settlement in Cyprus, my country, clearly constitutes a setback, for the people of Cyprus foremostly, but also in terms of the security and stability of the wider region. The ongoing aggression of Israel against the Palestinian people and the alarming humanitarian situation in Gaza is unfortunately persisting and affecting future generations too. I could go on with more examples of how foreign interference and the pursuit of selfish interests in the region remain a source of instability and tension. War in itself is disastrous and its effects particularly damaging for the younger generations, its first victims, who are traumatized for life, have no access to education and live in perpetual fear.

The fact remains that MENA continues to be a fragmented and highly volatile region and its many crises need to be resolved through a coherent, long-term political approach that combines security, development and solidarity among the countries of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. This strategy should be based on the fundamental principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state and respect of the independence and sovereignty of states.

The refugee and migration crisis in Europe is also a shared problem, not only because the huge influx of refugees has affected Europe, but also because some European states contributed to the creation of the problem in the first place. Hence, there is also a shared responsibility to take collective action in order to meet these challenges and find solutions. The principles of solidarity and the respect for international law should prevail in Europe. Repression, racism and islamophobia are part of the problem and definitely not the solution.

As regards the fight against terrorism. We insist on zero tolerance. That means zero tolerance to the root causes that are fuelling extremism and terrorism. These are none other than extreme poverty, injustice, increasing inequalities and the humiliation of national and/or personal dignity.

One last remark directly linked to the above, is the necessity to support the economic development of the MENA countries. Widening inequalities and social exclusion erode public confidence in government policy and could potentially undermine democratic processes. Financial assistance needs to be consistent and targeted, in order bring tangible results and measurably improve the living conditions and quality of life of these people.

Thank you.

Session 2: Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

It is a great pleasure to be here today and to share ideas and aspirations between Council of Europe member states and our broader Mediterranean family.

I congratulate the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for organising this event – and all the parliamentarians and attendees who have chosen to come here today from such a wide range of countries.

The level of interest evident here in Dubrovnik reflects the ongoing urgency of the task at hand.

Approaching this Conference, we are all acutely aware of the interconnected challenges that have emerged in recent years in the Mediterranean area:

The scourge of terrorism; the routes to deradicalisation; and the implications of a period of rapid regional migration.

These are just some of the burning issues that feature highly on our agenda here: problems that cross borders – and seas.

Alone we cannot fix them: but the good news is that, together, opportunities exist on the basis of co-operation and trust.

From the Council of Europe perspective, our contribution is to provide the forum, tools and experience that allow states to work in tandem with us and make progress.

But before I outline some of that progress, because there is already a lot, I want to reflect on what lies behind the approach that we take.

Let me give you a short historic perspective. The Council of Europe first put the pursuit of democratic security front and centre in our Vienna Declaration, the concluding document of our Summit of heads of state and government in 1993.

The concept of democratic security was issued in the wake of the Cold War, it was a means to secure peace and prosperity in European countries newly freed from communist oppression.

“Territorial ambitions, the resurgence of aggressive nationalism, the perpetuation of spheres of influence, intolerance or totalitarian ideologies”.

These “aberrations” would not be allowed to destroy the immense hope that Europe represented in 1993.

Instead, a shared commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law would pave the way to convergence, the creation of a shared legal space, and the 47 Council of Europe member states that we have today, all of which have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights.

But democratic security was – and remains – not just a lofty sentiment: it is a structured approach.

It was built on five key pillars:

An efficient and independent judiciary; freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and association; the efficient functioning of democratic institutions, including fighting corruption; and the construction of an inclusive society and democratic citizenship.

I know that some of these will be discussed in greater detail today.

It is no secret that these pillars are now under attack – in Europe and beyond.

Pockets of extreme nationalism and populism on the one hand, and corruption and mismanagement on the other, are real, live challenges.

But our values endure and our standards and instruments are the means by which we can both quantify the challenges – and tackle them.

This is the starting point for sharing democratic security more widely.

Not just east-west, but north-south, with a focus here in the Mediterranean.

Over the course of the past few years, that is precisely what we have been doing.

Encouraged by the events of the Arab Spring in 2011 the Committee of Ministers began a new period of co-operation between the Council of Europe and our southern neighbours.

And supported by the EU and member states, we have worked together to put in place the Action Plans that deliver change.

Our approach can be captured in three broad streams of work.

First, we have worked with individual countries to create a common legal space.

Second, we have provided help where it was sought to shape democratic institutions, including a well-functioning judiciary.

And third, we have fostered regional dialogue as a way to deepen our common understanding of cross-border human rights issues and the best ways in which to address them.

How have we developed this co-operation?

To shape that common legal space, we have shared, where appropriate, the standards enshrined in our 220+ conventions.

Many of those conventions were introduced by debates in the Parliamentary Assembly.

Our Mediterranean partners, who wanted to benefit from those human rights, rule of law and democratic governance standards took up that offer.

We have facilitated the harmonisation of legislation and practices through regional dialogue and co-operation, and by peer-to-peer exchanges.

And, in partnership, we have forged a sustained political dialogue – with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in particular – based on shared human rights values.

Progress has been impressive.

Tunisia, for example, has ratified 7 Council of Europe conventions and additional protocols, and is working towards accession on others with regard to tackling human trafficking and the fight against cybercrime.

Morocco has ratified 8 conventions and additional protocols and is in the final stages of ratifying others such as the MEDICRIME convention and the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

And all of the neighbours with whom we co-operate have a strong and welcome relationship with the Venice Commission, our advisory body on constitutional matters.

But for that legal space to function effectively, democratic institutions and an efficient judiciary are required.

These are the building blocks of a state that people can trust to safeguard the rule of law.

That's why we have helped establish and enhance independent governance bodies at the national level, including Tunisia's anti-corruption body and Morocco's national authority for equality and the fight against all forms of discrimination;

It's why PACE is promoting the Council of Europe's standards at the inter-parliamentary level, including by its "Partner for Democracy" approach to which Jordan acceded in 2016 – and why it also observed elections there this year, as indeed it did in Morocco just last month;

And it's also why our European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, CEPEJ, works to help ensure that justice systems are fair, transparent and effective.

Morocco for example made full use last year of CEPEJ expertise in the establishment of its Supreme Council of the Judiciary, part of a joint EU / Council of Europe "Programme to support the justice sector reform", and "South Programme I and II".

These are concrete achievements, and we believe that they will last.

At the same time, ongoing regional dialogue, through high level bilateral and multilateral co-operation, has created an environment in which we have been able to tackle these issues – and which will enable us to address many of the big challenges that continue to affect the region as a whole.

This is what we continue to do within the framework of the EU / Council of Europe Third South Programme: Ensuring sustainable democratic governance and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean.

Our work to combat the scourge of violence against women.

Our progress in tackling the evil of human trafficking.

And our joint efforts to address the challenges that have come about as a consequence of the surge of migration in the region: matters in which our Parliamentary Network on Diaspora Policies has been an important platform for sharing experiences and understanding.

Ladies and gentlemen, this list is not exhaustive.

The hard work of many people in this room – and many people beyond it – has led to greater co-operation, national action, and international partnership, and that is something to celebrate.

We can have peace and prosperity – democratic security – on this basis if we move forward in the right manner.

Here today, I am interested to hear how you think we can make more progress still.

Whether the model of democratic security is working as effectively as you think it might:

And how it might best be used to tackle other issues in the region today, not just in terms of physical security, but economic security too.

Because the world is changing at a quickened rate and we must be ready to face that challenge.

To safeguard, in the best possible way, the dignity of all people, through respect for their human rights, from which each and every one of us benefits.

Thank you.

Session 2: Mr Marin Mrčela, President of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

- Thank the Parliamentary Assembly for inviting me to this event.
- As you know, GRECO is the Council of Europe anti-corruption body. It is our job to ensure compliance with and effective implementation of the anti-corruption standards in all our 49 member states. These include the whole of geographical Europe, plus the United States. Two countries have been invited to join GRECO, at their request, Kazakhstan and Tunisia.
- The biggest threat to the Rule of Law is corruption. When corruption captures and pervades state institutions, democracy cannot function, Human Rights are at risk, and the Rule of Law crumbles.
- Let me be very concrete by mentioning one aspect: an independent judiciary. I think we can all safely agree on the prime importance of an independent judiciary for respecting Human Rights and upholding the Rule of Law.
- Yet, only a few weeks ago, in another beautiful Croatian city – Šibenik – a deputy minister of a Council of Europe member state, at a Ministerial conference, argued that GRECO should not be concerned about the “administration of justice” in relation to the fight against corruption. That argument is a textbook example of “alternative facts”. GRECO’s recommendations are not about administration but about independence of judiciary. There cannot be an effective fight against corruption without an independent judiciary. Whoever thinks otherwise is seriously, and perhaps deliberately, “beside the point”.
- Judges who are appointed or removed at the whim of the political masters of the day, who issue “judgments of convenience” or “popular decisions” to please those in power, who pay part of their salary to the parties of the politicians who elect them, who are appointed according to political affiliation instead of merit, or who can be MPs or Mayors at the same time, cannot be independent in practice, or be perceived as being independent. Such a judiciary cannot be credible, will not have the trust of the people and is not apt for securing compliance with the international Human Rights standards.
- My statements are not a rhetoric device - these are real situations GRECO has encountered in its monitoring work. The reason for my concern is that in some parts of Europe today we are not just seeing an absence of progress, but regression. GRECO will remain vigilant: our new Rule 34 procedure allows GRECO to act at any time, on any topic, and at very short notice, in respect of any of our 49 member states to raise a “yellow card” when things go the “wrong way”.
- GRECO’s recommendations are one of the responses to these challenges. They are about securing public sector integrity and are designed to shield all branches of the state – the legislative, the judicial and the executive – from corruption. Their full implementation is key. At the Ministerial event I mentioned earlier, organised by the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers a few days ago in Šibenik, many senior political leaders of our member states expressed strong commitment to GRECO, its work and the implementation of our recommendations. This is encouraging, even very encouraging. But we need to see *that* commitment better translated into national reforms, even if it means facing difficult challenges. We can all do more and better.
- This event in Dubrovnik involves countries from around the Mediterranean shores. Allow me to comment that Tunisia requested GRECO membership last year, in 2017. GRECO and the Committee of Ministers acted very quickly and completed in a few months the procedure for inviting Tunisia to join GRECO. Since then, despite two letters from our side, we have received no reply from the Tunisian authorities to our invitation to join GRECO. Expressions of international commitment require domestic action to translate words into reality.
- If Tunisia joined GRECO, it would be part, on an equal footing, of a family of nations who voluntarily submit themselves to our strong and credible mutual evaluation process to better our collective response to corruption. I hope the Tunisian authorities will join our family in the very near future. We are ready to welcome you, but “it takes two to tango”.
- My final word is about the Parliamentary Assembly which continues to initiate and lead important anti-corruption work. Cooperation between PACE and GRECO is sustained and strong. And to show you that we in GRECO “mean business”, let me inform you that, as a follow up to PACE Recommendation 2105 (2017) on “Promoting integrity in governance to tackle political corruption”, a Network of national

anti-corruption authorities was born in Šibenik on 16 October 2018. 20 agencies joined it on the spot and more will follow. This is an operational platform – not a “talking shop” - for anti-corruption agencies to exchange information and good practice in the fight against corruption and the promotion of integrity in public life.

- One also needs to lead by example. As you know, GRECO issued a number of recommendations to strengthen PACE's own integrity framework following allegations of corruption. Much progress has been made by PACE to comply with GRECO recommendations, but more is still to be done. In April this year, I addressed a letter to the then President of the Assembly, Mr. Nicoletti, highlighting the areas where more progress is needed. I trust the current President of the Assembly will follow up on the outstanding points. This is in the interest of PACE and of the Council of Europe as a whole.
- Thanks again for having invited me to this event. I look forward to the debate.

Session 2: Mr Mario Janeček, Chairperson of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT)

Distinguish members of Council of Europe Parliament Ladies and gentlemen, Dear colleagues

First let me thank the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Project Support Division of PACE for organising this Conference in the beautiful and historical city of Dubrovnik.

I also would like to thank all of you for being here today and for giving me opportunity to speak about terrorism that for sure represent one of major threat to human rights, democracy and rule of law.

So, I am here in my capacity as a President of the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) formerly called the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER).

The CDCT is the steering committee tasked by the Committee of Ministers with overseeing and coordinating the Council of Europe's counter-terrorism action. The CDCT provides a forum to deliberate pan-European counter-terrorism and prevention policies, draft legally binding and non-binding instruments, and exchange information between member States on their national legislations and policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me be clear, Terrorism is fundamentally the denial and destruction of human rights, democracy and rule of law. But on the same time the way we counter terrorism is very important. Our approach to the terrorism is our ID it shows who we are and what we are going to be in the future. By continuously sticking to fundamental values of rule of law, human rights and democracy we are on the best way to win the battle and by doing so we are not only fighting terrorism we are addressing its root causes, as well.

The current threat we face is multi-dimensional. By speaking on terrorism today we speak about issues such as: returning foreign terrorist fighters and relocators, homegrown terrorists, terrorists acting alone so called lone wolfs, cyber terrorism, potential CBRN terrorism, nexus

between terrorism and organised crime in particular regarding fund raising, trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings.

It is obvious, terrorism is an evolving threat, very dynamic and unpredictable and more and more violent.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In course of the past years the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) has tackled the issue of terrorism quite extensively.

The CDCT task is developing appropriate and practical binding and non-binding instruments such as conventions, protocols, recommendations and guidelines for member states to consider and apply in the prevention and fight against terrorism.

Furthermore, the CDCT also provides a platform for country profiles on legislative and institutional counter-terrorism situation in member States, and foster exchange of best practices, promote the effective implementation of Council of Europe instruments applicable to the fight against terrorism and help to ensure that all member State efforts to combat terrorism are in full respect of human rights and the rule of law. The CDCT and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) provide a regularly-updated facts-sheet on ECHR cases relating to counter- terrorism.

Among our major achievements are for example elaboration of Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol. The purpose of both instruments is to enhance the efforts of Parties in preventing terrorism and its negative effects on the full enjoyment of human rights, in particular the right to life, both by measures to be taken at national level and through international co-operation.

These very advanced instruments enable Pan-European criminalisation of certain acts that may lead to the commission of terrorist offences, namely: public provocation, recruitment and training for terrorism, travelling for terrorist purposes, fund raising and facilitation of such travel.

Furthermore, the aim of Convention and Protocol is reinforcing cooperation on prevention both internally, in the context of the definition of national prevention policies, and internationally through a number of measures, such as mutual assistance arrangements and information exchange.

The establishment of the 24/7 Network for Exchange of Police Information regarding Foreign Terrorist Fighters in 2016 (based on Article 7 of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism) is practical example of an activity designed specifically to assist day-to-day co-operation between member States.

In recent period the CDCT has developed a Council of Europe Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2018-2022), series of new legal and other standards on issues such as the criminal law response to foreign terrorist fighters, the use of special investigation techniques in terrorism cases and how to prevent attacks by terrorists acting alone. These standards, together with the already existing body of relevant conventions, protocols, recommendations and guidelines, form the basis for the Organisation's current and future work in the field of counter-terrorism and prevention of radicalisation leading to terrorism.

Among many other issues our current work is related to:

Pan-European definition of terrorism; Legal definition of terrorism is still missing on Council of Europe soil, at this moment we rely on UN global counter terrorism instruments. The Pan- European legal definition on terrorism would better reflect contemporary trends in terrorism, enable more comprehensive cooperation, improve compatibility of Council of Europe Prevention Convention with national legal systems and enhance legal certainty and rule of law.

However, we are on the very beginning of this very sensitive and very complex process. On the last plenary meeting the CDCT has established the Sub-Group for the purpose of examining the feasibility of elaborating a definition of terrorism. The Sub-Group shall examine the feasibility of elaborating a definition of terrorism and report back to CDCT on its findings. In case the Sub-Group finds that it is feasible to elaborate a definition of terrorism, the report shall also contain a proposal on the possible main characteristics of such a definition. Although, we are in a very preliminary phase of the possible elaboration process I am quite optimistic and hope that on the end we will have positive result.

Establishing a common set of risk indicators for identifying individuals likely to become terrorists acting alone. The aim of this activity is to produce a confidential set of guidelines to help first line practitioners identify individuals likely to engage in terrorism due, inter alia, to their ideological commitments or other relevant driving factors combined with the readiness to use violence.

Countering misuse of internet for purposes of terrorist propaganda; Internet has become an asset to terrorist groups to disseminate propaganda, recruit new terrorists and raise funds. There is obvious need to be efficient in countering terrorist activities in cyber space. So, the idea behind this activity is to open channels for communication and information exchange with Internet companies to effectively counter terrorist propaganda on Internet. Next week, in Strasbourg, the CDCT will convene Thematic session on this issue and discuss, with private Internet companies, way forward.

Ladies and gentleman,

In conclusion I do hope that I was successful in clarification what CDCT is dealing with and how our work is corresponding with and contributing to upholding and strengthening the rule of law, democracy and human rights.

CDCT will continue its efforts to develop new and promote existing standards, both regionally and globally, in close co-operation and co-ordination with member States and other regional and global organisations expert bodies.

Cooperation within the Council of Europe region, as well as, neighbouring states and regions is crucial. The threat of terrorism is not going to stop at any of our state borders and if we really would like to be secure in Europe than we need to work together with our partners on the regional and global level.

Values of rule of law, human rights and democracy must be our common bond that is invaluable and for which there is no substitute.

Thank you for your attention!

Session 2: Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission

First of all, I would like to thank our Croatian hosts for their hospitality in this wonderful city of Dubrovnik, the pearl of the Adriatic, the beauty of which is comparable only to Venice, the seat of our Commission.

I would also like to thank the Parliamentary Assembly for inviting me to present to this important gathering the role of the Venice Commission in strengthening democratic institutions through constitutional and legal reforms. This invitation reflects the close partnership between our respective bodies.

The Assembly always encourages states to co-operate with us and to follow our recommendations, while we encourage states to enter into partnership for democracy agreements with the Assembly.

The Assembly was particularly helpful, when we established contacts in Tunisia, contacts which led to our involvement in the preparation of the new democratic constitution of the country.

The Venice Commission was established in 1990 and we were, and are, closely involved in the drafting of the new constitutions and implementing legislation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Our expertise in this respect is uncontested in Europe, where we are recognised as the specialists in democratic transition.

But we have never been restricted to Europe. Three of the countries from the Southern Mediterranean represented here – Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia - are full members of the Venice Commission. With others – Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya – we have established different levels of co-operation.

What can the Venice Commission offer to the countries of the Southern Mediterranean?

First of all, we provide opinions on draft Constitutions and implementing legislation, as we did for example with respect to the Constitution of Tunisia, legislation on the judiciary in Morocco and the draft NGO law of Egypt.

These opinions are based, on the one hand, on international standards, on the other, on the sharing of experience among countries.

We can learn a lot from the successes, but also from the failures of other states. In our Commission with its 61 members from 61 countries a lot of experience is represented.

We do not try to impose solutions on countries, but we try to find through dialogue the solution, which appears most appropriate for the specific situation and which respects both our common values and the traditions and culture of the country concerned.

We not only deal with fundamental rights but also with the building or reforming of institutions. We contributed decisively to the establishment of constitutional courts in many countries, we protect the independence of the ordinary judiciary and of ombudspersons and try to ensure that parliaments have sufficient powers to effectively control the executive.

We also organise high level conferences and seminars. These can be conferences specific to a topical issue in a country, for example on the question of referral of cases from the ordinary courts to the Constitutional Court, the 'question prioritaire de constitutionnalité', in Morocco or the drafting of the law on the constitutional court in Jordan.

These can also be conferences on a topic of interest for the region, as is the case of our intercultural workshops on democracy. The next workshop will take place in one week in Tunis on the topic of the role of independent bodies in a democratic state.

The constitutional reforms in Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan have greatly increased the importance of independent institutions. This is a topic, where it is important to share experiences and where Europe may also learn from experiences in the Arab countries.

We also organise conferences of world-wide scope. The next Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice will be co-organised by the Venice Commission and the Constitutional Council of Algeria in Algiers in 2020 on peace and constitutional justice.

The Venice Commission is also active in capacity building at the regional level. In co-operation mainly with the Ministry of Civil Service and Reform of the Administration of Morocco, we launched the UniDem Campus for the training of senior civil servants in areas related to good governance, the rule of law and protection of fundamental rights.

We also co-operate closely with the Organisation of Arab Election Management Bodies and hope to establish co-operation on electoral issues with the Arab League.

Finally, we have a long-standing co-operation with the Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils and we have started to work together with the Arab Union of Administrative Justice and in particular the Council of State of Egypt.

You can see that there is a wide range of possibilities for co-operation between the Venice Commission and the countries of the Southern Mediterranean.

We are conscious that the period of euphoria following the Arab spring is behind us. But we should not give in to pessimism.

Building democratic institutions is hard work which requires time and patience. But I am convinced that, if we work together, we can achieve a lot in the common interest of our people.

Session 2: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mesdames et Messieurs, Mes chères et chers collègues,

Il m'a été demandé d'intervenir une seconde fois aujourd'hui devant vous afin de présenter le statut de « Partenariat pour la démocratie » en tant que plateforme de coopération interparlementaire. J'avoue que c'est une tâche difficile à plusieurs égards, d'autant plus que je m'adresse à un public d'expert-e-s en la matière, comme l'ont démontré les débats de ce matin. Je vais donc me concentrer sur l'essentiel afin de laisser la place aux débats car – pour moi – le plus important aujourd'hui est d'entendre votre expérience et votre analyse.

Je commencerai donc par présenter un bref historique des origines du partenariat puis j'exposerai quelques-unes de ses principales caractéristiques, pour terminer par quelques réflexions sur son futur.

L'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe coopère depuis longtemps avec les pays de notre voisinage, surtout dans la région de la Méditerranée. Sans fausse modestie, je peux affirmer que l'Assemblée a été pionnière en matière de coopération dans ce domaine, au sein de l'Organisation tout entière.

Avec la création, en 2009, du statut de « Partenariat pour la démocratie », cette coopération est passée, pour ainsi dire, à la vitesse supérieure.

Parallèlement, n'oublions pas une autre étape importante, le rapport intitulé « Renforcer la coopération avec les pays du Maghreb » – préparé par Madame Josette Durrieu en 2008 – qui a ouvert les portes à une institutionnalisation de notre coopération.

Si vous me le permettez, j'aimerais faire ici une parenthèse et rendre hommage aux travaux de notre ancienne collègue, Madame Durrieu, qui s'est beaucoup investie dans le renforcement de nos relations avec le voisinage. Ainsi, aujourd'hui, sur la base de ses propositions, les Parlements de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie – qui ne bénéficient pas du statut de partenaires – sont systématiquement invités à se faire représenter à nos sessions plénières.

En présentant son rapport, Mme Durrieu a très clairement exposé les objectifs de notre action dans le voisinage. Elle caractérisait cette action comme étant impérative, je cite « tout d'abord, parce que nous devons nous ouvrir, ensuite parce que nous devons être solidaires et puis parce que [notre] politique de voisinage doit donner un certain nombre d'orientations. »

Cette déclaration était véritablement visionnaire, comme nous le constatons aujourd'hui, à la lumière des derniers développements dans les pays de la rive sud de la Méditerranée et de la transition démocratique entamée après le « Printemps arabe ». Je ferme la parenthèse.

Comme je le disais à l'instant, l'adoption, en 2009, du rapport de M. Van den Brande portant création du Statut de « Partenaire pour la démocratie » a été une étape décisive dans le renforcement de nos relations avec le voisinage. Avec la création de ce statut, nous avons été clairement en avance sur les événements à venir. Car nul ne pouvait alors prévoir les changements qui se sont produits ensuite dans le monde arabe. Lorsque le « Printemps arabe » a éclaté en 2011, nous avions à notre disposition les bons outils pour montrer notre ouverture et notre solidarité avec nos voisins du sud engagés dans les transformations démocratiques.

Aujourd'hui, le statut de « Partenariat pour la démocratie » s'avère être un outil de coopération solide qui a fait ses preuves : parmi nos partenaires, nous comptons le Parlement du Royaume du Maroc, le Conseil national palestinien, le Parlement du Royaume de Jordanie, ainsi que le Parlement de la République kirghize – seul pays de l'Asie centrale à bénéficier de ce statut.

Je suis convaincue que l'espace géographique du partenariat continuera à s'étendre à d'autres pays de la rive sud de la Méditerranée et je m'en réjouis.

Ainsi, nous maintenons des contacts réguliers avec le Parlement de la Tunisie et la discussion récente avec le Ministre des affaires étrangères de la Tunisie, M. Khemaies JHINAOUÏ, qui est intervenu devant notre Assemblée pendant la dernière partie de session, a été très encourageante. J'espère qu'après les élections législatives de 2019, nous allons pouvoir relancer les discussions avec les membres de l'Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple afin que celle-ci puisse également acquérir le statut de « Partenaire pour la démocratie ».

Je souhaite également que les Parlements d'Algérie, d'Egypte et du Liban manifestent leur intérêt pour ce statut dans un proche futur et je suis convaincue que notre rencontre d'aujourd'hui est un pas dans ce sens.

Mes chères et chers collègues,

J'en arrive maintenant au contenu du partenariat et aux avantages qu'il offre en tant qu'outil de coopération.

Tout d'abord, je voudrais rappeler qu'il s'agit d'un partenariat basé sur des valeurs – des valeurs universelles qui sont les nôtres des deux côtés de la Méditerranée : la démocratie pluraliste et paritaire, l'État de droit et le respect des droits humains et des libertés fondamentales. En demandant le statut, le futur partenaire pour la démocratie doit s'engager à faire siennes toutes ces valeurs.

En deuxième lieu, dans toute logique d'une coopération basée sur des valeurs, le partenariat implique des engagements, notamment :

- l'engagement d'agir pour abolir la peine capitale et d'encourager les autorités compétentes à introduire sans délai un moratoire sur les exécutions ;
- l'engagement de s'appuyer sur l'expérience de l'Assemblée, ainsi que sur l'expertise de la Commission de Venise, dans ses travaux institutionnels et législatifs ;
- l'engagement d'organiser des élections libres et équitables ;
- l'engagement d'encourager la participation équilibrée des femmes et des hommes à la vie publique et politique ;
- l'engagement d'encourager les autorités du pays à adhérer aux conventions et accords partiels pertinents du Conseil de l'Europe, en particulier ceux traitant des droits humains, de l'État de droit et de la démocratie ;
- ainsi que l'obligation d'informer régulièrement l'Assemblée des progrès accomplis dans la mise en œuvre des principes du Conseil de l'Europe.

Il va de soi que les Parlements partenaires s'engagent à composer leurs délégations selon certaines règles, notamment en assurant une représentation équitable des partis ou groupes politiques existant dans le parlement et en incluant dans leur délégation un pourcentage de membres du sexe sous-représenté au moins égal à celui que compte leur parlement.

En troisième lieu, toujours dans la logique d'un partenariat basé sur les valeurs et le respect, les engagements pris donnent lieu à des droits et des prérogatives, ainsi qu'à certains engagements réciproques de la part de l'Assemblée parlementaire.

Ainsi, les partenaires pour la démocratie bénéficient des mêmes droits que les membres de l'Assemblée, à l'exception du droit de vote. Ils peuvent intervenir en plénière et en commission, signer des déclarations, des propositions de résolution et de recommandations, ainsi que les propositions d'amendements. Ils peuvent également être associés aux travaux des groupes politiques.

De son côté, l'Assemblée s'engage à envoyer systématiquement des missions d'observation aux élections dans les pays dont les parlements bénéficient du statut de partenaire pour la démocratie.

De plus, depuis plusieurs années, dans le cadre des programmes de coopération « Sud », l'Assemblée organise pour les Parlements partenaires des séminaires et des formations sur différents aspects des normes du Conseil de l'Europe ou sur nos conventions spécifiques, afin de mettre à leur disposition l'expertise parlementaire européenne et de les accompagner dans le processus de législatif.

Comme vous le voyez, Mesdames et Messieurs, le « Partenariat pour la démocratie » est un outil de coopération interparlementaire efficace, flexible et mutuellement avantageux.

Mesdames et Messieurs,
Mes chères et chers collègues,

Que peut-on dire sur l'évaluation globale du partenariat ?

Le partenariat a sans doute permis à l'Assemblée et aux Parlements des Etats du voisinage sud de tirer le meilleur profit de notre coopération au moment où nous en avons le plus besoin, pendant l'accélération des transformations démocratiques.

Toutefois, aujourd'hui, presque 10 ans après sa création, il est tout à fait légitime de porter un regard critique sur notre expérience afin d'évaluer et – éventuellement – d'adapter nos outils aux nouvelles conditions. Dans le but d'alimenter la discussion, permettez-moi de faire deux observations.

La première : avant d'envisager des changements éventuels, nous devons nous poser la question de savoir si nous utilisons déjà pleinement toutes les opportunités qu'offre le partenariat dans son état actuel.

En effet, comme je le disais tout à l'heure, le partenariat ne se limite pas uniquement au volet de la représentation politique, même si la présence des parlementaires partenaires à nos réunions, à Strasbourg, à Paris ou dans d'autres villes européennes comme aujourd'hui à Dubrovnik, est sans doute l'exemple le plus tangible et visible de notre coopération.

Rappelons-nous que l'un des objectifs du partenariat est le partage de nos expériences. C'est dans ce contexte que le partenariat encourage l'utilisation de l'expertise du Conseil de l'Europe dans le processus législatif, notamment, à travers la Commission de Venise, dans tous les domaines du droit constitutionnel, mais aussi dans d'autres domaines plus spécifiques comme, par exemple, l'indépendance de la justice, la lutte contre la corruption, ou encore l'éducation ou la société civile, domaines d'une vaste expertise qui mérite d'être partagée. Dans le cadre des « Partenariat de voisinage » avec la Jordanie, le Maroc et la Tunisie, de nombreuses actions de coopération sont déjà prévues dans ce sens et j'invite les parlementaires à y participer pleinement, afin de faire le lien entre les volets interparlementaire et intergouvernemental de la coopération.

Dans le même esprit, l'un des objectifs du partenariat est d'encourager l'adhésion aux Conventions du Conseil de l'Europe qui sont ouvertes aux Etats du voisinage. Parmi elles, j'en soulignerai tout particulièrement deux d'une importance primordiale pour notre Assemblée : la Convention de Lanzarote sur la protection des enfants contre l'exploitation et les abus sexuels et la Convention d'Istanbul sur la prévention et la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique. Je compte sur vous pour promouvoir l'adhésion à ces instruments juridiques du Conseil de l'Europe auprès de vos autorités.

Il en va de même des Accords partiels du Conseil de l'Europe, comme par exemple celui sur le Centre nord-sud auquel plusieurs pays de notre voisinage participent déjà. Nous devons utiliser davantage ces outils à notre disposition.

Enfin, un potentiel important de développement des programmes de coopération spécifiques existe entre l'Assemblée parlementaire et les parlements partenaires, notamment à travers les Réseaux parlementaires de notre Assemblée. Trois réseaux sont particulièrement appropriés : il s'agit du Réseau parlementaire pour « le droit des femmes de vivre sans violence », de l'Alliance parlementaire contre la haine, ainsi que du nouveau Réseau parlementaire sur les politiques des diasporas. Je sais que les parlementaires partenaires participent déjà aux travaux de ces Réseaux et je suis intéressée d'entendre vos observations sur leur fonctionnement, afin de discuter ensemble sur la façon de les améliorer.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Ma seconde observation porte sur le contexte politique et géopolitique plus général.

Comme nous l'avons vu, le statut de « Partenaire pour la démocratie » est un outil efficace de coopération institutionnalisée. Il permet aux Parlements – ou aux Assemblées constituantes – de bénéficier de l'expertise et de l'accompagnement du Conseil de l'Europe dans le processus législatif et les réformes.

Mais que faire lorsque les institutions ne sont pas suffisamment fortes ou – dans certains cas – inexistantes ? Que faire dans les situations de conflit ou de guerre civile, comme c'est par exemple le cas en Lybie ou en Syrie ?

Il est clair que nous ne pouvons pas rester indifférents à ce qui se passe dans ces pays, car la stabilité et la sécurité de la région tout entière en dépendent. Toutefois, nous ne pouvons intervenir qu'en présence de partenaires et d'institutions fiables et solides.

C'est ici que le processus politique et la diplomatie deviennent alors un élément clé de la résolution des conflits. En tant que parlementaires, nous devons bien entendu soutenir les efforts de nos autorités et des diplomates afin d'obtenir que des négociations aboutissent à l'arrêt des combats et lancent un processus politique de réconciliation et de reconstruction des institutions et de l'économie.

Parallèlement, il y a sans doute aussi de la place pour la diplomatie parlementaire. J'aimerais entendre votre point de vue sur ce sujet, afin de discuter ensemble de l'utilisation optimale des outils qui sont à notre disposition.

Mes chères et chers collègues, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je termine sur ce point ma présentation et je me réjouis par avance du débat fructueux que nous allons mener.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.