10th May, 2007

MEP calls for support for Malta Initiative

MEP Simon Busuttil called on the European Commission and the Council of Ministers to support the Malta Initiative to promote a Euro-Arab structured dialogue.

Dr Busuttil was addressing the plenary of the European Parliament which was debating a report on what strategy the EU should adopt with regards to reform in the Arab world. The report was drafted by former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard.

Dr Busuttil said that this subject required a deep understanding of the Arab world. He said that whereas it was clear that the Arab world needed to undertake substantial reform to face modernisation and globalisation, Europe nevertheless needed to be careful not to be patronising by dictating solutions to Arab countries as if it was the party that knew best.

Rather, Europe should offer its experience on unity and its support in a spirit of partnership between equals.

Dr Busuttil said that the European Union needed to engage better with Arab interlocutors such as the Arab League which had become a credible entity with an important voice in the Arab world.

Referring to the Malta Initiative launched by Foreign Minister Michael Frendo, Dr Busuttil said that a structured dialogue between the EU and the Arab League should be actively promoted as a forum for debating reforms on both sides of the Mediterranean. Dr Busuttil called upon the European Commission and the Council of Ministers to support the Malta Initiative.

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Full text of speech follows:

Grazzi sur President,

Is-suġġett tar-riformi fid-dinja Għarbija huwa suġġett kumpless ħafna u biżżejjed wieħed jaqra r-rapport li għandna quddiemna biex jifhem din il-kumplessita'.

Fil-fatt ir-rapporteur jistaqsi jekk hemmx, fil-fatt, "komunita' Għarbija" u jfakkar li mhux ta' b'xejn li nitkellmu dwar id-"dinja Għarbija" iżda mhux dwar "in-nazzjon Għarbi" jew "l-għaqda Għarbija[1]"

Dan juri biċ-ċar li qabel nitkellemu dwar id-dinja Għarbija u noffru s-soluzzjonijiet, jeħtieġ li l-ewwel għandna nifhmu aktar u aħjar lid-dinja Għarbija.

U huwa għalhekk importanti ferm li meta nitkellmu dwar riformi fid-dinja Għarbija noqgħodu attenti li ma nkunux patronizzanti u ma niddettawx is-soluzzjonijiet daqs li kieku aħna nafu aktar minn ħaddieħor.

[1] Arab unity.

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M'hemmx dubju li għad hemm bżonn bosta riformi fid-dinja Għarbija biex il-pajjiżi Għarab ikunu jistgħu jisfruttaw il-proċess ta' modernizazzjoni u globalizazzjoni aħjar.

Iżda daqstant ieħor xogħolna huwa li noffru l-esperjenza ta' għaqda tagħna u l-appoġġ tagħna fi spirtu ta' sħubija bejn żewġ partijiet ugwali u mhux f'kuntest ta' "*aħna ngħidulkom x'għandkom tagħmlu*". Il-proċess ta' Barċellona suppost li kien proċess ta' sħubija, iżda kullħadd jaf li, fil-fatt, spiċċajna bi proċess fejn hija l-UE li tiddetta x'għandu jsir, kif u meta.

U jeħtieġ ukoll li nużaw aħjar interlokuturi fid-dinja Għarbija bħalma hija l-Lega Għarbija li, bid-diffikultajiet kollha, illum għandu biżżejjed kredibilita' biex tagħti vuċi lid-dinja Għarbija.

Malta ħadet l-inizjattiva li tipproponi djalogu strutturat bejn l-Unjoni Ewropea u L-Lega Għarbija - djalogu li jitratta s-suġġett tar-riformi li rridu niffaċċjaw fuq iż-żewġ naħat tal-Mediterran. Din hija inizjattiva tajba li diġa ntlaqgħet tajjeb mil-Lega Għarbija stess u nittama li kemm il-Kunsill kif ukoll il-Kummissjoni jagħtuha l-appoġġ tagħhom.

Grazzi

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