

## **FINAL STATEMENT OF THE 2ND MEETING OF CHAIRPERSONS OF SOUTH EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS**

**ROME, 17 JULY 2014**

1. The Second Meeting of the Chairpersons of EU Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the South was held in Rome on 17 July 2014. In attendance were the parliaments of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey attended in their capacity as candidate countries.

2. Following up to the inaugural meeting held in Nicosia on 24-25 January 2014, the Second Meeting focused on the consolidation of an informal forum for the discussion of topics of common concern, with special focus on the Mediterranean, and with a view to the next COSAC meetings.

3. The chairpersons noted that the recent slight improvements in the economic and financial situations of Member States have not yet translated into the creation of new jobs. Unemployment rates – especially among young people – and the situations of poverty and social exclusion remain unacceptable.

The chairpersons welcomed the outcome of the 26-27 June 2014 European Council, stressing the importance of structural reforms to enhance growth and improve fiscal sustainability, including through an appropriate assessment of fiscal measures and structural reforms, while making best use of the flexibility that is built into the existing Stability and Growth Pact rules. They believe that an open debate to increase the effectiveness and validity of the Europe 2020 Strategy is needed, with a view to its mid-term review scheduled in 2015, also in order to devise and implement more effective decision-making tools for common action aimed at obtaining concrete and measurable results.

4. The chairpersons agreed - in line with the European Council of 26-27 June 2014 - that new European actions in the field of border control, asylum and immigration should be inspired by the global approach concept and should foresee appropriate measures, pursuant to Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the Union, to effectively implement the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities

and burdens between the Member States. Priority should be given to saving the lives of people trying to reach the European continent.

The chairpersons welcomed the contribution of the LI COSAC, stating that shared management of external borders, pooling of reception centres at European level to face emergency situations, and crisis management tools are necessary. Furthermore, as agreed by the European Council of 26-27 June 2014, the proposals put forward by the Task Force Mediterranean should be fully implemented and the possibility of setting up, in the context of the long-term development of Frontex, a European system of border guards should be assessed, in order to improve control and surveillance at our external borders.

Finally, the chairpersons recommend that the procedures to identify the recipients of humanitarian protection should be implemented at the places of departure for Europe. They also recommend the creation of international centres in Southern shore countries and in the places of departure of migrants where humanitarian protection procedures may be initiated.

5. The chairpersons, deeply concerned over the ongoing hostilities in Gaza and Israel, urge both parties to agree to an immediate cease-fire and call on the European Union to act promptly, together with the international community, to contribute to the resumption of peace talks.

6. The chairpersons welcome the Italian Presidency of the EU Council and its policy priorities for the next six months and recommend that such priorities should aim at greater integration, prosperity, solidarity and security in the European Union.

7. The chairpersons expect that at least one of the leading positions of the EU institutions be given to a prominent political figure from the EU South.

8. The chairpersons express their support for the continuation of the European Union enlargement process.