

Chronology of the Barcelona Process

The chronology that follows includes the most notable events that took place during 2005 as regards the Barcelona Process.

January 2005

1st January 2005

Trade

Brussels: The 22 December EU Council of Ministers decision enters into force. This decision extends the deregulation of agricultural trade between the EU and Palestine. The Palestinian products that benefit from the new regulation include tomatoes, grapes, strawberries, flowers and olive oil.

11th January 2005

MEDA

Brussels: The statistics concerning the implementation of the EuropeAid budget for the Mediterranean area are presented. Commitments amount to more than 1 billion euros, while payments exceed 1,1 billion. As regards the MEDA programme, commitments represent 700 million while payments total 800 million. Payments during 2004 represent the same total as the investments under the entire MEDA I programme between 1995 and 1999.

13th/14th January 2005

Investments

Marseilles: Euro-Mediterranean Investment Summit organised by *The Economist* and the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Investment Promotion Agencies (ANIMA) programme financed under MEDA. During this meeting, various aspects of investments in the Mediterranean region are discussed and a study undertaken by ANIMA is presented,

stressing the increase in investment projects over the past year.

24th January 2005

Luxembourg Presidency

Brussels: The Council of the European Union meeting makes a note of the priorities of the Luxembourg presidency. The priorities for the Mediterranean region include consolidating the achievements of the Barcelona Process, as well as entrenching the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

25th January 2005

Parliamentary Assembly

Brussels: Meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly's Political Committee, which deals with, *inter alia*, the proposal to create an earthquake and tsunami alert system in the Mediterranean region, the Palestinian elections and the drafting of a report on the Barcelona Process.

26th January 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting of the Senior Officials of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, at which they discuss, *inter alia*, the priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency or the relations between the Barcelona Process and the strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and Middle East. The opportunities for the Peace Process following the Palestinian elections are also highlighted. Regarding the preparations for the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the Commission announces a communication that will be sent out in the Spring.

26th/27th January 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: At the meeting, the priorities

of the Luxembourg presidency under the economic and human chapters of the Barcelona Process are presented. There is also a discussion about how to increase the Partnership's visibility in view of the 10th anniversary. The Committee also approves the Anna Lindh Foundation programme and budget, which will hold its opening session on 20 April. The Committee approves the official logo to represent the activities of the ten years of the Barcelona Process.

31st January 2005

Scientific-technical cooperation

Brussels: The Council of Ministers of the EU adopts a decision to authorise the signing of a scientific and technical agreement with Egypt. This agreement will allow the Egyptian scientific community to join the European Research Area and increase Egypt's participation in the activities of 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Development.

31st January 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Israel

Brussels: The EU Council of Ministers adopts a decision to authorise the signing of an Association Agreement protocol with Israel which adapts the agreement in order to take into consideration the joining of ten new Member States in the EU from 1st May 2004 onwards. This is the third in a series of protocols that must be signed with all the Mediterranean member countries with which the EU has entered into Association Agreements.

February 2005

4th February 2005

FEMIP

Athens: The Greek government pledges

2 million euros into the FEMIP Trust Fund. This Fund of 20-40 million euros was set up at the end of 2004 to finance global technical assistance and venture capital transactions, allowing EU countries to channel additional funds for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

13th-15th February 2005

EU-Jordan

Amman: Meeting of three of the EU-Jordan subcommittees. The Research and Innovation subcommittee deals with matters such as Jordan's participation in the 6th framework EU research programme and Marie Curie grants, which are the first steps in the negotiations towards the EU-Jordan agreement on science and technology. The Industry, Trade, Services and Investment subcommittee deals with the deregulation of trading goods and the suppression of non-tariff customs barriers, among others.

21st February 2005

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The Council of the EU decides on the position that the EU will maintain in the Association Councils with Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as in the joint EU-Palestinian Authority Committee in view of the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Plans of Action with these Mediterranean partners. During this meeting, the Council condemns the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

23rd February 2005

European Parliament

Brussels: The European Parliament adopts a resolution on the EU's relations with the Mediterranean region. The Parliament calls on the Council and Commission to renew efforts to emphasise democracy and contribute to promoting the necessary political, economic and social reforms in Mediterranean countries. The Parliament also calls on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. In addition, it expresses its satisfaction for the increase and improvement in the return on the funds of the MEDA programme.

28th February and 1st March 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting between the Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, at which the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Policy Institutes Network (EuroMeSCo) report on the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process is presented, which was written at the request of the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs ministers. The report considers the need to revise the Partnership in order to create a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States and integrate the (ENP) in the Partnership. The Senior Officials also discuss the Partnership's construction measures, the prevention of tsunamis in the Mediterranean, programmes in the field of justice, freedom and security, among others.

28th February and 1st March 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: At the meeting, the report written by the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Economic Institutes (FEMISE) on the economic aspects of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process is presented, which was drafted at the request of the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Offices. The report stresses the insufficient convergence between the economies of the region and the demographic problems. It proposes four lines of action: entrenchment of reforms, reinforcement of the role played by the private sector and civil society, promotion of investment and R&D. Some of the key points of the report are approved by the Mediterranean representatives, while the EU highlights the progress made on matters such as the signing of the Association Agreements, the gradual establishing of the Free Trade Area and the improvement in financial cooperation. Later, the Committee meets as the Board of Directors of the Anna Lindh Foundation, in order to discuss the preparations for the Foundation's opening ceremony planned for the 20 April in Alexandria.

March 2005

2nd March 2005

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The European Commission

publishes the country reports on Egypt and Lebanon, which lay the foundations for the development of the national plans of action under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The country reports submit an analysis of the political, economic and institutional reforms in these countries. The decision to negotiate Plans of Action with Egypt and Lebanon was taken by the Council of the EU, although in the case of Lebanon the schedule of negotiations will depend on the development of the internal political situation.

7th and 8th March 2005

FEMIP

Luxembourg: Meeting of the FEMIP Committee of Experts which presents a series of recommendations to modernise financial markets in view of the FEMIP ministerial conference. The experts also stress the need for greater cooperation between the main political and economic actors in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The recommendations include aspects such as the development and implementation of regulations and supervision systems, improved competitiveness of the banking system and product diversification.

12th-15th March 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)

Cairo: First EMPA plenary session at which delegations of the Mediterranean member countries, of the parliaments of EU member countries and of the European Parliament emphasise the centrality of the Barcelona Process as the main instrument for association and talks between the Euro-Mediterranean partners. In the final declaration, the progress of the ENP's development as a mechanism to enhance the Barcelona Process is received positively. Among other issues, the parliaments outline the Process' principle of joint responsibility and they ask the EU to play a more noticeable political role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, to promote investment in the Mediterranean region and the EMPA committees are asked to propose the creation of a civil protection instrument in the region.

16th March 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Morocco

Brussels: The EU Council of Ministers

adopts a decision regarding the signing and provisional application of an Association Agreement protocol with Morocco which adapts the agreement in order to take into consideration the joining of ten new Member States in the EU from 1 May 2004 onwards. This is the fourth in a series of protocols that must be signed with all the Mediterranean member countries with which the EU has entered into Association Agreements.

16th March 2005

Lebanon

Brussels: The Council of the EU calls for the Syrian troops to be withdrawn in accordance with resolution 1559 of the United Nations Security Council. The European Parliament had approved a resolution in this same regard on 10 March. Both declarations stress the importance of free, democratic and transparent elections in Lebanon.

17th March 2005

Palestine

Brussels: The MED Committee approves the National Financial Plan 2005 (Part I) which involves a contribution of 70 million euros in the Trust Fund to reform the public financial management of the World Bank for the Palestinian National Authority. This contribution is in addition to other types of European aid provided to Palestine.

22nd-23rd March 2005

Lebanon

Brussels: The European Council takes a decision regarding Lebanon which approves the conclusions adopted by the Council of Ministers on 16 March. The Heads of State and Government confirm their commitment to a sovereign, independent and democratic Lebanon. They appeal to Syria to withdraw its troops and intelligence services.

31st March 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Algeria

Algiers: Algeria completes the ratification procedure for the Association Agreement with the EU. The agreement is ratified by the National Council (upper house). This had been approved previously by the National Assembly (lower chamber) on 14 March. The par-

liaments of the EU member countries have not yet completely ratified the agreement.

April 2005

1st-3rd April 2005

Civil society

Luxembourg: The Euromed Civil Forum is held, which is the first prepared and organised by the Euromed Non-governmental Platform. The Forum's final declaration calls for the setting up of permanent consultation mechanisms with civil society under the Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The Forum's recommendations focus on the need to reduce the gap between declarations of intentions and the implementation of policies concerning human rights, equal rights, immigrant rights, respect for international law when solving conflicts, employment policies, fight against poverty, sustainable development or cultural diversity. www.euromedforum.org

4th-5th April 2005

Agriculture

Rabat: Senior Officials of the Mediterranean and EC Member Countries participate in a seminar on the deregulation of agricultural trade in order to prepare the ministerial conference planned to be held in May. The participants propose a draft agriculture waybill in which measures are put forward to stimulate cooperation and agricultural trade, some of which could be included in the ENP Plans of Action.

6th April 2005

Textile

Brussels: The European Commission agrees to publish the directives related to the possible use of a safeguard clause envisaged by the WTO against textile imports from China. The potential increase in these European imports from China particularly concerns producers in Mediterranean member countries. The textile industries in Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey sell around 95% of their products in the European market.

11th April 2005

Information technology

Dundalk: The first Euro-Mediterranean

ministerial meeting on information technologies is held. In the final declaration, the ministers acknowledge the need to boost cooperation in this field. There are plans to set up an Information Society working group in order to maintain continuous talks in the area. The ministers think that the e-government should be a priority area as regards aid given to Mediterranean member countries and they agree to promote a Euromed initiative to foster the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education. They also agree to revise the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation programmes that are underway and develop a joint strategy that allows the Mediterranean member countries to benefit from the positive effects of ICT.

11th April 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting between the Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to discuss two seminars planned for May and June, i.e. one on security in the Mediterranean and another on crisis management. A Euro-Mediterranean seminar on antipersonnel mines is also discussed. Before the meeting, a special meeting on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is held, which discusses the draft action programme to reinforce Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in this field.

11th-12th April 2005

Economy

Brussels: Ninth seminar of Experts on economic transition which focuses on the economic achievements of the Partnership and Association Agreements in view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. During the seminar, the Commission's Directorate General for economic and financial affairs submits an assessment document of the tenth anniversary of the Partnership. http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/etn/index.htm
http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/publications/occasional_papers/occasionalpapers17_en.htm

12th April 2005

Work programme

Brussels: The European Commission

adopts a work programme for the next five years to reinforce the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. In the communication, the Commission summarises a series of specific proposals to make progress in the three priority areas: Education, Sustainable Economic Growth and Democracy and Human Rights. The programme also covers subjects such as Justice, Migration, Foreign Policy and Security, especially the fight against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the Middle East peace process and civil society's role in the Partnership.

12th April 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: At the Committee meeting, the Commission's Communication, submitted that same day, is considered to be positive. The Luxembourg presidency submits the draft directives for the next Euro-Mediterranean summit. The Commission reports on the Euromed Civil Forum held in Luxembourg. The meeting also deals with subjects such as cooperation in education or Mediterranean rules of origin. Later, the Committee meets as the Board of Directors of the Anna Lindh Foundation, to which two reports are submitted, one by the presidency of the Foundation and another by the Executive Director.

13th April 2005

Med Committee

Brussels: At the Committee meeting, the MEDA II Regional Financial Plan 2005 (part I) is considered to be positive. This plan, worth 155 million euros, includes contributions for the FEMIP, as well as support for three transactions, *inter alia*, that aim to boost talks between both shores of the Mediterranean: "Partnership for peace" that supports civil activities in Israel and Palestine; the Anna Lindh Foundation and the MED-PACT association programme between cities of the North and of the South.

15th-16th April 2005

Ministerial Conference

Senningen: At the informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers on relations be-

tween the Mediterranean and Middle East, the ministers state their conviction that the reforms can only be successful if they are developed by the societies themselves and under no circumstances are they imposed from outside.

14th April 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Israel

Jerusalem: The fourth EU-Israel association Committee meeting is the first since the conclusion of the ENP Plan of Action. Those present discuss the implementation of the Plan of Action, the deregulation of agricultural trade and how trade with the Palestinians can be facilitated. In the field of political talks, the themes are the Middle East situation, anti-Semitism, the fight against terrorism and the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process.

19th April 2005

Cities

Brussels: The Eurocities network, which unites 121 European cities and includes a Euro-Mediterranean working group, explains its stance regarding the future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the role that the cities in the region must play. The network urges Euro-Mediterranean governments and European institutions to acknowledge cities in Euro-Mediterranean relations and in the ENP. The network calls for a Euro-Mediterranean forum of local governments to set up a specific program for cities. The network members are already part of the MED'ACT pilot programme for cooperation between cities financed by the MEDA programme. www.eurocities.org

25th April 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Tunisia

Brussels: The EU Council of Ministers adopts a decision approving the signing and provisional application of an Association Agreement protocol with Tunisia which adapts the agreement in order to take into consideration the joining of ten new Member States in the EU from 1 May 2004 onwards. This is the fourth in a series of protocols that must be signed with all the Mediterranean member countries with which the EU has entered into Association Agreements.

25th April 2005

Neighbourhood

Brussels: The Council of the EU favourably assesses the Egypt and Lebanon national reports under the ENP. These reports form the basis on which the national ENP Plans of Action are prepared. The Council also submits its conclusions on the Peace Process and the Lebanon situation.

27th April 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Algeria

Brussels: First informal meeting on the EU-Algeria economic talks among Senior Officials since the ratification of the Association Agreement. Themes include plans to reform the Algerian government, the creation of a favourable atmosphere for investment and preparations for the implementation of the Association Agreement. One of the demands made by the Algerian representatives is the need to clarify the relationship between the Barcelona Process and the ENP.

May 2005

9th May 2005

Road Map

Moscow: Quartet meeting at which a declaration is adopted that emphasises that times are promising for both Palestinians and for Israelis, who deserve full support from the international community. In addition, the Quartet states its commitment to support the efforts of both to ensure a successful withdrawal of Israeli from Gaza and from some regions of the West Bank.

10th May 2005

Human aid

Brussels: The European Commission announces the allocation of 28.3 million euros of human aid for one million Palestinians in Palestine and Lebanon. The aid will go to food and water supplies, health services, job opportunities, health and protection of the underprivileged. The aid will be channelled through ECHO, the EU human aid agency.

13th May 2005

Development

Edinburgh: The European Investment Bank and twelve development financial

institutions (members of the European Association of Development Finance Institutions, EDFI), sign an agreement to boost cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The members of the EDFI have consolidated an investment portfolio of 750 million euros invested in private sector companies in the region until the end of 2004. For its part, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has loaned 4,500 million euros through the FEMIP since it was set up in 2002.

18th May 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting between Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership focussed on the preparation of the seventh Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference planned for the 30-31 May in Luxembourg, and especially on the draft conclusions document. They discuss the proposals from member countries, which will continue to be dealt with by the Luxembourg presidency through consultations with the former. The Senior Officials also look at the future seminar on antipersonnel mines. The meeting is preceded by an *ad hoc* meeting about terrorism.

19th May 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: The themes of the Committee meeting are the preparations for the ministerial conference at the end of the month relating to chapters 2 and 3 of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In addition, representatives of the Euromed Non-governmental Platform submit the results of the Euromed Civil Forum in Luxembourg and request to be allowed into the Committee on a regular basis in order to put forward their points of view and remain informed about the Partnership's development. Later, the Committee meets as the Board of Directors of the Anna Lindh Foundation, to which two reports are submitted, one by the Luxembourg presidency and another by the Executive Director of the Foundation.

23rd May 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Lebanon

Brussels: The EU Council of Ministers adopts a decision approving the signing and provisional application of an interim EU-Lebanon trade agreement protocol which adapts the agreement in

order to take into consideration the joining of ten new Member States in the EU from 1 May 2004 onwards. Protocols of this type must be signed with all the Mediterranean member countries with which the EU has entered into Association Agreements or interim agreements.

23rd May 2005

Anna Lindh Foundation

Alexandria: The Anna Lindh Foundation is given legal status in Egypt, after which the legal conditions are set up to be able to receive funds, five million euros, under the MEDA programme.

30th-31st May 2005

Ministerial meeting

Luxembourg: The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers ends with an agreement on conclusions. There has not been an agreement between all members on conclusions since 1995. The ministers assess the achievements over the ten years of the Partnership's existence and discuss the Special Conference that will take place in Barcelona on 27-28 November. The ministers state that in spite of the progress made, there is still a long way to go to develop the potential of the Barcelona Declaration. The ministers stress that the Association Agreements lay down solid foundations to develop the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In addition, the ministers consider the setting up of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Non-governmental Platform to be positive, as well as the FEMIP and MEDA programme activities. Looking to the future, the ministers consider the need to improve the Partnership's activities in order to adapt them to the population. The ministers recommend preparing a waybill for the creation of the Free Trade Area in 2010 and for the deregulation of agricultural trade and services.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/publication/2005/report_90_en.pdf

June 2005

2nd June 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Jordan

The EU-Jordan Association Council

takes a decision regarding the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Plan of Action. The plan's priorities focus on reinforcing the rule of law, promoting freedom of the press and equal rights, improving the business climate and increasing the country's export potential, implementing sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, as well as the development of sectors such as energy, transport and information society.

3rd June 2005

Migration

Luxembourg: The Council of the EU adopts conclusions about cooperation with Libya regarding migration, in which specific talks between the EU and Libya are considered to be appropriate in order to be able to implement cooperation mechanisms with the Libyan authorities. The Council points out that since Libya is not part of the Barcelona Process, cooperation is limited to certain areas and to a certain technical level.

9th June 2005

Freedom of press

Brussels: The European Parliament adopts a resolution regarding the freedom of press in Algeria. In this resolution, the Parliament appeals to the Algerian authorities to release the journalists imprisoned for libel.

16th June 2005

MEDA II

Brussels: The European Commission adopts a package of 155 million euros under the Regional Financial Plan 2005 of the MEDA II programme (1st part). The funds will be divided into three main areas: investment, talks and study networks. As far as investment is concerned, 100 million euros will be allocated to the FEMIP venture capital fund while another 25 million will go to the FEMIP technical assistance fund. As concerns talks, ten million euros will be allocated to promoting talks between civil society organisations in Israel and Palestine under the Middle East Peace Process, another five million will be used to finance the Anna Lindh Foundation for a period of five years, and, finally, five million will go to the MED-PACT pro-

gramme for cooperation between local authorities. Lastly, the MEDA programme backing for Euro-Mediterranean study networks, about politics and security on the one hand and economic affairs on the other, is renewed with funds of five million euros allocated to each of the networks.

16th-17th June

European Council

Brussels: The European Council Meeting deals with several important subjects for Mediterranean member countries. It considers the ministerial conference in Luxembourg to be favourable and it takes note of the situation regarding the ENP as well as the Strategic Partnership in the Mediterranean Region and the Middle East, reaching an agreement on the need to pay more attention to the countries to the east of Jordan. The Council also adopts a declaration regarding the Peace Process in the EU and states its willingness to continue with its actions to find a solution to the conflict. It also adopts a declaration regarding the Lebanon, reasserting the importance that the EU attaches to the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/publication/2005/report_91_en.pdf

17th June 2005

FEMIP

Rabat: Signing of two loans for transport projects during the opening of the European Investment Bank (EIB) headquarters in Rabat. One of the loans (70 million euros) will be used to complete the Marrakech-Tangiers motorway, while the other (60 million euros) will be used to improve 2,300 km of rural roads.

19th-20th June

Economy

Skhirat: First ministerial meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Economy and Finance, which stress the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a framework to promote economic reforms and cooperation. The ministers agree that particular attention should be paid to four priority areas: improving the business climate, deregulating and opening up the economy,

updating public institutions and consolidating macroeconomic stability.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/ecofin/index.htm

20th June

FEMIP

Skhirat: Fourth FEMIP ministerial meeting at which the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Finance reassert their commitment to creating a closer economic and financial partnership. The ministers approve expert recommendations in the fields of water, health and transport. In the banking and financial sector, the participants request more direct support, as well as the publication of a Debt Management manual.

20th June

FEMIP

Skhirat: Signing of an 80-million euro loan for five science-technology parks. Each of the parks will be targeted at a specific sector: food and agriculture (Bizerte), textiles (Monastir), information technologies (Sfax), biotechnology (Sidi Thabet) and mechanical and electronic engineering (Sousse).

22nd June 2005

Sustainable development

Athens: The Mediterranean Sustainable Development Commission, an advisory body for the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), a United Nations programme within the Barcelona Convention for Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, adopts a "Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development". Twenty-one countries and the EU participate in the Convention, which was signed in 1975. The new Mediterranean strategy is structured around political, economic, social and environmental objectives, as well as around specific priorities. The Foreign Ministers supported the strategy adopted at the Conference held during May.

23rd June 2005

Road Map

London: Quartet Meeting, at which backing for the plan to withdraw Israelis from Gaza and some areas of the West Bank is reaffirmed. The Quartet reasserts its belief that this is a chance to give fresh impetus to the Road Map.

23rd June 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Jordan

Brussels: Third meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Committee which establishes a new agenda for bilateral cooperation. Both parties agree to use the ENP Plan of Action which entered into force on 1 June to back Jordan's national agenda for economic and political development. They also agree to increase the quality of financial backing through a better selection of objectives, relating these to the priorities of Jordan's national agenda.

24th June 2005

Free Trade Zone

Brussels: The European Commission adopts a proposal to start negotiations on the deregulation of services and investments with Mediterranean Member Countries. The Commission will pass on the proposal to the Council of the EU for its approval, and later the Commission plans to invite the member countries to open negotiations on a regional level.

July 2005

4th July 2004

Neighbourhood

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Plan of Action enters into force for Tunisia. The Plan will allow Tunisia to increase its participation in the European internal market and boost political talks and cooperation in fields such as the environment, infrastructure, social politics, justice, education, research and culture. Tunisia's is the first Plan of Action to enter into force in a Maghreb country.

5th and 7th July 2005

FEMIP

The European Investment Bank (EIB) announces the awarding of two credit loans under the FEMIP, one of which amounts to 60 million euros for the construction of new roads in Lebanon. The project will receive the backing of a three-year technical assistance programme under the FEMIP's Technical Assistance Fund. The other credit loan totals 50 million and is awarded to the Egyptian Natural Gas Company. It will cover two gas pipes that run a total of

152 km and which will form part of the national gas supply system.

11st July 2005

Med Committee

Brussels: Med Committee Meeting, which considers the National Financial Plans under the MEDA programme to be positive for seven Mediterranean member countries: Algeria (80 million euros); Egypt (110); Jordan (60); Lebanon (27); Morocco (148); Syria (22) and Tunisia (118), as well as the Regional Financial Plan 2005 (2nd part) (59.9 million). The latter is targeted at measures to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, at providing the TEMPUS and Euromed-Youth programmes with funds in 2005-06 and at ENP operations.

16th July 2005

Transport

Brussels: Euromed Transport Forum meeting to discuss the Blue Paper about transport in the Mediterranean region which will be submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Ministries at the meeting planned for the 15 December in Marrakech. The document is part of the Euromed Regional Transport Programme financed by the MEDA programme. In spite of the reforms introduced in the Mediterranean member countries, the document identifies six problem areas: institutional structures; infrastructure networks; the goods transport chain; international passenger transport; sustainability and financing.

18th July 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Algeria

Brussels: The Council of the EU takes a decision to complete the Association Agreement with Algeria which will enter into force on 1 September. The agreement, signed in 2002, has been ratified by both parties and will replace the 1976 cooperation agreement.

18th July 2005

Council of the EU

Brussels: The Council of the EU takes note of the British presidency's priorities to implement the EU strategy in the Mediterranean region. These include the joint organisation with Spain

of a Euro-Mediterranean summit in Barcelona to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, implementing the ENP and talks with Libya and Mauritania about their possible joining in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The Council also draws conclusions about the Middle East peace process, expressing its concern about the recent escalation of violence and approving the Palestinian policy development programme that receives the EU's backing through a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission.

26th July 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting of Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at which the British presidency's priorities are presented. It is agreed to hold a working group meeting on terrorism on 21 September. Morocco presents a non-paper prepared with France and Spain on joint migratory flow management and reinforced cooperation in judicial and political affairs. In addition, Greece informs about the Euro-Mediterranean seminar on crisis management which was held in June and Italy reports back on the first follow-up committee meeting of the Euro-Bridge programme regarding civil protection.

26th July 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: At the meeting, the British presidency presents its priorities. The Commission presents the main achievements of the Euromed Heritage regional programme. Some European countries and Mediterranean members demand that EU financing for broadcasts of the Euronews channel in Arab be renewed. The Commission also informs about the preparations for the ministerial transport meeting planned for December. Another theme is the possible joining of Libya and Mauritania in the Partnership.

September 2005

1st September 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Algeria

The Association Agreement with Algeria enters into force. The agreement,

signed in 2002, has been ratified by both parties and will replace the 1976 cooperation agreement.

6th September 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting of Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean at which the Commission presents the community methodology regarding the observance of electoral rules and it is congratulated by the Lebanese delegation on the role that it played in the recent elections. The *ad hoc* meeting on terrorism is also prepared, which is planned to be held on 21 September.

6th September 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: At the meeting, the Commission presents the main achievements of the Euromed Youth regional programme, stressing that in October the Euromed Youth Prizes will be awarded, which will serve to boost the third phase of the programme in which management will be decentralised to local MEDA authorities. The Euro-Mediterranean Committee insists on introducing the Arab language into the Euronews channel with financing from the Commission as a measure to increase the visibility of the Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

14th September 2005

Med Committee

Brussels: The Committee judges the Financial Plan for Palestine (2nd part), amounting to 62.75 million euros, to be positive. The Commission presents the intermediate evaluation report on the MEDA II programme, which highlights the significant improvement in the programme's financial results as compared to those obtained with the MEDA I programme. The impact of the structural reforms carried out since 2000 are also stressed, which have allowed for better operational results in the area. The report also assesses the improvement in the Programme's operational management, although it mentions that there is still some progress to be made. Finally, the report gives recommendations in order to improve the regulatory framework in view of preparations for the ENP's future initiative.

14th-16th September 2005

Cooperation

Barcelona: Symposium organised by Barcelona Council and the Arco Latino Association with the backing of the European Commission and the Committee of Regions entitled "Results and perspectives of the decentralised cooperation among local Euro-Mediterranean governments" in order to promote a slot for talks and thoughts on decentralised international cooperation between local entities in the Mediterranean region. The symposium adopts a final declaration to be presented at the Regions and Cities summit in November at which there is a call for the setting up of an observatory that compiles, systematizes and gives visibility to experiences, results and the impact of decentralised international cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean regions and provinces.

www.euromediterrania2005.org

20th September 2005

Road Map

New York: Quartet meeting that assesses the successful conclusion of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and some regions of the West Bank as positive, describing this as an important step towards achieving the vision of two democratic States at peace.

21st September 2005

Terrorism

Brussels: The European Commission adopts a Communication entitled "*Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation*", which is the Commission's contribution to the strategy that the Council will develop at the end of the year. The Commission considers that the EU is the instrument to fulfil and extend the level of skill that is being reached by the Member States. The Commission presents the Communication at the *ad hoc* Euro-Mediterranean meeting on terrorism on the same day. The meeting is attended by experts and Senior Officials from the 35 countries involved in the Barcelona Process.

21st September 2005

Transport

Jerusalem: The Israeli Minister of Transport and his Palestinian counterpart sign

an agreement to establish a Joint Transport Bureau through the European Commission. The aim of this bureau is to coordinate cooperation in relation to the planning and development of infrastructures. The bureau's location is yet to be decided and the list of joint projects yet to be finalised, which will be approved by both ministers at the next Euro-Mediterranean transport meeting planned for the 15th December. The bureau will receive financial support under the MEDA programme.

26th-27th September 2005

Politics and security

Barcelona: Meeting of Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at which the Presidency expresses its satisfaction regarding the progress of the meeting on terrorism and announces the preparation of a terrorism code of conduct to be submitted at the summit held in November in Barcelona. The Presidency announces a seminar to be held in December on racism and xenophobia in the media and proposes the 9th November as a possible date for a meeting on disarmament and the non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Mediterranean.

26th-27th September 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Barcelona: The themes of the meeting include Euronews broadcasts in Arab and the Commission warns of the need to apply financial regulations in this regard. The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) presents the results of its survey on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The general assessment is positive, although progress needs to be made on visibility and on politics and security matters. The Generalitat de Catalunya presents the various events planned around the summit which include the Euromed Health Forum, the meeting of entrepreneurs, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Conference on Women, the Cities and Regions Conference, the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean parliament presidents and the seminar on the Media. The Euromed Non-governmental Platform announces that it will propose a conference on Governance at the summit.

26th-28th September 2005

Media

Dead Sea: In view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the Year of the Mediterranean, the European Commission is organising a comprehensive international conference of Euro-Mediterranean journalists to assess the role of the media in the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The conference will include three meetings (Dead Sea, Marseilles and Barcelona). The meeting in Jordan focuses on intercultural communication challenges, political division and independent press, the role of the media in the Partnership and the role of administrations to facilitate the media's work.

29th September 2005

FEMIP

Casablanca: Under the FEMIP, the European Investment Bank (EIB) announces the first loan awarded to a Mediterranean member country without guaranteeing sovereignty. The 30-million euro loan is signed at the *Banque Marocaine de Commerce Extérieur (BMCE)* to finance Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME).

October 2005

3rd October 2005

Peace process

Luxembourg: The Council of the European Union draws conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process. These include a positive assessment of the withdrawal of Israeli troops as a significant step towards implementing the Road Map. It fully approves the Quartet's last declaration, and calls for the parties to take renewed action to fulfil the obligations of the Road Map. The Council also expresses its concern over the new acts of violence, the spreading of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the building of a wall to divide the Palestinian territory.

5th October 2005

Peace process

Brussels: Commission's Communication to the Parliament and Council on EU-Palestine cooperation following the withdrawal. The communication aims to

define the elements for the EU's strategy in support of the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank. The strategy focuses on the necessary actions to set up a Palestinian State that is feasible both politically and economically. This communication responds to the new circumstances following the Israeli withdrawal.

7th-11th October 2005

Migration

Ceuta and Melilla: A Commission technical mission goes to Ceuta and Melilla and North Morocco following the tragic incidents on the border between Morocco and these two cities, in order to analyse the characteristics of illegal African immigration through Morocco. The mission also aims to assess the situation on the northern Morocco border, especially illegal immigration channels, and to listen the Moroccan and Spanish authorities opinions on the measures that could increase cooperation between the EU and Morocco to prevent and fight against illegal immigration. The mission's report makes suggestions to boost cooperation with Morocco under the Association Agreement and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Plan of Action.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/380&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

11th October 2005

Rules of origin

Brussels: The Council of Ministers approves the Commission's proposal to create a Pan Euro-Mediterranean cumulation of origin area between the EU, the candidate countries, the Mediterranean member countries and Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands. This system will allow the area's producers and traders to benefit from preferential customs tariffs. The cumulation of origin allows a product to be manufactured in several countries without the end product losing the benefits of preferential tariffs. The system has been in use since 1997 between the EU and the EFTA with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey since 1999. This decision extends the system to the Mediterranean member countries.

11th October 2005

Transport

Brussels: Seventh meeting of the Euromed Transport Forum at which the representatives of the member countries and the EU member states adopt the final version of the Blue Paper on transport in the Mediterranean. The draft agenda for the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial transport conference is also revised, which will be held on 15 December, and the draft conclusions that will be drawn at this conference are discussed.

12th October 2005

Migration

Florence: Under the Euromed Migration project, a regional initiative of the MEDA programme, the Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM), which is in charge of the implementation of the project, publishes its first annual report entitled "Mediterranean Migration 2005". This report is the result of an extensive study on demographic, economic, legislative and political issues related to migration in the south and east regions of the Mediterranean.

17th-18th October 2005

Media

Marseilles: Second (of three) conference on the role of the media in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, organised by the European Commission. The three conferences are part of the Euromed regional "Information and communication" programme, one of the objectives of which is to increase the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The Marseilles conference is focused on the reality of the Partnership and the ENP in the media, the freedom of expression, the role of journalism schools in specific training on the Partnership and social problems through the Euro-Mediterranean media.

17th-18th October 2005

Neighbourhood

Beirut: The European Commission and Libya start negotiations on the (ENP) Plan of Action. The EU working group for the ENP holds a series of meetings with government and civil society represen-

tatives which mark the start of the five-year Plan of Action negotiations under the ENP. Apart from the meetings, a seminar is organised with the interministerial working group coordinated by the Ministry of Economy.

28th-29th October 2005

Heritage

Barcelona: Seminar on "Cultural heritage in the Barcelona Process" organised by the Euromed Heritage programme with collaboration from the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), at which a series of recommendations and future guidelines are established. The main recommendation is to include cultural heritage and cultural activities in the ENP and ask Governments to view culture as an important tool for economic and local development and as a basic instrument to build a national identity.

www.euromedheritage.net/en/rmsu/rmsu_workshops/barcelona.htm

November 2005

6th-7th November 2005

Trade unions

Barcelona: In view of the Tenth Anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the 3rd general assembly of the Euromed Trade Union Forum is held, entitled "For Peace, Democracy, Economic Progress and Social Justice". The Forum, which was set up in 1999, aims to increase the Partnership's social dimension.

7th November 2005

Peace process

Brussels: The Council of the EU expresses concern over the ongoing violence in Palestine and stresses the need for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to take complete control over order in Occupied Territories. The Council condemns the recent attacks against Israel, acknowledging Israel's right to protect its citizens, although requesting that it abstain from extrajudicial murder. The Council expresses its support for the work of the Quartet's special correspondent for the Israeli withdrawal. The Council urges Israel to cease activities in Palestine, including creating settlements, building a di-

viding wall and demolishing Palestinian houses.

8th November 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting of Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at which presentations are given by the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Policy Institutes Network (EuroMeSCo). The preparations for the Barcelona summit are discussed at the meeting, including the draft summit documents: the Declaration, Work Program and Code of Conduct on the fight against terrorism. The differences on these topics cause a new meeting to be called prior to the Conference.

8th November 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Committee

Brussels: In the same way as at the meeting of Senior Officials on politics and security, at the Committee meeting information is given on the logistic aspects of the Barcelona summit and the declaration and document proposals that are going to be put forward at this summit are discussed.

14th November 2005

Agriculture

Brussels: First follow-up Committee meeting on the waybill for Euro-Mediterranean agriculture at which the agriculture Senior Officials assess the preparations by the EU and member countries in view of the start of negotiations to deregulate agriculture and fishing product trade. The meeting also identified actions regarding non-commercial aspects such as rural development or health issues.

15th November 2005

Trade

Brussels: Meeting of civil servants on Euro-Mediterranean trade to discuss the situation of trading relations between Euro-Mediterranean countries. The meeting focuses on topics such as commercial integration under the Barcelona Process, improvements in access to markets and increasing regional integration, negotiations to deregulate services, agriculture or investments and reinforcement of the political and institutional framework.

15th November 2005

Agriculture

Brussels: The Council of the EU takes a decision which authorises the Commission to start negotiations with Mediterranean member countries to develop the trade of agricultural and fishing products. The purpose of the negotiations is to achieve a broader trade deregulation in 2010. The negotiations will cover all non-commercial products and aspects but which are related to agricultural products. The talks will consider the special sensitivity of certain products for the EU and for member countries. The bilateral negotiations are expected to start during the first months of 2006.

20th-21st November 2005

Parliamentary Assembly

Rabat: Special meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) in view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. The debates focus on topics related to the future of the Process, such as the implementation of the EU's strategic Partnership with Mediterranean countries, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Alliance of Civilizations and subregional integration prospects. The EMPA also adopts the recommendations made by its sectorial Committees (political, economic and cultural) for the Barcelona summit.

www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/empa/default.htm

21st-22nd November 2005

Services

Brussels: The Council of the EU takes the decision to authorise the Commission to start negotiations with the Mediterranean Partner Countries regarding the deregulation of services and investments from 2006 onwards, in order to set up a free trade area in 2010.

21st-22nd November 2005

Peace process

Brussels: The Council of the EU draws a series of conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process. The Council considers the agreement between Israel and the PNA concerning border crossings between Gaza and Egypt to be positive. The Council announces a mis-

sion under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to supervise operations at the Rafah crossing. The Council also judges the announcement of Palestinian Legislative Council elections planned for January 2006 to be positive, and urges the PNA to provide everything necessary for the elections to be held. The Council also repeats that the EU is willing to provide economic, technical and political aid to the PNA during the elections and will send an electoral observance mission which will work in conjunction with the members of the Quartet and other international organisations. Finally, the Council stresses its concern over Israeli activities in East Jerusalem, including the construction of the dividing wall, the building of settlements and the demolition of buildings.

21st-22nd November 2005

Business

Barcelona: First Euro-Mediterranean meeting of business leaders, organised by the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce (ASCAME), with Eurochambers and other business organisations, which aims to explore opportunities for greater cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean in terms of economic and financial affairs. The meeting conclusions will be presented at the summit of Heads of State and Government in Barcelona.

22nd November 2005

Politics and security

Brussels: Meeting of Senior Officials on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at which they discuss the preparations for the summit of Heads of State and Government and aim to reach an agreement on the documents to be used at the summit.

21st November 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Jordan

Brussels: Fourth meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council, which defines the action priorities for 2006 and reviews the progress made over the past year. The Council also discusses the Middle East Peace Process and the Iraq situation.

http://ue.eu.int/cms3_applications/Applications/newsRoom/LoadDocument.asp?directory=fr/er/&file-name=87076.pdf

22nd November 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Morocco Brussels: Fourth meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council which reviews the development of activities over the past year and the work carried out by the different subcommittees. The action priorities for 2006 are also defined, and topics of interest for both parties such as migration, fishing, deregulation of services and political talks are discussed.

http://ue.eu.int/cms3_applications/Applications/newsRoom/LoadDocument.asp?directory=fr/er/&file-name=87086.pdf

22nd-23rd November 2005

Culture

Barcelona: In view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, an international conference on culture in the Euro-Mediterranean area is held in order to set up a working agenda that establishes continuity in this field.

24th-25th November 2005

Women

Barcelona: As part of the events to mark the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the Euromed Women's Conference Barcelona+10 is held, in order to promote an active role for women in the Partnership, and highlight the need for a gender perspective when defining politics. The conference, structured around the three chapters of the Partnership, presents conclusions that the participants hope will be taken into account at the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference on women, which will be held during the second half of 2006.

www.barcelona10.org

25th November 2005

FEMIP

Paris: The FEMIP grants a 200-million euro loan to build a combined cycle power plant in Deir Azzour (Syria). This is the second electricity generation transaction signed with Syria and the fourth in the electricity sector over the past six years. The project will be

undertaken by the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company (PEEGT).

25th-26th November 2005

Media

Barcelona: Third and final conference on the role of the media in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, organised by the European Commission. At the conference in Barcelona, organised in conjunction with the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) the journalists reassert their commitment to the freedom of expression and independence. The sessions deal with issues such as complexity, economic information, information on migration or the role of satellite channels in the Arab world, always from the point of view of the importance of media in the visibility of the Barcelona Process. The seminar conclusions will be presented at the summit of Heads of State and Government.

www.barcelona10.org

25th-26th November 2005

Regions

Barcelona: Regional Euromed Barcelona+10 conference organised by the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe CRPM on the role of regions in the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, at which representatives of many regions in Euro-Mediterranean countries participate. This conference completes a joint session with the conference of Euro-Mediterranean cities which takes place simultaneously and at which a joint declaration is presented, which will be submitted to the summit of Heads of State and Government.

www.barcelona10.org

25th-26th November 2005

Cities

Barcelona: Conference of Euro-Mediterranean cities Barcelona+10, in order to boost decentralised cooperation in the Mediterranean and to reinforce the role of cities in the Partnership. In the joint final declaration of Mediterranean cities and regions, there is a request for a permanent Euro-Mediterranean forum of local and regional authorities to be set up, with backing and acknowledgement

from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

www.barcelona10.org

27th-28th November 2005

Euro-Mediterranean Summit

Barcelona: Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Heads of State and Government in view of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. In spite of the problems, the summit allows substantial agreements to be reached, with approval of the five-year Work Programme for a broader development of the Partnership and the Code of Conduct against Terrorism. The Work Programme makes it possible to work under the Euro-Mediterranean framework with complete synergy and coordination with the ENP Plans of Action. Also, by adopting this Work Programme, the Euro-Mediterranean countries reach agreements on different topics such as the deregulation of agricultural trade and services; ease of governance, which will support and accompany political reforms; fight against illegal immigration; increase of resources for education; promotion of equal rights; reinforcement of civil society; and improved interaction between Governments and parliaments. The Code of Conduct against Terrorism involves Europeans, Arabs and Israelis working together on an agenda and stresses the commitment to fight against terrorism in all of its aspects. The Code represents a victory, since the signatures of 35 Euro-Mediterranean Governments show that in spite of the different sensibilities regarding the matter, the Euro-Mediterranean countries are willing to join forces to combat terrorism beyond the bilateral cooperation that exists between some of them.

www.barcelona10.org

29th November 2005

Water

Brussels: The EU and Egypt sign an 80-million euro financial agreement to back the Egyptian programme to reform the water sector, launched in May 2005. The aim of the programme is to improve the management of water resources to ensure the population's supply of drinking water, combined with industry and agriculture needs. The de-

centralisation and support for collaboration of the public and private sectors are the central themes of this programme.

30th November 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Morocco Rabat: The EU and Morocco sign the first institutional twinning arrangements between EU member countries and Morocco. The arrangements include customs administration (with Italy), maritime safety (with France) and environmental protection (with Italy). A fourth institutional twinning arrangement is expected to be signed shortly regarding border police training (with France). These arrangements are signed as part of the Association Agreement support programme financed with a fund of 5 million euros, which was later increased by another 15 million. This type of instrument, used successfully in the EU enlargement process, which is used for the first time in Morocco and in Mediterranean member countries, opens up a new chapter in EU-Morocco cooperation and starts the effective implementation of the ENP. From now on, it will be possible to “twin” sectors of the Moroccan administration with their counterparts in a EU member country, allowing the Moroccan administration to benefit in the reform programme from the experience and knowledge of civil servants in EU countries.

December 2005

1st-3rd December 2005

Investment

Rabat: Fourth annual conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Investment Promotion Agencies (AN-IMA) project, at which the development perspectives of investment promotion in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are highlighted. During the conference, representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean business community present the new opportunities for investment in the region and the investors share their experiences and expectations. On 3 December, the meeting of ANIMA members is held, at which an assessment is made of the

year's activities and the 2006 activities are debated, i.e. the year when the project ends.

www.animaweb.org

6th December 2005

Energy

Algiers: The European Commission, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia sign a project to integrate Maghreb electricity markets. The project is one of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's objectives in the energy sector. The three-year project, financed by the MEDA programme, aims to support the Maghreb's industrial structure and bring standards into line in view of a future integration of Maghreb countries in the EU internal electricity market. The project costs 6.2 million euros, of which the EU's contribution totals 5.6 million.

12th December 2005

Trade

Brussels: Fourth meeting of the Pan EuroMed working group on rules of origin, at which representatives of customs administrations and related administrations of all the MMCs participate, as well as of EFTA countries, candidate countries and the Faroe Islands. The working group discusses the various topics related to the implementation of the Pan Euro-Mediterranean cumulation of origin system.

12th December 2005

Terrorism

Brussels: The Council of General Affairs and External Relations views the political talks with international organisations on the fight against terrorism as positive, as well as the progress made on the broadening of these talks through the Code of Conduct to Combat Terrorism reached at the Barcelona Summit. At the same meeting, the Council takes a common stance to establish a framework to impose restrictive measures against people suspected of being involved in the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri.

13th December 2005

Palestinian development

Brussels: The European Commission

signs a 14-million euro contribution for the recent Euro-Palestinian Credit Guarantee Fund. This fund, managed by the German Development Bank (KfW), will support the financing of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) by local banks through soft credits and subsidies. The capital in this fund totals 29 million euros, of which 14 come from the Commission, five from the KfW and ten from the FEMIP. In addition, the financial partners also provide technical assistance to boost the financial sector in Palestine.

13th December 2005

Association Agreement: EU-Egypt

Brussels: The EU and Egypt sign a 25-million euro financial agreement to support the implementation of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement. The support programme will allow Egyptian public administrations to benefit from the institutional twinning arrangement, an instrument that was applied successfully in the EU enlargement process. The Egyptian public administrations can work with their counterparts in member countries to transfer know-how in areas such as tourism, investment promotion, postal services or maritime safety, as well as Association Agreement priorities and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Plans of Action.

13th December 2005

FEMIP

Brussels: The European Investment Bank (EIB), through the FEMIP, loans 45 million euros to the Palestinian National Authority for essential investments to improve electricity supply. This transaction represents the resumption of the EIB's financial aid to Palestine after being absent for five years. The project is part of a 99-million euro programme to improve the electricity distribution and transmission network.

15th December 2005

Transport

Marrakech: First Euro-Mediterranean conference of Transport Ministers. The ministers discuss the Blue Book about Euro-Mediterranean transport policy, written as part of the Euromed Trans-

port Forum at the request of the European Commission, and about the final report by the Top Level Group regarding extending the trans-European transport network to neighbouring countries. In the conference conclusions, the ministers establish the priorities of future cooperation: institutional reform, regional transport infrastructures, maritime transport, multimodal transport, air transport and Galileo. Before the conference, the EU and Morocco sign a global air transport agreement. This is the first

agreement of its kind to be signed with a third-world country, and lays the foundations for the future development of a common Euro-Mediterranean air space.

www.euromedtransport.org (Blue Book) http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/publication/2005/report_94_en.pdf (Conference conclusions)

16th December 2005

FEMIP

Paris: The FEMIP grants a 100-mil-

lion euro loan to extend the landline telephone network in areas of Syria that receive a poor service. This is the first telecommunications sector transaction in the Mediterranean region signed under the FEMIP.

21st December 2005

FEMIP

Paris: The FEMIP agrees on a 25-million euro venture capital facility with Egypt. The facility aims to develop the private sector in Egypt.