



30TH BSPC: FOURTH DEBATE

Addresses and reports

Speaker: ***Mr Pedro Roque***, *Vice-President and President Emeritus of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)*

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to contribute to the 30th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM).

I would like to thank President Pyry Niemi and Secretary General Bodo Bahr for inviting PAM to this event.

PAM and BSPC share a long-standing friendship and a history of collaboration, and we appreciate the active participation of BSPC delegates in PAM conferences in recent months and years.

I strongly believe that inter-regional parliamentary exchange is very helpful to get a variety of beneficial perspectives and good legislative practices that can help us face common challenges.

In this regard, I wish to commend our organisations for having decided to establish a structured cooperation and finalised a draft Memorandum of Understanding, which we hope to sign in person at the next opportunity, possibly on the occasion of the upcoming PAM Bureau Meeting in Rome in November.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Covid-19 crisis has put unprecedented pressure on the economic growth, financial stability, and social development of our countries.

Today, we are finally seeing the first signs of improvement. According to the latest figures of the OECD, international trade reached a new high in the past months, with an increasing exchange of travel and financial services, especially among the G20 economies.

This is encouraging. However, vital segments of our economies, such as Small and Medium Enterprises and the tourist sector, are still far from a full recovery.

In this perspective, our task as Parliamentarians is essential.

We need to oversee and guide our governments in maximising effective strategies and implement corrective actions when needed.

At PAM, we have been successful contributed in bridging regional parliamentary perspectives to create synergies and opportunities for a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Most recently, PAM joined forces with the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) to organise a high-level conference on building a resilient and inclusive economic recovery.

As an outcome of this meeting, three key elements have emerged:

First, the need to implement an effective vaccine roll-out, also through international solidarity, as no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Second, fostering international financial cooperation to mobilise resources to support the most affected countries and sectors.

Third, to ensure that our investments accelerate the green and digital transitions of our economies.

In autumn, we will meet again, this time in person, to resume this conversation. The event will be hosted in Antalya by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I look forward for BSPC delegates will provide an important contribution to this event.

Dear friends,

Please allow me to comment on a specific note I particularly care about.

Climate change has become a reality much faster than all scenarios have predicted.

We have all seen the tragic images of summer wildfires across the Mediterranean and the world.

We have also all mourned the many victims and counted the damages of the recent floods in Europe.

We are all observing the alarming speed of glaciers melting in our countries.

These are not just environmental issues.

It is an all-encompassing threat: to our economies, to the health of our communities, to international peace and security.

Resolute full-scale political commitments cannot wait any longer.

Throughout this year, climate action has been a cross beam element of PAM activities.

We have produced two sets of policy recommendations at our last Plenary Session, one with specific advice on environmental governance and one which put green policies at the heart of our economic recovery strategies.

We contributed to the G20 session on Energy and Climate to promote carbon neutrality and the use of renewable energy sources.

We have strengthened our cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Programme, and PAM has been chosen to facilitate the parliamentary dimension of UN climate action in the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions.

Currently, we are in full preparation to bring the voice of our Parliaments to the upcoming COP in Glasgow and the COP on biodiversity in China.

I am happy to see that our partner parliamentarians in the Baltic Sea region are likewise strongly committed to addressing the climate change emergency.

The Mediterranean also remains an epicentre for mass flows of economic migrants and asylum seekers, with an inadmissible death toll that requires a common and urgent response.

The Afghan crisis will indeed add to the scope of the crisis.

I strongly believe that our interparliamentary work will contribute to building the political momentum needed to secure the necessary policy commitments to address these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, I want to thank you once again for the opportunity to contribute to this important meeting, and I am confident that the upcoming signature of a cooperation agreement between our organisations will reinforce our strong partnership and will pave the way for future joint actions.

Thank you.