

Resolution

“Civil society and modernization in the Middle East”

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting, 6 September 2008

Recognising:

- The fundamental significance of the concept of civil society for the Middle East to enable the social, economical and political development of the region,
- 5 • The importance of modernization and development of the societies of the region to face up to the challenges of a global economy and a globalizing political agenda that does not stop at national borders,
- The need for the evolvement of a political culture in which citizens have the opportunity to shape the political agenda according to their needs,
- 10 • The necessity of establishing the rule of law, civil liberties and the respect of human rights in all states of the region.

Considering:

- 15 • That the civil society has to be a project of the whole society, not only of one party or political group and needs to be concurred by truly reform oriented governments,
- That in the long run initiatives that are initiated and run from outside the country suffer from a lack of legitimacy and acceptance by the population in most countries of the region,
- 20 • That cultural exchange between societies in the region and with European societies is essential to foster social development in an environment not shaped by the preeminence of civil liberties,
- The pivotal role of the structures of civil societies to overcome prejudices against foreign cultures and entrenched hatred in the Arab-Israeli conflict,
- 25 • The importance of youth exchange to overcome entrenched attitudes and for the long-term perspective for exchange and civil society cooperation

- That the exchange with the governments of the region has been intensified with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the inclusion of the partner countries into the European Neighbourhood Policy, thereby enhancing the perception of common interests and interdependencies, but that a breakthrough in transmediterranean civil exchange has still to be achieved,
- That stable political conditions and governments capable of reform action are indispensable for the development of the countries and for the interests of Europe,
- That a true civil society is possible only if all religious communities and secular organisations have the right to pursue their activities unmolested as long as they do not advocate hatred or support terrorism.

YEPP calls on the EU and its Member States:

- To make sure that civil society initiatives in future aim at being truly supported by civil society and that they be initiated and conceived in the region in the long run,
- To orient civil society policy to long term cooperation originating in the region and determined by local needs, not to singular events and activities,
- To consider the involvement of governments and the cooperation with institutions close to the government or the administration where necessary to avoid counteracting stability and security goals by civil society policies,
- To consider expanding and institutionalising youth exchange following the successful examples of the Franco-German Youth Office and the German-Polish Youth Office
- To ensure that the respect of human rights and the accordance to the principle of the rule of law has always to be considered part of civil society cooperation and must be shared by civil society partners in the region,
- That there shall be no dialog or cooperation with organisations that support terrorist groups or deny the right of existence to other states.

55

YEPP embraces the impulse for the cooperation between the EU and the states at the south of the Mediterranean Sea that comes with the European project of a Union for the Mediterranean. This can only serve the strategic interests of Europe and the development interests of its neighbours to the south. The EU has to continue to play an active role in solving the Middle-East-conflict and in moderating the political dialogue in Lebanon.

60