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Euro-Mediterranean agricultural and rural policy

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Schmied and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Located at the border of Europe, the Mediterranean basin is a striking example of inequalities and imbalances between north and south. In addition to strictly political, socio-economic and cultural differences, the geographic and demographic structures of the two shores of the Mediterranean are diametrically opposed.

The more developed Northern Mediterranean basin enjoys a better climate and more abundant natural resources and tends towards a tertiary economy, co-operation and even integration. The Southern basin is marked by severe structural deficiencies, a predominantly primary economy, excessive dependence on imports, strong demographic growth and population movements, and insufficient co-operation.

However, agriculture and rural development are sectors which could help reduce the differences between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin, contribute to its economic and territorial development, and help limit migratory flows, thus promoting international co-operation and solidarity between the northern and the southern shores.

The need for co-operation and development, in particular in the field of agriculture, can be illustrated with some data: the Mediterranean basin has only 3% of global water resources (75% in the North) for 8% of the world population, 30% of the active population work in the agricultural sector, 454 million inhabitants in 2005 and 523 millions foreseen in 2020 (65% growth on the Southern shore), ie twice the number of inhabitants in the South than in the North.

On 28-29 September 2006, the Assembly co-organised in Strasbourg the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture, at which it was stressed that agriculture is at the centre of the development process for the countries of the Mediterranean Southern shore and that Europe must be one of the main actors. Moreover, agriculture in the North Mediterranean countries is also encountering some difficulties.

In the context of globalisation that also affects agricultural products, of the WTO interrupted negotiations, of a European policy for the Mediterranean which does not sufficiently integrate agriculture, of overexploitation of natural resources, of the expanding population, of urbanisation and aggravated coastal settlement, etc, Europe must act urgently. However, these difficulties should be considered and solved jointly and by all of the Mediterranean basin countries working together.

The Assembly proposes that the Mediterranean countries and relevant organisations take measures to avoid distortions in competition, improve the organisation of markets, limit imports, promote quality regional products, adapt the CAP to Mediterranean products, create a Euro-Mediterranean fund to finance adaptation of agricultural structures in the countries of the southern shore, and revitalise Europe's Mediterranean policy with a view to integrating agriculture into the Mediterranean free trade zone envisaged by the Barcelona Process.

*Signed*¹:

SCHMIED, Walter, Switzerland, ALDE
ALATALU, Toomas, Estonia, EDG
COUSIN, Alain, France, EPP/CD
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DUPRAZ, John, Switzerland, ALDE
FERNÁNDEZ, AGUILAR, Adolfo, Spain, EPP/CD
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MEALE, Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
MENDES, BOTA, José, Portugal, EPP/CD
MIRONESCU, Laurentiu, Romania, EPP/CD
PAPADIMITRIOU, Elsa, Greece, EPP/CD
PLATVOET, Leo, Netherlands, UEL
POPESCU, Ivan, Ukraine, SOC
PRESEČNIK, Jakob, Slovenia, EPP/CD
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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group