

Chronologies

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Instability in the Mediterranean region is important to NATO Allies and partners both for humanitarian and geopolitical reasons as security in the Middle East and North Africa is organically related to security in Europe. NATO has developed a network of partnership with seven Southern Mediterranean Countries under the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), as well as with four countries of the Gulf region through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Within these frameworks, these countries: share insights on areas of common interest or concern through political consultation and intelligence sharing; participate in exercises and training for future missions; contribute to current operations; support research on new capability development; integrate gender perspective into security and defence; fight against corruption in the defence sector; enhance efforts to destroy or control arms.

Terrorist attacks, the refugee crisis and the military escalation in Syria and the Middle East are the central concerns of NATO in the Mediterranean region. Every NATO ally and many partners are involved in the Global coalition to counter ISIL, and the high degree of interoperability achieved through years of NATO-led operations and exercises is considered a key asset of this coalition. MD started in 1994 with five participating countries, which included Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, followed a few years later by Algeria and Jordan. The Dialogue has the following features: it is *progressive* in terms of participation and content; it is generally *bilateral* in the NATO+1 format but also admits multilateral meetings in the

NATO+7 format; the same basis is offered to all the partners according to a *non-discrimination* principle; however each country can decide to intensify its own participation in the spirit of *self-differentiation* through an Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) and NATO will *not impose* the extent of the cooperation; it is *complementary* to other regional or international initiatives; it has both a political and practical dimension. Until 2011, the overall responsibility for the MD fell to the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG), established at the Madrid Summit in 1997. It was then replaced by the Political and Partnerships Committee, which is responsible for all partnerships. The Committee meets at the level of Political Counsellors on a regular basis to discuss all matters related to the Dialogue including its further development. At the 2004 Istanbul Summit, NATO's Heads of State and Government elevated the MD to a genuine partnership through the establishment of a more ambitious and expanded framework, which considerably enhanced both the MD's political and practical cooperation dimensions. Consultations of the 28 Allies and seven MD countries take place on a regular basis on a bilateral and multilateral level, at ministerial, ambassadorial and working level formats. The political dimension also includes visits by NATO Senior Officials, including the Secretary General (SG) and the Deputy SG, to MD countries. The main purpose of these visits is to conduct high-level political consultations with the relevant host authorities on the way forward in NATO's political and practical cooperation under the Dialogue. The new Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon

Summit in 2011, identifies cooperative security as one of three key priorities for the Alliance. Practical cooperation in the MD includes seminars, workshops and other practical activities in the fields of modernization of the armed forces, civil emergency planning, crisis management, border security, small arms & light weapons, public diplomacy, scientific and environmental cooperation, as well as consultations on terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The military dimension of the practical cooperation includes invitations to Dialogue countries to observe – and in some cases participate – in NATO/PfP military exercises, attend courses and other academic activities at the NATO School (SHAPE) in Oberammergau (Germany) and the NATO Defense College in Rome (Italy), and visit NATO military bodies.

The Individual and Partnership Cooperation Programme (IPCP), which replaces the previous Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) framework document, is aimed at enhancing bilateral political dialogue as well as tailoring cooperation with NATO according to key national security needs. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia have all agreed tailored ICPs with NATO. At the 2014 Wales Summit two important initiatives were endorsed: the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative. The first provides measures to ensure that the connections built up over years of operations and exercises will be deepened so that partners will contribute to future NATO-led operations (currently only Jordan has access to enhanced cooperation). The DCB Initiative is demand-driven and aims at reinforcing

NATO's commitment with partners. Allies have agreed to offer the DCB package to Jordan, as well as four other countries. This package includes: seven areas of cooperation (cyber defence, military exercises, Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices cooperation, border security...); the invitation to participate in the 2015 NATO Cyber Coalition exercise (the first MD countries to do so); and a Science for Peace and Security (SPS) project on Counter-IED.

The Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme is a policy tool that enhances cooperation and dialogue with all partners, based on scientific research, innovation, and knowledge exchange. It provides funding, expert advice, and support to security-relevant activities. More than 30 SPS activities are held with MD countries covering areas such as cyber-defence training for Morocco, the implementation of a cyber-defence strategy in Jordan, the development of advanced security technologies in Israel and the creation of a regional crisis management centre in Mauritania. Unlike the MD, the ICI only focuses on practical cooperation and it was launched in 2004. It is addressed to the Gulf Countries and, as it stands, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have all joined the Initiative. Based on the principle of inclusiveness, the Initiative is, however, open to all interested countries of the broader Middle East region who subscribe to its aims and content, including the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Initiative offers bilateral activities that countries can choose from, which comprise a range of cooperation areas: tailored advice on defence transformation; military-to-military cooperation to contribute to interoperability through participation in selected military exercises and through participation in selected NATO and PfP exercises and in NATO-led operations on a case-by-case basis; cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including through intelligence sharing; cooperation regarding border security in connection with terrorism, small arms and light weapons and the fight against illegal trafficking; and civil emergency planning. With the approval of the new partnership policy at the meeting of

NATO Foreign Ministers in Berlin in April 2011, all NATO partners will have access in principle to the same range and number of activities. This will dramatically expand the number of activities accessible to ICI countries. ICI partners have also increasingly demonstrated their readiness to participate in NATO-led operations, acting as security providers. Today, several ICI partners actively contribute to the NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan. Following the launch of Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates promptly provided air assets to the operation and were recognized as contributing nations, playing a key role in the success of the operation. Finally, within the Parliamentary dimension of NATO a Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) was created in 1996 as a forum for parliamentarians of NATO and the MENA region to discuss security issues. The GSM conducts seminars, bringing together parliamentarians from NATO countries with their counterparts in the region, to explore specific topics and to consider the annual GSM Report. The Group also undertakes an annual visit to a country in the region.

Main Events in 2015

- 29 January, Nouakchott, Mauritania: The Mauritanian centre for crisis monitoring, alerts and management (*centre de veille, d'alerte et de conduite des crises* – COVACC) is inaugurated as part of a national crisis management and disaster monitoring mechanism. The project is funded equally by NATO and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs. This new centre will help reduce vulnerability to the various risks and threats, thereby strengthening the population's sense of security and helping to fight the spread of terrorism in particular, as well as developing better national responsiveness to emergencies and improving coordination between national, regional and local actors. This is a one-of-a-kind initiative in the region and is considered as a reference for the various Sahel countries, who have expressed an interest in setting up similar systems to strengthen regional coordination. It helps reinforce territorial con-

tinuity, thereby covering partially isolated areas which are at risk of falling under the influence of terrorist or extremist organizations.

- 23-26 February, Amman, Jordan: The Jordanian Air Force and the NATO Science for Peace Security (SPS) Programme co-host a "Cyberspace Conference" examining the country's cyber capability needs in 30 tailored workshops. More than 260 participants from 40 local, regional and international organizations attend the conference. It attracts renowned subject-matter experts in the cyber defence field from military, government, industry and academia, as well as infrastructure operators, banking and many other private sector entities. The Chairman stresses Jordan's eagerness to further develop its partnership and cooperation with NATO and underlined the country's commitment as a partner to working with the Alliance and other regional and international parties to enhance peace and security in the region. Jordan has experienced cyber attacks against its governmental and military information networks and internet sites. With increased ISIS activities in the Levant and direct terrorist threats towards Jordan, counter-terrorism is an area of strong focus for the partner nation. The benefits of the SPS Programme is not limited to Jordan, but potentially has broader, regional implications.
- 26-27 February, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: An inter-ministerial delegation from the United Arab Emirates visits NATO to discuss the development of an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) between NATO and the UAE. The group meets with the Head of MENA Countries Section and with senior officials from various Divisions to discuss details of future cooperation under the IPCP.
- 1-3 March, Doha, Qatar: Participants from nearly 50 nations across five continents meet to discuss current threats and challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) including in the Middle East and Asia. The event provides an informal forum to exchange views on key issues ahead of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. This is the first time that the Annual NATO

Conference has been held outside Europe. This first NATO WMD conference in the region reflects the full commitment of ICI partners and Qatar to increased cooperation with NATO in the fight against WMD proliferation and terrorism and to peace and security in the region. The meeting comes at a time of serious turmoil in a Middle East challenged by regional conflicts and terrorism. Weapons of mass destruction remain a pressing security issue worldwide despite the existence of major non-proliferation treaties and disarmament conventions in the fields of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons – as not all countries are yet parties to these instruments.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_117886.htm

- 9 March, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: During his talk with Jordanian King Abdullah II, NATO SG Stoltenberg underscores the importance of the Alliance's partnership with the country. After the meeting, they discuss regional security challenges with Allied ambassadors at a session of the North Atlantic Council. Mr. Stoltenberg underlines that NATO Allies and Jordan face the same security challenges and threats, including terrorism and extremism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the consequences of failing states. Mr. Stoltenberg welcomes Jordan's key role in promoting regional security, calling the country a force for moderation and a special partner for NATO. Jordan has participated in NATO-led missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Libya. Jordan is the first MD country to join the NATO Response Force. NATO is also working with Jordan to build its defence capacity and support training for other partners in the region. The Secretary General and Allied ambassadors say they look forward to even deeper cooperation with Jordan in the future, to support Jordan's cyber defence strategy.
- 23 March, Brussels, Belgium: The 13th NATO Regional Cooperation Course (NRCC) makes a Field Study visit to NATO Headquarters. The NRCC-13 receives briefings on NATO's cooperation with the Mediterranean and the Middle East Region and on NATO's Military Cooperation in the framework of the MD and ICI among other issues.

The NRCC is a direct response to NATO's HOSG decision in Riga in 2006 to launch the NATO Training Cooperation Initiative with the countries from the MD and ICI, and the success of the NRCC is demonstrated by the growing interest from regional states. The current NATO Regional Cooperation Course (NRCC-13) has 36 participants, from Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Germany, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates

- 28 May, Brussels, Belgium: The NATO Deputy SG Amb. Vershbow receives Tunisia's Prime Minister Habib Essid to review the partnership between NATO and Tunisia. Last year Tunisia and NATO approved an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme focused on several priority areas, including political dialogue, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, border security, cyber defence, defence planning and management and science cooperation. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss how to further develop the partnership. NATO vessels have conducted regular port visits to Tunisia in recent years. During several of these visits joint exercises were conducted by the Tunisian Navy and naval assets from NATO countries.
- 9 June, Tunis, Tunisia: The Assistant SG for Political Affairs and Security Policy Amb. Terry Stamatopoulos pays an official visit to Tunisia in the framework of the MD partnership. Ambassador Stamatopoulos and his Tunisian interlocutors discuss the implementation of the NATO-Tunisia Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme, which covers such areas as the fight against terrorism, civil emergency planning, defence reform and defence planning, military cooperation, cyber defence, public diplomacy and science for peace and security. They also discuss common regional security challenges, including the situation in Libya, Syria and Iraq, the spread of extremist and terrorists networks, and the strengthening of defence institutions in MD partner countries. The visit is also the occasion to organize a public diplomacy conference that brings together senior political and military officials, policy makers,

academics and civil society representatives of think tanks, to exchange views on the achievements and future prospects of NATO-Tunisia cooperation, in the framework of the MD partnership.

- 9 September, Brussels, Belgium: NATO SG Stoltenberg and the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs Baccouche meet for talks on regional security and ways to further enhance NATO-Tunisia cooperation. Mr. Stoltenberg confirms NATO's continued commitment to help Tunisia address its new security challenges, including terrorism, through NATO's MD partnership. The SG and the Minister agree on the importance of regular political dialogue between NATO and Tunisia and to strengthen the scope of practical cooperation. Political consultations, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, cyber defence, defence planning and management, public diplomacy, and scientific cooperation are among the priority areas identified by Tunisia for its cooperation with NATO, as part of the ambitious Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme.
 - 28 September - 1 October, Tunis, Tunisia: The NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM), led by the French MP Le Bris, visits the country both to learn about the political, security and economic situation in that country and to express solidarity with a young democracy that has suffered two terrible terrorist attacks over the year. The new parliament in post-revolutionary Tunisia is slated to play a critical role in building a democratic society but needs to build up its capacity to serve as an effective partner in government and an expression of the public will. The delegation is composed of 12 national parliamentarians from eight NATO member countries.
- www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=4051
- 16-19 November, Amman, Jordan: NATO's Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security, Ambassador Schuurman visits Jordan in the context of the Trust Fund project which supports the Jordanian Armed Forces in their goal to attain a 3% female representation and to offer women wider career opportunities. This 3.6-million-euro Trust Fund project enhances the role of

service women through policy, infrastructure and training initiatives. The infrastructure pillar of the project is aimed at rebuilding a modern training centre with the capacity to train increasing numbers of military women in Jordan.

- 26-27 November, Florence, Italy: A high-level seminar is held by the Italian Parliament bringing together over 200 participants, including some 100 parliamentarians from 38 countries. Several parliamentary delegations from North Africa and the Middle East attend, including Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait. The Italian Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior ministers, EU High Representative Mogherini, a range of experts from the region and NATO Parliamentarians meet to review the international strategy against Daesh in the wake of the 13 November terrorist attacks in Paris. They also examine efforts to better coordinate international military action in Syria, particularly following the downing of a Russian fighter aircraft by the Turkish air force.

For further information:

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm Mediterranean Dialogue
www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_58787.htm Istanbul Cooperation initiative

2. OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

2015 marks two important events for the OSCE dialogue with its Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation (MPCs): firstly, the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, and secondly, the 20th OSCE Mediterranean Conference.

The relationship between the OSCE and its MPCs dates back to the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, which recognized that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole. Immediately after Helsinki, Mediterranean non-participating states were invited to a specific meeting on Mediterranean issues related to economic, social, environmental, scientific and cultural topics. It was at the 1993 Rome Ministerial Council meeting when Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia requested a closer cooperation and finally became partners for cooperation in 1995 (Jordan joined in 1998).

In 1994 an informal contact group of experts met to conduct a dialogue with MPCs to facilitate the exchange of information of mutual interest and generate ideas: the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG). Within the political framework of this relationship, besides the MCG, the main elements are: the annual OSCE Mediterranean Conference, certain annual OSCE events, the OSCE PA Mediterranean Forum and the visit by the Secretary General (SG).

The OSCE Mediterranean Conference is generally attended by international organizations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, and it provides a place for the exchange of ideas and exploring new ways to enhance cooperation. At the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, partners engage in high-level meetings with the OSCE Troika (incoming, current and past Chairmen-in-Office) and the OSCE SG. In 2003, OSCE participating States decided to extend the fields for cooperation with partners (counterterrorism, border issues, economic and environmental activities, trafficking in human beings, election observation, media freedom) besides encouraging them to voluntarily implement OSCE commitments. Since 2007, a special fund has been created to attend to Partners' needs to participate in specific activities. The wave of upheavals that swept across the Southern Mediterranean as of 2011 confirmed the need to reinforce and adapt the Partnership to assist Partners on their way to democracy and stability. The Contact Group serves at the main venue for regular dialogue with the Partners. It generally meets seven times a year at ambassadorial level and its chairman is generally the incoming chair of the OSCE. It discusses topics relevant to OSCE Partners or members in the three OSCE dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental and human. Since 2011, Partners have displayed a readiness to share relevant information and developments within the group while OSCE participating States have reaffirmed their support to share their expertise, experience and OSCE toolbox for democratic transition.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) enhances relations between participating States and MPCs

from a parliamentary perspective. MPCs are invited to participate in OSCE PA conferences, and also to country observation missions offering them the opportunity to study best practices and democratic processes.

2015 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 14th Winter Meeting and the Mediterranean Forum

- 18-20 February, Vienna, Austria: The Assembly's 14th Winter Meeting gathers more than 200 parliamentarians from 50 OSCE Participating States. The Meeting also includes the 14th Mediterranean Forum, held on 18 February, where topics tackled range from migration to threats posed by violent extremism and the enduring challenges of the Arab Spring and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Isabel Pozuelo, Vice-President of the OSCE PA, underlines the interdependence between the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners and reaffirms the importance of dealing with the concerns affecting the Mediterranean region as a whole, including violent extremism. She expresses concerns about social stagnation and unemployment – particularly youth unemployment. Indeed, they provide a breeding ground for terrorism racism and religious intolerance, which have increased following terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen. The issue of migrants and asylum seekers, as well as that of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are also addressed. She says that promoting a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should remain a priority for the OSCE and expresses her support for recognizing Palestine as a state and granting it OSCE Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation status. Ambassador Ludeking, Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation also talks about recent events and how they demonstrate that the fight against extremism, radicalization and terrorism is a crucial challenge. In this respect, he stresses the need to give extra relevance to the relationship with the Mediterranean Partners.

Representatives of OSCE MPCs, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia stress the need to broaden the frame-

work of analysis of the Mediterranean geopolitical space to include the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, Iran and the Sahel in order to build a successful strategy to cut off sources of financing for terrorist organizations. They also urge efforts to be increased for finding a viable solution to the conflicts in Israel-Palestine, Mali, Libya and the Sahel region as a whole, and describe terrorism as the biggest challenge to the region. They call for more and improved dialogue and cooperation at a multilateral level between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. In the debate, OSCE parliamentarians highlight the relevance of the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Forum in providing opportunities for improving interaction and dialogue between the OSCE area and the Mediterranean region as a whole. Discussing the promotion of security and cooperation in the region, parliamentarians raise various issues related to migration, the Islamic State and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More joint efforts are urged to face the humanitarian crisis in Syria. The new EU policy "Operation Triton" towards refugees and asylum seekers trying to reach Europe is touched upon, with members stressing the need for an efficient new approach to migration management. Parliamentarians agree that the spread of terrorism – particularly with the rise of the Islamic State – represents a major risk to security in the Mediterranean region and the entire OSCE area. In this regard, it is mentioned that the OSCE as a regional security organization has an important role to play in strengthening dialogue, promoting democracy and supporting the moderate political actors who demonstrate a commitment to a peaceful political process.

www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/winter-meetings/2015-vienna/reports-3/2815-2015-winter-meeting-report/file

24th Annual Session of the OSCE PA and 40th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

- 5-9 July, Helsinki, Finland: The 24th Annual Session of the OSCE PA brings together nearly 300 parliamentarians in Helsinki. The Session also features a

special commemoration of the Helsinki Final Act's 40th anniversary and a presentation of the results of the PA's Helsinki +40 Project on Organizational reform. The project is conceived as a unique opportunity to reaffirm the participating States' commitment to the concept of comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security, to reconfirm and build upon OSCE achievements across all three dimensions, and to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

On 9 July, the OSCE PA adopts the 2015 Helsinki Declaration, containing policy recommendations and pronouncements for the OSCE and its 57 participating States in the fields of political affairs and security, economics, the environment, humanitarian questions and human rights. The crisis in and around Ukraine, the plight of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean region, arms control, climate change, water management, terrorism, anti-LGBT legislation, and threats to civil society are among the topics addressed in the Declaration.

The General Committee on Political Affairs and Security resolution urges the OSCE to upgrade its Mediterranean dimension. Deep concern is expressed over the mass drownings in the Mediterranean Sea involving hundreds of migrants fleeing conflict, poverty, political instability and human rights abuses in Africa and the Middle East, and the insufficient solidarity and burden-sharing among EU countries. The debate also touches on matters related to combating terrorism, arms control and nuclear disarmament. Parliamentarians stress that dialogue and co-operation among participating States are necessary in times of crisis in order to effectively counter transnational threats, as well as to ensure full compliance with already existing key documents and agreements for peace and security in the OSCE region. They reaffirm their strong commitment to the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, based on the inextricable security link between the Mediterranean and the OSCE regions, and stress the need for an enhanced OSCE Mediterranean dimension to be adequately reflected in the Helsinki +40 process and in overall

efforts to address the root causes of global security threats.

The General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions addresses a supplementary item "Calling for Urgent Solutions to the Tragedy of Deaths in the Mediterranean," that reaffirms the full right of all people fleeing from persecution and armed conflict to seek asylum in OSCE participating States and calls for a strengthened inter-parliamentary Mediterranean dimension in the OSCE. Further and greater action against traffickers who use unseaworthy vessels is urged.

<http://oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2015-helsinki/declaration-3/2977-2015-helsinki-declaration-eng/file>

2015 Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA

- 15-18 September, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: The OSCE PA holds an Autumn Meeting every year to enhance inter-parliamentary dialogue and provide a forum of discussion about the Mediterranean region's political challenges. More than 150 parliamentarians from 45 OSCE participating States gather to discuss security issues within the political-military, economic-environmental and democracy-human rights spheres around the title: "Addressing security challenges in the OSCE region and beyond: the role of parliamentarians in fostering regional co-operation." They debate the ongoing refugee crisis and the related question of how the OSCE can help mitigate the situation, underscoring the role of parliamentarians in generating necessary political will. During the Opening session, the OSCE PA President, Kanerva, calls for greater solidarity and compassion in addressing the migrant and refugee crisis. At the session held under the theme "The role of the OSCE and regional co-operation in regional security, fighting against terrorism and trafficking in human beings," participants also address the need for regional organizations to collaborate for increased global security, including the fight against terrorism and extremism, countering organized crime, including human and drug trafficking, and resolving conflicts in Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan.

Other topics discussed are the progress of Mongolian democracy over a quarter-century, the crisis in and around Ukraine, the development of democratic institutions, human rights issues, terrorism and human trafficking.

www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/autumn-meetings/2015-mongolia/report-14/3130-2015-ulaanbaatar-autumn-meeting-report/file

2015 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

- 20-21 October, Dead Sea, Jordan: The conference gathers around 225 participants from 44 MPCs and participating States, including 16 Foreign Ministers and Deputy Foreign Ministers, a number of key representatives of international organizations and representatives of civil society, academia and the media. It focuses on “Common Security in the Mediterranean Region – challenges and opportunities” and addresses questions related to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean especially focusing on countering violent extremism and radicalization, the role of interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and the current challenges related to migration. For the first time, the Mediterranean Conference serves as a platform for high-level political discussion on common security challenges. Furthermore, the Conference brings forward suggestions on how to strengthen the Mediterranean Partnership through a more structured type of co-operation, and on how to facilitate a more substantive dialogue with the Partners.

www.osce.org/annual-report/2015?download=true

Annual Ministerial Council – 22th OSCE Ministerial Council

- 3-4 December, Belgrade, Serbia: OSCE Foreign Ministers and delegations from the 57 OSCE participating States gather for the annual Ministerial Council. It acts as the central decision-making and governing body and provides a rare opportunity for participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation to engage in high-level multilateral and bilateral talks on their current security relations and concerns. Declarations are

adopted on reinforcing OSCE efforts to counter terrorism in the wake of recent terrorist attacks and on the OSCE's activities in support of global efforts in tackling the worldwide drug problem.

States agree to pursue a multi-dimensional approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism. The ministerial declaration reaffirms the commitment of participating States to work together to prevent, suppress, investigate and prosecute terrorism-related acts, including their financing. They stress their strong determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its motivation or origin, and that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. They also express particular concern that youth, including children, are being radicalized and recruited as foreign terrorist fighters, and recognize the importance of working with youth to prevent and counter terrorism, while reaffirming the will of participating States to foster tolerance and non-discrimination, mutual respect and understanding in their societies.

www.osce.org/oscemc15

Mediterranean Contact Group

Germany, as Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) in 2015, works closely with the Mediterranean Partners on fostering an intensified dialogue. The liveliness and substance of the Partnership is underlined by well-attended, timely and extensive discussions during the Mediterranean Conference and at the meetings of the MCG, and by the active involvement of representatives from MPCs in various OSCE events, including their participation in concrete projects. Six meetings of the MCG are held in Vienna during the course of the year. The first meeting, held on 27 February 2015, takes place in the wake of the 7 January terrorist attack on the offices of ‘Charlie Hebdo’ in Paris and is dedicated to the issues of freedom of the media and countering violent extremism and radicalization. At the second meeting, on 27 March, the MCG discusses the topic of counter-terrorism and the issue of addressing the conditions con-

ducive to radicalization as well as its impact on our societies. On 8 May, the third meeting focuses on “International migration, human trafficking and refugee protection in the Mediterranean,” and the fourth, on 19 June, is dedicated to the implementation of the counter-terrorism declarations on kidnapping for ransom and foreign terrorist fighters. The fifth meeting, held on 18 September, focuses on “Sustainable energy: Advancing stability and security in the OSCE Mediterranean region.” Lastly, the sixth and final meeting takes place on 20 November with a focus on the positive potential of migration for the economy and stability in the Mediterranean region. In addition to meetings, practical co-operation take place in the context of a number of fruitful projects and workshops with the Partners in all three dimensions. Substantial studies are also carried out, such as the field study on sustainable energy for the Mediterranean Partners, intended for completion in spring 2016, under the 2016 Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group.

www.osce.org/cio/205381?download=true

3. 5+5 Dialogue

The 5+5 Dialogue comes from a French proposal and was set up on 10 October 1990 during a ministerial meeting in Rome. It gathers the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean Basin: five countries from the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia) and five members of the European Union (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Malta who joined in 1991). The 5+5 Dialogue has a flexible and informal nature. Over the years, it has been transformed from a merely political forum to one for strengthened regional and multidisciplinary cooperation in the Western Mediterranean. Its flexibility and informality have enabled a gradual opening up, and the participating ministers and senior officials now meet to discuss an increasing number of issues. Originally just a political compromise between Foreign Ministers dealing with security and stability, as well as economic integration, it later expanded to include other spheres, such as Education, the

Environment and Renewable Energies, Home Affairs (since 1995), Migration (since 2002), Inter-parliamentary Relations (since 2003), Defence (since 2004), Tourism (since 2006) and Transport (since 2007). Due to its practical and operational nature, it is a forum for the exchange of ideas and the launch of new initiatives. It can also capitalize on its restricted geographical scope, which is limited to the Western Mediterranean. This initiative has encouraged the insertion of Libya and Mauritania in the regional context.

Main Meetings in 2015

Foreign Affairs

- 7 October, Tangier, Morocco: The 12th Meeting of the Foreign Affairs meeting of the Western Mediterranean takes place under the Portuguese and Moroccan co-Presidency and coincides with the 25th anniversary of the 5+5 Dialogue. In addition to the foreign affairs ministers of the ten countries of the Dialogue, other institutions take part in the meeting as observers: the Arab Maghreb Union, European Union and Union for the Mediterranean. Many important issues are tackled by the Ministers especially in terms of Political Dialogue, Security in the Mediterranean, Youth and Economic and Social Cooperation. Some of the Countries of the Western Mediterranean are facing important challenges, and Tunisia and Libya are at the centre of the talks: Ministers reiterate their full support to the consolidation of democracy in Tunisia and express their will to assist Libya in its efforts to reconcile and stabilize the country. Security in the broader Mediterranean region and its neighbourhood is also tackled, as the dramatic situation in Syria, instability and underdevelopment in the Sahel region and the growing tensions in the West Bank and Jerusalem are sources of instability in the Western Mediterranean as well. The Conference is also the occasion for the Ministers to condemn the terrorist attacks suffered by France, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya and call for a stronger cooperation among the 5+5 countries to fight against terrorism through the exchange of information se-

curity and police, judicial and military cooperation. Ministers establish as a priority the consolidation of economic and trade relations between the 5+5 countries, involving private sector and government initiatives. They also attach great importance to strengthening youth by guaranteeing better access for youth to their political, civil, economic and cultural rights. In view of the humanitarian crisis and the loss of many migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, the Ministers recognize the need to enhance cooperation between the countries in the analysis and management of asylum systems and international protection of migrants. A stronger cooperation in the other cooperation initiative (AME, UfM, EU-ENP) is also envisaged. The Foreign Affairs meeting is also the occasion to review the work carried out so far in other fields of the 5+5 Dialogue: Defence, Interior, Transport, Health, Water, Renewable Energies and Environment, Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research and Tourism. They also identify new sectors of cooperation and envisage future conferences in the field of Culture, Finance and Trade and Investments.

Final Declaration: <http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/D%C3%A9claration-de-Tanger-7-octobre-2015.pdf>

Civil Society Forum

- 6 October, Tangiers, Morocco: The first Forum of Civil Society organized in coordination with the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) is held on the eve of the 12th meeting of the 5+5 Foreign Affairs Ministers to celebrate the role of civil society and especially of youth in building a brighter future for the Mediterranean especially in difficult times. The work of the Forum focuses on two major themes: innovative entrepreneurship as a vehicle for creating jobs and wealth, and mobility in training and employment, as a tool for promoting shared citizenship.

Interior

- 18-19 May, Lisbon, Portugal: The objectives of the Conferences of the Western Mediterranean Interior Ministers (known by its French acronym

CIMO) are to jointly address the challenges and threats that require a more versatile and effective answer. They focus on four areas of competence: security, migration, management of natural disasters and decentralized cooperation. The 16th meeting of 5+5 Interior Ministers tackles the fight against terrorism, organized crime, migration and civil protection. Ministers decide to further cooperation in the field of information exchange in the fight against terrorism, taking into account the most innovative ICT for dealing with cybercrime; to cooperate against the phenomena of foreign fighters; and to promote a comprehensive approach which also takes into account the fight against poverty, precariousness, social exclusion and conflict resolution. In the same way, Ministers decide to strengthen cooperation to fight against organized crime and all kinds of associated trafficking through the identification of the links between organized crime, terrorism and trafficking networks. The issue of migration and human rights is discussed in all the CIMO conferences. Ministers reaffirm the need for a comprehensive, integrated and concerted approach to tackle this issue and promote active cooperation between the EU and the countries of the Southern CIMO in the fields of surveillance and border control. Ministers ask the Monitoring Group to follow up on the implementation of the actions identified in the final declaration.

The 17th Conference of the Western Mediterranean Interior Ministers will take place in Mauritania.

Final Declaration:

www.sg.mai.gov.pt/RelacoesInternacionais/OrganizacoesMultilaterais/CoopMediterraneoOciden/Documents/Declaracao3%20A7%20C3%A3o%20XVI%20CIMO%20-%20PT.pdf

Defence

The 5+5 Defence Initiative was launched in 2004 at the 1st Defence Ministers Meeting. The aim was to encourage mutual understanding among the member countries and to develop multilateral cooperation in order to promote security in the Western Mediterranean and address common concerns

in the areas of security and defence. The Presidency of the 5+5 Defence Initiative is held by each country of the Initiative by annual rotation, following the alphabetical order of the countries in English. Tunisia holds the 2015 Presidency and Algeria follows in the rotating Presidency. The main meeting is the gathering of Defence Ministers (usually in December) in the country holding the Presidency. During the Ministerial meeting, the Ministers approve the Action Plan for the year to come, and analyze and discuss the result of the activities that occurred during the year. The Defence Ministers also gather once a year in October to review the activities undertaken that year, and to approve the Activity Plan for the following year. The main goal of these meetings is to support political action undertaken by the 5+5 Defence Initiative, deepening the dialogue concerning regional military matters, the understanding between the Armed Forces, and therefore improving the military cooperation between all ten countries of the Initiative.

- 9 June, Tunis (Tunisia): Since Tunisia is chairing the 5+5 Defence initiative, the Ministers meet in the country's capital. The meeting coincides with the visit to the country by the NATO SG for Political Affairs and Security. Ministers are unanimous in affirming that a military intervention in Libya is not a solution in itself to address all the security challenges in the country, but rather a political solution has to be found aimed at the formation of a single government representing all the people. As chair of the 2015 session of 5+5 Defence Initiative, Tunisia proposes to focus the work of the meeting on the capacity building of the 5+5 countries' armed forces with the aim of securing the borders of the Western Mediterranean Countries, to provide air and maritime control, to manage crises and to intervene in relief and rescue operations. The initiative will be chaired by Algeria in 2016.

- 10 October, Tunis, Tunisia: The Chiefs of Staff of the member countries of the 5+5 Defence Initiative gather for their 7th meeting to tackle the threats to these countries in terms of terrorism, migration and illegal cross-border organized crime. The aim of this kind of

meeting is to strengthen the operational capability of military forces to confront these new challenges.

Water

- 31 March, Algiers, Algeria: 1st 5+5 Ministerial Conference on Water after being officially launched at the Economic Forum in Barcelona in 2013. A common strategy on water is adopted thus allowing a better common approach to the problems of water and sanitation. This strategy is the result of an inclusive and consensual process through an exchange of experience, information sharing, consultation and identification of common concerns. It will help develop a common approach and promote access to water and sanitation as part of a sustainable and integrated management of this resource for the countries of the Western Mediterranean. Cross-border and regional cooperation in the water sector will contribute to both economic and social development and to the strengthening of mutual trust in many other areas. This new sector of cooperation in the 5+5 framework will allow the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean to acquire a space for consultation and coordination and a cooperation mechanism for sustainable development of water resources in the sub-region with an emphasis on water scarcity. The instrument will also support national development strategies and the mitigation of the impact of climate change on the resource.

Environment and Renewable Energies

- 2-3 March, Lisbon, Portugal: During the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Environment and Renewable Energies of the Western Mediterranean Dialogue – 5+5 Dialogue the key issues tackled are the challenges of climate change and cooperation in the field of renewable energies. Regarding climate change, Ministers reaffirm the need to move towards a society based on a low-carbon economy and one that's resilient to climate change impacts in order to ensure a sustainable future for future generations and recognize green growth as a privileged tool to

promote development and economic growth. They stress the importance of sustainable urban development, both for the control of greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability of urban infrastructure to the impacts of climate change, especially in coastal areas. Cooperation between the countries of the Western Mediterranean in the area of climate change, including the exchange of information and experiences on adapting to climate change is also envisaged. In the field of Energy, they recognize the need to promote cooperation in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency between the countries while strengthening existing energy interconnections, since the increase in energy interconnections will also help to provide alternative supply routes to increase energy security. The next Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and Renewable Energy will be held in Morocco

Lisbon Declaration: www.econostrum.info/attachment/558110/

Police

- 20 September, Algeciras, Spain: The 1st meeting of the highest representatives of the police of Algeria, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Mauritania, Portugal and Tunisia ratifies the need to intensify cooperation to tackle terrorism, organized crime, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. The meeting is also attended by representatives of INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Border Agency (FRONTEX). Attendees are committed to promoting their common struggle against terrorism and to working together to identify 'foreign fighters' and develop plans for the prevention and investigation of their modus operandi and arms control. Special emphasis is also placed on joint operations and intelligence regarding criminal networks, routes and the means used for trafficking, encouraging cooperation with countries of origin and the identification and return of those entering illegally. The directors are committed to maintaining an annual meeting to promote new cooperation mechanisms to future security challenges.

Research, Innovation, Higher Education

- 26 January, Barcelona, Spain: UfM Secretariat and the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness organize the Preparatory Meeting of Experts for the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education of the Western Mediterranean Countries (Dialogue 5+5). The meeting is an opportunity to present the state of play of UfM-labelled projects and flagship activities in these fields, as well as to identify possible synergies with the 5+5 Action Plan to be drafted by national experts. In view of preparing the Dialogue 5+5 Second Ministerial Conference, the working sessions focus on how to increase cooperation in the areas of Research, Innovation and Higher Education as essential instruments for pursuing balanced socio-economic growth in the region.
- 23-24 March, Madrid, Spain: Building on the activities undertaken since the 1st 5+5 Dialogue Ministerial Conference in Rabat in 2013, the Ministers endorse a work programme for 2015-2016 which defines concrete steps to move forward in cooperation in the fields of Research, Innovation and Higher Education. In the 2nd Ministerial Conference, Ministers and those responsible for these areas sign the Madrid Declaration, aimed at strengthening cooperation and promoting the work programme agreed in the previous meeting. The Declaration also includes a concrete action plan for the next two years to facilitate access to science and technology infrastructures for countries on both shores of the Mediterranean. The aim of this initiative is to support research as well as generate high-quality training. The 3rd Dialogue 5+5 Ministerial Conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education will be held in Tunisia in 2017.

4. Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All)

After the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia and the growing tensions among ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the Balkan area, the EU, in its attempts to cope with these crises, promoted

the "Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe" for southeastern European countries hoping to join the Union in the future. Within this treaty, at the Finnish EU Summit in 1999, the Italian Government presented the "Adriatic Ionian Initiative." The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (All) was established at the Summit on the Development and Security of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, held in Ancona (Italy) in May 2000. At the end of the Conference, the Foreign Ministers of the participating countries, Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia signed the "Ancona Declaration" in order to strengthen regional cooperation to promote political and economic stability, thus creating a solid base for the process of European integration. Today, the All has eight members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The initiative's Chairmanship rotates every May/ June according to alphabetical criteria. The Albanian Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina started in June 2014 and ended in May 2015 and Croatia takes over from June 2015 until May 2016. Following the recent EU approach to support multilateral sub-regional cooperation, the All started working, in 2010, on the idea of a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian Region. Since then the All Participating States, started raising awareness regarding the need to establish a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian basin. The European Council has given a mandate to the EU Commission to present a new "Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region" (EUSAIR) by the end of 2014. The EUSAIR has been endorsed by the Council on 24 October 2014 and is now in its implementation phase. Many years after the establishment of the All, the geopolitical environment has deeply changed. Slovenia in 2004 and Croatia in 2013 entered the EU while the other Adriatic-Ionian Eastside coastal Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), even if with different timeframes and conditions, are gradually approaching the EU within the Stabilisation and Association Process framework, as a prelude to future EU membership.

Main Events during Bosnia and Herzegovina's Chairmanship

Bosnian and Herzegovinian priorities as Chair of the All are to further strengthen good neighbourly relations, stability and prosperity for the All members and the Western Balkan region, in order to come closer to the EU through the EUSAIR, which should provide an adequate framework to this end.

The round tables address topics related to environmental protection, tourism, transport, blue growth, protection and cooperation in events of natural disasters, the aftermath of this year's catastrophic floods and issues arising from the realization of EUSAIR aims and recommendations.

The All Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina coincides with the period of the approval process of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macro-region (EUSAIR), finalized at the end of 2014.

- 22-23 January, Ancona, Italy: The 1st Governing Board (GB) of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) marks the beginning of the implementation phase of the EUSAIR. The representatives of the eight participating States and the representatives of the EU Commission and of other Institutions represented in the GB, focus on the governance of the Strategy, with particular emphasis on the procedural rules of the Governing Board and of the Thematic Steering Groups. They also tackle the issue of an increased involvement of civil society and stakeholders during the implementation phase of the Strategy. The intergovernmental body of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (Committee of Senior Officials) meets in the margins of the Governing Board. The main item on the Agenda (the overhaul of the All Round Tables with a view to aligning them with EUSAIR activities) is discussed in detail.

www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/187-first-eusair-gb-ancona-january-2015

- 23 April 2015, Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 13th Conference of the Speakers of the parliaments of the All. All participants express great satisfaction for the improvements in regional cooperation in the area particularly thanks to the newly endorsed

“EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region” and express their wish to actively contribute to its implementation phase. The participants stress the leading role governments had in such a process and express the belief that through political and legislative initiative, parliaments could foster concrete developments in the Strategy. The topics covered by the Conference are: Connecting the Region in order to strengthen sustainable tourism and the engagement of parliaments in achieving the aims of the All and the EUSAIR. The heads of All parliaments decide to establish a constant and more efficient flow of communication with the All Chairmanship in Office by appointing in the coming months a High Official from each National Parliament, in charge of liaising with the national Senior Official and the All Permanent Secretariat on intergovernmental and EUSAIR issues. www.aai-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/197-xiii-conference-speakers-parliaments-neum-23-april

- 13 May, Brussels, Belgium: The 18th Adriatic and Ionian Council (AIC) closes the All Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The venue is chosen to signal the possible synergies between the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The Heads of Delegations discuss the possible evolution from AIC to a joint AIC/EUSAIR Ministerial meeting without losing the intergovernmental character of the All, but coordinating the political ownership of the two exercises. They decide to “further enhance the interlinks between the AIC Council and the EUSAIR, fully recognizing All’s role of intergovernmental anchorage of the EUSAIR.”

Brussels Declaration: www.aai-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/199-xviii-adriatic-ionic-council-brussels-2015

Main Events during Croatian Chairmanship

With Croatia’s Chairmanship of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative begins a new cycle of chairmanships on rotational bases of the All Member States, furthermore it becomes the first

EUSAIR participant country to co-chair its Governing Board with the European Commission. In order to reduce the number of fora and avoid the duplication of their subjects, Croatia proposes merging the meeting of the Ministerial Council of the All with the annual meeting of EUSAIR Foreign Ministers. In view of the priorities and future activities and cooperation among the All participating countries, Croatia proposes political dialogue on the following aspects: redefining the objectives of the All itself; positioning the All in the newly-created political framework and cooperation area of the EUSAIR; and collaborating with other initiatives and organizations in the geopolitical area of the region.

- 14 October, Zagreb, Croatia: The second EUSAIR Governing Board is held under the Co-Chairmanship of the EC and Croatia. The GB standing members take stock of the first two rounds of the four Thematic Steering Group (TGS) meetings, highlighting the opportunity to effectively link them with the overhauled All Round Tables that represent a ‘new auxiliary’ tool for the TSGs.

The decision to connect the Adriatic and Ionian Council and the EUSAIR at the political level is endorsed. There is general agreement that pooling resources will be more and more crucial, both for All and EUSAIR. Discussions among National Coordinators, Pillar Coordinators and the EU Commission also focus on the ADRION Programme and the Facility Point, which will support the EUSAIR Strategy.

www.aai-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/207-eusair-governing-board-zagreb

- 17 and 18 December, Kotor, Montenegro: 17th Plenary Session of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC). The two working days focus on EUSAIR, and the contribution the Forum Cities may make to its implementation, on the European Territorial Cooperation, on creative industries in the area and on innovation and competitiveness. The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative attaches great relevance to the FAIC, as signalled by the presence of the All Secretary General.

www.aai-ps.org/index.php/news-events/

[events/item/210-xvii-forum-adriatic-cities-kotor-december-2015](http://www.aai-ps.org/index.php/news-events/item/210-xvii-forum-adriatic-cities-kotor-december-2015)

5. The League of Arab States

The League of Arab States is an association of 22 countries founded in 1945 with the aim of improving coordination among its members on matters of common interest. The founding members of the League (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Yemen) agreed to seek closer cooperation on issues regarding economics, communication, culture, nationality, social welfare and health. The highest body of the League is the Council, composed of representatives of member states, generally Foreign Ministers. Each member state has one vote, regardless of the size of the country. The Council meets twice a year, in March and September but it may also convene a special session at the request of two members. The General Secretariat runs the daily activities of the League. It is the executive body of the Council and administrative body of the League. The Current SG in 2015 was the Egyptian Nabil el-Araby, who succeeded Amr Moussa, and Ahmed About Gheit will take over in July 2016. The Arab league struggles with dysfunction and disunity among its members. In 2002 it achieved remarkable consensus on the Arab Peace Initiative. The 2011 Arab revolts in Middle East and North Africa offered an occasion to propose actions and initiatives: it backed the UN action against Gaddafi’s forces in Libya and sent, for the first time in history, a mission of observers to Syria (after suspending its membership in the League).

Further information: www.lasportal.org/en/Pages/default.aspx

Main Events in 2015

- 19 January, Brussels, Belgium: HRVP Mogherini meets with the Secretary General of the League of Arab States (LAS), Dr. Nabil El Araby. During their first bilateral meeting, HR/VP Mogherini and the SG El Araby discuss the current situation in the Arab world, focusing on Libya, Iraq, Syria, the Middle East Peace Process and, notably, the

terrorist threat posed by Daesh in Syria and Iraq. They sign a Memorandum of Understanding furthering cooperation between the EEAS and the LAS.
http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/190115_league-of-arab-states_en.htm

26th Arab Summit

- 28-29 March, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt: The Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration emphasizes Arab solidarity in dealing with the current developments in the region, and the absolute necessity to formulate common Arab positions in the face of those challenges. Arab leaders vow to join ranks and look into taking pre-emptive and defensive arrangements to maintain Arab national security. The 'Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration' adopted during the two-day 26th Arab Summit points to the "challenges related to the criminal practices of terrorist and violent groups taking religion as a cover for their brutality." The leaders agree in principle to form a joint military force to address growing Arab challenges and threats. It is up to each Arab country to join the joint military force, which will be mainly tasked with swift military intervention in case an Arab League member state comes under threats, including from terrorists. Arab leaders celebrate the Arab League's 70th anniversary, and their commitment to the goals of the founding leaders, namely, consolidating ties among member states, coordinating political plans to achieve cooperation, and maintaining their independence, sovereignty and joint heritage. They also reaffirm their unwavering support for the UAE's full sovereignty over the three Gulf islands and urge Iran to respect the UAE's sovereignty while condemning Iran's action aimed at bolstering its occupation of the three islands. The Arab leaders reiterate their full commitment to Yemen's unity, and respect of its sovereignty and independence. They reaffirm their full support to the 'Determination Storm' operation in support of legitimacy in Yemen and express hope that the compelling military measures will restore security and stability to all Yemen under constitutional legitimacy. They voice support to the Yemeni peo-

ple and their expectations for freedom, democracy and social justice. The Middle East Peace Process is also discussed. The importance of both Palestinian reconciliation and Gaza's reconstruction is underlined. The discussion also strengthens the importance of all sides continuing to work for a genuine two-state solution where both Israelis and Palestinians would respect their mutual security needs. With regard to Syria, a course of action including a political solution to the Syrian conflict is urged.

The Declaration also emphasizes the need for the Middle East to rid itself of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and on Israel's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In this context, the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration stresses that the Arab economic integration is an integral part of the Arab national security system, including the completion of the Greater Arab Free Trade Zone and the achievement of food security, in addition to the sustainable development and optimal utilization of resources and narrowing the Arab food gap and future management of financial resources for achieving Arab water security.

<http://susris.com/2015/03/29/26th-arab-summit-sharm-el-sheikh-declaration-spa-report/>

Arab League Presents Regional Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security

- 12 October, New York, USA: In partnership with UN Women, the LAS presents a regional action plan for women, peace and security as part of the United Nation's review of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security fifteen years after its adoption. The action plan calls for meaningful participation of women and girls at all levels of decision-making to build and preserve peace in conflict areas and to combat terrorism. The Arab action plan also stresses the need for the prevention of all forms of violence including sexual and gender-based violence during conflict. The plan allocates resources and provisions to push for women's participation in peace-building, mediation and diplomacy at all levels of the decision-

making process. Indeed, afflicted by armed conflicts and an alarming surge in terrorist extremism in several countries, the Arab region has seen some of the worst forms of sexual and gender-based violence during conflict, from the abduction and sexual enslavement of young girls under the Islamic State, to early and forced marriages as a result of displacement. For Syria alone, over four million Syrians are now refugees - 50.4% of whom are women who find themselves more economically and socially vulnerable than ever. Conflicts also exacerbate existing gender inequalities further compromising women's economic rights, reproductive rights and access to education and adequate healthcare. Furthermore, when it comes to reconstruction and peace-building, women are often absent from the negotiations tables, which entrenches gender inequality in post-conflict communities as well. Between 1992 and 2011, only 9% of conflict resolution negotiators around the world were women. Involvement of women in peacebuilding is not only a right owed to women, especially because of the disproportionate impact of conflicts on their lives, it is also an added enhancement for the chances of conflict resolution and a guarantee for the sustainability of peace.

<http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/arab-league-presents-regional-action-plan>

Meeting of European Union and League of Arab States Representatives

- 24-25 November, Brussels, Belgium: The EU and LAS officially launch the Strategic Dialogue between both organizations, and the fourth meeting of the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the League of Arab States Permanent Representatives takes place. The Ambassadors hold constructive discussions on common challenges, with a particular focus on the terrorist threat and extremism, as well as on the Middle East Peace Process, Syria, Libya, Yemen and the refugee and migration crisis. Sharing concerns about the political and security situation, they welcome the expansion of the Euro-

Arab partnership as an adequate regional response. Within the framework of the launch of the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue, progress is made on the progress is made on the Euro-Arab practical cooperation, particularly in the fields of conflict prevention, early warning and crisis management, humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, transnational organized crime and weapons of mass destruction. The establishment of a working group for each of these areas aims to facilitate joint work to better respond to current and future security threats.

http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/151125_03_en.htm

6. Arab Maghreb Union

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was founded in 1989, in Marrakesh, where the five member countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania) expressed their common wish for greater unity among the Maghreb countries, reflecting the ties existing between their peoples and their synergy. The Union's main goals are the free circulation of goods and people, the eventual establishment of a free trade area, a customs union and a common market, and the adoption of common policies in all the spheres possible, as well as fostering progress and the well-being of populations. The main decision-making bodies are the Presidential Council, consisting of heads of state, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Council and the Specialised Ministerial Commissions. The secretariat general is based in Rabat, the post of secretary general currently held by the Tunisian, Habib Ben Yahia. Major projects are the creation of a Maghrebi Investment and Foreign Trade Bank, a Maghrebi University and a Maghrebi Science Academy. However, the AMU is experiencing difficulties functioning, for a great number of problems hinder good relations between the Maghrebi partners: the issues of the Moroccan-Algerian border, closed since 1994, Western Sahara, which poisons relations between Morocco and Algeria, and the embargo against Libya from the 1990s to 2003.

The Council of Heads of State has thus not met since 1994 and the future of the AMU remains dependent on relations between the partners.

Meetings Held in 2015

- 30 April 2015, Meknes, Morocco: As a side event of the 10th Edition of the International Agriculture Show in Morocco, the SG of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) organizes a Maghreb Conference on Agriculture and Food Systems in collaboration with the FAO subregional office for North Africa. The topic addressed is "Professional Organizations: a lever for the sustainable development of the agro-food industry." North African agriculture experts, public institutions involved in livestock farming and agrifood, and International development organisms attend the Conference. The Conference focuses on AMU's support to fostering Maghreb integration of professional organizations and the development of their capacities to enhance the productivity of small ruminants, dairy cattle, apiculture and fishing sectors in a sustainable way.

Expected results are the realization of a better national and North-African integration of professional organizations for the sustainable development of these sectors by strengthening their capacities in the sectors of ruminant farming, dairy farming, apiculture and traditional fishing, in order to allow AMU countries to better contribute to the field of food security.

- 7 May 2015, Rabat, Morocco: The 33rd Council of Foreign Ministers of the UMA calls for a Maghrebi security strategy in order to counter current threats in the region. The Council welcomes the inter-Libyan dialogue process held in Skhirat, Morocco and calls for the different political actors in Libya to engage in inclusive dialogue and compromise to form a national unity government in order to eradicate terrorism, establish security throughout Libya and ensure control of its borders with neighbouring countries. The final declaration reaffirms the Council's commitment to the consistent position of the UMA calling for respect for the "unity, sovereignty and territorial integ-

ity of Libya, non-interference in its internal affairs and preserving its political independence."

In terms of coordination and security cooperation, aimed at formulating a collective response to terrorism, the Council reiterates its condemnation of this scourge in all its forms as a threat to the security and stability of Maghreb countries. In this regard, the Council stresses the importance of deepening cooperation, consultation and coordination between Maghreb countries and intensifying the exchange of information and experience between the services concerned in these countries to collectively tackle this scourge. It also welcomes the holding of the Fifth Regular Session of the Council of Interior Ministers of the AMU in Nouakchott in late April, and outlines the resolutions and recommendations of the session. Regarding illegal immigration, the Council also discusses the issue of the growing phenomenon of illegal migration "because of the limited resources of the countries of the southern Mediterranean and the deterioration of the security situation in many Maghreb countries." It calls on EU countries to assume their responsibilities regarding the need to intensify cooperation with Maghreb countries in order to achieve appropriate solutions to this phenomenon.

www.menara.ma/fr/2015/05/07/1612988-le-33e-conseil-des-ministres-des-affaires-%C3%A9trang%C3%A8res-de-luma-pour-la-mise-en-place-dune-strat%C3%A9gie-s%C3%A9curitaire-maghr%C3%A9bine-1.html

- 3-4 June, Rabat, Morocco: The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), ECA, ADB, FAO, IDB, UNESCO, ISESCO, WHO, IOM and ILO take part in the annual North Africa Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM-NA). Set up in June 2014, SRCM-NA is a sub-regional section of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) – Africa to increase synergies between UN agencies and other organizations and support Africa's development. Participating organizations agree to coordinate their support for UMA objectives and seize opportunities for synergies in four key areas: Strengthening institutional capacities; Trade, industry and market access; Human re-

sources, employment, gender and social protection; and Agriculture, food security and rural development. Participants also decide to widen the SRCM-NA agenda beyond the existing collaboration with the UMA General Secretariat by including other North African actors, such as professional organizations, to pursue regional integration objectives while avoiding political obstacles. SRCM-NA membership will also be extended to optimize the mobilization of human and financial resources needed for projects.

www.uneca.org/stories/international-organizations-build-partnership-north-africa%E2%80%99s-integration

7. Deauville Partnership

As a response to the upheavals in the Arab world in 2011, the G8 launched the Deauville Partnership (DP) at the summit held in May 2011 in the French city of Deauville. The aim of the partnership is to improve and coordinate international political and financial aid for countries in a transition process such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Jordan and Yemen. The partnership also aims at strengthening cooperation with relevant regional partners (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates) and to guarantee coordination with international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank) and key international organizations (OECD, UNDP, EBRD, EIB). The DP requested the WB to establish a special fund to support the transformation underway in several countries. The MENA Transition Fund was established in September 2012 and its aim is to provide funds for technical cooperation to improve governance and public institutions and foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth in such a way as to improve the lives of the citizens of these transition countries.

In June 2014, Germany assumed the presidency of the initiative until the 31st of December 2015, following France, the US and the UK. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is currently managing the action to coordinate the IFIs and Develop-

ment banks. The key events of the Partnerships are the annual meetings of Foreign Ministers and of Finance Appendices Chronologies IEMed. The priorities of this initiative are supporting SMEs, strengthening the legal framework, promoting investments and improving opportunities for women.

Main Events during 2015

- 28 April, Berlin, Germany: More than 100 high level participants gather at the German Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) Headquarters in Berlin to witness the birth of the “Deauville Partnership Action Plan for Financial Inclusion.” The plan represents the first step of a coordinated financial inclusion effort across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The “Deauville Partnership Action Plan for Financial Inclusion” proposes an objective of supporting Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen in their comprehensive reform agenda to pursue sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The plan is also in line with the German G7 Presidency priority of fostering sustainable and inclusive growth and job creation in the region through financial inclusion, financial literacy and responsible finance.

The importance of engaging banks and non-bank institutions, promoting public-private dialogue, encouraging the development of interoperable platforms while enhancing the distribution channels, ensuring secured transactions and protecting customers' privacy is highlighted as essential to the future of sustainable and successful financial inclusion.

www.bmz.de/g7/includes/Download-archiv/Deauville_Partnership_Action_Plan_for_Financial_Inclusion__April_2015.pdf

- 6 May, Paris, France: The Deauville Partnership agrees on a “Compact on Economic Governance” at a Senior Officials Meeting at the OECD in Paris. This Compact provides a framework for key policy objectives to promote good governance and a sound business climate, to be undertaken by Arab Countries in Transition (ACTs) and supported by the G7, Deauville Partner countries,

the OECD and the IFIs, as well as relevant coordination platforms. The Compact will be followed up on by way of a steady dialogue and consultation process and the development of country-tailored implementation plans where ACTs identify specific policy measures and the G7 and Partner countries match them with technical assistance and other supporting measures. To ensure continued economic stabilization in Transition Countries through improved economic governance, the Deauville Partnership agrees on the importance of: 1) designing economic policies for socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable market economies; 2) the transparency and efficiency of public institutions and processes; 3) an attractive environment for private sector investment and development through better economic governance; and 4) the involvement of public and civil society and the business community in decision-making.

<https://deauville-partnership.org/insights/2015/%C2%BBcompact-on-economic-governance%C2%AB-of-the-deauville-partnership.html>

- 8 October 2015, Lima, Peru : Finance Ministers, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and International Organizations (IOs) of the Deauville Partnership (DP) with Arab Countries in Transition (ACTs) meet in Lima to reaffirm their commitment to support Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen in their comprehensive reform agendas to foster sustainable and inclusive growth and job creation in the region. Ministers recognize that since 2011, macroeconomic stability has broadly been maintained in the ACTs but that several ACTs are now under pressure from destabilization threats and, in some cases, violent conflicts. Ministers recognize that political tension and instability in the broader region are major obstacles towards their economic and social development. Ministers call for continued efforts to strengthen macroeconomic resilience, including through prudent fiscal policies and further progress with key structural reforms to lay the foundation for more inclusive and sustainable private sector-led growth. Elements of the reforms should include tax reform, fi-

nancial sector regulatory and supervisory reforms, labour market reforms, business climate and governance reforms to create a level playing field for firms, including micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are typically key engines of job-intensive growth. Ministers acknowledge the progress made by the finance track, an effective platform for coordination and policy exchange, and the Partnership as a whole in 2015 against the priorities set out under the German Presidency in October 2014.

www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/EN/Standardartikel/Topics/International_affairs/Articles/2015-10-09-deauville-partnership-lima-meeting-chair-statement.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

8. Mediterranean Group

The Mediterranean Group gathers the Foreign Ministers of seven European Mediterranean Countries, namely, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain on an informal basis. The proposal to create this group came from Spain and Cyprus with the aim of

generating a space for informal consultations in order to resume the aims and initiative of the former Olive Group. It was formally presented to the EU Foreign Affairs Council in December 2013. It is an informal coordination and consultation group of the seven EU Mediterranean Member States on issues of common interest.

- 20 February, Paris, France: At the informal ministerial meeting of the Mediterranean Group (Greece, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta) Ministers agree on the need for an ambitious response in order to face the challenges of a democratic transition and of social, human and economic development in the Southern Mediterranean countries. To face them, the EU must be able to use all of its resources. This includes the AMICI initiative, which is a sponsored coordination mechanism developed in cooperation with the Commission and EEAS. It aims to foster strategic coordination in the region by the EU, Member States and other donors and frameworks, in relation to investment facilitation, private sector development, and creating a favourable environment for business

and direct foreign investments, with the objective of enhancing coordination and the efficient use of available resources, as well as improving partners' capacities and ownership and regional cooperation to attract needed investment, with a view to enhancing its development impact, in particular for job creation.

In this context, Ministers agree that a closer dialogue between Mediterranean countries has to be favoured, with a focus on common challenges such as migration, particularly illegal migration, the fight against terrorism, and employment and growth. Help from the EU must focus on these sectors. Foreign Ministers of the Med Group talk about the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean region and on the latest developments in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Ukraine in particular. They agree that efforts have to be renewed to 1) counter extremism; 2) put youth at the centre of the priorities in the Mediterranean; and 3) fight climate change.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/informal-ministerial-meeting-of-the-mediterranean-group-in-paris-promoting-the-mediterranean-agenda-in-eu-policies/>