

Chronology of the Barcelona Process

The chronology that follows includes the most relevant events that took place in 2008 related to the Barcelona Process.

January 2008

1 January 2008

Slovenian Presidency

Brussels: Slovenia begins its presidency of the EU on 1 January 2008. Among the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency are the implementation and application of the Lisbon Treaty in the EU to strengthen member countries, the adoption of a common position on post-Kyoto climate change solutions, the maintenance of stability in the Balkans, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue among European countries and between Europe and the Mediterranean region.

8 January 2008

Intercultural Dialogue

Ljubljana: During the inauguration of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Slovenian Prime Minister highlights the need for deepened discussion about the importance of culture. Representatives of leading European arts and culture festivals sign, in conjunction with the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, a declaration of support for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu

15-16 January 2008

Water

Aleppo: A workshop entitled “Drought Guidelines for Mediterranean Countries: a methodology to develop risk management and a proactive approach in drought preparedness” is organised

within the framework of the MEDA Water Programme. The participants examine cases that could be applicable to other countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, and Turkey. The aim of the programme is to improve local water management conditions with the cooperation of non-profit organisations from EU countries.

www.medawater-rmsu.org

16 January 2008

Alliance of Civilizations

Madrid: During a speech given at the First Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, the European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, Ferrero-Waldner, expresses the desire to make the Mediterranean region one of the pillars of the Alliance of Civilizations and stresses the importance of promoting dialogue. The Commissioner refers to the strategic relation between the EU and the Mediterranean region and names numerous projects of this nature funded by the European Commission (EC). She adds that 2008 is not only the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue but also the Euro-Mediterranean Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and refers to the programme drawn up by the Anna Lindh Foundation, “1001 Actions for Dialogue.”

17 January 2008

Politics and Security

Brussels: Economic and social development, energy and climate change, civil protection, countering terrorism and extremism, the European Neighbourhood Policy, and intercultural dialogue are among the leading priorities of the Barcelona Process during the Slovenian Presidency, according to a press release issued on completion of the Euro-

Med Senior Officials and Committee Meeting. These priorities and activities are presented and analysed during the meeting, which brings together 39 countries (27 EU Member States + 12 partners from the southern Mediterranean, including Albania and Mauritania, which participate in their first meeting after joining the Barcelona Process).

www.eu2008.si

17 January 2008

Aviation

Brussels: The 4th Aviation Working Group Meeting takes place to review the activities completed in the first year of the Euromed Aviation Project and to present projects for the upcoming year in the area of training, on-site technical assistance and seminars. The aim of Euromed aviation is to establish a common Euro-Mediterranean aviation space. It focuses on five priority areas: the aviation market, security, safety, the environment and air traffic management.

www.euromedtransport.org/355.0.html

21 January 2008

EU-Morocco

Rabat: European Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner describes Morocco as a “privileged partner” of the EU, making special reference to its reinforced political dialogue with the EU, economic integration, sectoral cooperation, and exchanges on the people-to-people level. The Commissioner also declares that these advances would not have been possible without the ambitious reform and modernisation programme launched by the King Mohammed VI.

22 January 2008

EU-Arab Maghreb Union

Rabat: After the meeting between the

EU, Troika and the Arab Maghreb Union, the president of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) stresses the importance of cooperation between the EU and the coastal countries in the southern Mediterranean region. A competitive, stable, and democratic Maghreb is the interest of the EU, as is any region that can participate actively in the efforts to safeguard the Mediterranean, protect the environment and fight against extremism and terrorism.

23 January 2008

Human Rights

Rabat: Launching of a new project within the framework of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. The project, called "Promotion of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" is allocated 52,250 euros, and scheduled to last for 24 months. The aim of the project is to promote the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Morocco to encourage Morocco to ratify the convention and promote the application of its inclusive principles.

www.delmar.ec.europa.eu/fr/communiqués/20080116b.htm

28 January 2008

PEGASE

Brussels: The EC launches a new instrument designed to facilitate the channelling of community and international aid to the Palestinians. The mechanism, called PEGASE, is to be implemented over the course of three years. Its aim is to contribute to the creation of a Palestinian state and to substitute the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM). PEGASE will provide support in four key areas: governance, social development, economic and private sector development, and public infrastructures.

www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu

28 January 2008

EMPA

Brussels: Divergent views on the situation in Gaza dominate the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) Committee on Political Affairs, Security, and Human Rights. The committee calls for respect of international law by all parties and for an

immediate end to any action that endangers civil lives; it calls on Israel to urgently cease all military action and to immediately lift its blockade to allow supplies to reach the Gaza Strip and to enable the free movement of people and goods; it also calls on Hamas to put an immediate end to the shooting of rockets at Israeli civilians.

www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

28-29 January 2008

Women

Tunis: The Euromed Role of Women in Economic Life Programme, in cooperation with the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), organises a regional seminar on structures with mandated responsibility for operationalising a state's commitment to gender equality. The seminar brings together over 80 participants representing MEDA authorities, experts, civil society activists, research institutions and regional and international organisations concerned with the gender issue in Arab Mediterranean countries.

www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net

28 January-1 February 2008

Training

Barcelona: A seminar on training development and management is organised within the framework of the Euromed Training of Public Administrations programme, which is designed to provide training on European affairs to civil servants from the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. It also foresees the creation of a network of public administration training centres among Euro-Mediterranean partners.

www.eipa.eu/en/topics/show/&tid=158

30-31 January 2008

FRONTEX

Geneva: This joint conference of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX)-International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)-Europol project entitled "Towards a Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flow" brings together senior government officials from Arab and European countries, ICMPD, Europol, FRONTEX, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the

African Union, the EC, as well as international organisations to identify activities for enabling cooperative projects between Arab and European partner states on the management of mixed migration, with the support of relevant international agencies.

www.frontex.europa.eu/newsroom/news_releases/art31.html

February 2008

4 February 2008

Fishing

Zaragoza: During the ministerial conference of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Joe Borg, states that to achieve the goal of sustainable fishing in the Mediterranean, it is necessary to strengthen coordination efforts to meet the growing pressures facing fishing resources, particularly in terms of fishing, pollution, and climate change.

4 February 2008

EU-Algeria

Algiers: The European Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, and the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in a series of meetings held in Algiers, discuss the progress made with regard to Algeria's membership of the World Trade Organization, its role in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the need to improve the investment climate for European companies. The Commissioner stresses the acceptance of the Pan-Euromed protocol on cumulation of origin, which helps Mediterranean countries produce goods in regional supply chains and still benefit from preferential access to the EU market.

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/algeria/pr040208_en.htm

7 February 2008

Maritime security

Brussels: The participants of the 4th meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Security review cooperation in the area of transport with particular attention paid to the adoption of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) by all the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries. The RTAP consists

of 34 actions in the area of maritime security and safety that should be completed by 2013.

www.safemed-project.org/home

11 February 2008

Human Rights

Copenhagen: The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) publishes a report on freedom of association in the Euro-Mediterranean region summarising the state of freedom of association in all the countries in the region. It also publishes a training guide on human rights instruments in Euro-Mediterranean relations. This guide is part of a larger project aimed at strengthening the role of civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

<http://en.emhrn.net/pages/439>

11 February 2008

EU-Arab League

Malta: During a meeting between EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Arab League in Malta, the Slovenian President of the EU GAERC states that the EU and the Arab League can make important contributions to mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures, which are essential for peaceful and successful coexistence. The Slovenian Minister adds that the EU appreciates the important role played by the Arab League and welcomes its initiatives, which form part of the efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East and can help to foster dialogue among Palestinians.

www.eu2008.si

13 February 2008

FRONTEX

Brussels: The EC unveils details of the future development of the management system for the EU's external borders. The system involves combining specific measures (related to the objectives of FRONTEX and the control of maritime borders) with longer-term reflection on how to record migration inflows and outflows from third countries. The EC Vice-President Frattini states that these ideas would "promote legitimate free movement of people whilst also dealing with unexpected migratory pressure, especially at the southern maritime border of the Union, and reduce the trafficking of human beings into the EU."

www.frontex.europa.eu

18 February 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: During the GAERC session, EU Foreign Ministers conclude that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has proven to be an important instrument for promoting reforms in partner countries. The ministers add that considerable progress has been made in the area of financial cooperation and that the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has already led to an increase in the financial support provided to partners. It stresses the importance of interpersonal contacts and the role of civil society in the framework of the ENP.

19 February 2008

EU-Lebanon

Brussels: The EU-Lebanon Association Council meeting deals with relations between the EU and Lebanon, matters of common interest and regional and international affairs. The EU conveys its concern about the rising tensions in Lebanon and calls for all parties to return to dialogue in a spirit of commitment.

www.dellbn.ec.europa.eu

19-21 February 2008

SMAP

Istanbul: Regional workshop on sustainable tourism within the framework of the EU Short and Medium-Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP III). Over 100 participants from the Mediterranean region and the EC come together to discuss sustainable tourism and the management of coastal areas.

www.smap.eu

20-21 February 2008

Economic Transition

Brussels: Over 200 government representatives, members of civil society, researchers and academics, senior representatives of EU Member States and the EC concerned about economic aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership participate in the 12th Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Economic Transition dealing with the theme "Financial and Banking Services at the Heart of Economic Transition." A large number of representatives from central banks and banking and financial establishments from the Euro-Mediterranean

region attend the conference for the first time.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/etn/12mtg_0208/index_en.htm

20-21 February 2008

Aviation

Paris: The participants in a two-day seminar organised by the Euromed Aviation project conclude that it is necessary to have equivalent safety measures in order to guarantee maximum safety levels in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The seminar is attended by 25 representatives from eight Mediterranean partner countries together with representatives of the European Commission, the European Civil Aviation Conference and other organisations.

www.euromedtransport.org

24-25 February 2008

Euromed Heritage

Thessaloniki: Final conference of the Euromed Heritage III project "Byzantium Early Islam." This project is designed to bring to the fore and protect Byzantine and Islam culture in the Mediterranean region and to improve the region's ability to manage this intelligently through cooperation.

www.byzantiumearlyislam.net/

25 February 2008

Aviation

Brussels: The EU and Jordan sign an agreement in the aviation sector authorising EU airline companies to operate flights between Jordan and any EU Member State. This agreement removes nationality restrictions in bilateral airline services agreements, allowing any European airline company to operate flights between Jordan and any European Member State in which it is established.

27 February 2008

Human Rights

Brussels: The members of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights express serious concerns about the conditions in which Palestinians are being held in Israeli prisons. Several deputies conclude that the European Parliament should send an information-gathering mission to Israel.

www.europarl.europa.eu

27 February 2008

Information Society

Cairo: Ministers at the second Euromed Ministerial Conference on Information Society called "Building an Enabling Environment for the Euromed Information Society" emphasise the important role played by the information society, research and innovation in business competitiveness, job creation and overcoming the challenges of globalisation. The aim of the conference is to discuss the implementation of a competitive Euro-Mediterranean information society based on win-win partnerships and public-private investments and to encourage the strengthening of dialogue between Euro-Mediterranean partner countries.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/conf

March 2008

7 March 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: EU Commissioner, Ferrero-Waldner, and the Egyptian Minister for International Cooperation, Fayza Aboulnaga, sign a memorandum of understanding for the National Indicative Programme 2007-2010. The aim of the programme, which consists of an aid package totalling 558 million euros, is to support the reform process and implementation of the EU-Egypt ENP Action Plan. Egypt is one of the main beneficiaries of EU support in the region and the EU is the second largest donor of support to Egypt.

www.eu-delegation.org.eg

10 March 2008

EU-Algeria

Brussels: During the EU-Algeria Association Council, the chair of the session, Slovenian Foreign Minister Rupel, stresses that Algeria was a strategic partner of the EU and played a key role in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in the Arab League and in Africa in general. He says that the EU understands that reform processes are difficult and lengthy but that it nonetheless wishes to establish a genuine partnership with Algeria that will be of mutual benefit.

10-11 March 2008

Media

Ljubljana: The Euromed and the Media

Task Force meet to discuss its work programme and to prepare its contribution to the Euromed Ministerial Meeting on Culture and Cultural Dialogue. The participants in this two-day meeting also take part in a public information session and debate with the local media and diplomatic corps.

10-13 March 2008

Medibtikar

Casablanca: The second seminar on business innovation organised within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Medibtikar programme brings together participants from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to study how to implement and finance innovation projects. The Medibtikar programme offers partner Mediterranean countries novel, improved instruments to stimulate innovation in private and public companies and to promote networking.

www.medibtikar.eu

13-14 March 2008

UfM

Brussels: The European Council approves of the principal of the Union for the Mediterranean, which would include EU Member States and non-EU Mediterranean coastal states. In a declaration included in the presidency conclusions, EU Heads of State and Government invite the European Commission to present to the Council the necessary proposals for defining the modalities of what will be called 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' with a view to the summit which will take place in Paris on 13 July 2008.

www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/99410.pdf

27-28 March 2008

EMPA

Athens: The fourth plenary session of the EMPA welcomes the proposal for a Union for the Mediterranean, describing it as a "fresh impetus given to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership." Recommendations are adopted in the following areas: ways for parliaments to contribute to the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict; monitoring of the implementation of the code of conduct for the fight against terrorism; the promotion of environment-friendly forms of energy; the promotion of investment through

education and job creation; the strengthening of intercultural dialogue, freedom of expression and respect for religions; the role of media in education; dialogue between cultures and the impact of radical climate change in the Mediterranean Basin. Since Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, the EMPA has grown from 240 to 260 members.

www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

April 2008

3 April 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The EC adopts a strategy document summarising the specific milestones related to the ENP achieved since the end of 2006 by partner countries in a large number of areas including political cooperation, trade exchanges, migration, relaxation of visa-issuing formalities, energy, transport, research, innovation and the mobility of students and young people.

<http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp>

4 April 2008

Tourism

Fez: Ministers at the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Tourism issue a series of conclusions on future economic, environmental and cultural cooperation between the EU and its southern partners with regard to the further development of sustainable tourism. They decide that the conference of ministers responsible for tourism should be held every two years, which will allow working groups of senior officials to prepare further action plans for future cooperation in the area of tourism in the Mediterranean.

www.eu2008.si

8 April 2008

Agadir Agreement

Brussels: The Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) organises the First Agadir Member States Investment Forum in cooperation with the EC, the European Parliament (EP) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The four states that sign the Agadir Agreement are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The EU finances a project that supports the Agadir Agreement, designed to reinforce south-south cooperation and to work towards a free

trade area by 2010. The forum focused in particular on the improvement of legal frameworks surrounding investments, the encouragement of partnerships between EU and southern Mediterranean companies and the development of EU investment in the region.

10 April 2008

Environment

Brussels: The EC and the EIB present the results of a study on potential investments aimed at reducing pollution in a number of sensitive areas in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. The study, conducted within the framework of the Horizon 2020 initiative, recognises the need to establish a programme to help these countries to reduce their waste disposal at sea.

11-13 April 2008

Politics and Security

Malta: The 24th Information and Training Seminar for Euro-Med Diplomats focuses on progress made in the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Five-Year Work Programme and recent developments. The seminar brings together diplomats from the 27 EU Member States and 12 Mediterranean partner countries, including Mauritania and Albania. The main objective of the Malta seminars is to help participants to become familiar with the Euro-Mediterranean process.

www.euromed-seminars.org/mt/seminar24/programme.htm

14-17 April 2008

Euromed Market

Bucharest: Meeting of the Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Fight Against Counterfeiting Piracy in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The aim of the meeting is to share knowledge and experiences and to promote a common approach in the Euro-Mediterranean region regarding legislation, procedures, and their application to facilitate trade between Euro-Mediterranean partners.

www.euromedmarket.org

15 April 2008

Politics and Security

Brussels: Senior officials from the Euro-Mediterranean region meet to discuss political dialogue and technical coop-

eration in various areas such as combating terrorism, culture, intercultural dialogue, tourism, the information society, the role of women in society and higher education.

17-18 April 2008

Industry

Brussels: Meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Task Force on Industrial Cooperation, which includes representatives of all the Mediterranean partner countries, EU Member States and Turkey, as well as representatives from different business organisations, international organisations and varying European Commission departments. The aim of the meeting is to prepare the work programme for 2009-2010, which focuses on five key areas: the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise, access to markets, investment, innovation and textiles/clothing.

28 April 2008

EU-Egypt

Luxembourg: During the fourth EU-Egypt Association Council meeting, the Slovenian Secretary of State declares, on behalf of the Slovenian Presidency, that the meeting has been conducted in a spirit of openness and friendship. He adds that Egypt is a key partner of the EU in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East and as such receives a lot of attention from the EU. Discussions also focus on bilateral issues and the situations in the Middle East, Lebanon, and Kosovo.

28-30 April 2008

Water

Marrakech: The Second MEDA Water Regional Event is organised within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Programme for Local Water Management. The discussion focuses on important topics such as irrigation water management, drought management, water information, improvement of decision-making in rural water supply and wastewater reuse.

www.medawater-rmsu.org/meetings/2nd_MWP_conference.htm

May 2008

5 May 2008

Energy

Brussels: The European Commissioner

for External Relations and the ENP, Ferrero-Waldner, and the European Commissioner for Energy, Pielbalgs, meet representatives from the Mashreq countries, Iraq and Turkey to discuss improving security in the region and in the EU, in particular by deepening cooperation on natural gas.

5 May 2008

FEMIP

Tunis: Conference organised by the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) and Sanabel, the network of microfinance institutions in Arab countries, entitled "Microfinance in the Mediterranean: What Impact?" The conference brings together almost 400 participants to discuss, with some 30 speakers, issues related to micro-credit institutions, the banking sector, finance institutions, academia and civil society. According to the conclusions of a study published during the conference, microfinance represents a potential market for 40 million beneficiaries.

7-8 May 2008

Tempus

Cairo: Launching of the fourth phase of the Tempus programme designed to support modernisation efforts in higher education in 28 partner countries from the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. The conference also provides a platform for dialogue between university experts and students from the 27 EU Member States and 28 partners of the Tempus programme.

19 May 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: During the first meeting of the Governing Board of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility, European Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner declares that the ENP was already bearing fruit for both the EU and its partners. The Commissioner states that the new Neighbourhood Investment Facility is a clear political message to neighbouring countries that the EU is serious about achieving closer relations and shared prosperity. The facility will mobilise additional funds to finance infrastructure projects mainly in areas such as energy, transport and the environment.

20 May 2008

UfM

Brussels: The EC adopts a communication containing proposals aimed at strengthening relations with its Mediterranean partners thanks to the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.” The main proposal is the creation of a secretariat and standing committee of European and Mediterranean representatives. The policy paper also outlines ideas for the kind of projects that would constitute viable and tangible efforts to improve the lives and livelihoods of citizens in the region.

22 May 2008

Dialogue Night

Dialogue Night aims to bring together civil society groups working in the area of dialogue and the general public to build on the common cultural heritage of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a crossroad of civilisations. Major events and actions take place in towns and cities on both shores of the Mediterranean, including Alexandria, Barcelona, Palermo and Rabat. A variety of events are organised, ranging from food festivals organised by immigrant communities to concerts open to the general public. The events also include a dimension of public debate and discussion on issues regarding coexistence in the region. Dialogue Night is organised to take place exactly one week before decision-makers arrive in Athens for the Euromed Ministerial Conference on Culture and Cultural Dialogue.

www.dialogueinaction.net/dialoguenight

26 May 2008

Financial Cooperation

Brussels: The EIB and the EC sign a memorandum of understanding aimed at improving the coordination of the EU's external lending policies. The aim of the initiative is to facilitate coordination, coherence and synergies between EU assistance instruments and EIB financing, thus increasing the efficiency and visibility of EU action towards third countries.

25-28 May 2008

Intercultural Dialogue

Brussels: The EP receives 21 young Europeans, Israelis and Palestinians, who take part in a meeting organised within the framework of the European Year of

Intercultural Dialogue. The meeting offers young political leaders a unique opportunity to share political and personal experiences and to establish interpersonal relations in a neutral environment.

www.europarl.europa.eu

26 May 2008

Energy

Madrid: The fifth General Assembly of the Association of Mediterranean Regulators for Electricity and Gas (MEDREG) brings together 19 energy regulators from the Mediterranean Basin, all members of MEDREG. The four MEDREG ad hoc groups present the results of their ongoing activities and in particular key evaluation studies on institutional issues and regulatory mechanisms governing renewable energy sources and energy efficacy.

www.remep.org/medreg

26 May 2008

Euromed Migration II

Brussels: More than 76 participants from both MEDA and EU countries participate in the opening conference of the Euromed Migration II project. This new regional project will strengthen EU cooperation with its Mediterranean partners on migration issues and reinforce partners' capabilities. Cooperation will cover issues such as mechanisms to promote legal immigration opportunities, the fight against human trafficking and illegal immigration, and the correlation between migration and development. Four working groups will formulate recommendations respectively on regulatory convergence, the job market, the fight against illegal immigration and money transfers from migrants.

www.euromed-migration.eu

29-30 May 2008

Culture

Athens: The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Culture and Intercultural Dialogue, which is a platform for promoting dialogue between cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region, focuses on analysing actions necessary to reinforce cooperation in the area of culture. In order to accelerate the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean culture strategy, the ministers agree to implement a monitoring mechanism that foresees the establishment of a group of

culture experts who would meet regularly before each ministerial conference.

June 2008

4 June 2008

Principality of Monaco

Brussels: Prince Albert of Monaco, during a meeting with Dimitrij Rupel, the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the GAERC, voices Monaco's wish to join the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and also participate in the Union for the Mediterranean initiative. The Slovenian Minister informs Prince Albert that the Committee of High Representatives has already given a favourable opinion on the Principality of Monaco's membership of the Euromed. He also recalls that the representatives of Monaco are invited to participate as guests at the meeting of high representatives programmed for the following week.

5-6 June 2008

FRONTEX

Luxembourg: EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers reaffirm the need for better management of external borders with better use of technology. In their conclusions on the management of EU external borders, the ministers stress the need to reinforce the role of FRONTEX within the framework of the global approach to migration and the relevant external financial instruments.

6 June 2008

EMPA and UfM

Brussels: Members of the EP express their support for the “fresh political and practical impetus” given to the Barcelona Process in order to raise its profile and highlight its tangible benefits for citizens, in particular, those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. They, nevertheless, ask for concrete projects such as solar electricity and water desalination to be promoted. According to a joint resolution adopted at a plenary session, the EMPA should become the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.

9 June 2008

EMUNI

Portoroz: EU representatives, rectors and other academic representatives par-

ticipate in the inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI). The Slovenian Prime Minister and President of the European Council states that the EMUNI would not have been possible without the solidarity demonstrated, throughout the set-up process, by a great many academic institutions from all over the Euro-Mediterranean region.

www.emuni.si

12 June 2006

Gender Equality

Brussels: Launch of the new regional programme "Enhancing equality between men and women in the Euromed region." The aims of the programme are to support and reinforce current dynamics that favour both *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality, to improve understanding and knowledge of the various forms of violence against women, and to ensure that the Istanbul ministerial conclusions on strengthening the role of women in society are being followed up.

www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net/

16 June 2008

Environment

Tunis: Representatives of Euromed ministries for the environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), financial institutions, EC departments, and representatives of civil society participate in the second meeting of the steering group of the Horizon 2020 initiative, which aims to reduce the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. The participants agree on the next steps that should be undertaken and on the need to look for synergies with initiatives in the region.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/pdf/steeringgroup/agenda_fr.pdf

16 June 2008

Migration

Luxembourg: EU Foreign Ministers underline the importance of continuing the dialogue, partnership and cooperation with third countries on migration issues. In its conclusions on "Enhancing the Global Approach to Migration," the General Affairs Council recalls the measures envisaged within the framework of this approach in terms of priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean.

17 June 2008

Migration

Brussels: The European Commission adopts a communication entitled "A Common Immigration Policy for Europe: Principles, Actions and Tools" and a "Policy Plan on Asylum: an Integrated Approach to Protection Across the EU." The communication puts forward 10 common principles on which to base the common immigration policy. These principles are linked to the three main strands of EU policy: prosperity, solidarity and security. The Policy Plan on Asylum provides for the architecture of the second phase of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

19-20 June 2008

UfM

Brussels: The Heads of State or Government state in their conclusions adopted at the European Council that the EU will conduct the necessary consultations with all Euro-Mediterranean partners with a view to preparing a joint declaration to be adopted at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean on 13 July 2008.

22-30 June 2008

Youth

Ajloun: 24 youth workers and youth leaders representing 14 countries (seven MEDA and seven European) meet to discuss the interactions between religious, spiritual and humanistic traditions, as well as the need to promote understanding and mutual respect of other people's beliefs. Euromed Youth III is an EU-funded regional programme aimed at fostering mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue among young people in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

www.euromedyouth.net/spip.php?breve45

23-24 June 2008

EUPOL COPPS

Luxembourg: The EU adopts a decision on its police mission for the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS) with which it increases the financial reference amount for this mission to six million euros for the period from 1 March 2008 to 31 December 2008 in order to allow for the reinforcement of its activities. The mission is expanded to cover the criminal justice system.

24 June 2008

Committee of the Regions

Marseille: The President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) presents an initiative aimed at establishing a permanent institutional framework for the partnership between the regions and cities of the EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries that will allow them to enter into direct dialogue with the European institutions. The EU's regional programme funds a project named MEDPACT that encourages dialogue and cooperation between cities and their civil societies on both sides of the Mediterranean with the aim of improving mutual understanding.

www.cor.europa.eu

30 June 2008

Justice

Brussels: Opening Conference of the Euromed Justice II project attended by over 60 participants, eight MEDA countries and 17 EU Member States. The global objective of the project is to consolidate the rule of law based on common values, the strengthening of democracy and good governance. The project will sustain the development of institutional capacities of the MEDA partners in the field of justice as well as the modernisation of the legal systems and the improvement of access to justice for the most vulnerable persons.

30 June-1 July 2008

Women

Cairo: Regional Seminar on Women's Economic Participation. The participants debate key challenges facing women in terms of labour force participation and entrepreneurship in the region. Examples are social protection and the right to property.

www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net

July 2008

July 1 2008

French Presidency

Brussels: France takes up the six-month rotating presidency of the EU Council. The President of the Republic and Prime Minister identify four priorities that France would like to see dealt with: overall and consensual management of migration, energy policy and sustainable develop-

ment, agricultural policy and European security and defence.

www.ue2008.fr

2 July 2008

Trade

Marseille: Trade Ministers from 27 EU countries and 13 Mediterranean partner countries (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Turkey, and Libya as an observer) come together for the seventh Euromed Trade Ministerial Conference. The ministers make progress on the ways to enhance economic integration and diversification and boost Euro-Mediterranean trade and investment with the objective of achieving a genuine Free Trade Area by 2010.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/ashton/speeches_articles/sppm210_en.htm

2-3 July

Aviation

Cyprus: Workshop on safety requirements within the framework of the Euromed Aviation project. The workshop is focused on laying the foundation, mechanisms and working arrangements for the extension of the Single Sky initiative to the countries of the Europe Middle East Air Traffic Management Cooperation.

www.euromedtransport.org/index.php?id=462&L=0

4 July 2008

EU-Egypt

Brussels: Negotiators reach a preliminary agreement to further liberalise trade in agricultural, processed agricultural and fish and fishery products between the EU and Egypt. This agreement will form the basis of a future agreement, subject to completion of both sides' internal procedures. The agreement will give the EU free and immediate access to the Egyptian market for around 90% of agriculture and fisheries exports. In return, the EU market will be liberalised for all products except for certain products where current arrangements will continue to apply.

9 July 2008

Galileo

Strasbourg: In a ceremony at the EP, President Hans-Gert Pöttering and the

French Presidency of the Council officially sign into law an important regulation on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), including the Galileo programme. The Galileo project is a global constellation of 30 satellites and ground control infrastructure. The EuropeAid regional programme finances the project METIS, which aims at defining a common, shared Euro-Mediterranean policy on the implementation of GNSS services and at paving the way for the introduction of EGNOS and GALILEO services in the Mediterranean region.

www.euromedinfo.eu/site.168.news.en.4164.html

9-13 July 2008

A Sea of Words

Barcelona: Meeting of winners of the competition "A Sea of Words." The competition is organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) within the framework of the 1001 Actions for Dialogue programme launched by the Anna Lindh Foundation. The project is aimed at the exploration of new approaches in matters of intercultural dialogue that can lead towards an opening of our social environment, contributing to fostering a more dynamic and varied society in which young people can play an important role in the learning process implicit in the mutual understanding of different cultures that live together in the same space made up by the Euro-Mediterranean region.

www.iemed.org/seaofwords/en/index.html

10 July 2008

Migration

Strasbourg: French President and EU Council President Nicolas Sarkozy, and EC President Jose Manuel Barroso, both state that Europe needs to discuss ways of managing immigration. President Sarkozy, on addressing the EP to present the priorities for the French six-month rotating presidency, asks, "is it reasonable for each country to have its own immigration rules without taking into account the impact on others?" He believes immigration and asylum must be debated at European level, citing the problem of asylum seekers who can lodge

27 separate applications throughout the EU.

10 July 2008

ENPI

Brussels: The EP approves the EC proposal for a regulation laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Since 2007, financial support for the ENP and ENP countries is provided through this instrument, which replaces the MEDA and TACIS and other existing instruments. The ENPI is a "policy-driven" instrument operating in the framework of the existing bilateral agreements between the Community and neighbouring countries. It will focus in particular on supporting the implementation of the ENP Action Plans.

11 July 2008

Statistics

Brussels: The EC and Israel sign a memorandum of understanding establishing the basis for a sustainable exchange of data between the Israeli statistical office and Eurostat within the context of the ENP. Israel is the first Mediterranean partner country to sign such a memorandum. The statistical offices of Morocco and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are expected to follow. Negotiations with other Mediterranean partner countries on similar memoranda are being carried out.

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

11 July 2008

EESC

Brussels: The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) underlines the importance of "a strong involvement of civil society organisations and economic and social partners in the institutional framework of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" and expresses "full support" to the initiative, which aims to give new impetus to the process.

<http://eesc.europa.eu>

12 July 2008

EMPA

Brussels: On the eve of the Summit for the Mediterranean, Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the EP and the EMPA, presides an extraordinary meeting of the

Bureau of the Assembly, which approves a declaration underlining the role of the EMPA as a legitimate parliamentary organ of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.

www.europarl.europa.eu

13 July 2008

UfM

Paris: The Paris Summit, co-presided by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France and the European Council, and by Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt, brings together 43 European and Mediterranean states, community institutions, and regional organisations. The summit leads to the signing of a joint declaration that notes that the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean will build on the Barcelona Declaration and its objectives of achieving peace, stability and security, as well as the *acquis* of the Barcelona Process. The leaders express their shared conviction that this initiative can play an important role in addressing common challenges facing the Euro-Mediterranean region, such as economic and social development; the world food security crisis; degradation of the environment; energy; migration; terrorism and extremism; as well as promoting dialogue between cultures.

www.ue2008.fr

16 July 2008

Education

Brussels: The European Commissioner in charge of education and the Israeli Minister of Education sign a joint declaration on cooperation and dialogue in education and training. The declaration will be an effective tool to contribute to the objectives of the 2005 Action Plan under the ENP. The move intensifies cooperation on education and training matters with Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israeli and Palestinian universities now fully profit from participation in the EU's external cooperation programmes in higher education, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus.

16 July 2008

Transport

Brussels: Meeting of the Working Group for Infrastructure and Land Transport Regulatory Issues within the framework of the Euromed Transport programme. The main topic of the discussion is the

monitoring of the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) and the next steps toward fulfilling the aims of the RTAP. The experts agree to propose a list of priority projects that can be funded within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean or other programmes.

www.euromedtransport.org/index.php?id=48&L=0

17 July 2008

Lebanon

Brussels: The EC will provide a total of 42 million euros in assistance to Lebanon under the ENP. Core sectors for this assistance are the development of the private sector, local development in northern Lebanon and the modernisation of the justice system. The Commissioner for External Relations and ENP comments that the improvement of rule of law, a stronger private sector and reconstruction in northern Lebanon would all contribute to the political and economic stabilisation of the country.

24-25 July 2008

Migration

Brussels: EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs discuss the state of progress made with the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum. The Council also holds a policy debate on two draft directives: one relating to the conditions of entry and residence for third country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment; the other concerning sanctions that may be taken against undocumented migrants.

27 July-1 August 2008

Journalism

Malta: The European Neighbourhood Journalist Network (ENJN) organises its first training session, in which a team of reporters from the Middle East delves into the thorny issue of illegal immigration on the island of Malta. Reporters from Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Syria spent the week working on their journalistic skills. The ENJN is a regional project aimed at training journalists from southern Mediterranean, Eastern European and southern Caucasus countries and facilitating networking between journalists from these regions.

www.journalismnetwork.eu

August 2008

1 August 2008

EU-Israel

Brussels: The EU and Israel reach a preliminary agreement to further liberalise trade in agricultural and processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products. This will form the basis of a future agreement, subject to completion of both sides' internal procedures. Once adopted, the agreement will create new trade opportunities for EU exporters in a large range of products that could not previously reach the Israeli market. Israel's major export sectors will benefit from better access to the EU market.

20 August 2008

PEGASE

Brussels: The EU provides an additional 40 million euros to the Palestinian Authority to help meet its recurrent expenditures and ensure the continued delivery of public services. The funds will be used to help pay for salaries and pensions, social allowances to vulnerable Palestinian families and fuel for the power plant to provide electricity to the people of Gaza. The funds are channelled through PEGASE, the EU assistance mechanism for the Palestinians.

www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu

September 2008

15-17 September 2008

Migration

Brussels: In the framework of the programme Euromed Migration II, the first session of the working group is dedicated to travel documentation and identification of migrants. It deals with the prevention of falsification and forgery of travel and other documents and the use of information technologies for efficient immigration control. The working group is composed of high level officials from the EU and Mediterranean countries.

www.euromed-migration.eu

19 September 2008

Human Rights

Brussels: In a written statement released by the French EU Council Presidency, the EU expresses its concern with the situation regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria. The EU

condemns the recent arbitrary arrests and says it is deeply troubled by the restrictions on freedom of expression. It calls on Damascus to abide by the international commitments it has freely entered into.

www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/102845.pdf

22-23 September 2008

Justice

Barcelona: Meeting of Working Group on Access to Justice and Legal Aid within the framework of the Euromed Justice programme. Participants at the first meeting on "The Universal Meaning of Access to Justice" present and discuss the current situation in their countries. The working group will make proposals on how to improve access to justice, practical tools to implement, access to justice for more vulnerable people, justice efficacy and means to accelerate procedures.

www.euromed-justice.eu

24-26 September 2008

Drug trafficking

Toulon: The French Presidency of the EU Council organises a seminar on the fight against drug trafficking in the western Mediterranean. The meeting follows up on a previous meeting held in Paris that brought together officials from the relevant national and international bodies for combating drug trafficking (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, Europol, Interpol, the European Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) to take stock of drug trafficking in the western Mediterranean Basin. The conclusions of the meeting set forth the need to set up an operational centre for the analysis of maritime intelligence on narcotics in the Mediterranean.

October 2008

6-10 October 2008

Journalism

Beirut: Around 20 French-speaking journalists from Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia are invited to participate in the second seminar organised within the ENJN programme on "Conflict Res-

olution in the Middle East with Assistance from the EU." Following exchanges and meetings, the journalists produce television and radio reports and publish articles in their countries.

www.journalismnetwork.eu

7 October 2008

Finance

Luxembourg: The Euro-Mediterranean Finance Ministers move forward on the financing of specific projects for the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean and affirm their determination to continue their work in favour of economic growth despite the financial, energy and food crisis. According to a press release issued by the French Presidency of the EU Council, the ministers emphasise the role played by the FEMIP in three of the projects: the depollution of the Mediterranean, motorways of the sea and the Mediterranean solar plan. Lastly, the ministers express their support for the approach adopted by Italy and Spain to implement the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative.

7 October 2008

Energy

Brussels: The expert group of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum meets to discuss the 2008-2013 Priority Action Plan for Energy Cooperation and other topics such as the state of play of cooperation in the area of market integration and regulatory harmonisation, sustainable development, and developments in energy interconnections and infrastructure projects of common interest in the region.

9-10 October 2008

Aviation

Luxembourg: The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council adopts a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Lebanon to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Air Agreement. This move is based on the Commission's opinion on the need to establish a general aviation policy vis-à-vis the EU's neighbouring countries. The purpose of this agreement will be to align legislative provisions and establish cooperation on security, safety and environmental standards. It will also be aimed at ensuring the gradual open-

ing of markets between the EU and Lebanon.

www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/trans/103282.pdf

10-11 October 2008

Youth

Amman: Conclusion of the 3rd phase of the Euro-Med Youth programme promoting the mobility of young people. The last meeting brings together representatives of the Euromed Youth Units, national agencies for the Youth in Action Programme, the EC, and some partner institutions. The meeting is an opportunity to provide an update on the last two years of cooperation, to present the main outcomes and share perspectives for future cooperation in a new phase to be launched in 2009.

www.euromedyouth.net

12-13 October 2008

EMPA

Jordan: During the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) recommends that the EMPA become the parliamentary institution of the process. The EMPA wishes to see a legal base created and a formal link established between the executive branch and the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. The recommendation, adopted during the extraordinary plenary session defined the role of the EMPA as a consultative body.

www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

13 October 2008

EU-Morocco

Brussels: During the 7th meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council, the EU approves a package of measures designed to grant Morocco "advanced status" within the framework of the ENP and to strengthen its ties with Europe. These measures concern in particular cooperation in political and security matters, the preparation of a comprehensive and deeper free trade agreement, the gradual integration of Morocco into a number of EU sectoral policies, and the development of people-to-people exchanges.

www.delmar.ec.europa.eu/fr/maroc_home/index.htm

14-16 October 2008

EESC

Rabat: Euro-Mediterranean civil society organisations call for a greater implication of civil society organisations in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. This declaration is made at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils and similar Institutions organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in conjunction with Moroccan civil society organisations, with the support of Morocco's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EC.

<http://eesc.europa.eu>

16 October 2008

Migration

Brussels: The European Council adopts the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, which expresses the commitment of the EU and its Member States to conduct a fair, effective and consistent policy for dealing with the challenges and opportunities that migration represents. The pact will form the basis, for the EU and its Member States, of a common immigration and asylum policy, guided by a spirit of solidarity between Member States and cooperation with third countries. The Council also reaffirms the objective of an overall agreement on issues regarding energy and climate change by the end of the year.

16-17 October 2008

EuroMeSCo

Amman: Annual EuroMeSCo Conference, entitled "Euro-Mediterranean Relations Between Continuity and Reinforced Cooperation. Quo Vadis Barcelona?" The choice of topic for this conference corresponds to the current concern about Euro-Mediterranean relations. The French initiative designed to re-dynamise the somewhat languishing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, forcibly introduces into the agenda the re-evaluation of the Process launched in Barcelona in 1995. The experts at the conference also discuss the dimensions and objectives of the Barcelona Process and the soundness of its foundations.

www.euromesco.net

31 October-2 November 2008

Euromed Civil Forum

Marseille: Civil society actors gather at

the 2008 Euromed Civil Forum to identify recommendations and proposals to send to Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. The final statement insists particularly on the need to respect human rights and the rights of migrants on both the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. A range of proposals are presented; for example, the elimination of short-term visas, which according to the declaration, hamper family ties and people-to-people exchanges and also affect artistic, scientific, and educational exchanges.

www.euromedplatform.org

November 2008

3-4 November 2008

Ministerial Meeting

Marseille: The Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers adopt a final declaration on the following areas: the institutional structures of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, their work programme for 2009, the fields of cooperation to be pursued and the state of progress in the implementation of projects that have already got the green light. The ministers propose renaming the process "Union for the Mediterranean" (UfM). They decide that the League of Arab States should participate in all meetings to contribute positively to the objectives of the process, i.e., the establishment of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region. On the structure of the UfM, it is decided that the co-presidency should apply to summits and meetings and that one of the co-presidents will be from the EU and the other from the Mediterranean partner countries. Barcelona was chosen as the seat of the Secretariat.

3-4 November 2008

Euromed Audiovisual II

Marseille: The Euromed Audiovisual II programme is featured in the Mediterranean Cultural Forum (EGCM). Eight thematic seminars are organised following the Civil Forum and the Interministerial Conference, which gather the 43 countries of the UfM, on themes spanning the entire cultural action (heritage, arts, education, etc.) in order to de-

velop this new entity's cultural policies. The programme presents to an audience of European and Mediterranean audiovisual representatives the strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual cooperation produced by a reflection group.

www.euromedaudiovisuel.net

5 November 2008

Arab League

Brussels: Secretary General of the League of Arab States Amr Moussa meets the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee as part of the Arab Week at the European Parliament. Moussa states that he hopes for a change of method in the Middle East with the arrival of the new American government and recalls that they need the EU's commitment in the peace process. He says that it is necessary to put an end to the settlements in the occupied territories and welcomes the fact that it has been decided at the Ministerial Summit in Marseille that the Arab League should participate in the Union for the Mediterranean at all levels.

www.europarl.europa.eu

5-6 November 2008

Industry

Nice: Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Industry Ministers to decide further measures to deepen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on enterprise and industry policies for the subsequent two years (2009-2010). The ministerial meeting adopts a report of an analysis of the business environment in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian territories, Syria and Tunisia. The report underlines the efforts made to promote enterprise creation but mentions that more work is needed to effectively promote entrepreneurship, in particular among women and young graduates.

6 November 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The EP Foreign Affairs Committee gives its assent for increased participation by Israel in community programmes as part of the ENP. An accompanying resolution links this participation to respect for the commitments given by Israel at the Annapolis summit. The members of Parliament state that

companies and organisations based in the settlements in the occupied territories should not be eligible to take part in the process.

www.europarl.europa.eu

9-10 November 2008

Employment

Marrakesh: The employment and labour ministers from the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries meet at their first ministerial conference on employment and work, which focuses on the human potential of the Euro-Mediterranean area. The conference provides the opportunity to examine various aspects of human development and to advance specific proposals aimed at fostering job creation, the modernisation of labour markets and decent work. The ministers also discuss the resources and tools to implement to give the Euro-Mediterranean project a social dimension.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/conf

10 November 2008

EU-Jordan

Brussels: The 7th EU-Jordan Association Council provides the occasion to conduct a general review between the EU and Jordan. The EU is conscious of the determined commitment by this country to work for regional development and stability. Jordan, a founding member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, is one of the very first countries to enter into relations with the EU through an Association Agreement and later a Neighbourhood Action Plan. The launch of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean will give fresh impetus to relations.

11 November 2008

EU-Tunisia

Brussels: The 7th EU-Tunisia Association Council provides the EU and Tunisia with the opportunity to take stock of their cooperation and economic and trade relations. Tunisia is the first southern Mediterranean country to form a free-trade area on industrial goods with the EU. Within this context, the EU says that it is willing to study the Tunisian proposal for an enhanced partnership along the lines of the "advanced status" enjoyed by Morocco.

12 November 2008

EU-Libya

Brussels: Libya and the EU start negotiations with a view to closing the EU-Libya framework agreement. The agreement will provide for political dialogue and cooperation on foreign policy and security issues, for a free trade area, and for cooperation in key areas of common concern such as energy, transport, migration, visas, justice and home affairs, the environment, maritime policy, fisheries, education and public health. Fundamental principles underpinning the agreement will be the respect for human rights and democracy, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and commitment to the rules of the market economy.

16-17 November 2008

Health

Cairo: Health Ministers of the 27 EU Member States and their counterparts from 16 Mediterranean partner countries meet to make health one of the priorities of the UfM. The ministers discuss improving regional cooperation in the area of monitoring and surveillance of communicable diseases, the sharp growth in chronic diseases in partner countries and strengthening national healthcare systems.

17 November 2008

EuroMedScola

Strasbourg: The first meeting of EuroMedScola enables 250 young people aged 16 to 18 to debate key issues facing the Mediterranean region, such as migration, education, energy and transport. The students call for exchange programmes between students from all the partner countries of the Union for the Mediterranean to be set up. They also advise governments in the Euro-Mediterranean region to promote educational reforms that will allow the diffusion of the idea of equal opportunity at all levels.

www.europarl.europa.eu

20 November 2008

Medibtikar

Marseille: The aim of the conference entitled "Towards the Creation of a Regional Innovation Financing Instrument for the Mediterranean" is to examine with interested partners an action plan

for setting up a financing and accompanying instrument for innovative start-ups in the Mediterranean region. Medibtikar aims at providing Mediterranean Partner Countries with new instruments designed to reinforce existing SME supporting structures in order to stimulate the innovation chain.

www.animaweb.org

25 November 2008

Energy

Istanbul: Representatives of the national energy agencies of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey attend a Power Breakfast organised by the EU-funded project Euro-Mediterranean Energy Market Integration Project (MED-EMIP). Among the issues presented is the development of a tool to rationalise the allocation of financial resources to renewable energy projects within the different countries taking account of local conditions. It is stated that a team of national expert institutions is to be formed and supported by regional and international experts in order to help allocate scarce limited local budgets most efficiently. The parties also agree on the need and importance of south-south and north-south cooperation.

www.medemip.eu

28 November 2008

Tempus Programme

Brussels: The EC gives its approval to 63 university cooperations and 13 other high-quality projects under the new phase of the Tempus programme, selected from 530 applications. In total, 900 universities (600 from partner countries and 300 from EU Member States) will participate in these projects. The aim of the Tempus programme is to support the modernisation of higher education and to create an area of cooperation in countries outside the EU.

December 2008

2 December 2008

Energy

Brussels: The EC and the Arab Republic of Egypt sign a memorandum of understanding to enhance EU-Egypt energy cooperation. The areas covered

by the memorandum are energy market reforms and convergence of Egypt's energy market with that of the EU, promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, development of energy networks as well as technological and industrial cooperation.

2 December 2008

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The Palestinian Authority and the EC hold the first ever meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Good Governance and the Rule of Law within the framework of the ENP. 40 participants from Palestinian Authority ministries, the EC and EU Member States convene to review progress and agree on steps for further action in the area of cooperation.

www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu/en/what-snew/84.htm

8-9 December 2008

Association Agreements

Brussels: The European Council welcomes the deepening cooperation with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan. It also welcomes the willingness of Algeria to fully apply the Association Agreement signed with the EU, as well as the re-initiation of negotiations with Libya and the willingness of Egypt to deepen its cooperation with the EU. The Council also announces the future start of the establishment of an Association Agreement between the EU and Syria and recalls the deepening of bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority.

9 December 2008

Aviation

Brussels: The EC and Israel sign an aviation agreement to remove nationality restrictions in bilateral air service agreements between EU Member States and Israel. The agreement will allow any EU airline to operate flights between any EU Member State and Israel where a bilateral agreement with Israel exists and where traffic rights are available.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air/international_aviation

12 December 2008

Transport

Brussels: The 9th meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum is held in Brussels with the participation of high representatives of the European Commission, Mediterranean countries, EU Member States, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank. The participants analyse future activities to define a Euro-Mediterranean transport network and to submit finalised proposals to the next forum and to the Ministerial Conference on Transport for approval in 2009.

www.euromedtransport.org/518.0.html?&L=1

15-17 December 2008

Migration

Brussels: Second working group session on legislative convergence and institutional reform dedicated to the topic of "International Legislation on Migration and International Institutions." The aim of the

meeting is to present the content of the international law on migration and discuss its application in MEDA countries compared to in EU countries.

www.euromed-migration.eu

18 December 2008

Vocational Training

Paris: Euro-Mediterranean Forum on technical and vocational education and training. The topics discussed by approximately 200 participants are what is at stake for the Maghreb and Mashreq countries in developing vocational training and strengthening its effectiveness; an overview of the various vocational training systems in the region and their characteristics; an identification of the most important needs in terms of vocational training; and an exploratory discussion of ways and means to deepen vocational training cooperation.

22 December 2008

Water

Amman: The Euromed Ministerial Conference on Water has two goals: to set the guidelines for a long-term strategy on water in the Mediterranean, and to announce the first concrete projects that are coherent with this strategy. As the problem of water is of interest to all stakeholders (local authorities, companies, non-government associations, researchers, etc.), civil society actors are also invited to meet in order to make an important contribution to this conference.

www.medaquaministerial2008.net