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Conclusions of the Workshop Policy and Information

44th EUCOCO

Vitoria- Gasteiz

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First of all, we will be listening to the FP Congress in December. We will send a message for this congress because it is important for the Front and for solidarity.

The working document presents several approaches: the EU, the UN, the AU and communication.

At the European level, there are two levels. First, the FP has initiated several judicial proceedings which have led to judgments of the ECJ. We must demand that these judgments be respected. They are extremely important and give the FP an important tool of legitimacy to prevent Morocco from exporting products from the territories. It is also an instrument to remind that the WS is a separate and distinct territory from Morocco. The work must make it clear to MEPs that these agreements are illegal. This is an important contribution to international law.

Recently, the ECJ issued a judgment on settlements in Palestine. The ECJ explicitly refers to the judgment on the WS in its reasoning. Today the Sahrawi cause is helping the Palestinian cause in this way. That is why this year we must mobilize the entire legal world. He is our best guarantor of the legitimacy of the Sahrawi cause and we must bring this to all parliamentary intergroups in Europe as well as to the AU.



We can obtain support from the AU and its judicial bodies. These capacities to strengthen the law in Africa and Europe are opportunities to put pressure on the UN SG and the member countries of the Security Council. There must be constant pressure on the "turning" countries of the SC through your national channels as well as in Geneva on HR issues. The High Commissioner for HR is sensitive but has not yet opened the Sahrawi case. He should be encouraged to go on mission in the camps and Occupied Territories.

As a reminder, Spain has never publicly denounced the 1975 Madrid Agreements. However, this is one of the arguments used by Morocco to justify its occupation. Coordination of solidarity must be strengthened in order to send messages to the Spanish authorities in particular, if a progressive government is formed in Madrid. It should be remembered that the FP remains the only interlocutor with regard to WS. To do this, there are highlights such as the 4th UN Commission, the HR Council in Geneva. These are opportunities to put pressure on ambassadors and senior officials. The action of the Spanish people is decisive: we must remember the action of the Portuguese people in supporting the people of Timor Leste. Javier Bardem made it possible to give the cause great publicity, including within the political world. It would be necessary to find a new "ambassador" from the Spanish cultural world. At the same time, the continuation of the network of twinned cities is a fundamental axis in the recognition of the Sahrawi cause among the population.

The same is true in the European Parliament, since the last elections 50% are new MEPs. They must be called upon to join the European Parliamentary Intergroup. Since last year, it has been an official intergroup that has the means to hold committees and gives the President of the intergroup status in parliamentary committees.



There are two walls in the southwest: the one that separates the Sahrawi people and the one that France is building in all instances where, at all levels, officials are blocking or sabotaging the files. France has therefore become the main obstacle to the UN resolution. The representative in France is under attack by Moroccan lobbyists. The same is true in Brussels, where Front representatives are followed. We need to work on these issues because they are real obstacles.

That is why we will organise a major international legal conference in Brussels to strengthen the legitimacy of the FP. The solidarity movement is a peaceful movement. However, it is up to the FP to conduct its struggle in the way it sees fit. This will be defined at the next Front Congress.

It will be necessary to consider how to set up a programme that can be shared with all international, national and regional parliamentary intergroups.

PG noted the absence of Spanish solidarity at the last meetings of the Task Force. It is necessary for Spanish solidarity to assume part of the leadership of the movement because of Madrid's historical responsibility. This is a collective responsibility. In parallel, PG highlighted the success of the last 4th UN Commission as each committee managed to send a petitioner.

It is important, when working with young people who work in the social movement, feminists etc., to make contacts in order to organize civilian missions in refugee camps and in the Occupied Territories. Thousands of young people have gone to Palestine and this has made it possible to renew the solidarity movement. The same is true with the trade unions, collaboration with the Sahrawi trade union must be encouraged in order to



organize civil missions. It will be necessary to find ways of financing using the right means.

In France, we must not forget the twin cities and the great solidarity movement. At the same time, at the Council of Europe, civil society is making progress on the Sahrawi issue.

With the public's input, we realize the extent of the accumulated experience. The problem is that these good practices are not shared. For example, videos broadcast in EUCOCO plenary session should be shared with all support committees. In addition, it would strengthen the consistency of our message.

It is important to value the testimonies of human rights defenders or international observers who are expelled from the OPT. These testimonies give a very good media effect.

Optimism remains in the ability of the solidarity movement to support the Front. The questioning of the Spanish authorities by civil society now remains a priority, for example, through the Spanish ambassadors in the various Member States. There is also the representation of Member States at the United Nations and the European Union. This is an opportunity to provide informative documents to officials and key actors.

In summary, there is an urgent need to:

- to call on the Spanish authorities (local, regional, national, European and UN level) everywhere for the cancellation of the 1975 Madrid Agreements and for the recognition of the FP's representation as the only representative of the WS people.



- to contact the new European parliamentary intergroup Peace for the Sahrawi people and the MEPs who are members of the ad hoc committees.
- to go to the UN HR Council at its February 2020 session and to call on Mr. Guterres in March for his report to the SC to press for the implementation of the self-determination process.
- Strengthen cooperation between the solidarity movement, friendly countries and the African Union.

Mohamed Sidati

I would say that France and Spain are hiding behind the EU. They manipulate the European institutions and the EU's external policy. This is the case of the High Representative, Borrell. The solidarity movement needs more coordination. We insist that the solidarity movement, everywhere in the world, must coordinate its discourse.

An action plan for the year 2020 must be developed. What can the solidarity movement contribute to support the Polisario Front following the holding of its next Congress? It is essential to determine what actions to take in order to force the EU to comply with European and international law.

We must take concrete action at European level in the coming months. For example, a conference organised with the European Parliamentary Intergroup. However, most actions have a limited impact and we need to think about how to reinforce our message.

Today, there is a fundamental element in European politics: the rise of the right and the extreme right. The far right is not in favour of liberation movements in general. They are against the Sahrawi cause because they want to stem migration by promoting agreements with Morocco. The



progressive European movement must assume its responsibility and support the Sahrawi cause by occupying the space on this subject. What actions should be taken if the peaceful path does not work? I think that we must strengthen as much as possible the synergy between the FP and the solidarity movement on the eve of the next Front Congress.

At the academic level, there is a consensus and a fairly elaborate perception of the Sahara, whether it is the judgments of the ECJ, the Hague Court, etc. It is necessary to find generational relays in order to pass on these ideas to as many people as possible.

What can young people do about EU action? Youth must organize, mobilize and act to create a renewed movement in the future. Coordinated actions at EU level are needed to demand compliance with European and international law. Young people must get involved in this theme.

Said Ayachi

Spain has a historical responsibility. This year will be a year of strong pressure on the Moroccan authorities. The patience of the Sahrawis has its limits. The United Nations must fulfil its commitments without delay. It will also be necessary to affirm that the Sahrawi people are fighting both Morocco and France. The Sahrawis today are led to fight two opponents. France has emerged as a determined enemy of the Sahrawi cause. We need to think about actions to ensure that France is singled out for its role in the conflict.

Today, the AU is the main ally of the Sahrawi people in their struggle. I attended a meeting of SADC, 14 Southern African States that support the Sahrawi people with one voice. Today, we have a continental ally who is also committed to the UN. We have a strategy to adopt with regard to the AU so that it can better support the resolution of the conflict.



The USA, for its part, is the subject of strong lobbying. We must call on the US parliamentary authorities. The lines of US policy have moved a little in favour of the Sahrawi people with the action of John Bolton.

With the Algerian Committee, we have categorized all the groups that can provide support: the academic world, civil society, local elected officials and journalists. The Algerian Committee invites them to the refugee camps. One of the problems is that there is no "return on investment" because it often has a limited impact when participants return home. The Algerian committee is always ready to help with these missions but this depends on the choice of participants in these missions as well as the feedback that the participants give to them.

Prime Minister of SADR Mohamed El Ouali Akeik

The UN's capacity to resolve the conflict is diminishing. It has been 6 months since the UN was supposed to appoint a Special Envoy for WS. The UN seems to want to maintain the status quo. The PS says it cannot continue like this; we cannot continue in this way, we are wasting our time. The Sahrawis may have to choose another alternative for the struggle. We are here to alert those responsible of the seriousness of the situation. We call on all international bodies to take note of this seriousness, and they alone will be responsible for an escalation of the conflict.

The wall of shame built with the support of France must be denounced, as must the wall of silence that hangs over the Sahrawi conflict. We must take political action in the first quarter of 2020 because this will be decisive in determining the direction in which events will take. This is a very important EUCOCO to affirm the fed up of the Sahrawi people and our



determination to put pressure on the next Spanish government in the hope that it will be progressive.

Public interventions

There is a student exchange system that allows young people to go to refugee camps. This makes it possible to inform young people and make the Sahrawi cause known in student circles.

It would be appropriate to create a network of journalists who are willing to publish on the subject and who can exchange information. Articles should be challenged when they are false, for example, by calling the newspaper's editorial office directly.

The Arab Parliament is absent from the debate on the Western Sahara conflict. It is important to also direct our efforts towards this Parliament, particularly through Algerian parliamentarians.

Gonfreville is twinned with Dakhla and organizes information sessions on the Sahrawi cause in youth centres. It would be interesting to take inspiration from the BDS movement, for example, by directly involving travel agencies organizing holidays and flights to the Occupied Territories. It is also important to publicly display the political figures who have been bought by the Moroccan government. During the forthcoming Olympic Games, this could be an opportunity to organise "parallel games" for peoples whose fundamental rights are violated.

It is also interesting to exploit the very rich Sahrawi cultural and archaeological potential in order to raise awareness of the cause.

A proposal has been made by the Brazilian solidarity movement to create a Latin American conference to support the Sahrawi people. It will be necessary to share our experiences and documents with the Latin



American solidarity movement in order to support the creation of an international network (12 countries are already members). In May 2020, the first conference of the inter-American network (lacsaharalibre.wordpress.com) will be held.