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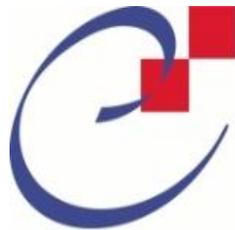
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**Ad hoc Sub-Committee of the  
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**

## Summing Up Parliamentary Conference

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

**Hotel Excelsior Conference Hall  
Dubrovnik, Croatia  
6 November 2018**

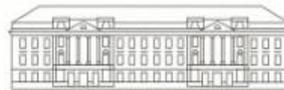


**CHAIRMANSHIP OF CROATIA**

Council of Europe  
May - November 2018

**PRÉSIDENCE DE LA CROATIE**

Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai - Novembre 2018



CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

*organised in the framework of the Croatian Chairmanship  
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*

*in cooperation with the Parliamentary Project Support Division  
of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*

**Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean**

Funded  
by the European Union  
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*“Peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean region are vitally important for Europe. Our continent is stable and safe inasmuch as are the neighbouring countries, and hence the need of Europe to support its neighbourhood”,* stated Mr Gordan Jandroković, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, at the opening of the parliamentary conference “Building democratic security in the Mediterranean: Common challenges, Shared responsibility” on 6 November 2018 in Dubrovnik (Croatia).

The conference was organised by the PACE Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and the Croatian Parliament in the framework of the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in order to discuss political challenges of the Mediterranean region and their impact on both European and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, and to present an overview of Council of Europe tools contributing to democratic security in the region.

It brought together parliamentarians from Council of Europe member States and the MENA region, as well as a number of Council of Europe and Croatian top-ranking officials and experts.

PACE President Liliane Maury Pasquier recalled that the Assembly led the policy of openness towards neighbouring regions, in particular the Mediterranean, aimed at sharing experiences in the fields of democracy, human dignity and fundamental rights, as well as the rule of law, with all those who aspired to these universal values.

*“Developing a system of governance which is firmly anchored in these values – this is what we call promoting democratic security, in particular in the framework of the partnership for democracy”* the President said in her opening speech. *“It is our shared responsibility to implement these principles for there to be peace, stability and prosperity in this region that we share,”* she continued.

*“We must not forget that our values should never be taken for granted, and that no single democratic model is applicable to all countries and all situations. Each must find their own democratic path, but sharing experience and good practice nevertheless enables us all to make quicker progress.”* the President added.

Ms Marija Pejčinović-Burić, Vice-President of the Croatian Government and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, addressing the conference in her capacity as Chairperson of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, stressed that 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.

*“It is our strong belief that co-operation 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”,* Minister Pejčinović-Burić said.

During the first working session, Ms Dragica Roščić, Chairperson of the Croatian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and Professor Vlatko Cvrtila, Rector of Vern' University (Zagreb) provided an overview of security challenges facing the Mediterranean. Ms Roščić focused on regional conflicts in Syria, Libya and the Middle East which caused instability in the region. Professor Cvrtila argued that “hard security” approach was insufficient and there was a growing need for an appropriate mix of hard and soft security measures.

George Loucaides, Chairperson of the *ad hoc* Sub-Committee, who served as moderator of the conference, further developed this view. *“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”,* he stated. *“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”.*

Mr Loucaides also stressed that democracy cannot be imposed, imported or exported; it can only be achieved through the free will of the people. *“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”.*

During the second working session, participants looked in detail at the concept of democratic security and at the tools that the Council of Europe offered in this respect.

Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, recalled the pillars of democratic security, and warned that these pillars were 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”* she said. *“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.”*

Ms Battaini-Dragoni presented the co-operation of the Council of Europe with its Mediterranean neighbours in creating a common legal space, in shaping democratic institutions, including a well-functioning judiciary, and in fostering dialogue as a way to deepen a common understanding of cross-border human rights issues and the best ways in which to address them. She admitted that, while there was substantial progress in bilateral co-operation on these issues, more efforts were needed to develop the regional dimension. The conference in Dubrovnik was therefore a welcome step in this direction.

Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, reported on the work of this advisory body specialised in constitutional matters, in particular in strengthening democratic institutions through constitutional and legal reform, including in a number of MENA countries. *“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”*, he said.

Mr Marin Mrčela, President of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), and Mr Mario Janeček, Chairperson of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT), informed the participants on the Council of Europe specific tools to address threats to the rule of law such as corruption and terrorism.

Finally, Mr Driss El Yazami (Morocco), Chairperson of the National Human Rights Council, shared with the participants the Moroccan experience in the field of Human Rights protection and deradicalisation in prisons.

Summing up the discussions, George Loucaides quoted the words of the Croatian Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković at the opening: *“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. We at the parliamentary co-operation can make a significant contribution in bringing about democratic security.”*