

## EUROMED SURVEY OF EXPERTS AND ACTORS “ASSESSMENT OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP: PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES”

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### Introduction

With this document, the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) presents the first results of an activity that forms part of the project “Promoting mutual awareness, understanding and cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the European Neighbourhood Region (South)”, a multi-year programme within the framework of the working dynamics of the European Commission and EuropeAid through the regional chapter of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. This activity involves four surveys to assess the progress, achievements and shortcomings of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership begun in Barcelona in 1995.

Such a project cuts across the IEMed mission as an actor in the dialogue between the EU and the Mediterranean countries and as a think tank analysing Euro-Mediterranean relations, proposing and disseminating policy options and contributing to the building of a true Euro-Mediterranean area.

This study is the result of the analysis of more than 370 extensive questionnaires answered by experts, actors and decision-makers of the countries involved in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or Barcelona Process. Many people have contributed to generating a surprising amount of information. Now that this has been processed, analysed and presented on this report it enables the assessment and interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean policy as a whole; that is, the sum of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the southern strategy of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as well as the recently promoted Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). At the same time, it also enables an exhaustive and systematic analysis of the different actions and programmes developed within the framework of these initiatives.

In this regard it is not a simple survey of public opinion, but an exercise of assessment and identification of the main successes and difficulties, potential and shortcomings of the EMP from the point of view of the experts and actors involved. At the same time, it aims to go beyond these limits because the results must be used to create a tool to revitalise current debates as well as to provide proposals for policy action.

### Assessment of the Exercise

This is a first exercise in a wider and more ambitious project that attempts to assess the progress, achievements and shortcomings of the Barcelona Process initiated 14 years ago. Thus, above all it is an effort of mobilisation and generation of opinion regarding the policies developed within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

Indeed, the word mobilisation describes an attempt to involve the maximum number of experts and decision-makers while at the same time generating opinion. Therefore, the confronting of perceptions and realities regarding the process of regional integration that has been put in place within the Euro-Mediterranean area must be used to verify what has been done. This involves the initiatives that have been developed over almost 15 years, including the way in which they are perceived and, therefore, how they are considered by the main experts and actors involved.

This particular moment is of special interest in that the implementation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) opens the door to what we could call a third phase in Euro-Mediterranean relationships. After the classic period of the EMP between 1995 and the setting up of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the second phase represented the progressive implementation of the ENP with widening perspectives of participation of the member countries, especially after the implementation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which came into force in January 2007, to fund programmes of regional and bilateral cooperation between the European Union and its neighbouring countries.

Finally, this third phase to which we make reference adds a new institutional framework and new instruments that must have the capacity to re-launch the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in that it will benefit from institutional reinforcement, such as the creation of the General Secretariat of the UfM, which is a significant step forward.

This Survey is being carried out at a time when the creation of the UfM and the assessment of the years since 1995 have opened serious debates regarding Euro-Mediterranean regional integration. Thus, it will be of great interest to be able to find out the main lines of assessment and opinion.

In general terms, it is possible to distinguish two large blocks that are the basis of a lively and interesting debate. Firstly, there is the block related to institutional structure, meaning the initiatives implemented by institutional actors and currently being carried out in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Secondly, there are the factors that have affected the objectives of the EMP. In this case, the evaluation is fundamentally of the efficiency of the structures designed to kick-start the main objectives set out almost 15 years ago.

In regard to the elements associated with the institutional structure of the EMP, the main debate is centred on the suitability, linking and coherence of the projects and institutions of the UfM in the heart of what some authors have identified as Greater Barcelona; that is, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) itself, in terms of the policy of the EU to which the member countries of the southern Mediterranean region are closely linked, together with other ongoing strategies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the 5+5 Dialogue for the Western Mediterranean, the NATO-Mediterranean Dialogue, the Mediterranean Forum, the EU sectoral strategies, the process of approval of advanced statutes, etc. In all, it is a complex scenario with a risk of dispersion, a high potential for incoherent actions and the coexistence of both a bilateral and multilateral dimension in the relations between the affected countries.

Furthermore, consideration must be given to the renewed role of the European Commission, as well as the progressive implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the new scenario of institutional weights and counterweights that this will represent.

The second block includes analysis of the factors that have influenced the evolution of the EMP. In this regard, the assessments of Euro-Mediterranean strategy and its evolution have been ambivalent. Assuming, of course, that always pivoting in the midst of the EMP will be the peace process between Israel and Palestine, which conditions development of international relations in the Mediterranean, in the assessment of the EMP we find a range of views from the pessimistic to the most encouraging, from a negative assessment based on the process as a whole to the view of positive elements of an advance at the level of partial results.

Today, the main information that we would like to find out from the Survey is whether the new institutional structure added to the others mentioned above will be able to respond to the elements that are currently considered to complicate, and could potentially complicate, the framework of Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation. The Survey therefore enables us to obtain first-hand information on positive aspects of the EMP and the ENP, which make up a series of effective partial results that will indicate where the lines of action should be reinforced and improved. Whatever the results, the exhaustive assessment of the priority action areas of the EMP, ENP programmes, as well as UfM projects, will contribute information that was unavailable up until now to enable an analysis of the scope and complexity of Euro-Mediterranean policy.

Finally, this mobilisation exercise also gathered opinions regarding medium-term outlooks, as well as the action priorities of Euro-Mediterranean policies. In the light of the exercise assessing what has been achieved so far, these opinions can now provide ideas on how to plan Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in the medium and long term, as well as which elements will enable us to consider how to improve the capacity to assume challenges and develop policy options that contribute to the construction of a true Euro-Mediterranean area.

We hope, therefore, that this first report fully meets its objectives, while at the same time we encourage you to continue following the results of the next phases of this project that will provide us with a battery of elements related to the main objective of this exercise, increase the visibility of the EMP, promote its public understanding and acceptance, and reinforce the sense of belonging and legitimacy of the countries involved.