

BARCELONA DECLARATION:

BUILDING PEACE AND RESPONSES TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Original: Spanish

Democratic socialist parties from the Mediterranean region gathered for a meeting of the Socialist International Mediterranean Committee in the city of Barcelona on 26 and 27 October 2015, under the heading 'For an end to conflicts – For peace in the Mediterranean.'

This meeting takes place at a crucial moment for the Euro-Mediterranean region for three reasons. Firstly, it is the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration, the founding document of a project of co-operation between the EU and the twelve countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Secondly, the grave refugee crisis that has been afflicting our region in recent months calls for urgent and effective solutions to contain the greatest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, and thirdly, because of the number and complexity of the open conflicts that are causing deaths and the displacement of people in a several of countries of the region.

As Mediterranean socialists, we recognise that the creation of the Barcelona Process at the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Conference, and subsequently the Union for the Mediterranean, were important initiatives at their respective times which helped establish a forum for political dialogue and social and economic co-operation in a complex region. However, the problems and crises in different parts of this region obstruct these initiatives, although the Mediterranean Committee continues to consider them absolutely necessary for dealing in a concerted manner with the challenges that confront us.

The Mediterranean is experiencing one of the worst crises in its history: the refugee crisis. Hundreds of thousands have arrived in Europe after crossing Mare Nostrum, fleeing from war and torture in their countries of origin. Many of them have lost their lives in the attempt or have disappeared in its waters. It is a human and humanitarian tragedy, in the face of which we, as socialists, cannot and must not stand aside with folded arms. We understand that we must attend to the needs of those who have justified reasons for seeking asylum in Europe, while at the same time we must try to remove the root causes of the problem: the war in Syria which has been going on for more than five years, the barbaric terrorism of Daesh/ISIS, the lack of democracy and bad governance in many countries that inhibits the opportunities and prospects of the young people of the region.

Our priority is the achievement of three aims: peace and stability, democratisation, and prosperity. Our region's potential is weighed down by different conflicts, some of which are long-standing and still without resolution, like that of Israel and Palestine, the division of Cyprus or the question of Western Sahara, and others that are more recent, like Libya and Syria. We consider it necessary to continue working together, on an equal footing, to advance political initiatives that would lead to peace in our region, through regional co-operation, political dialogue and a global vision that goes beyond questions of security.

On the other hand, we want governments on both shores of the Mediterranean that are committed to the democratic principles of the Rule of Law, free, transparent and honest elections in every country, and full respect for basic rights and public freedoms.

In turn, we also have to press for actions to promote prosperity and redistribution in our countries, through co-operation for development, including social and business initiatives.

To achieve this, the member parties of the Socialist International Mediterranean Committee propose the following measures and actions to confront the refugee crisis and to move forward with the peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the region:

1. We call for an effective and collective response from the European Union to the arrival of the refugees: all the member States must fulfil their commitments and deal more rapidly with the redistribution of asylum claims. This is an ethical responsibility that must be taken up in order to be consistent with the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU must show solidarity in supporting countries like Greece, which is currently suffering a double crisis: economic and humanitarian.
2. We condemn the violations of human rights and legal obligations by States in connection with this crisis – and ask the European Union and the international community to be forceful in their vigilance. We commit ourselves to fighting against the mafias involved in human trafficking and those parties whose xenophobic and anti-immigrant discourses are inflaming European societies.
3. We believe it necessary to give support to the refugees in the countries that border on the Syrian war, especially those in Turkey, where the majority of are, but also those in Lebanon and Jordan. Large-scale resources are needed to run the refugee camps, as well as to guarantee the provision of education to all those young people who have had to flee their countries, because it is the best weapon against radicalisation.
4. We ask the international community to engage in direct, collective action to halt the war in Syria and to search for a way to bring peace and stability to the country, so as to allow a return to the logic of politics, urgently beginning a transition to democracy that will allow the refugees to return to their homes. We appreciate and value all those forces struggling on the ground against the barbarous terrorism of the so-called ‘Islamic State’.
5. This Committee is very concerned at the current political situation in Egypt following the last parliamentary elections and at the governmental repression of political parties and civil society. Similarly, we value and support the efforts of our sister party the ESDP in their struggle to establish a genuine and inclusive democracy in the country.
6. We are closely following the current efforts to bring an end to the division of the island of Cyprus, and consider of great importance the confidence-building and other measures based on our principles and values and the resolutions of the United Nations to reach a solution to the problem of Cyprus.
7. We express our deepest concern over the escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine, and regret the absence of a meaningful diplomatic process leading to the recognition of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. We call on the parties to halt all violence and to re-engage in constructive dialogue for a just and lasting solution to this conflict, based on the Declaration adopted by the Socialist International Council in New York in July 2015. In this regard, the Committee has decided to initiate contacts with the Democratic Party in the

United States, as a privileged interlocutor, to explore ways in which we can collaborate to bring this solution forward.

8. We intend to continue working with our member parties to promote a solution to the question of Western Sahara, in a constructive spirit and using ideas from the report of the Socialist International Mission that took place in May of this year - a report that was approved by broad consensus - in the search for a political solution within the framework defined by the United Nations.

9. We welcome the agreement to form a transitional government of unity in Libya, sponsored by the representative of the United Nations Secretary General, and we express our support for the EU and the international community so that they try to consolidate reconciliation in a key country of the region in a serious, staunch and constructive way.

10. We applaud the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, in recognition of the all the Tunisians and political forces of the country who demonstrated that it has been possible to initiate a transition to democracy through dialogue and negotiation. However, this process is still fragile and we in this Committee call on all progressive forces and those in civil society to be vigilant in the face of attempts to go back on the successes achieved in the revolution and the Constitution.

Lastly, the member parties in this Committee wish to recall the spirit that 20 years ago launched the Barcelona Process, and we consider that, despite all the difficulties involved, it is necessary to return to the basic ideas of peace, stability and prosperity shared by countries on both shores of the Mediterranean, in order to put an end to the conflicts and inequalities, and to be able to offer a present and better future for our citizens.
