



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

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“The Mediterranean back on centre stage” – Cardinal Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State

Delegates of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) were hosted for the General Audience with H.H. Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter’s Square earlier this month. At the end of the Audience, H.H. the Pope spent some moments with a number of delegates from the Bureau. PAM Roving Ambassador, Hon. Mohamed Abou El-Enein (Egyptian MP), took the opportunity to invite His Holiness to visit Egypt and Gaza in order to see for himself the much needed humanitarian assistance by the population in the area. H.H. Pope Benedict XVI listened attentively and with great interest to Hon. El-Enein’s passionate description of the plight of the Palestinian population living in Gaza following the military intervention earlier this year.

“ Within this context, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean is currently working on the organisation of a fact-finding mission in the Middle East with the participation of PAM President, Hon. Rudy Salles (France), members of the Bureau, Hon. El-Enein and Hon. George Vella (Malta), Rapporteur of the PAM *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Middle East”, PAM Secretary General, Dr. Sergio Piazzi, stated.

Dr. Piazzi added that the Secretariat is actively engaged in the coordination of the mission with the assistance of other international organizations, including the United Nations, who are already actively involved in the region.

PAM delegates were in Rome on the invitation of the Italian Parliament for the meetings of the Special Task Forces falling under the 3rd Permanent Commission on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights. Migration, Dialogue of Cultures and Religions, and Gender and Equality Issues were discussed, and a number of prominent guest speakers delivered papers and shared personal experiences over these topics.

Another highlight of the Rome event was the private meeting the delegates had with the Secretary of State of the Holy See, H.E. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, during which both sides exchanged views and possible actions required to secure peace and stability in the region.

“The Mediterranean is back in the centre of attention following the phenomenon of globalisation and the drift in general terms beyond the oceans”, Cardinal Bertone said to the MPs. He also underlined the importance of PAM, which “is a young institution that has already made important progress in promoting political dialogue among the countries of the Mediterranean”.

Secretary of State Bertone also referred to an earlier meeting that Pope Benedict XVI had with Ambassadors from Islamic countries, during which the Holy Father said that, “interreligious and intercultural dialogue is required in order to build together a world of peace and brotherhood, profoundly desired by all men of good will”.

PAM President, the Honourable Rudy Salles (France), while thanking Cardinal Bertone for the privilege conceded on the occasion of the unique opportunity to meet PAM delegates, underlined the Assembly’s philosophy to work with all the parliaments of the region, among other aspects, and also on the harmonisation of laws related to the various issues of common interest in order to bring closer the populations of the Mediterranean. Hon Salles insisted on the importance of establishing and sustaining a collaborative relationship with other important institutions in the region.

In their interventions, a number of delegates noted that the representatives of religions have a role to play in the peace process, a reflection that was reiterated by Monsignor Pietro Parolin, Vatican Undersecretary for Relations with States, in his address to the PAM delegations. In this regard, Hon Nikola Zutic (Serbia) pinpointed the significance of dialogue between religions also in the framework of the Orthodox Church. Monsignor Parolin and the Secretary General also discussed the future structured cooperation between the Vatican and PAM.

The meeting came to an end with the presentation of gifts to His Holiness and to Cardinal Bertone by the heads and representatives of the National delegations and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

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Caption: Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone addressing PAM delegates



Caption: Group photo of PAM delegates at St. Peter's Square

For further information please contact:

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