

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

2014 marks two important anniversaries for NATO and its partners in the Mediterranean and Broader Middle East region: the 20th anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the 10th anniversary of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). The Mediterranean region faces huge security challenges with wide-ranging implications for Euro-Atlantic security, so it is important to underscore how the security and stability of these regions are interlinked. The Dialogue was conceived to mark this shift in the Alliance's priorities and the beginning of a greater cooperation between the Alliance and its neighbours. Since its inception it has evolved to become a partnership of seven nations: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Under the NATO partnership framework, they engaged in political dialogue and practical cooperation. As for the political dimension, bilateral consultations (NATO+1) are regularly held and provide a forum for sharing views on a wide range of issues. Multilateral meetings (NATO+7) are held after NATO Summits or for special NATO events. The practical dimension includes seminars, workshops and practical activities in the field of modernising armed forces, border security, scientific and environmental cooperation, emergency planning, terrorism, weapons proliferation issues, civil management and border security control. MD nations have also contributed to NATO operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. In June 2004, NATO launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to contrib-

ute to regional security by offering the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council practical bilateral security cooperation. Four of these countries have joined the Initiative: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, however the initiative is open to all interested countries in the Broader Middle East region. Bilateral activities comprise a range of cooperation areas: tailored advice on defence transformation, military-to-military cooperation to achieve interoperability and cooperation in the fight against terrorism. In 2014, Kuwait becomes the first Gulf partner to conclude an Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme with NATO to plan their practical cooperation in a more tailored way. The political dimension has developed (both bilaterally and multilaterally) and evolved to include high-level meetings. ICI partners actively contribute to NATO ISAF operations in Afghanistan and provide assets for air operations in Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya.

In the framework of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, a forum for MPs from across the Atlantic Alliance to discuss and influence decisions on Alliance security, a Mediterranean and Middle East special Group (GSM) was launched in 1996. The GSM was conceived as a formal mechanism to address regional challenges, and a forum for cooperation and discussion with parliamentarians from the MENA region. The GSM conducts two annual seminars, which bring together parliamentarians from NATO countries with their counterparts in the region to explore specific topics. GSM seminars and reports cover a broad range of issues, including: security-related mat-

ters in the Mediterranean area and Broader Middle East, developments in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, with a particular focus on those matters that directly concern national parliamentarians, and religious and cultural forces shaping developments in the region and in the region's relations with allied countries. Recognising the profound changes that the 'Arab Spring' continues to bring to the region, the Assembly has stepped up its outreach to the region with two main priorities: strengthening political engagement with the region, and exploring avenues of assistance for democratic transition and parliamentary oversight of security and defence.

Main Events in 2014

- 15 January, Tel Aviv, Israel: NATO deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow delivers a keynote speech at the Institute of National Security Studies conference on missile defence, stressing that the Alliance's Ballistic Missile Defence system poses no threat to Russia, adding that cooperation with Russia on missile defence would improve security for both NATO and Russia. The deputy Secretary General's visit to Israel includes talks with Israeli Defence Minister and senior officials to review areas of NATO-Israel cooperation. Israel has an Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) dating back to 2008.
- 20-21 January, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: Visit of Diplomats from the State of Qatar to NATO under the ICI. Topics discussed include NATO's ICI and Military Cooperation; NATO's Current Political Agenda; NATO's Transfor-

mation and Outreach to the Middle East and the Gulf region; NATO's role in Counter Terrorism; NATO's operations; and new emerging security challenges and energy security.

- 22-23 January, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: The 170th Meeting of NATO Chiefs of Defence, NATO's highest military authority, gathers NATO Allies and Partners to discuss current NATO operations, to strengthen future Partnerships and define military priorities. Among the key speakers, General Mashal Al Zaben, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces, offers his views on the current security situation and challenges in the MD region. The Military Committee, comprising the Chiefs of Defence, agrees to revitalise the forum of the Mediterranean Dialogue in order to enhance mutual understanding, practical cooperation and interoperability

- 18-19 March, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: The NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division organises a visit to NATO Headquarters for a group from the Sultan Qaboos University, as part of NATO's public diplomacy activities under the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Topics discussed include NATO's new Strategic Concept and Partnership with Gulf States; Military Cooperation in the Framework of ICI; NATO-Russia relations; NATO's Outreach to the Middle East and the Gulf Region; new emerging security challenges; NATO's Anti-Piracy Operation; NATO's Operation in Afghanistan; and NATO's Science for Peace and Security Programme.

- 21 March, NATO HQ, Brussels: An inter-ministerial delegation from the State of Qatar visits NATO to discuss the development of an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP). The group meets with Mr. Nicola de Santis, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Countries Section and senior officials from various divisions to discuss details of future cooperation.

- 1-2 April, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: NATO Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting focuses on the Ukraine crisis and the Alliance's review of its relations with Russia, but also on the preparation of the NATO Wales Summit. In this framework, NATO Foreign Ministers

meet with their counterparts from ICI partners: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. This is the first meeting at Foreign Minister level with the ICI countries since the official launch of this initiative at the NATO Summit in Istanbul in June 2004. Over the past decade, dialogue and cooperation have intensified and Gulf partners have contributed to some NATO-led operations (the last one being Operation Unified Protector in Libya in 2011). Ministers discuss how to improve political dialogue and practical cooperation as well as how to tailor cooperation according to Gulf Countries' specific needs.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/events_108401.htm

- 3 April, Egypt: NATO and Egypt recently completed a two-year project developed under the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme to introduce advanced detection systems suitable for demining in the Egyptian desert. Egypt is regarded as one of the most contaminated countries in the world in terms of the number of mines and explosive remnants of war scattered across its territory. Now that the project is completed the group of Egyptian Military Engineers will benefit from the advanced detection equipment, which will result in better, safer and faster demining of the mine-affected areas in Egypt

- 19 May, Rabat, Morocco: A NATO Science for Peace and Security information day focuses on cyber defence and other global security issues such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) resilience and civil emergency, gathering around 35 experts, scientists and Moroccan government officials to review existing projects and explore opportunities for further cooperation. Morocco and NATO recently signed an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP), which identifies opportunities for collaboration, especially in the fields of cyber defence, CBRN and energy security.

- 26 May, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: A group of officers from the Mauritanian military academy visit NATO Headquarters for a series of briefings and discussions with officials from the

Alliance's International Staff and International Military Staff. In the context of the 20th anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue, topics discussed include NATO's relations with Mauritania; the political and military cooperation under the MD; NATO's operations; and NATO's policies in the areas of emerging security challenges.

- 27 May, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: A group of high-level opinion leaders from Morocco visits the NATO HQ in the context of the MD's 20th Anniversary. The Moroccan civil society representatives are also briefed on the Alliance's transformation and its outreach to the Mediterranean and to the Middle East by Mr. Nicola de Santis, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Section.

- 2-4 June, Malta: The NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme supports the US German Marshall Fund and Malta MEDAC in organising the International Border Security Forum. The forum gathers more than 50 participants to discuss border security challenges in the Mediterranean Basin (eastern Libya, northern Mali, the Sinai Peninsula and Syria, provide safe havens for terrorist groups and other illicit actors). The event provides the occasion to discuss a wide range of issues, bringing together major stakeholders in border security from think tanks, academia, and public administration from the Mediterranean region, Europe and the US. It is also a platform for senior experts and government officials to debate and network in the spirit of building the international border security community.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_110614.htm

- 4-5 September, Newport, Wales: More than 60 world leaders attend the 2014 NATO summit, the first after the 2012 Chicago summit. NATO leaders have to cope with the greatest challenges to security since the end of the Cold War – not only Russia's aggression against Ukraine, but multiple threats in the Broader Middle East and Gulf regions. NATO Defence Ministers meet with 24 interoperable partners to discuss ways to improve practical cooperation. In the final Declaration the Heads of State and Government affirm

their concern on the deteriorating situation in Libya, calling all the parties to start an inclusive political dialogue and reaffirm their readiness to support the country with advice on defence and security institution building for Libya to adhere to the Mediterranean Dialogue framework. They underline the efforts made through Operation Unified Protector together with regional Arab partners. They reiterate their commitment to the MD and ICI and the principles that underpin them. The MD and ICI remain two complementary yet distinct partnership frameworks, looking to deepen political dialogue and practical cooperation in both fora, building on many years of steady progress. They remain open to welcoming new members from the Mediterranean and the Broader Middle East region to these frameworks. 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the MD and 10th anniversary of the ICI. The summit is the occasion to encourage MD and ICI partner countries to be proactive in taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by their partnership with NATO, as well as individual partnership and cooperation programmes.

Wales Summit Declaration:

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en

- 1 October, Amman, Jordan: Launching of National Cyber Defence Strategy in the framework of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme. It is the first of this kind in a partner country. It involves a joint team of cyber experts setting up cyber defence in Jordan to include the protection of key infrastructure such as electricity grids, dams, energy networks and more.
- 2-4 October, Catania, Italy: The NATO PA's annual GSM seminar is dedicated to assessing the security situation in Europe's southern neighbourhood. The seminar engages NATO members, partners, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) legislators as well as a range of observers and members of the press. The seminar focuses on several of the security challenges currently facing the region, including the conflict in Syria and Iraq, the threat posed by foreign fighters participating in those conflicts, the refugee crisis and

its implications for the immediate neighbourhood and the broader Mediterranean, the consequences of the recent war in Gaza and ongoing instability in Libya. The role Italy has played in coping with the growing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, including its humanitarian naval operation, Mare Nostrum, constitutes another central theme for the deliberations.

www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=3658

- 19 October, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: NATO deputy Secretary General Vershbow takes part in the Abu Dhabi Strategic Debate, speaking in favour of deepening NATO's partnership with countries in the Gulf. He also stresses that NATO and regional partners of the Gulf should intensify political dialogue and practical cooperation, working together to strengthen maritime security and further strengthen interoperability. He also addresses the danger that the terrorist organisation ISIL poses to the Middle East and beyond, including to NATO and EU Member States. Dealing with it requires a broad, multinational effort covering a range of different measures. On the occasion, NATO deputy SG expresses the need to intensify practical cooperation and political dialogue, and closer relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council are envisaged, as well as strengthening maritime security, considering that Gulf countries depend on the secure transport of their energy export and European NATO allies on Gulf energy supply.

- 17 November, La Hulpe, Belgium: NATO deputy SG Vershbow speaks at a conference on NATO-Israel Cooperation. He recalls the adoption of the Readiness Action Plan at the last Wales Summit and the need to improve interoperability. Considering the huge security challenge the region is facing, the MD is becoming more valuable than ever. It is in fact a unique multilateral forum where 28 NATO allies, Israel and key Arab countries sit together on a regular basis for ministerial, ambassadorial and also informal consultation.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_114789.htm?selectedLocale=en

- 8-10 December, Amman, Jordan: Jordan hosts a seminar marking the

20th anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue and gathering 28 Permanent Representatives to the North Atlantic Council and the Brussels-based ambassadors of the seven countries participating in the Partnership. The relationship has deepened over the last 20 years but the spread of ISIL in the Middle East region is presenting new security challenges requiring closer cooperation. There are three potential areas where this cooperation can grow stronger: NATO should improve its assistance in developing partner countries' own defence capacity and increasing the ability of Armed Forces to work together and deepen political consultations (both bilaterally and multilaterally).

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_115773.htm?selectedLocale=en

- 11 December, Doha, Qatar: A conference to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the ICI gathers 20 members of the Alliance and the ambassadors of the four partner countries. NATO SG Stoltenberg sets out three priorities for better cooperation: increasing cooperation between military forces; enhancing cooperation on maritime security, inviting Gulf Partners to join NATO's 'Ocean Shield' mission against piracy; and deepening political consultation both bilaterally and with the Gulf Cooperation Council. On the occasion, the SG mentions the suggestion received to broaden joint public diplomacy activities and include civil society representatives, academics, opinion makers and parliamentarians. The conference is also the occasion to discuss security challenges such as terrorism, maritime security and cyber security.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_115900.htm

- 15 December, Nouakchott, Mauritania: NATO Assistant SG Stamatopoulos meets with the Prime Minister of Mauritania to discuss the partnership between NATO and Mauritania. She also delivers a keynote speech at the NATO-Mauritania Conference to celebrate the MD's 20th Anniversary.

For further information:

Mediterranean Dialogue: www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52927.htm

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52956.htm

NATO PA Mediterranean Special Group: www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=743

2. OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

2014 marks two important events for the OSCE dialogue with its Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation (MPCs): firstly, the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the existing framework for cooperation between the OSCE and the Partners for Cooperation, the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG), 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 recognised 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 organisations, 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 (counter-terrorism, 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.

Mediterranean Contact Group

Under the 2014 Serbian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) six meetings are held and one joint meeting with Asian Partners. Different topics are tackled in these meetings such as: the importance of strengthening the dialogue between MPCs and Participating States in order to deal with the threats and challenges in the Mediterranean Region; the significance of Tunisia's new constitution and the role of ODIHR in elections

observation; the Syrian refugees' impact on Jordan and other States neighbouring Syria and the role of UNHCR in responding to the refugee influx; trafficking in human beings; migration and terrorism. The Joint meeting of Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups takes place on 17 October and is focused on "The role of women in building democracy" providing the opportunity for an update on recent progress achieved by Participating States and Partners in promoting the active participation of women in public affairs. In 2015 the group will be chaired by Germany.

23rd Annual Session of the OSCE PA

- 28 June – 2 July, Baku (Azerbaijan): Nearly 300 MPs from more than 50 OSCE participating States gather at the Parliamentary dimension of the OSCE to assess developments and challenges relating to security and cooperation, in particular at "Helsinki +40: Towards Human Security For All." Their views and policy recommendations in the fields of political affairs, security, economics, the environment and human rights are offered to the OSCE ministers for the next OSCE Ministerial Council. Among the resolutions issued in the Declaration, participants consider the humanitarian consequences of the Mediterranean crises, the situation of refugees in the OSCE area, the tragic events off the coast of Lampedusa and call for stronger dialogue among the countries of origin and transit, developing cooperation and committing to a solidarity policy on asylum. The 23rd Annual Session also features a special debate on "The Rise of Extremism, Radicalism and Xenophobia: Challenges for the OSCE Region" as well as a debate on the situation in Ukraine. In the Baku Declaration, parliamentarians reiterate their commitment to engage OSCE Mediterranean partners in the PA's work in all three dimensions and commend Tunisia on the adoption of the new Constitution.

www.oscepa.org/publications/all-documents/annual-sessions/2014-baku/declaration-2/2540-2014-baku-declaration-eng/file

Workshop on “Preventing and responding to terrorist kidnapping and hostage-taking”

- 16-17 September, La Valletta (Malta): The OSCE and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) organises a workshop bringing together experts from across the Mediterranean region and beyond, to exchange information and good practices, and strengthen cooperation in order to better prevent and thwart kidnappings and hostage-taking in the region. Terrorist organisations have been increasingly involved in kidnapping for ransom and political concessions particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, the Sahel and the Mediterranean region. The ransom profits allow terrorist and criminal organisations to grow, recruit persons or buy weapons, thereby also impacting the security of these regions. The workshop is also aimed at enhancing national regional and international cooperation in tracking the flows of money that finance terrorists, through financial investigations as well as through appropriate responses and prevention.

www.osce.org/secretariat/123603

International seminar “Towards Helsinki +40”

- 18 September, Rome (Italy): An international seminar “Towards ‘Helsinki +40,’ the OSCE, the Global Mediterranean, and the Future of Cooperative Security,” is convened at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the aim of fostering a discussion about the prospects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation from a politico-security, economic, environmental, and human perspective. The seminar addresses the specific question of how the OSCE, in synergy with other international actors, can help promote a cooperative approach to Mediterranean security. During the meeting a network of think-tanks and academic institutions is formally launched, whose goal is to identify areas in which new practical cooperation can be developed between OSCE and Mediterranean partners.

www.osce.org/networks/123434

www.osce.org/secretariat/123631

For further information on the Helsinki +40 Process: www.osce.org/cio/110111

2014 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Autumn Meeting - Mediterranean Forum

- 3 October, Geneva (Switzerland): The Mediterranean Forum is held in the framework of the OSCE PA Autumn Meeting under the theme “Facing Current Challenges to Security in the Mediterranean Region: the OSCE Model.” It brings together the members of the OSCE PA Participating States and the MPCs once a year, providing a platform for discussion on the Mediterranean region’s political challenges. The debate focuses on how the OSCE model can best cooperate with Mediterranean partners in order to address instability and conflict in the region. The main issues tackled are: the growing threat represented by ISIS to the OSCE area; the mass influx of refugees; the inadequate international response to the Syrian Conflict; and the urgency to support Libya’s application for Partner State Status.

2014 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

- 27-28 October, Neum (Bosnia and Herzegovina): The Conference gathers representatives of the OSCE Participating States, the OSCE MPCs, international organisations and NGOs to discuss the topic “*Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons and Fight against Terrorism in the Mediterranean Region.*” The proliferation of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) constitutes a grave threat to global security, fuelling conflicts, preventing lasting peace and socio-economic development in conflict-inflicted regions. Participants tackle this topic also considering routes and modalities of illicit trafficking: the Mediterranean region provides the route for much of the illicit trafficking of SALW. The spread of transnational terrorism, growing porosity of borders, the spreading of violence in some southern Mediterranean countries is further cause for the OSCE to actively engage MPCs in order to find a common-oriented action approach. Participants also share experiences on issues related to counter-terrorism and

de-radicalisation and rehabilitation of Foreign Fighters. Another session is devoted to enhancing the role of women in public, political and economic life as a follow-up to the 2013 Mediterranean Conference.

www.osce.org/networks/135276

58th Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent Council

- 27 November, Vienna: During the meeting, Jihadist terrorism is dealt with as the major transnational threat against the Mediterranean region where police cooperation between states is essential to confront this threat. Particular emphasis is placed on the need to identify those methods being employed to recruit Europeans to the ranks of this Jihadist DAESH, along with their ‘modus operandi’ to infiltrate into Europe. Another issue tackled is the fight against smugglers and networks of human trafficking as well as drug trafficking between opposite shores of the Mediterranean.

www.osce.org/fsc/128741

21th OSCE Ministerial Council

- 4-5 Basel (Switzerland): This year the OSCE Ministerial Council is focused on the crisis in Ukraine. The Ministerial Council finally adopts 17 declarations and decisions that comprehensively cover all three OSCE security dimensions. The Foreign Ministers of the Participating States agree also on the Declaration on the OSCE’s role in countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. This document, together with the declaration on countering kidnapping and hostage-taking committed by terrorist groups, should be regarded as an important factor in the fight against ISIS. MPCs participate in the council as observers. The Mediterranean should be kept on the OSCE Agenda in 2015 and should consider the events occurring in the Middle East and in North Africa, especially in Libya, which threaten the OSCE region’s security. OSCE Foreign Affairs Ministers also adopt a declaration concerning the cooperation with Mediterranean Partners in which they underline the inextricable link between secu-

ity in the OSCE and adjacent areas. In this perspective, the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership needs to be strengthened and tailored to address common challenges like terrorism, organised crime and trafficking in human beings, but also gender equality and energy security. Cooperation should also be strengthened in order to enhance freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, prevent intolerance, violence and discrimination etc. The declaration is also the occasion to reaffirm the OSCE's readiness to support MPCs in accordance with their needs and priorities and to encourage them to make the best use of OSCE principles and commitments. The next Ministerial Council will be held in Belgrade at the end of 2015.

www.osce.org/event/mc_2014

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 capitalise 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 2014

Health

During the 10th Foreign Affairs Meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue held in Nouakchott in 2013, emphasis is placed on the importance of deepening the dialogue on health issues. In this regard the Moroccan Ministry of Health, with the support of the Institut de Prospective Economique du Monde Méditerranéen (IPEMED), launches the Technical Working Group "Health in the Western Mediterranean" to hold a dialogue on health between the "5+5 countries" and in order to identify areas of collaboration (as both shores face common challenges that need a global reflection and answer). The final aim is to develop a common policy on Health in the Western Mediterranean. The first areas identified for collaboration are pharmacovigilance as well as health coverage and pharmaceutical biotechnology. The Technical Working group holds two meetings in 2014 (on 17 January and 26 November), both of which take place in Rabat.

www.ipemed.coop/fr/-r16/sante-c142/

Water

Taking into account the importance of water and its scarcity in the Mediterranean region, Spain and Algeria decide to promote a series of seminars within the 5+5 framework in order to develop a water strategy for the western Mediterranean. The aim is to promote sustainable water use at local, regional and national levels, through the adoption of cross-cutting goals, management criteria and objectives in order to harmonise water policies in the Mediterranean. This harmonisation will help to prevent conflicts, promote co-development and the human right to water and sanitation. In this context, three workshops are held during the year.

- 25-26 February, Valence (Spain): The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs points out the need to address the risks and challenges relating to water through three fundamental approaches: peace and security; development; and human rights.

- 25-26 June, Oran (Algeria): 2nd Workshop of the Water Expert Group of the 5+5 Dialogue. At the end of the meeting they provide a preliminary draft for the 5+5 Water Strategy and agree to intensify their contacts by creating a network of focal points in charge of water issues.

- 9-10 September, Valence (Spain): The 3rd Workshop to elaborate Water Strategy is held together with the steering committee of the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System (EMWIS). Valence – Concept Note

www.semide.net/media_server/files/semide/thematicdirs/news/2014/03/5-5-water-strategy-western-mediterranean.-1sr-workshop.-valencia-25th-26th/ConceptNote_WSWM.pdf

Oran Declaration

www.semide.net/media_server/files/semide/thematicdirs/news/2014/06/5-5-water-strategy-western-mediterranean-2nd-workshop-oran-algeria-25-26-06-2014/DecalationOran26juin2014.docx

Parliamentary Dimension

The Parliamentary Dimension of the 5+5 Dialogue is entrusted to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which coordinates and promotes the activities of this important sub-regional parliamentary forum. PAM, moreover, represents itself at ministerial meetings and Heads of State and Government Summits of the 5+5 Dialogue, as well as special events of this initiative, such as dedicated military exercises.

- 20 May, Lisbon (Portugal): The 5th High Level Meeting of the National Parliaments of the Western Mediterranean Cooperation (5+5 Dialogue) takes place on the occasion of the 11th Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers. National parliamentary delegations from the 5+5 Dialogue Member States, PAM and other invited representatives from relevant regional parliamentary

institutions, address the main issues on the table from the parliamentary perspective in the sectors of regional security, economic growth, climate change and the protection of victims of human trafficking and the fight against organised crime. They reaffirm the fundamental role of the parliaments in the 5+5 Dialogue since these are best placed to respond to political and economic challenges and to deepen integration.

Economic Forum

- 21 May, Lisbon (Portugal): The 2nd Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean “Towards a strengthened regional economic integration” brings together more than 400 business leaders and high-level representatives of major enterprises and economic institutions from the 5+5 countries. The Portuguese deputy Prime Minister reaffirms Portugal’s full support for this informal but dynamic and efficient process and stresses the importance of the UfM’s role for its consolidation. The central theme of the event is Sustainable Development and it is structured around four strategic pillars: water, environment, infrastructure and financing. The forum provides a space for reflection and discussion on each country’s economic challenges and the opportunities for cooperation in joint projects or initiatives

Foreign Affairs

- 22 May, Lisbon (Portugal): The 11th Foreign Affairs Meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue takes place under the Portuguese and Mauritanian Co-Presidency and provides the opportunity to discuss different regional issues, set a series of objectives and assess the work carried out so far. Ministers consider the 5+5 Dialogue a paradigmatic framework for political dialogue and cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean. This cooperation has to be inspired by the democratic principles spreading in the region. They praise Tunisia’s adoption of a new Constitution and express their concern for the situation in Libya. On regional Security they agree to enhance strategic and

regional cooperation to fight terrorism through judicial cooperation and intelligence exchange. The situation in Sahel with the proliferation of international illicit networks; the degradation of the situation in Mali; the ongoing violence in Syria; the development of the Peace Process in the Middle East; and the need for a global approach to tackle migration in the Mediterranean are other topics linked with security and discussed by Ministers. Economic and Social development are also on the agenda. Ministers reaffirm the need to promote investments and trade and develop infrastructures, and facilitate the exchange of expertise and human exchange between the two shores. The Foreign Affairs meeting is the occasion to review the work carried out so far on the different sectors of the 5+5 Dialogue: Environment, Water, Energy, Climate Change, Defence, Transport, Education and Tourism. Besides these sectors, new perspectives are envisaged: Health, Culture, Trade and Investments. Finally they underline the importance of strengthening complementarity between the Dialogue and the UfM.

Final Declaration:

http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/D%C3%A9claration5+5_Lisbonne.pdf

Transport

The 5+5 Dialogue on Transport brings together the GTMO 5+5 - the Transport Group of the Western Mediterranean. Ministers of the 10 countries of the western Mediterranean participate as members while the EC Directorate General for Mobility and Transport and the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) attend as observers. CETMO performs the function of Technical Secretariat. Operational cooperation with UfM has been consolidated since 2013.

- 22 October, Lisbon (Portugal): The Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean gather for the 8th Conference of the GTMO 5+5. Ministers agree to intensify their efforts to complete the Central Section of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis project (the

first example of effective operational collaboration between GTMO 5+5 and the UfM). This project will generate a positive impact on regional and international levels because it will increase the mobility of persons and international freight flows. The next conference will be organised in 2016 by Mauritania.

Final Declaration:

www.cetmo.org/pdf/Conclusions%20GTMO%205+5%20Lisbonne.pdf

Education

- 27-28 October, Marseille (France): Following the recommendation made during the 5+5 Dialogue Foreign Affairs Meeting in Lisbon, the Education/Vocational Training Ministers of the ten countries of the western Mediterranean gather under the Moroccan and Portuguese Co-Presidency. There are many different challenges, which vary between countries but which are often shared: low participation and employment rates, inadequate correlation between education and employment, high school or vocational training drop-out rates and a lack of vocationally-oriented higher education. The Ministers of Education express their willingness to: develop vocational education and training and align it with the economic and labour market demand; promote a better match between training provision and business needs; promote the social inclusion of young people; improve the efficiency of vocational education and training systems; propose new governance models and public practices; and establish avenues for the mutual recognition of qualifications of each country by all the others. They identify three objectives to be achieved: improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training; secure and facilitate young people’s training programmes; and take better account of business needs in vocational education and training. In this perspective, they identify some priority occupational sectors: Automobile and aircraft maintenance, Mechanics and mechatronics; Digital professions; Building and public works; Tourism, hotels and catering; Transport; Energy

and mining industries; Agriculture and agri-food businesses; Environment and sustainable development; and the Maritime sector. A concrete Action Plan for 2015-2016 is also signed, whose aim is to promote mobility and improve the comparability of systems by establishing a Euro-Mediterranean competence framework, which should help increase the employability of young people in the Mediterranean region. Some of the Action Plan priority axes are to establish a Euro-Mediterranean competence assessment framework, to favour the use of digital media to create a EURO MED PASS, a 'passport' to enhance mobility. The next 5+5 Education meeting will take place in Mauritania in 2016. Meanwhile, an expert group will be responsible for implementing these recommendations, and in 2015 a conference will be held as a forum for reflection and dialogue and to propose initiatives.

Final Declaration:

www.dimed.gouv.fr/sites/dimed.gouv.fr/files/declaration_finale_version_en.pdf

Tourism

- 3 December, Lisbon (Portugal): The ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue and representatives from the UfM and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) gather and recognise the strategic role played by the tourism sector in the socio-economic development of the western Mediterranean countries. In this perspective, a common approach to enhance tourism cooperation is necessary. They acknowledge the importance of training and qualifications for human capital, as well as the need for an evaluation of the services and performances in the field of tourism. To this end, they decide to share their common experience and heritage as well as best practises. The fourth Ministerial conference on tourism will take place in Morocco in 2016.

Final Declaration:

www.turismodeportugal.pt/Portugu%C3%AAs/turismodeportugal/destaque/Documents/Declaracao-de-Lisboa-3-12-2014.pdf

Defence

The '5+5 Defence Initiative' was set up in 2004 after a Declaration of Intent was signed to foster mutual knowledge about Member States, strengthen understanding and confidence between them and develop multilateral cooperation with a view to promoting security in the Western Mediterranean. The presidency is held on a rotating basis for one year, during which time that country is responsible for organising the forums for developing the proposals made in the annual Action Plan and the ministerial meeting, while defining the strategic directives for forthcoming activities. In 2014, Spain holds the Chairmanship of the Initiative. Practical activities focus on three areas: maritime security, aviation security and participation by armed forces in support of civil protection.

- 10-11 December, Granada (Spain): The Ministerial Meeting on cooperation, security and defence of the 5+5 Defence Initiative focuses, among other themes, on security in the western Mediterranean area and regional crisis scenarios, in particular Libya, Iraq and Syria. The Ministers discuss major threats such as terrorism and illegal trafficking and issues connected with migration flows and humanitarian crises such as natural disasters and healthcare emergencies. Furthermore, Defence Ministers reiterate the value of the 5+5 Initiative as a discussion forum given the concrete contribution it provides to the sectors of maritime surveillance, airspace security and Armed Forces' aid to civil protection operations, education and training. Ministers also sign a joint declaration to further develop multilateral cooperation and convert the western Mediterranean into a privileged forum of confidence and security. They approve the 2015 Action Plan and agree to implement a coordination mechanism for issuing instructions to tackle the management of natural disasters and emergencies, as well as during any healthcare activities carried out with affected populations, and the development of an operational Coordination and Planning Centre for armed forces support for civil protection. For 2015, the Chairmanship hands over to Tunisia.

www.defensa.gob.es/5mas5/es/

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 started in June 2013 and ended in May 2014 and Slovenia takes over from June 2014 until May 2015.

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 East-side coastal Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), even if with different time-frames and conditions, are gradually approaching the EU within the Stabilisation and Association Process framework, as a prelude to future EU membership.

Main Activities under the Albanian Chairmanship

Albania took over the All presidency in June 2013 in a very special moment for relations between Member States and for All relations with the European Union. A discussion started within the EU on the adoption of an Adriatic-Ionian Macro Regional strategy has reached a crucial stage.

- 6 February, Athens (Greece): 16th Adriatic and Ionian Council: a special meeting of the AIC is convened by the Albanian Chairmanship, unscheduled in the regular calendar, in order to stress the support of the eight All Governments to the EUSAIR process.

The Special meeting of the AI Council offers the opportunity to take stock of the intergovernmental activity of the first part of the Albanian Presidency and enables a discussion to be held at Ministerial level on the preparation of the final phase of the macro regional process. An Action Plan will be adopted in the second half of the year.

Athens Declaration: www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/161-xvi-adriatic-ionic-council-athens-2014

- 27-28 April, Tirana (Albania): 12th Conference of All Parliament Speakers organised into two sessions: Driving closer towards the EU and Promoting sustainable Economic and Social prosperity of the All Region. In the Joint Statement approved at the end of the conference, they decide to set up ad hoc Parliamentary Representations to follow the work of All and the Progress of the EUSAIR, they also commit themselves to closely following the EUSAIR in the final phase of the process and in the implementation phase starting early in 2015.

Tirana Statement: www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/169-xii-conference-speakers-parliaments-tirana

- 13 May, Brussels (Belgium): The 17th AIC Adriatic Ionian Council marks the end of a successful Albanian Chairmanship and hands it over to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the final Declaration, ministers confirm that the goal of regional cooperation in the Adriatic Ionian basin is fostering stability and growth and paving the way to the EU integration of the candidate and potential candidate countries in the region; they are also convinced that the EUSAIR will give new impetus for cooperation and investment to the benefit of all involved and to the peace and security of the entire area; they recognise the crucial importance of cooperation with the EU commission and invite the Participating States to continue raising awareness among internal stakeholders and representatives of the Adriatic Ionian civil society to give their contribution to the activities within the All and the EUSAIR.

Brussels Declaration: www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/170-xvii-aic-held-brussels-secretary-general

Main Activities under the Bosnia and Herzegovinian 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 West Balkan region in order to come closer to the EU through the EUSAIR, which should provide an adequate framework to this end. The roundtables will be organised according to the EUSAIR pillars. The period of its Presidency, coinciding with the first semester of the Italian Presidency of the EU and with the approval of the Strategy by the European Council by the end of the year, will be of particular significance and crucial for the future developments of the Adriatic and Ionian macro region.

- 17 June, Sarajevo (BiH): At the first Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting the new Chairman presents the programme and the priorities of the Chairmanship that this year are also strictly linked with the EUSAIR priority pillars. Attention is also given to the damages and the consequences of the

catastrophic floods that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. All All Countries have given support and solidarity in different forms to the people of the Region.

- 23-24 October, Brussels (Belgium): In the European Council Conclusions, the Heads of State and Government of the 28 Member States of the European Union adopted the "EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region" (EUSAIR) asking "all relevant actors" to implement it without delay. The new strategy benefits from: the long experience of the All which fosters cooperation at the level of civil society (Chambers of Commerce, Cities, Universities); the Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas adopted in November 2012; the coincidence of the programming period 2014-2020; the lessons learned from the already existing macro-regional strategies. The EUSAIR will address major challenges of the region through its four-pillar architecture focusing on: Blue Growth, aimed at boosting marine and maritime innovations; Connecting the Region, aimed at improving connectivity in terms of transport and energy; Environmental quality, focused on coastal and marine biodiversity; and Sustainable Tourism.

Council Conclusions: www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/182-eusair-adopted-council

5. 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 ses-

sion 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 is the Egyptian Nabil el-Araby, who succeeded Amr Moussa.

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 during 2014

25th Arab League Summit

- 25-26 March, Kuwait City (Kuwait): The 25th Arab League Summit starts with polarisation among the participants. Part of the divide is due to the labelling or not of the Muslim Brotherhood as a 'terrorist Organisation.' Egypt and Saudi Arabia already do so, while Qatar, their regional sponsor, continues to support it. Syria is another point of divide as different members of the League support different sides in the civil war. Due to all these disagreements, the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates do not attend the summit. The Syrian seat at the summit also opens a discussion between those defending it should remain vacant for following events and those supporting the rebels and considering it should be filled by the opposition national coalition. In the final declaration, Arab leaders pledge to provide support to Arab countries undergoing political transformation and social shifts, reaffirm the Palestinian cause to be the core issue of all Arab and Muslim nations and refuse to recognise Israel as a Jewish state.

Kuwait Declaration:

www.da.gov.kw/eng/arab-league-summit-2014/kuwait-declaration.php

3rd European Union - League of Arab States Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting

- 10-11 June, Athens (Greece): The third European Union - League of Arab States Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting serves to adopt a 34-point joint declaration on cooperation between the two international organisations. The statement sets shared ideas on several current issues, most of them focusing on the MENA region. They agree to address common challenges together in security, political and socio-economic fields. More specifically, the Euro-Arab cooperation seeks to provide an integrated regional response to strategic challenges, to exchange views on political and security matters, to prepare a humanitarian assistance plan on crisis situations, to face terrorist threats (including acting against radicalisation, recruitment and foreign fighters) and combating transnational organised crime. They also stress the importance of implementing the 1995 NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), the role of civil society and free media in democratic process, and cooperation on human rights, environment, energy and business. In addition, they express their concern for the Middle East peace process – defining it as a strategic objective and vital for stability and international peace and security – the Syrian conflict, its internal situation and the refugee crisis, and the democratic process and state institution building in Libya.

Declaration: www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140611_03_en.pdf

1st Conference on Human Rights in the Arab Region: Challenges and the Way Forward

- 30 June, Cairo (Egypt): The conference is jointly organised by the UN Human Rights Office and the LAS, and is attended by some government representatives, national human rights institutions and Arab civil society organisations. The principal goal is to develop a regional HR strategy. They identify the continuing HR violations as the main challenges to transitions to sustainable democracies in some of the countries. Nabil El Araby states that

discrimination and hate speech could be the root of many other political and social problems in Arab societies. Moreover, priorities are agreed to monitor those violations and focus on vulnerable groups, mainly women, refugees, IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), migrants and HR activists. Both organisations encourage delegates to take action, for instance, to protect individuals working on HR defence, and call on Arab civil society to engage to guarantee HR promotion, especially with regard to gender organisations and strengthening women's role in all areas. At the same time, they propose to strengthen mechanisms already established, such as the Arab HR Committee and the Arab Court for HR. It is decided to organise this conference regularly every two years in order to boost cooperation and enhance ties, so the next one would be in 2016, when it is planned to approve a joint strategy.

Further Information:

www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/AroadmapagreedforanArabregional-humanrightsstrategy.aspx

2nd Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

- 14-16 September, Sharm El Sheikh (Egypt): The UNISDR (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the LAS organised this intergovernmental high level conference attended by national delegations, ministers, senior government officials, city mayors, civil society representatives and scientific and academic institutions. Its aim is to review the commitment from the Arab countries to the advancement of DRR (disaster risk reduction) policies and the implementation of the HFA (Hyogo Framework for Action). The conference also provides an opportunity to generate stronger political commitment and investment in Arab countries in disaster risk management and sustainable management. This is the last inter-governmental meeting before the Third World Disaster Risk Reduction Conference to be organised in Japan in 2015.

www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/36370

6. Arab Maghreb Union

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) celebrates its 25th anniversary. Founded in 1989 in Marrakesh, 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 2014

- 17-18 February, Marrakesh (Morocco): The AMU countries and its Secretary General, Habib Ben Yahia, participate in the 3rd Forum of Maghrebi Entrepreneurs organised by the Moroccan General Business Federation (Confédération générale des entreprises du Maroc, CGEM), presided by the Maghrebi Entrepreneurs' Union (Union maghrébine des entrepreneurs, UME). The forum's aim, among other things, is to stimulate economic integration in the

AMU and foster intra-Maghrebi commerce by accelerating the implementation of the Maghrebi Integrated Economic Area and creating a favourable legal climate in AMU countries. The forum likewise emphasised the need to strengthen the legal and organisational dimensions of the Entrepreneurs' Union. With regard to boosting partnerships, they decide to hold a meeting of the Entrepreneurs' Union with the EU delegation in order to study means of cooperation, partnership and support between the two institutions.

Marrakesh Statement

www.maghrebarabe.org/fr/communiqués.cfm?id=123 (in French and Arabic)

- 9-10 May, Rabat (Morocco): The 32nd Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of AMU Countries is held in a particular context marked by security, political and economic challenges requiring a global approach to handle them and foster stability in the region. The Ministers insist on the need to get out of the deadlock situation and fulfil the aspirations of the region's people. They call for the launching of the Maghrebi Investment and Foreign Trade Bank. The Ministers also agree to hold the 7th session of the AMU Presidency Council in Tunisia in coordination with Libya, who will hold the AMU's rotating presidency (in the end, the meeting was never held).

- 23-27 June, Rabat (Morocco): The AMU Secretariat General holds coordination meetings with the regional ensemble and other international organisations (including, among others, the WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, the ILO, the EU and the EIB) to define priority lines of action for regional integration and raise awareness of all the projects being carried out in the Maghreb in the economic, legal, food, energy and environmental spheres, among others. As part of the UN-fostered Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), these meetings seek to establish a support system for the AMU and a coordination mechanism between the Union and its development partners in order to combine efforts.

www.maghrebarabe.org/fr/communiqués.cfm?id=128 (in French and Arabic)

- 8 December, Rabat (Morocco): The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the AMU Secretary General sign a joint programme to relaunch cooperation on food security. They specify a series of goals to attain within four years regarding improved performance in the agricultural sector, sustainable management of natural resources, protection of agrifood systems against natural disasters and Maghreb economic integration.

www.maghrebarabe.org/fr/communiqués.cfm?id=134 (in French and Arabic)

7. The 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 organisations (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, following France, the US and the UK. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is currently managing the action to coordinate the IFIs and Development banks. The key events of the Partnerships are the annual meetings of Foreign Ministers and of Finance

Ministers. The priorities of this initiative are supporting SMEs, strengthening the legal framework, promoting investments and improving opportunities for women.

Main events during 2014

- 25 September, New York (USA): The 4th Ministerial Meeting of the G7 Deauville Partnership takes place on the margins of the UN General Assembly. Ministers recognise that Arab countries in transition are facing huge challenges and that political tension and instability in the broader region is a major obstacle towards its economic and social development. They condemn all terrorist acts committed by the Islamic State terrorist organisation in Syria and Iraq. They call for an immediate political settlement in Syria and Libya. In this sense, ministers reaffirm that the aim of the initiative is to assist the Arab countries in consolidating democracy, rule of law, human rights, developing institutions and building an inclusive society. They reconfirm that the assistance should be demand-led according to the priorities set by Arab countries. They also agree to seek greater civil society and private sector involvement.

German Chair's Statement:

www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/705254/publicationFile/197708/140926_Statement.pdf

- 9 October, Washington (USA): Finance Ministers and IFIs of the Deauville Partnerships gather to confirm their commitment to give support to Arab countries in transition in their reform agenda. They agree that in order to tackle challenges like unemployment, labour force inactivity and socioeconomic imbalances, it is necessary to enhance economic stability, foster sustainable and inclusive growth and increase economic opportunities for women and young people. They set four priorities: to acknowledge the importance of sound public finances and structural reforms; promote the efficient division of labour among partners and coordinate among donors; support financial inclusion, financial literacy and responsible finance; and enhance the MENA Transitional Fund's efficiency and impact.

Chair Statement:

www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/EN/Standardartikel/Topics/International_affairs/G7/Articles/2014-10-10-chair%20statement.html

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.

- 16 April, Alicante (Spain): The Foreign ministers of the Mediterranean Group gather for the first time and discuss the European Neighbourhood Policy with particular focus on the Southern neighbourhood, the role of the UfM and the challenges associated to migratory flows. Ministers restate their political support of the UfM, reinforcing its role as a platform for coordination with other institutions and instruments of economic diplomacy. On the issue of migration, ministers express the need to continue to make major efforts considering that migration pressure is far from diminishing due to the instability and poverty in the countries of origin. Ministers consider that the efforts carried out by EU Mediterranean countries are a benefit for the entire European Union. These challenges need to be addressed comprehensively through both short and long-term measures involving both the European Union and third countries.

Declaration of the Mediterranean Group:

www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/Sala-DePrensa/NotasdePrensa/Paginas/NOTAS_P_2014/20140416_NOTA101.aspx