

# YOUTH, WOMEN, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATIONS: DEFINING POLICY PRIORITIES IN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION

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The qualitative analysis of the questions on the priorities when developing and implementing policies at a regional level on migrations, women, youth and employment must be based on the idea that these policies fall within the social, human and cultural dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation agenda. In the four Surveys there have been direct or indirect questions on this dimension, which has been repeatedly given a high or very high priority. The results obtained show a higher average assessment than for the remaining dimensions (politics and security, socio-economic development, migration, justice and security).

It is necessary to emphasise that this block of questions is the result of previously selecting the most outstanding priorities of the programmes included in the Euro-Mediterranean Social, Cultural and Human Partnership.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, for questions on women, we analyse the existing programmes in the Euromed Gender Equality Programme (EGEP) implemented from 2008 to 2011 and which formed part of the follow-up of the Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society”, held in Istanbul in November 2006.<sup>2</sup> In relation to youth, the priorities are identified based on the EuroMed Youth IV Programme (2010-2013).<sup>3</sup> Finally, employment policy priorities come from the Euro-Med Framework of Actions, approved in the first Ministers Conference held in Marrakesh in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of migrations, the results must be analysed separately as since 2007 this dimension has had its own basket and also because the type of question is not aimed at identifying priorities but at achieving an assessment of how to improve current policies in terms of management of human movements, based on the document “A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood. A review of European Neighbourhood Policy”.

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1. Euro-Mediterranean Social, Cultural and Human Partnership, [http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/social/social\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/social/social_en.htm)

2. Euromed and Women, [http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/women/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/women/index_en.htm)

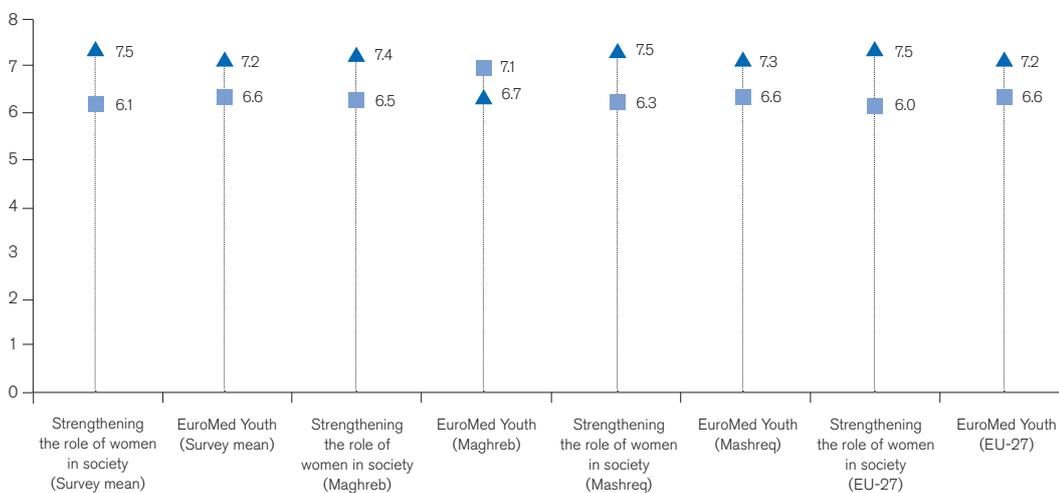
3. Euro-Med Youth Programme, <http://www.euromedyouth.net/>

4. Euro-Med Employment Framework of Action, [http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/conf/employment\\_health\\_conclusions\\_1108\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/conf/employment_health_conclusions_1108_en.pdf)

## Women and Youth

It is interesting to observe how in 2009 the Survey asked about the priorities identified in the 2008 Marseilles Ministerial Conference and there was a specific question on their degree of importance for the period 2010-2013. As can be seen in Graph 1, in the case of women and youth policies, there was a clear trend to see them as highly important. These results allow a fairly optimistic reading of the responses to the questions in 2012 on the prospects for evolution and development of both women and youth policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). The responses suggest that according to the Survey participants, these policies will clearly improve given that they are considered to be important priorities whose evolution would be positive over the next few years.

**Graph 1: Comparison between priority (2008) and future development (2012) of women and youth policies in the MPCs**



▲ 2009: Which priorities identified at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Marseilles in Nov. 2008 are the most important in your opinion for 2010-13? Indicate the degree of importance

■ 2012: Future development in MPCs of priorities identified in the Communications of the European Commission and the High Representative on: "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood"

Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd and 4th Euromed Survey

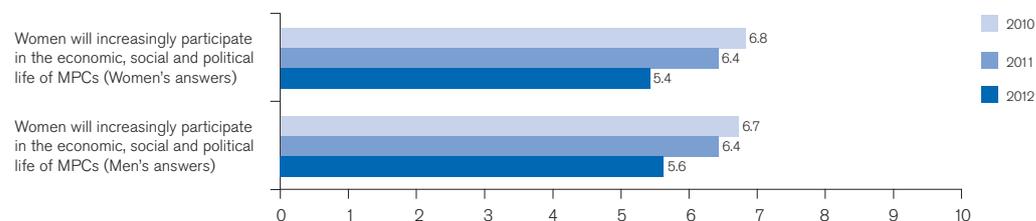
In this respect, one could interpret the results of the Survey related to the future development of policies on women in which the averages obtained served to measure the improvement or regression of these initiatives at a regional level. The average grade is around 6 with a notable greater trend (6.4) towards the improvement of the policies related to strengthening, as a basic right, education opportunities for girls and women. It is also worth stressing differences between whether the responses come from EU countries or MPCs. In this case, the most optimistic view suggesting an improvement of programmes and policies on women comes from the EU countries, with Mediterranean EU countries having a more positive view than the remaining EU countries. For MPCs, the averages are usually slightly below the Survey average, with a clear difference between Maghreb respondents who are more optimistic about these policies improving and Mashreq respondents who are less optimistic.

These trends cannot be ignored and we should ask ourselves whether they are a symptom of the recent evolution of political changes in the respective countries. In this respect, we must stress other indicators that would help with interpreting these results by groups of countries such as for the stagnation detected when analysing the probability that the integration of women in the political, economic and social life in MPCs will continue to improve, given that the

evolution of the results on this question in the last three Surveys reveals a scenario of regression (see Graph 2). It is notable that, on the one hand, respondents consider the renewed ENP's potential (i.e., "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood") high in relation to being able to improve the role of women in society and they consider that at a regional level we are faced with regression. In any case, we realise the need for Mediterranean cooperation to have an active role in this aspect in order to positively influence a scenario disinclined to strengthen the role of women in the medium and long term.

**Graph 2: Degree of probability attributed to the following potential mid- to long-term hypotheses in the Mediterranean**

(average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 stands for no probability and 10 for very high probability)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Euromed Survey

Youth policies in keeping with the results of Graph 1 are considered important priorities, whose evolution should improve in the next few years. The results obtained in the Survey follow this trend, and the most outstanding element prioritised is strengthening the participation of youth in the development of civil society and democracy. A possible interpretation is that the youth policy agenda in the Mediterranean is influenced by democratic uprisings, calling on Mediterranean cooperation to emphasise this element as a priority, without forgetting that integration into the formal labour market as well as the development of youth policies continue to have relative importance.

Giving priority to the participation of youths in the political arena as democratising actors is especially relevant as they now have the opportunity to play this role actively and effectively. Although youths in MPCs realised their potential role as actors in processes of political change, they were not as clear about their capacity to translate this potential into the political reality of their respective countries.<sup>5</sup> Thus, strengthening these policies and objectives aimed at youths in the southern Mediterranean is now quite pertinent.

## Employment

Employment is not one of the elements that Mediterranean cooperation has prioritised since its beginnings in 1995. In the first 10 years of the Barcelona Process there was no Euro-Mediterranean ministerial summit on employment as it was considered that the creation of employment was linked to economic growth.

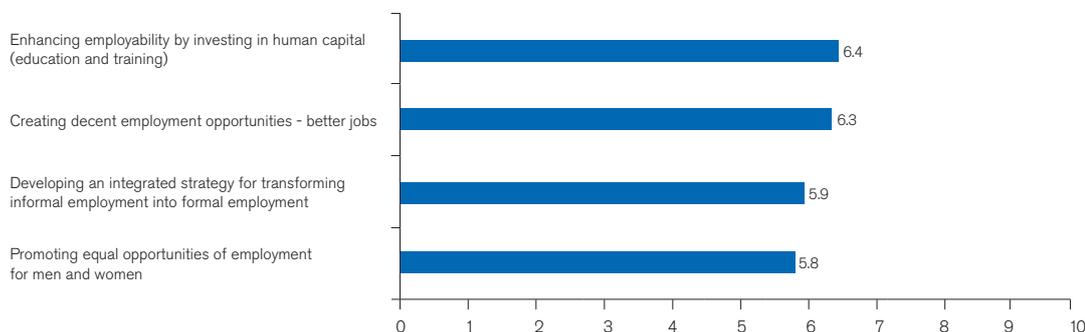
In macroeconomic terms, the growth of the working age population and, consequently, the fight against growing unemployment in southern Mediterranean countries inevitably led to forecasts of up to 45 million new jobs for the second decade of this century. The difficulty of fulfilling this forecast together with the economic stagnation means that cooperation fully incorporates employment within its agenda.

5. J. Mouawad, "Young People as Actors of Political Reform. The case of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon", EuroMeSCo papers No. 62, 2007.

In 2008 in Marrakesh, the Euro-Mediterranean Employment and Labour Ministers Conference was held, establishing the action priorities at the level of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. The summit identified the main employment challenge in the region: unemployment, which in many countries has a particular effect on youths and women. It also recognised the wide reach of the informal economy which accounts for much of the new employment, thereby generating a labour market devoid of labour rights or social protection. Finally, it noted the imbalance between training levels and the needs of the labour market. The action plan resulting from the conclusions of the summit would lead to specific employment programmes and the results of this Survey enable us to see their degree of acceptance as participants respond that the elements on which specific policies have been established will improve. Moreover, the Survey allows us to see the priorities.

### Graph 3: Future development of employment policies in the Euro-Mediterranean

(average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 stands regression and 10 for improvement)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 4th Euromed Survey

The main reading we can make is that it is necessary to prioritise measures to improve the current labour market redressing the imbalance between training and job demand, in keeping with the ILO guidelines on decent employment to improve the current labour conditions. The Survey results identify as a lesser priority policies with a more structural character and, perhaps because of this, more difficult to implement (transforming informal jobs into formal jobs and promoting equal opportunities between men and women). However, the differences between averages are so narrow that it encourages us to consider an overall strategic action.

## Migrations and Mobility

As for migration policies, it is necessary to bear in mind the framework in which the questions posed in the Survey are placed for a more precise interpretation of the responses. Thus, we should remember that the questions reflect the breakdown of the initiatives on migration included in the ENP renewal, in which the three Ms stand out: Money, Market and Mobility.

As can be seen in the descriptive report of the Survey, there is a question on the prioritisation of these three issues. Mobility is considered as the main priority in the responses from Mashreq countries and the Balkans (or European non-EU countries) while in Maghreb countries mobility is third among the priorities, and in the EU it is the second priority.

This response can be explained by the different approach to mobility policies, related with an ordered management of migration, depending on whether it is addressed from the southern or eastern neighbourhood. The Balkan countries form part of the Prague Process<sup>6</sup> and, moreover,

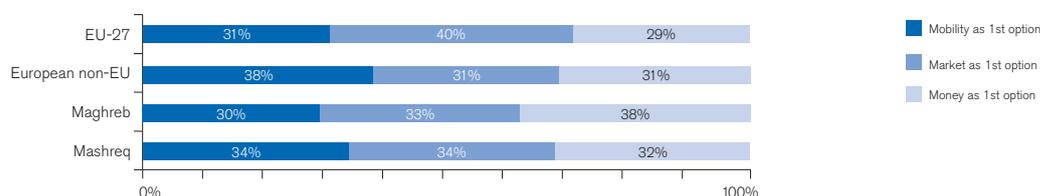
6. A political process promoting migration partnerships among the participating states of the European Union, the Schengen Area, South Eastern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in addition to Turkey, whose guiding principles are defined by the "Building Migration Partnerships" Joint Declaration endorsed at a ministerial level by 49 states at the Prague Ministerial Conference in April 2009.

they have started or can potentially start the EU membership process by which dialogue in terms of migrations and mobility is of strategic importance.

For their part, Maghreb countries, especially Tunisia and Morocco,<sup>7</sup> had already started dialogue on migrations, mobility and security in order to establish the mobility partnerships;<sup>8</sup> in other words, it is a well-developed priority and close to real implementation. This, along with the economic situation which is diminishing the appeal to migrate to EU countries, can explain this result.

In the case of the Mashreq, its importance is relatively greater and it is probably due more to a human mobility component as a result of the armed conflicts in the region than to migration movements. In fact, most migration flows from the Mashreq countries are heading towards Persian Gulf countries and to a much lesser extent to EU countries.

**Graph 4: Classification of priorities identified in the Communications of the European Commission and the High Representative on: “A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood” (%)**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 4th Euromed Survey

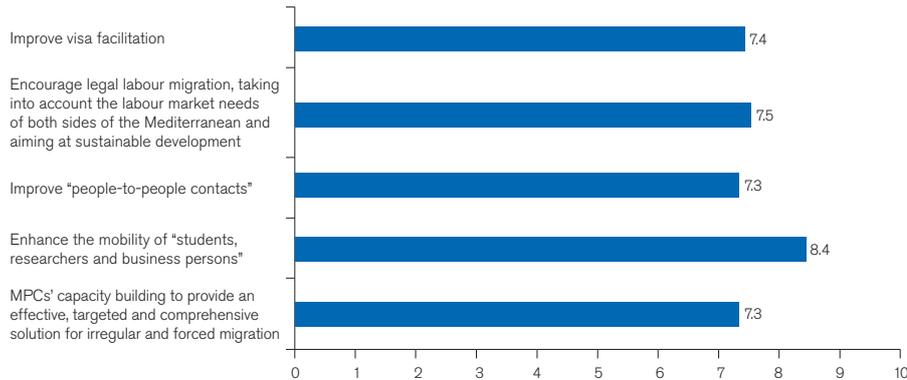
The breakdown of the policies or programmes under the epigraph Mobility allows us to reflect on two main elements. On the one hand, the very high average grade given to each of the political proposals than can potentially improve the management of migrations, which involves significant support for these measures of the revised ENP, mainly aimed at managing the human mobility in the region; i.e., an ordered management of migrations.

In this respect, we can state that the reading of these results enables us to see Euro-Mediterranean cooperation as a multilateral scenario that complements the strategies on migrations at EU level and which are more aimed at control and security than managing mobility. The fact that the groups of non-EU countries are systematically given a grade above the Survey average would reinforce this trend.

7. Mobility Partnership: in June 2013 Morocco signed the Migration and Mobility Partnership between the EU and Morocco, the first agreed between the EU and a southern Mediterranean country. Previously, the EU had established MPs with Cape Verde, Moldavia, Georgia and Armenia.

8. "The MPs constitute non-legally binding joint declarations negotiated between the Commission on behalf of interested member states and a third country. Member states offer a range of benefits, from visa facilitation schemes and regular channels for temporary migration in exchange for a commitment on the part of the signatory third country to cooperate with the EU in the management of irregular migration, in particular readmission, return and border control/surveillance policies". S. Carrera, L. den Hertog, and J. Parkin, "EU Migration Policy in the wake of the Arab Spring. What prospects for EU-Southern Mediterranean Relations?" MED-PRO (Mediterranean Prospects) Technical Report No. 15, 2012.

**Graph 5: Policies that can improve the management of human mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region**  
(average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 stands for not at all and 10 for very much)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 4th Euromed Survey

We must consider how this support given to measures integrated in the ENP clashes with the current orientation of the mobility partnerships, which are beginning to be promoted with some Mediterranean countries<sup>9</sup> and mainly focus on control of irregular migrations instead of offering a broader and effective mobility. This would involve increasing the possibilities of mobility beyond the reduced population segments (students, researchers), a very positively assessed option in the Survey, while reducing the high number of requisites to be fulfilled by the partner country.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, these results would make us think of the need to foster a reorientation of the mobility partnerships in the Mediterranean. This scenario means replacing the current security direction with a more balanced orientation which is a "fully accountable framework that roots human mobility modalities into a wider agenda that complements social and economic development in the region."<sup>11</sup> In this framework, there could be a realistic and credible development of incentives for labour migrations (7.5 on average in the Survey), improved visa facilitation (7.4) making the mobility partnerships evolve into a valuable political asset of the EU for external relations in the region.

9. As previously mentioned, in June 2013 Morocco signed the Migration and Mobility Partnership between the EU and Morocco, the first agreed between the EU and a southern Mediterranean country.

10. S. Grenier, "EU policies towards Southern Mediterranean countries: Implementation of the 'new ENP approach' should match commitments", Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), 2012.

11. S. Carrera, L. den Hertog and J. Parkin, op. cit.