

## Chronologies

# Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

## 1. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

In order to extend security and stability on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, NATO launched the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) in 1994, which aims to promote good relations and mutual understanding among the participating countries. The initial Southern partners adhering to the initiative were Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt and Israel, who were later joined by Jordan in 1995 and Algeria in 2000.

The main principles of the Mediterranean Dialogue are: self-differentiation and non-discrimination, progressiveness in terms of participants and of political and practical dimensions, mutual benefit, and complementarity with other international security organisations. It has both political and practical dimensions. Bilateral political consultations (NATO+1) are regularly held and provide a chance for sharing views on a wide range of issues. Meetings in the NATO+7 format (multilateral format) are usually held after NATO summits and other major NATO events. The practical dimension includes seminars, workshops and practical activities in the field of modernising armed forces, civil emergency planning, border security, crisis management, scientific and environmental cooperation and NATO/PfP military exercises. In 2004, the Dialogue was upgraded to 'genuine Partnership' thus entailing an opportunity for MD partners to participate in selected military exercises, improving interoperability, share intelligence and contribute to military operations (Morocco and Israel participated in Operation Active Endeavour and Morocco contributed

forces to the stabilisation of Kosovo). Considering the changes experienced by the MENA region, a more tailored assistance is envisaged through Individual Partnership Cooperation Programmes.

In 2004, during the same summit that reformed the dialogue, NATO launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) after a series of high-level consultations between the NATO Secretary General (SG) and the GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Four countries have since joined the initiative: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The ICI is based on the premise that the security and stability of the Gulf region is of strategic interest to the Alliance. It essentially promotes practical cooperation on a bilateral basis. This initiative offers a menu of bilateral activities in several areas of cooperation, including: tailored advice on defence transformation, budgeting and planning; military-to-military cooperation to attain interoperability; and participation in NATO PfP exercises and NATO-led operations (in Afghanistan and Libya, where Qatar and the UAE contributed air assets). Since 2004, significant progress has also been made in the political dimension of the initiative with the partner countries. The first NAC+4 meeting was held in November 2008; it was followed by other such meetings in the following years. Additional high-level political consultations took place in the framework of the ICI, in order to discuss ways to deepen the ICI partnership ahead of the NATO Chicago Summit in 2012. Furthermore, issue-specific meetings – such as on anti-piracy, military cooperation or

education – have taken place with the participation of Saudi Arabia and Oman. Public Diplomacy represents an important element of the ICI, which has been regularly underlined by ICI nations. High visibility events gave way to informal discussions on security related issues of common interest. The ICI Ambassadorial Conferences in Kuwait (2006), Bahrain (2008), the United Arab Emirates (2009) and Qatar (2011) focused on discussing and addressing the perception of NATO in the Gulf, as well as ways to develop the NATO-ICI partnership in its two dimensions.

It is worth mentioning the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) which gathers parliamentarians from all the 28 Member States of the Alliance and 14 Associates to discuss security and defence issues. The increasing attention to security in the Mediterranean region gave rise to the creation of the Assembly's Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM), a forum for cooperation and discussion with parliamentarians from the MENA region focused on political, economic, social and security issues. The GSM was launched in 1996 as a formal mechanism to address regional challenges, and engage leaders from the region in constructive dialogue. The GSM conducts two annual seminars, bringing together parliamentarians from NATO countries and their counterparts in the region to explore specific topics and discuss the annual GSM Report. GSM seminars and reports cover a broad range of issues, including: security-related matters pertaining to the Mediterranean Area, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula; practical security cooperation among NATO

member countries and their partners; developments in MD and ICI partnerships; the dynamics of political change in the region and its potential economic, social and security implications; religion and cultural forces; and common challenges, including: energy security, migration, the environment and economic development. In 2005, the Standing Committee created the new status of Mediterranean Associate Members, opening the door for increased cooperation with MENA parliaments. The new status was soon granted to Morocco, Algeria, Israel and Jordan. Reflecting the increased strategic importance of the Gulf region and following the launch of NATO's ICI in 2004, the NATO PA has also started establishing links with parliamentary institutions and advisory councils in countries of the Gulf region. Invitations to Mediterranean seminars are also extended on an ad hoc basis to Cyprus, Malta, and other parliaments in North Africa and the Middle East (such as Palestine).

#### *Main Events in 2013*

- 29-30 January, NATO HQ, Brussels (Belgium): An Algerian delegation from the Follow-up Committee for the Mediterranean Dialogue, including representatives from several ministries, visits NATO Headquarters for discussions with officials from the Alliance's International Staff and International Military Staff. The discussions focus on political and practical cooperation between NATO and Algeria in the framework of the MD; the development of an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between NATO and Algeria; NATO's scientific cooperation with MD partners; and opportunities for cooperation in the fields of crisis management, civil emergency planning, counter-terrorism, border security, arms control, training and education, energy security and cyber defence.
- 5 March, NATO HQ, Brussels: Morocco's Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr Amrani is welcomed by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Vershbow. The Deputy SG and Mr. Amrani discuss NATO-Morocco relations and the state of play within the Alliance's MD.
- 21-22 March, NATO HQ, Brussels: the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division organises a visit to NATO Headquarters for a group of Bahraini diplomats, as part of NATO's public diplomacy activities under the ICI. Topics discussed include NATO's new Strategic Concept and NATO's outreach to the Middle East and the Gulf region; NATO's military cooperation in the framework of the ICI; NATO-Russia relations, NATO's operations in Afghanistan and Ocean Shield; NATO's Civil Emergency Planning and new emerging security challenges.
- 3 April, Marrakech: a NATO Parliamentary Assembly Seminar is organised in collaboration with the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors of Morocco, and supported by the Swiss Government. Entitled "Political and Security Changes in North Africa: Implications for Peace and Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean and Transatlantic Regions." The seminar engages parliamentarians from 25 NATO member and partner countries as well as legislators from Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, including in the discussions a number of leading experts, government officials, representatives of international organisations and members of the diplomatic community. Taking stock of the unprecedented change in the Mediterranean and broader Middle East, discussions focus on NATO's future engagement with the countries in the wider region.
- 11-12 April, NATO HQ, Brussels: A group of Mauritanian officers visits NATO Headquarters for a series of briefings and discussions with officials from the Alliance's International Staff, and International Military Staff. Topics discussed include NATO's Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme with Mauritania; military cooperation under the MD; NATO's role in the fight against terrorism, NATO's operations; as well as opportunities of cooperation in the areas of civil emergency planning, border security, and training and education.
- 6-10 May, NATO Defence College (NDC), Rome: Hosting of the Generals, Flag Officers and Ambassadors' Course (GFOAC 2013-1). The Course is attended by Generals, Flag Officers, Ambassadors and other high-ranking civilians from countries within NATO, the Partnership for Peace, the MD and the ICI, as well as by representatives of Global Partners. The programme's theme is "Leading NATO into the Future," focusing on the challenges that the Alliance faces in the current shifting international environment and on emerging challenges likely to become increasingly important for NATO members and partner countries. The programme encompasses several aspects of fundamental significance for the Alliance, such as NATO after Chicago, the importance of the transatlantic link and the changing character of warfare.
- 7 May, NATO HQ, Brussels: A group of officials and opinion makers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia meet as part of NATO's public diplomacy activities under the ICI. Topics discussed include NATO's outreach to the Middle East and the Gulf region; NATO's military cooperation in the framework of the ICI; NATO's Civil Emergency Planning, NATO's Operation and NATO's Armaments Cooperation. The group also holds meetings with the US Deputy Permanent Representative and with the Permanent Representative of Turkey on the North Atlantic Council.
- 5 September, NATO HQ, Brussels: An inter-ministerial delegation from the State of Kuwait visits NATO HQ to present and discuss the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) between NATO and Kuwait. The delegation also receives briefings on NATO's cooperation with ICI countries and the broader Middle East and on Military Cooperation in the Framework of the ICI, as well as Civil Emergency Planning and Crisis Management.
- 1-4 October, Amman: A NATO military delegation headed by the Chairman of the Military Committee, General Bartels, visits Jordan. Speaking at the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) General HQ, Gen. Bartels thanks the country for its commitment and support for partnership activities in cooperation with NATO. He commends Jordan's high level of ambition for cooperation with NATO: practical military-to-military cooperation is at unprecedented levels and besides cooperation in missions it covers exercises, academic exchange and interoperability of forces. Gen. Bartels agrees

with Gen. Al-Zaben to deepening regular consultations between NATO and Jordan on interoperability and exchanging views on the perspectives on the regional security situation. Gen. Bartels also delivers a speech at the JAF's Royal National Defence College, where the audience, consisting of senior officers and officials from Jordan and the wider region, engage him in discussions on regional developments and challenges, including Syria.

- 22 October, Dubai: An International Conference is co-organised by NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy Division and the American University in the Emirates as part of NATO's public diplomacy activities with countries invited from the ICI. The conference concerns the lessons learned from NATO's approach to Gulf Cooperation and future related challenges. Discussions focus on three different panels: regional security cooperation; piracy and maritime cooperation; and NATO's approach to Gulf cooperation. This two-day conference concludes with remarks summarising the panel discussions and agreements and indicating possible ways and means to improve the ICI as well as the security of the Gulf region.

- 25 November, Rome (Italy): 10th Joint GSM/ESCTD Annual Seminar. The Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA) discusses a range of issues affecting Mediterranean states, the broader Middle East, and the Sahel with assembled panels of regional experts. The seminar is hosted by the Italian delegation to the NATO PA and chaired by delegation head, Federica Mogherini. Syria's civil war and its devastating effects on the region is a central theme, and its central messages resonate throughout the seminar – the increasing burdens from refugee flows, the potential for conflict spill-over, the prospects for Syrian state failure and the attendant security vacuum, the radicalisation of the rebel forces, etc. Middle Eastern parliamentarians repeatedly call for NATO to: alleviate the pressures of refugee flows upon Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey; help negotiate a cease-fire; and, encourage all sides to find a durable political solution to the conflict.

For further information:

Mediterranean Dialogue: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52927.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52927.htm)

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52956.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52956.htm)

NATO PA Mediterranean Special Group: [www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1917](http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1917)

## 2. Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in the OSCE

The OSCE has a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratisation, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities. All 57 participating states enjoy equal status, and decisions are taken by consensus on a politically, but not legally binding basis. The OSCE maintains special relations with six Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. This relationship goes back to the Helsinki Process and the Helsinki Final Act, which included a Mediterranean chapter stating that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole. This inter-linkage has been underscored in subsequent CSCE/OSCE documents, such as the Istanbul Charter for European Security and the Maastricht OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century. Permanent Council decision 571 decided to explore new avenues of co-operation and interaction and to explore the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments.

A number of meetings, conferences and special events provide a broad framework for regular contact: Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation participate as observers in the OSCE Ministerial Council Meetings and hold high-level meetings on the margins with the OSCE Ministerial Troika and the Secretary General. They actively participate in

OSCE yearly events, such as: the Annual Security Review Conference, the Economic Forum, the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting and the Annual and Winter Sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Special side events for the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation are frequently organised on these occasions, while the PA holds an annual Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean. Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation are regularly invited as observers in Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. Following the 1994 Budapest Summit decision, the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation was established within the framework of the Permanent Council. It is an informal group that meets periodically "to facilitate the interchange of information and the generation of ideas."

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminars provide the opportunity to exchange views and contribute to further developments in the relationship between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. The seminars are also attended by international organisations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, leading to a cross-fertilisation of ideas and recommendations.

### *Seminar on Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region*

8 February, Rome (Italy): The principal objective of this seminar is to initiate a dialogue on trafficking in human beings and human rights protection in the context of irregular migration in the Mediterranean region. The seminar takes an innovative approach: while issues related to mixed migration in the region have been dealt with in the framework of people smuggling, the seminar will shed light on the often-hidden exploitation of migrants, examine intersecting issues and highlight the need for the protection of their human rights and the implementation of commitments on human trafficking. The focus will be trafficking for labour exploitation, including domestic servitude.

[www.osce.org/node/98654](http://www.osce.org/node/98654)

### *Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG)*

The 2013 Swiss Chairmanship of the MCG works together with Mediterranean Partners to foster an open and interactive dialogue so as to respond to their interests and priorities. Through informal discussions, a list of projects and topics of cooperation is developed as a working tool to identify concrete activities and prioritise their implementation. During the year, six meetings of the MCG are held, as well as a joint meeting with the Asian Partners for Cooperation. Each meeting focuses on a topic proposed by one of the Mediterranean Partners. The six meetings focus on: the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination; dialogue and mediation in a regional context; combating trafficking in human beings; good governance and the fight against corruption; and challenges in the fight against terrorism.

The Annual Joint Meeting of the Asian and Mediterranean Contact Groups focuses on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military aspects of Security, and provides an opportunity to assess the progress achieved in the OSCE partnerships with a view to being more interactive and action-oriented.

- 1 March, Vienna (Austria): MCG meeting on "Promoting Tolerance and Non-Discrimination by Strengthening Interfaith Dialogue," a topic proposed by Jordan. One of the guest speakers is Father Nabil Haddad, the director of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Centre. During his presentation, Father Haddad describes the rise of religious influence in the Middle East and in Northern Africa. He says the profound changes in the Arab world in the last few years have politicised religion, with political parties of a religious background gaining influence. Father Haddad presents the Jordanian model of co-existence between the different faiths and calls for an alliance to support the moderate religious voices all over the region.

- 19 April, Vienna (Austria): "Dialogue and mediation in a regional context" is the topic chosen for the second meeting, featuring presentations by Mr. Farhane, Director for Multilateral Affairs, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Morocco; and Mr. Juan Jose Escobar, Ambassador-at-large for Mediterranean Affairs,

Spain. The Moroccan-Spanish Group of Friends of Mediation initiative is the result of a United Nations General Assembly resolution on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution presented by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs in New York in September 2012. Speaking on behalf of Spain, Mr. Escobar, highlights the potential of mediation in interreligious and intercultural dialogue and the importance of education in this area for all age groups. He also underscores the need to develop a peace infrastructure specifically in the Mediterranean region. The OSCE is invited to the second meeting within the framework of this initiative in Rabat on 8 July 2013. One of the aims of the meeting in Rabat will be to establish a mediation network in the Mediterranean region so as to develop a new approach to national dialogue in countries in transition.

- 15 November, Kiev (Ukraine): The last meeting of the year provides an opportunity for the 2013 OSCE Ukrainian Chairmanship to brief participants on the preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Council Meeting, as well as to discuss the outcome of the 2013 OSCE Mediterranean Conference. The main topic on the agenda is a presentation by the Libyan Ambassador on the subject of Libya's application to become an OSCE Partner for Co-operation. In conclusion, the participants welcome the incoming Serbian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group.

### *22nd Annual Session of the OSCE PA*

29 June - 3 July, Istanbul (Turkey): The Parliamentarians of the OSCE participating states gather for the annual session to assess developments made in security and cooperation and offer their views and recommendations to the OSCE Ministers for the next OSCE Ministerial Council. Concerning the Chapter on Political Affairs and Security and focusing on the Mediterranean region, OSCE participating states stress the interlinkage between the OSCE and the Mediterranean and request an increasing engagement with OSCE MPCs, including by envisaging the possibility of extending the partner-

ship to those Mediterranean countries that observe its principle, and insist on the need to renew the Mediterranean Forum. On the Economic and Environmental Chapters, the OSCE PA invites the OSCE to strengthen cooperation with Mediterranean Partners both in economic and environmental dimensions; finally on the Chapter on Democracy and Human Rights, the OSCE PA shows its concern for the alarming situation and increasing number of refugees and forcibly displaced persons as a result of conflicts and human rights abuses. In a resolution, the Assembly calls upon the OSCE to grant the State of Palestine Mediterranean Partner status and urges the OSCE to initiate a constructive dialogue on peace in the Middle East. In another resolution on the Middle East Area, the OSCE PA expresses its concern for the situation in Syria, urging all states to offer greater assistance to Syrian refugees helping the governments of Turkey and Jordan; they also recommend establishing contacts with the Libyan Government so that it can become a Mediterranean Partner Country.

For further Information:

*Istanbul Session Final Declaration*  
[www.oscepa.org/publications/declarations/2013-istanbul-declaration/1826-istanbul-declaration-eng/file](http://www.oscepa.org/publications/declarations/2013-istanbul-declaration/1826-istanbul-declaration-eng/file)

*Regional Conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security for the Mediterranean Region*

11-13 September, La Valletta (Malta): MEDAC co-organises, together with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, a conference on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. The Code of Conduct was adopted in 1994 and is a landmark document for security sector governance and the role of armed forces in democratic societies. It contains key principles and commitments on security relations between states and also on the democratic control of armed forces within a state. The Conference brings together around 50 participants from 20 countries of the Mediterranean region and beyond. While a num-

ber of regional conferences on the OSCE Code of Conduct have been organised in recent years, this is the first such conference destined specifically for the Mediterranean region and involving the OSCE MPCs. The objectives of this conference are to raise awareness and to present the countries of the Mediterranean Region with the Code of Conduct (including its recent Arabic translation) as a key normative document for security sector governance as well as to engage in discussion and dialogue about its principles and commitments.

*OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Autumn Meeting – Mediterranean Forum*

13-15 October, Buvda (Montenegro): In the framework of the OSCE PA Autumn Session, the Mediterranean Forum is held in two sessions under the theme “The Mediterranean: A Union of Civilizations.” The Forum includes a debate on the situation in Syria. President Krivokapic opens the meeting with a call for parliamentarians to ensure that the OSCE’s ongoing Helsinki +40 process incorporates a strong Mediterranean component. He points out that in the Helsinki Final Act, an entire chapter was devoted to the Mediterranean, and since then, the importance of the region for the OSCE has only grown. Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the PA of the Council of Europe (PACE) stresses the need for co-operation and parliamentary dialogue on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. He says that responsibility must be shared to meet the challenges of refugees, the humanitarian consequences of the war in Syria, and democratic transformations in the southern Mediterranean. Mignon emphasises the opportunity presented for closer co-operation between the PA and PACE to assist the region’s aspiring democracies, noting that both organisations have extensive and complementary experience in these matters. The second session of the Mediterranean Forum debates the situation in Syria. The countries of the Mediterranean are undergoing a process of historic transformation that requires the support of the international partners. In order to have a successful

democratic transition, it is necessary to introduce concrete measures and projects that will strengthen democratic institutions, ensure freedom of speech and expression, empower civil society and encourage economic growth. The debate features the participation of members of the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation – including the Palestinian National Council – and many OSCE participating states from across the region. Several delegates agree that the response to the Syrian crisis has so far represented a failure of the international system and call for greater commitment before the situation deteriorates further.

[www.oscepa.org/meetings/autumn-meetings/2013-budva](http://www.oscepa.org/meetings/autumn-meetings/2013-budva)

*2013 OSCE Mediterranean Conference*

28 – 29 October, Monaco: Discussions at the conference highlight the importance of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership and points to exchanges of best practices as a good way to further interaction between the OSCE and its Partners. Improving women’s participation in public, political and economic life needs to remain a priority, despite the progress already achieved in certain cases. Pursuing closer cooperation in the field of fostering women’s participation in peace mediation and facilitation processes is discussed in this context. Co-operation among international organisations and the involvement of civil society and the business sector is also key to further progress. The second session is devoted to the topic of combating human trafficking. The third session, devoted to combating the financing of terrorism, particularly the payment of ransoms, highlights outstanding challenges, such as ensuring the survival of hostages, the adoption of non-ransom policies and the public understanding of such an approach. During the discussions, both the Partners and the participating states stress their interest in pursuing the exchange of information on the topics of the Conference on a more concrete, practical level, through expert meetings and by pursuing an interactive dialogue in the Mediterranean Contact Group. An effective connection between the discussions which took place

at the Conference and the activities in 2014 as follow-up should be pursued. To this effect, a Chair’s perception paper is discussed at the MCG meeting of 15 November 2013. In its capacity as holder of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2014, Switzerland will continue to promote action-oriented activities, also in relation to the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

[www.osce.org/ec/103342](http://www.osce.org/ec/103342)

*20th OSCE Ministerial Council*

6 December, Kiev (Ukraine): The OSCE Ministerial Council meets once a year towards the end of every term of chairmanship to consider issues relevant to the OSCE and take appropriate decisions. MPCs participate as Observers. Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Kozhara welcomes participants from 57 participating states, 11 Partners for Cooperation and international organisations to the forum. A commitment to address protracted conflicts, stronger OSCE work on energy and environment, increased efforts to address transnational threats, human dimension agreements on religious freedom and Roma, and a reaffirmation of the Helsinki +40 process to map the OSCE’s future path are amongst the results of the 20th OSCE Ministerial Council.

[www.osce.org/node/105370/](http://www.osce.org/node/105370/)

### 3. The Arab League

The League of Arab States (LAS), widely known as the Arab League, is a regional inter-governmental organisation that was formed in 1945, grouping 22 Arab countries from the Middle East and North Africa. The Arab League’s aim is to develop closer relations between member states and co-ordinate their political activities with the aim of realising a close collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. The organisation was officially founded in Cairo at the end of World War II (22 March 1945). Seven countries signed the Pact of the League of Arab States: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan (at that time Transjordan), Syria, Lebanon,

Saudi Arabia and Yemen. They were joined later, as the decolonisation of the region advanced, by Libya (1953), Sudan (1956), Tunisia, Morocco (1958), Kuwait (1961), Algeria (1962), Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates (1971), Mauritania (1973), Somalia (1974), the Palestine Liberation Organisation (or PLO, 1976), Djibouti (1977) and Comoros (1993). The permanent headquarters was established in Cairo.

The League of Arab States has long been criticised for its disunity, ineffectiveness and representation of autocratic regimes. Although a first (ad hoc) EU-Arab League Ministerial meeting (Foreign Affairs) was held in Malta in 2008, EU relations with the League remained limited both in scope and substance for a number of years. However, since the Arab Spring, the Union's relations with the League have entered a new phase of constructive engagement and cooperation. Recent upheavals in the Arab world have highlighted regional challenges – political, security-related, economic and social. These issues call for regional solutions, in which prominent regional organisations such as the Arab League play a key role. The League's change in leadership, under the new Secretary-General, Nabil Elaraby, instilled a progressive approach favouring change. In recent years, the Arab League has been particularly proactive on the Libya and Syria files. The League's approval of NATO's intervention in Libya and its imposition of sanctions on the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria have helped build consensus among regional actors on the legitimacy of political actions to be taken by the international community within the framework of the United Nations. The EU's clear objective is to make the 'new' Arab League the main channel for a strengthened Euro-Arab relationship. To this end, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton has maintained close political contact with Secretary-General Elaraby, and the EU has actively supported the League's initiatives on Libya and Syria. Since 2011, a structured, regular political dialogue has developed at Senior Official level. Cooperation in the field of election observation has also

been enhanced, with the EU offering training courses for observers from the League's Secretariat. 2012 marked a turning point for relations between the two partners. On the initiative of the Council's Cypriot presidency (endorsed by High Representative Ashton), the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) Ambassadors travelled to Cairo at the end of September 2012 to meet their Arab League counterparts and establish cooperation at ambassadorial level. Furthermore, a second, successful EU-Arab League Foreign Affairs ministerial meeting took place in Cairo in November 2012.

#### *Main Events during 2013*

##### *Seminar for Launching the Regional Strategy "Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security"*

- 6-7 February, Cairo (Egypt): The seminar hosts a prominent group of experts specialised in the areas of peace and security, governmental and non-governmental senior representatives at the regional and international levels. The aim of the strategy is to achieve the protection of Arab women against all forms of gender-based violence in times of war and peace and attain their full rights without any form of discrimination during armed conflict. Consequently, governments and regional and international organisations are urged to take further measures towards improving women's participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution and post-conflict planning and decision-making positions.

[www.arabwomen.org/Content/Publications/strpeceng.pdf](http://www.arabwomen.org/Content/Publications/strpeceng.pdf)

##### *Regional Consultative Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region*

- 4-5 June, Cairo (Egypt): The meeting aims at preparing Arab countries to maximise the benefits of their participation in the Second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development by taking stock of progress in relation to migration and development in the Arab region since 2006, with particular focus on the High-Level Dialogue round-table themes, and by assisting

representatives in the development of a common understanding of the next steps to be taken to maximise the contributions of migration to development in the Arab region and to minimise the potential negative impacts for destination and origin countries, as well as for migrants and their families themselves. [www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/Regional-Consultative-Meeting-on-International-Migration-Final-Declaration-EN.pdf](http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/Regional-Consultative-Meeting-on-International-Migration-Final-Declaration-EN.pdf)

#### *24th Arab League Summit*

- 21-27 March, Doha (Qatar): The 24th Arab League Summit released the Doha Declaration, which welcomes the initiative made by the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to establish a fund to finance projects that conserve the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem and aid the Palestinian people in facing the policies of the Israeli occupation. The Arab League calls on the international community to work immediately towards achieving fair peace that guarantees Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian land as well as Arab land in the Golan Heights. The declaration also calls for establishing an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. It demands that the United Nations Security Council takes all the necessary measures. It also expresses their rejection of having Israel declare itself a Jewish state. The declaration also condemns illegal Israeli settlement activity taking place on Palestinian land including East Jerusalem, and accuses Israel of trying to change the demographics in those areas.

<http://arableaguesummit2013.qatarconferences.org/news/news-details-17.html>

#### **4. The 5+5 Dialogue**

The 5+5 Dialogue was set up on 10 October 1990 during a ministerial meeting in Rome of 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). 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, it later expanded to include other spheres, such as Education, the Environment and Renewable Energies, as well as 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 2013*

- 8 - 9 April, Algiers (Algeria): the 15th meeting of the Interior Ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue renews its commitment to fight against terrorism and organised crime especially in the aftermath of the Malian crisis which affected almost all the countries of the region. Ministers underline the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination among security agencies especially on border security, exchange of information on organised crime networks, trafficking of human beings, arms, ammunition and drugs. They also agree to work for a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism taking into account the rule of law, social justice, the fight against poverty and prevention of conflicts.

[www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/documents-oficials-adjunts/CIMO%20Algeries%202013.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/documents-oficials-adjunts/CIMO%20Algeries%202013.pdf/at_download/file)

- 15 April, Nouakchott (Mauritania): Fourth Meeting of the representative of the Parliaments of the countries of the Western Mediterranean Forum - 5+5 Dialogue. They gather with the assis-

tance of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and with the participation, as observers, of the Arab Parliament, the Maghreb Consultative Council, the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM. They stress the pivotal role of the Parliamentary Dimension of the 5+5 Dialogue in furthering the cooperation required among the countries of the Western Mediterranean to strengthen democratic institutions and deepening integration to make the region less vulnerable to instability. They also call on the Governments of the wider Mediterranean region and the Secretary General of the UN to further increase their efforts to find a political solution that respects the territorial integrity, national unity and the safety of the people of Syria.

[www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/nouakchott-declaration-2013](http://www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/nouakchott-declaration-2013)

- 16 April, Nouakchott (Mauritania): 10th Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the countries of the Western Mediterranean jointly chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy. In the final declaration, the groundwork for promoting the 5+5 Dialogue over the coming years is approved. Ministers underline the role played by the forum as a political platform for cooperation and dialogue and examines the democratic processes on the southern shores, considering the historic changes taking place in the region that enable the strengthening of values shared by the Member States, such as democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice. Participants also tackle the situation in Syria, the crisis in Mali (for which support is given to the military operation currently under way) and peace in the Middle East. Other topics include security, migration, water and the environment, north-south economic cooperation, cultural cooperation and regional integration in North Africa through the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). The final declaration adopted praises the “key role of the UfM to reinforce regional and sub-regional cooperation through concrete projects.” Particularly, ministers

mention the relevance of the Business Forum to be organised with the Secretariat of the UfM and the UfM projects in the field of Education.

[www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/documents-oficials-adjunts/Declaration-X-reunion-CMAE-16-avril-2013.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.iemed.org/observatori/recursos/documents/documents-oficials/documents-oficials-adjunts/Declaration-X-reunion-CMAE-16-avril-2013.pdf/at_download/file)

- 20 September, Rabat (Morocco): 1st Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Research of the Countries of the Western Mediterranean. The ten Ministers reaffirm the importance of higher education, research and innovation for the economic development of the Euro-Mediterranean region and for youth employment. They discuss practical opportunities to strengthen high-level bilateral and multilateral scientific cooperation, based on the European programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). They also reaffirm their shared priorities: facilitating the transformation of knowledge into innovative products and services, the main lever for competitiveness and growth. Strengthening partnerships between higher education and research institutions will also be facilitated by the rise of European mobility programme “Erasmus plus.” The conference concludes by welcoming the proposal of the Minister to focus the work of the next conference on strengthening the middle and senior management as a factor of growth and employment.

- 23 October, Barcelona (Spain): Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean. The Foreign Ministers of France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, as well as the Italian Deputy Foreign Minister, debate in Barcelona how to strengthen economic cooperation in the Western Mediterranean, along with representatives from employers' associations and a large delegation of businesspeople from these countries. In total, over 300 people participate in the diverse sessions of the forum. It is the first conference on economics of this forum. The Barcelona meeting, opened by the President of the Spanish Government Mariano Rajoy, addresses the following issues: the role of the Western Mediterranean in a globalised economy, the strengthening of cooperation between

Europe, the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, urban development and public services, the role of small and medium-sized enterprises, the financing of development policies, and international arbitration in the Mediterranean. The forum is co-organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), together with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ministry of Spain and Casa Mediterráneo.

- November 27, Algiers (Algeria): The ten countries bordering the Western Mediterranean Basin hold in Algiers the first conference devoted to setting up “a High-level Segment” that will represent a benchmark for orienting common actions with shared dividends, through which the conditions for long-lasting food security on a regional level will be created as a strategic objective, guaranteeing full access of all the inhabitants of the ten partner countries to the basic foods that are essential to lead a healthy and active life. The planned exchanges will aim to produce a shared approach to food security, which encompasses both economic and social dimensions, as well as political and ethical ones, and takes into account the specific needs at sub-regional and regional levels. The conference is devoted to the reading and adoption of the recommendations produced from expert workshops, held during the conference in Algiers. These include setting up a common strategy, accompanied by tangible measures to ensure food security for the 300 million people living in the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean.

## 5. Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All)

The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (All) was established at the Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, held in Ancona (Italy) in 2000 and attended by the Heads of State and Government of Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia. At the end of the Conference, the Foreign Ministers of the participating countries 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. The Initiative was later extended to Serbia and Montenegro, both of which, following the referendum in Montenegro, remained All participating countries. Following the recent EU approach to support multilateral sub-regional cooperation and the example of the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea, the All has started working, since the beginning of 2010, on the idea of a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian Basin, which considers the common historical and cultural heritage, the use of the common sea, the need to protect the marine environment from pollution, the opportunity of sustainable development and growth and the common goal to make this basin an internal sea of the EU. This initiative is supported by all Adriatic Ionian actors at all levels of government. In order to bring it to the attention of the EU authorities, the last Adriatic Ionian Council (the decision-making body of the initiative) was held in 2011 in Brussels at the premises of the Committee of the Regions. The initiative’s Chairmanship rotates every May/June according to an alphabetical criteria. The Serbian Chairmanship ends in May 2012 and Slovenia will take over until May 2013.

### *Main activities under the Slovenian Chairmanship*

One of the main goals of the All-PS Slovenian Chairmanship is to develop and strengthen relations, in a project directed by local and regional authorities, as well as the three Adriatic Ionian Fora located in Ancona: UniAdrion, the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce and Forum of Cities and Towns. Slovenia advocates cooperation within the All with a focus on issues related to the sea and coastal regions.

- 14 May, Brdo Pri Kranju (Slovenia): 11th Conference of the Parliament Speakers. The conference is organised by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in the framework of the one-year Slovenian chairmanship of the All. In the conference debate, the speakers and other high parliamentary representatives focus on topical issues related to the shaping of macroregions in the EU, with special emphasis on the develop-

ment of the Adriatic and Ionian macroregion and the contribution by the parliaments in such processes. The delegates decide to establish an ad hoc delegation to the Adriatic Ionian Initiative. The first such meeting takes place in autumn under the Albanian Delegation.

[www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/135-xi-conference-presidents-parliaments-brdo-pri](http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/135-xi-conference-presidents-parliaments-brdo-pri)

- 20 May, Medjugorje (Bosnia and Herzegovina): 13th Forum of the Adriatic Ionian Chambers of Commerce. On this occasion, a Declaration of Intent is signed by the Executive Secretariats of the Adriatic Ionian civil society Fora (Cities and Towns, Chambers of Commerce, UniAdrion) and the All Permanent Secretariat. Such a Declaration marks the beginning of closer cooperation among them by establishing an “Integrated Secretariat” that will be capable of channelling the needs of civil societies to the eight All Governments and the European Commission. The new instrument will not add any financial burden for any institutions involved.

[www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/136-xiii-forum-chambers-medjugorje](http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/136-xiii-forum-chambers-medjugorje)

- 27 May, Brussels (Belgium): 15th Adriatic Ionian Council: concluding the Slovenian All year of Chairmanship, the representatives of the eight Governments of the All, chaired by the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Erjavec, approve the Brussels Declaration 2013. The declaration welcomes the significant progress of regional cooperation in the Adriatic Ionian basin achieved with particular regards to the progress in the process of establishing the “EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.” High level officials of the European Commission inform Ministers about the ongoing procedures and process that will lead to the final approval of the EUSAIR by the end of 2014. Furthermore, an “Integrated Secretariat” between the All Permanent Secretariat and the Executive Secretariats of the Adriatic Ionian Fora of civil society is established, and the Regional Cooperation Programme approved last year is put into action.

<http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/137-xv-adriatic-ioni-an-council-brussels>

### *Main Activities under the Albanian Chairmanship*

Albania takes over the All presidency in a very special moment for the relations between Member States and for All relations with the European Union. A discussion started within the European Union on the adoption of an Adriatic-Ionian MacroRegional strategy has reached a crucial stage. At the European Council meeting on December 14, 2012, the Heads of Governments of EU Member States invited the European Commission to approve the proposal for a new Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion strategy in 2014.

- 1-3 September, Bled (Slovenia): All-PS Strategic Forum 2013. Upon invitation by the Slovenian Foreign Minister Erjavec, the All Secretary General attends the 8th BLED Strategic Forum. Ambassador Pigliapoco is a panellist in Panel no.2 which focuses on water in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). He highlights the main lines of the Maritime Strategy of the future Adriatic Ionian macroregion as presented by the European Commission in its Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on November 2012, as "a possible example for a collective response to water management through regional cooperation." The Strategic Forum proves to be a very successful event.

[www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/141-aii-bled-strategic-forum](http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/141-aii-bled-strategic-forum)

- 7 November, Tirana (Albania): All Round Table on SMEs. The All Round Table on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises under Albanian Chairmanship is an occasion to exchange experiences among participant countries and to discuss possible joint actions on supporting SME innovation, capacity building, and improving business culture among youth.

[www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/153-aii-round-table-tirana-smes](http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/153-aii-round-table-tirana-smes)

- 9-11 December, Brindisi (Italy): 15th Plenary Session of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities. The session was dedicated to "Macroregions and territories: The role and functions of the local communities in cross-border cooperation processes." The representatives of the Adriatic and Ionian Municipalities

gather in Brindisi and try to upgrade their cooperation in order to contribute to the process of establishing the EU-SAIR (EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region). The priorities of this year's session are matched to the EUSAIR's four pillars. On this occasion, the All Secretary General, Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco is awarded with the International Award Bruno Bravetti "The Adriatic is Not a Barrier."

[www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/155-xv-session-forum-adriatic-ionian-cities-brindisi](http://www.aii-ps.org/index.php/news-events/news/item/155-xv-session-forum-adriatic-ionian-cities-brindisi)

### **6. The Deauville Partnership**

The Deauville Partnership provides support for the historic political and economic transitions of the people in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Jordan and Yemen. The Partnership also includes the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States), the EU and regional partners (Kuwait, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE). The Partnership also includes international financial institutions and organisations. The Islamic Development Bank is the rotating chairman of the IFI platform that includes: the African Development Bank, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the OPEC Fund for International Development and the World Bank. There are several other organisations that have been supportive of the Deauville Partnership, including: the Arab League, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations organisations.

#### *The UK's Presidency of the Deauville Partnership*

The UK holds the presidency of the G8 in 2013, which means it also has the Chairmanship of the Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition. The aim of the UK presidency is to support job creation and to build opportuni-

ties for marginalised groups such as youth and women, which is important for the long-term stability of the region. Eight priority areas are identified to focus on in 2013 which align with a vision of open economies and inclusive growth: Investment, Trade, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Women's Economic Participation, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Mandate Expansion, Access to Capital Markets, Asset Recovery and the MENA Transition Fund for Demand-driven Technical Assistance.

#### *Main Events during 2013*

- June, London (UK): The UK launches a new mentoring initiative called Forsa to support SME Development in the Arab Countries in transition. Forsa aims to provide entrepreneurs with mentoring support for up to 12 months and to demonstrate to policy makers the power of mentoring. Forsa will provide at least 250 young and/or female entrepreneurs from across the six Arab countries in transition with free business mentoring, where mentors are recruited from countries across the G8 and the MENA region. By providing entrepreneurs with mentors who inspire and encourage them, Forsa will help to unlock the great potential that is still largely untapped in the spirits of young entrepreneurs of the transition countries. This will help to support economic growth and job creation, and change attitudes to entrepreneurship from the ground up.

- 25-26 June, London (UK): The Arab Women's Conference promotes the role of Arab women in the global and Middle Eastern and North African economies, debates how economic opportunities can be improved for women and will aim to create new economic partnerships. The event brings together private sector and government representatives from across the Deauville Partnership countries which comprise the G8, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen and regional partners, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

- 16 September, London (UK): G8 Deauville Partnership Investment conference. The conference focuses on the six Arab countries in transition (Egypt,

Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen). The event provides a forum for those nations to highlight opportunities and explain the steps they are taking to improve the environment for investment in their countries. It covers issues such as financial risk mitigation instruments, access to local labour and supply chains and specific opportunities and challenges in key sectors. Senior representatives from business and government from the transition countries, the G8, regional partners and the International Financial Institutions all participate.

- 10 October, Washington (USA): Deauville Finance Ministers and international financial institutions of the Deauville Partnership for Arab Countries in Transition meet to re-affirm their commitment to support Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen in undertaking economic reforms that will lead to more stable, open and inclusive economies.

For further information:

*Deauville Partnership Progress report:*  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248907/130925\\_DP\\_progress\\_rpt.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248907/130925_DP_progress_rpt.pdf)

## 7. Arab Maghreb Union

The Arab Maghreb Union was founded in 1989 in Marrakesh by Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania to materialise their shared desire for greater unity among Maghreb countries, based on the links existing between the peoples and their complementarity. The main goals of this union are the free circulation of goods and people, eventually constituting a free trade area, a customs union and a common market, the

adoption of common policies in all possible domains as well as fostering the progress and well-being of the people. The main decision-making bodies are the Presidential Council, consisting of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers and the Specialised Ministerial Commissions. The Secretariat-General is based in Rabat and the incumbent Secretary-General is the Tunisian, Habib Ben Yahia. Its principal projects are the creation of a Maghrebi investment and foreign trade bank, a Maghrebi university and a Maghrebi academy of sciences. Nonetheless, the AMU is struggling to become fully operative because a number of issues hinder the development of good relations between the Maghrebi partners: the Algerian-Moroccan border, closed since 1994, and the matter of Western Sahara, which embitters relations between Morocco and Algeria, and the international embargo on Libya from the 1990s to 2003. As a consequence, the Council of Heads of State has not met since 1994 and the future of the AMU remains contingent to the normalisation of relations between the partners.

### *Meetings in 2013*

- 9 January, Nouakchott (Mauritania): At the 5th Conference on Maghreb economic integration, AMU member countries decide to bring into being the Maghreb Investment and Foreign Trade Bank with the initial sum of 100 million dollars. The bank will finance development and infrastructure projects such as highways, and will work in the line of promoting new technologies, as well as investing in the energy sector. A monitoring committee will be set up and submit monthly reports on the progress

of economic integration in the Maghreb in collaboration with the IMF.

- 10 January, Nouakchott (Mauritania): The AMU launches an investment bank with a capital of \$100 million for the financing of infrastructure projects in the region. The investment bank is intended to fund projects in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco. The bank will finance development projects such as highways, the promotion of new technologies and invest in energy.

- 21 April, Rabat (Morocco): Following the Council of Interior Ministers, they adopt the Rabat Declaration for “A Maghreb joint security strategy.” It contains 24 resolutions focusing on the fight against terrorism and organised crime and also aiming at neutralising their financing methods by establishing a partnership with the countries of the Sahel-Saharan region. Finally, a monitoring committee is created in the security domain in order to implement the Rabat Declaration.

- 5 May, Rabat (Morocco): During the 31st session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, participants demonstrate their willingness to find more effective ways to build and upgrade the AMU. The Foreign Ministers also stress the need to achieve economic integration in the Maghreb. Ministers agree to combine their efforts for closer coordination to meet the security challenges that arise mainly from the situation in Mali and the Sahel. Participants also agree on the creation of the Maghreb Council of Religious Affairs. Finally, an agreement has been reached to develop a common vision for dialogue with the European Union and the creation of a coordination mechanism of Maghreb ambassadors in Brussels.