

JOINT DECLARATION BY THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE SOUTH

The Speakers, Deputy Speakers and representatives of the Parliaments of the South of the European Union, the European Parliament, and the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, met in Lanzarote, from January 26 to 28, 2025, within the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PAUfM).

This Conference built on the meeting of Parliaments of the South of the European Union held on the margins of the last Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the European Union, held in Palma from April 21 to 23, 2024, which brought together the Parliaments of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, Portugal and the European Parliament.

The goal of this Conference was to address the specific challenges posed by migratory flows with the most affected origin, transit and destination countries, thus incorporating to the meeting other countries from southern Europe and the southern shore of the Mediterranean, who have signed the main migration cooperation agreements, as well as the Chairpersons of the five Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, who presented their Report on the situation of migratory flows between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

The main session of the Conference was devoted to the migratory routes of the Central, Eastern and Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Following the debates held, the ensuing considerations were adopted:

Reaffirming our shared commitment to strengthening *cooperation* between the two shores of the Mediterranean, particularly with regards to the management of migration flows and in a spirit of solidarity and respect for human rights.

Being aware that cooperation on migration is a phenomenon that entails both a common challenge and shared development opportunities and that, therefore, demands the utmost attention and political investment by our respective Governments and the European Union institutions;

Acknowledging that in recent years Mediterranean countries, both within the European Union and across the broader Mediterranean region, have faced and continue to face important irregular migratory flows, which pose significant *challenges* to our respective countries and put human lives at risk;

Recognising that migration is a strategic issue of concern to all Mediterranean countries, and that it requires a global response and an *integrated approach* for an efficient management of migration and asylum for refugees;

Considering that the recent escalation of tensions in the Middle East and instability in the Sahel and the general geopolitical developments in the broader region, including open conflicts and the worsening of the socio-economic conditions, will continue to exert *a strong and sustained pressure* driving irregular migration;

And since we are determined to address the countless tragedies that we have witnessed in recent years and are continuing to witness, which have caused thousands of victims.

The Speakers, Deputy Speakers and representatives of the Parliaments of the South here represented,

CALL ON

All involved Governments and institutions, to

1. Agree on an *integrated approach* to devise economic, humanitarian, development and peace and security building policies that contribute to a more efficient management of migratory flows;
2. Promote and build tailor-made and mutually beneficial partnerships among countries of *origin, transit and destination* of migrants to foster a closer cooperation on the regional, multilateral and international level to prevent further deaths and any violation of human rights along the migrants' trajectories and to curb as far as possible irregular migration;
3. Address the *root causes* and drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement. In this respect, we acknowledge the progress made with the adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum and call on the European Commission to work, within the framework of the New Pact for the Mediterranean, to build comprehensive partnerships focused on peace building/ending conflicts, investment, economic stability, job creation, especially for young people, gender equality and fighting discrimination against women, energy, transport, security, the environment and climate change, migration and other areas of mutual interest;

4. Recognise the need to help *countries of origin* to strengthen their capacities to manage reintegration of returning migrants in a sustainable manner;
5. Support the establishment of *local development programs* in countries of origin and transit focusing on job training especially for women, including STEM professions, aiming at creating job opportunities and fostering economic growth in order to prevent irregular migration;
6. Assess a comprehensive strategy to combat, also with the use of modern technologies and AI, the desertification processes that particularly afflict the countries of Northern and sub-Saharan Africa, caused by decreases in rainfall and poor water management, reducing agricultural output and forcing farmers to migrate, fueling social unrest and generating regional tensions, further intensifying the ongoing migration crisis;
7. Focus on the improvement of *education, healthcare and social welfare* in the countries of origin and transit, as these factors directly contribute to reducing push factors and preventing forced displacement;
8. Acknowledge the increased pressure suffered by *destination countries* that are on the front line given their geographical location and the responsibilities entailed by the management of the reception, accommodation and processing of the growing number of asylum requests and integration, promoting the establishment of an efficient solidarity and shared responsibility mechanism;
9. Be proactive in addressing any possible new refugee flows and in providing support particularly to the front-line countries; and ensure the creation of conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees where possible;
10. Tackle irregular migration and *improve security* by putting in place all possible measures to eradicate smuggling networks and halt trafficking in human beings, enhancing regional cooperation by strengthening border control capacities and setting up joint operations between countries of origin, transit and destination;
11. Ensure that *human rights* are respected at all stages of cooperation and continuously monitor, report and counter unnecessary distress or suffering of all individuals involved;
12. Protect *under-age girls and boys* in migration and unaccompanied minors, stressing that, irrespective of their migration or refugee status, they are entitled to all the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that their best interests must be the primary consideration in all decisions and actions concerning them;
13. Recognise the benefits of *legal migration* and mobility, since safe and legal migration is beneficial for everyone as it can help address labour market needs and drive economic growth in their countries of destination, transit and origin; encourage the establishment of *secure legal channels*, by using humanitarian corridors for persons entitled to

international protection and via education and labour mobility programs, and conduct awareness campaigns at institutional level on the benefits of legal migration;

14. Proactively *advocate for the values* of migration to combat racism and xenophobia. And to actively engage in host countries in investing in policies for the reception and social, labour and cultural integration of newcomers.

PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBERS SIGNING THE FINAL DECLARATION

- 1) Congress of Deputies (Spain)
- 2) Senate (Spain)
- 3) House of Representatives (Morocco)
- 4) House of Councillors (Morocco)
- 5) Chamber of Representatives (Egypt)
- 6) European Parliament
- 7) Parliament of Croatia (Croatia)
- 8) Chamber of Representatives (Cyprus)
- 9) National Assembly (France)
- 10) Hellenic Parliament (Greece)
- 11) Chamber of Deputies (Italy)
- 12) Senate (Italy)
- 13) Chamber of Representatives (Malta)
- 14) Assembly of the Republic (Portugal)
- 15) National Assembly (Slovenia)
- 16) Grand National Assembly (Türkiye)



Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean
 Assemblée Parlementaire de l'Union pour la Méditerranée
 Asamblea Parlamentaria de la Unión por el Mediterráneo
 الجمعية البرلمانية للاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



CORTES GENERALES

Francina Armengol Socías
 Congreso de los Diputados
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 Majliss-annouwab
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Giulio Centemero
 Camera dei Deputati
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Simona Petrucci
 Senato della Repubblica
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Angelo Farrugia
 Kamra tad-Deputati
 Malta

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(with the reservation)
 to second paragraph)

Mohamed Zidouh
 Majlis al-Mustacharin
 Morocco