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On the eve of the extraordinary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly held in Rabat on 20 -21 November 2005, the President stated:

"The members of parliament from both sides of the Mediterranean have decided to meet again in Rabat. The European Parliament is the only institution which will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona process in the South and I hold to this especially. For, if we wish to create an Alliance of Civilisations, then we must get to know our partners by meeting in their country.

I have in any case invited Mr Frederico Mayor Zaragoza, personal representative of the UN Secretary General for the Alliance of Civilisations, to come and debate with us on this occasion.

This Assembly is the child of the Barcelona Summit. The Parliamentary dimension which it has brought to the process must allow a strong political impetus to be given to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The results of the Barcelona Process, 10 years after its launch, are mixed: politically, regional conflicts are still in evidence and economically the differences between the two sides are going to increase. However, this isn't because of a lack of investment by Europe. Three billion Euros a year in MEDA grants and EIB loans have been pumped into the region.

The problem is that private investment has not followed for various reasons, notably, the continuing presence of conflicts and also a lack of good governance.

So, when we Europeans talk about the need for democracy and respect for human rights, we are not attempting to lecture others. We are simply trying to create the conditions favouring a successful Mediterranean, both economically and politically.

Today, we must sketch out the future and it is vital that we remodel the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. I hope that the work accomplished during this EMPA session will allow us to send a strong message to the Heads of State who will meet in Barcelona the following week."

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