Resolution

2011/12
Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar

The Economic and Social Council,


Referring to resolution 912 (1989), adopted on 1 February 1989 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, regarding measures to encourage the construction of a major traffic artery in south-western Europe and to study thoroughly the possibility of a fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar,1

Referring also to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, held in Barcelona, Spain, on 27 and 28 November 1995, and to the work programme annexed thereto, which is aimed at connecting Mediterranean transport networks to the trans-European network in order to ensure their interoperability,

Referring further to the European Commission communication of 31 January 2007 on strengthening transport cooperation with neighbouring countries,2 established on the basis of the conclusions of the report of November 2005 of the High-level Group on the Extension of the Major Trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries and Regions, and to the conclusions of the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 15 December 2005, as well as to the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region 2007–2013, adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, held in Brussels on 29 and 30 May 2007,

Referring to the final declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”, held in Marseille, France, on 3 and 4 November 2008, and the emphasis placed on transport projects in the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008,

Referring also to the meeting held in Luxembourg on 8 June 2008 between the Ministers of Transport of Morocco and Spain and the Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport with regard to the official

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presentation to the European institutions of the project for a fixed link,

_Taking note_ of the follow-up report prepared jointly by the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/11.³

_Not_ the conclusions of the studies carried out by the Western Mediterranean Transport Group on Europe-Maghreb transport and cooperation agreements and on transport conditions for nationals of Maghreb origin when they travel to the Western Mediterranean in the summer, and the action plan for the period 2009–2011, adopted at the sixth Conference of Ministers of Transport of the Western Mediterranean, held in Rome on 20 May 2009,

_Not_ also the conclusions of the studies carried out by the European Commission (INFRAMED, MEDA TEN-T, REG-MED and DESTIN) for the development of an integrated transport network in the Mediterranean basin,

_Taking note_ of the Regional Transport Action Plan which constitutes a road map for intensifying cooperation in the Mediterranean with regard to infrastructure planning and the reform of transport service regulations, as well as the list of priority projects annexed thereto, including the fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar,

_Taking note also_ of the conclusions of the global evaluation of the project, carried out in 2010 by an independent consortium of international consultants, which indicate that the geostrategic component of the project and the potential for the development of mass-transit networks offered by long-distance rail transportation weigh significantly in favour of its implementation and the involvement of the international community, especially regarding its financing,

1. _Welcomes_ the cooperation on the project for the link through the Strait of Gibraltar between the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Governments of Morocco and Spain, and specialized international organizations;

2. _Also welcomes_ the progress made in the project studies as a result, in particular, of deep-sea drilling, which has given a decisive impetus to geological and geotechnical exploration and to the technical, economic and traffic update studies currently being finalized;

3. _Further welcomes_ the organization by the International Tunnelling Association, under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa, of the seminar held in Madrid in January 2005 entitled “Soundings and treatments: new developments relating to geological formations”;

4. _Commends_ the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa for the work done in preparing the project follow-up report requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2009/11;³

5. *Renews its invitation* to the competent organizations of the United Nations system and to specialized governmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in the studies and work on the fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Europe to continue to take an active part in the follow-up to the project and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2013 on the progress made on the project studies;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide formal support and, to the extent that priorities permit, the resources necessary, from within the regular budget, to the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa, to enable them to carry out the activities mentioned above.

*42nd plenary meeting*

*25 July 2011*