

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

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on developing microcredit in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Lapse date: 30.9.2006

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Written declaration on developing microcredit in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Union's links with the Mediterranean countries are enshrined in the Barcelona Process and the European Union's neighbourhood policy,
- B. whereas the southern Mediterranean countries' region is in a precarious social and economic state, as described in the '*Arab Human Development Report 2002*' drawn up under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
- C. whereas 2005 was the International Year of Microcredit and a global microcredit summit will take place on 12 to 15 November in Halifax (Canada),
- D. whereas microcredit is an essential means of combating poverty and achieving sustainable social and economic development in line with the Millennium Objectives as well as an important catalyst for emancipation, particularly female emancipation, and whereas initiatives designed to promote microfinance in the Mediterranean countries should be encouraged,
- E. whereas the Mediterranean countries' microfinance sector needs Europe to bring its political and economic engagement to bear, while setting particular store by the real social impact of the sector,
- 1. Considers that the political decision-makers should recognise the importance of microcredit and microfinance instruments as development tools in the context of the Barcelona Process and, more generally, the neighbourhood policy, and calls on the Council and the Commission to provide greater support for microfinance projects and strengthen existing programmes to assist women in connection with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to ensure that they take this new microeconomic dimension into account;
- 2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council and the Commission.