

Cultural Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership from 1995 to 2008

Dossier

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The Mediterranean has long symbolised the co-existence of cultures and traditions, despite the many conflicts that have affected the region. Today, as always, the peoples of the Mediterranean work tirelessly to promote exchanges, share knowledge and enjoy a common cultural heritage. To speak of the Mediterranean is to speak of conflicts, true, but it is also, above all else, to speak of literature, philosophy, thought and science, in short, to speak of Culture with a capital C.

In this mosaic of different cultures, ethnic origins and religions that make up the Euro-Mediterranean region, human, social and cultural development, mutual knowledge and understanding and dialogue are key factors for peaceful co-existence and shared development.

Intercultural co-existence is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It is a challenge to which the governments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, from its origin through to today, have afforded great importance.

The cultural agenda within the Barcelona Process, like the process itself, has not only been affected by the constant changes in international policy, but has also felt the full impact of the political instability and conflicts in the region, primarily, the conflict in the Middle East. The priorities for Euro-Mediterranean

relations have been adapted over the years to world priorities: security, the environment, the dialogue between cultures, trade liberalisation, democratisation, etc.

Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Under the Barcelona Process launched in 1995,¹ the social, cultural and human partnership was one of the three main aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a whole. (The other two were the political and security partnership and the economic and financial partnership.) The 27 partners at the time² thus acknowledged the importance and central role played by culture in the relations between countries and the potential for the dialogue between cultures and human exchanges to deepen the relationship between the EU and its neighbours to the south.

The Barcelona Declaration clearly sets out how the partner countries in the process hope to implement this aspect. The key instrument is the creation of joint cooperation programmes. Over the years, these programmes have encompassed everything from protecting heritage to providing support for film production, by way of student and youth exchange programmes, support for civil society and the founding of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.

At the same time, for the last 13 years, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has promoted an extensive network of political, social and economic rela-

¹ Final declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, 27 and 28 November 1995, Barcelona. The objective was to create a global Euro-Mediterranean partnership in order to turn the Mediterranean into an area of peace, stability and prosperity, strengthening political and security dialogue and establishing an economic and financial partnership, as well as a social, cultural and human one.

² The 15 member states of the European Union (Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Austria), the Palestinian Authority, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

tions grounded in a shared vision of the future. Moreover, and thanks to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the action plans signed with our partners, we have effective tools to turn our projects into reality.

Today, we are working on drawing up a regional Euro-Mediterranean strategy on culture to encompass, for the first time, all actions in the sector with a common objective.

The launching of the Union for the Mediterranean in Paris in July 2008 bore witness to the fact that, today more than ever before, the Mediterranean is a strategic region. It is a crossroads of cultures bound by a common destiny. The Union for the Mediterranean stands as a new forum in which to expand our relations and conduct our tasks within the Euro-Mediterranean cultural framework.

History of the Process

The cultural agenda has relied on the same working tools as the other aspects of the Barcelona Process, namely: political commitments through declarations adopted by the ministers of partner countries at general meetings (Foreign Affairs Ministers) and sectoral meetings (the ministers for different portfolios) and bilateral cooperation programmes between partners, as well as bi-regional programmes funded by the European Commission.

Ministerial Meetings: Genuine Commitments or Declarations of Intention?

The conclusions of the ministerial meetings have, at times, been dismissed by civil society as mere declarations of intention that rarely translate to concrete actions for citizens. They are viewed as political commitments, which are often not even considered binding by their signatories.

Whilst it is true that the declarations of the ministerial meetings held under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are not legally binding texts, but rather political commitments, within the Barcelona Process, these declarations have, the vast majority of times, played a decisive role in the adoption of legal measures, the negotiation of binding agreements and, above all, the launching of regional cooperation programmes. Let us now look at the results of the meetings of the region's Culture Ministers:

1. Following the Barcelona Conference, the first sectoral ministerial meeting was the meeting of Culture Ministers held in April 1996, in Bologna. This meeting marked the start of the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural agenda. Although the Bologna meeting focused on cultural heritage, the ministers agreed on the need to expand efforts to include other fields and reaffirmed that dialogue and mutual respect are prerequisites for bringing different peoples closer together. The meeting's conclusions provided the guidelines for the creation of the regional 'Euromed Heritage' programme, intended to safeguard the region's common heritage, which was the first concrete measure taken under the cultural chapter of the Barcelona Declaration.

2. In September of 1998, the second meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Culture Ministers, which was held in Rhodes, built on the work carried out in the cultural sector since the Bologna meeting, including the Thessaloniki Conference (November 1997), which lay the groundwork for Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual cooperation, and the Stockholm workshop on the dialogue between cultures and civilisations (April 1998). The ministers agreed to increase cultural dialogue and promote human, scientific and technological exchanges with a view to fostering mutual understanding and improving people's perceptions of each other.

They underscored the importance of the exchange of people, in particular young people, ideas and cultural activities as a common denominator for future projects. At the meeting, partners were also encouraged to table ideas and initiatives to be carried out in their own countries under the partnership's cultural dimension, and this lay the groundwork for the audiovisual and youth cooperation programmes.

3. Intercultural dialogue, a recurring theme since the Barcelona Declaration itself, was discussed in depth at the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs Ministers in Crete (May 2003), where the guidelines for the dialogue between cultures and civilisations were set forth. At the ministerial meeting held in Naples in December 2003, it was agreed to set up a foundation dedicated to dialogue and in 2005 the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures was founded.

The Anna Lindh Foundation is an organisation supported and funded, at present, by the 43 member

countries of the Union for the Mediterranean³ to promote dialogue between cultures and respect for diversity. The European Commission funds half of its budget.

From the start, the Foundation has promoted and partnered on initiatives in most social and cultural fields, including facilitating capacity-building and training seminars, promoting cultural and art festivals and providing support for literary translation, awards and public debates.

For the new phase of its programme, from 2009 to 2011, the Foundation is implementing a strategy based on the execution of major projects in six priority fields: ideas and ideologies, education, cultural production, media, religion, spirituality and values and cities and diversity. Additionally, it is reinforcing its position as a leading institution for the Union for the Mediterranean's dialogue between cultures through its annual report on intercultural trends.

In each of these areas, the Foundation is working with a long-term perspective, carrying out sustainable projects that enhance our understanding of cultural and political processes, shape opinions and behaviour and improve institutional and civil society actions to foster dialogue. The Foundation brings together regional experts, media directors, cultural operators, educators, spiritual leaders, etc., to forge a wide-ranging network of individuals that can help with its work to iron out discrepancies in opinions and mutual perceptions throughout the Mediterranean.

To carry out its work, the Anna Lindh Foundation operates in all countries through its network of civil society agents, 43 national networks of organisations dedicated to the dialogue between cultures (including NGOs, universities, associations, non-profit foundations and private enterprises) and in association with regional and international institutions.

4. The third Euromed conference of Culture Ministers was held in Athens in May 2008 during the '2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue' within the specific context of the '2008, Euro-Mediterranean Year of Dialogue between Cultures'. The meeting marked a turning point in the approach taken to date by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the cultural field. For the first time, the Culture Ministers decided to establish a long-term Euro-Mediterranean cultural strategy and asked a group of experts to draw

one up to be formally adopted over 2010 at the next ministerial meeting.

The accomplishment of Athens consisted not only of strengthening the commitment to safeguard, share and celebrate culture, but also of the commitment to stress the vision of culture as a strategic factor for political, economic and social development in the region.

According to the meeting's conclusions, this strategy would have two main dimensions: the dialogue between cultures and cooperation on cultural policy:

- a. With regard to the dialogue between cultures, the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (www.euromedalex.org) was to serve as the core for this part of the strategy in accordance with the Foundation's role in the process and the decision of the Heads of State and Government in July 2008, in which they stated that the Foundation must effectively contribute to the cultural dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean.
- b. With regard to cultural policy, the European Commission considers the following to be of utmost importance:
 - To adhere to the principles set forth in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
 - To encourage Euro-Mediterranean partners to further develop national cultural policies, taking into account the needs of the cultural sector.
 - To give particular attention to strengthening the capacity of partner countries in the field of cultural expression and to promoting access to culture and to aim at establishing more balanced cultural exchanges between partner countries (public administrations and civil society).
 - To stress the importance of cultural industries in our economic sectors.
 - To include priorities such as human resource development, the transfer of technical know-how, the establishment of joint information and communication systems, the use of new technologies and the promotion of sustainable economic development through culture.

³ All Euro-Mediterranean Partnership member countries, plus Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monaco and Montenegro.

ANNA LINDH EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FOUNDATION FOR THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURES

The 5th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, in Valencia (2002), launched the initiative and approved the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF). The Foundation functions as a network of national networks connecting over 2000 civil society organisations (NGOs, universities, associations, public and private institutions and the like) among 43 Euro-Mediterranean countries that have reached a political agreement. These consist, among others, of the EU countries and their ten partner countries on the South Mediterranean shore: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Turkey. The President André Azoulay, the Executive Director and the Board of Governors work in collaboration with the Heads of the National Network of each country. The original 35 countries forming part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) established the ALF in 2005, basing it in Alexandria, with the aim of fostering dialogue among cultures on both the northern and southern Mediterranean shores and rising to the challenge of peaceful intercultural coexistence, that is, bridging the gap existing insofar as perceptions and mutual comprehension among the populations on both shores. ALF functions were expanded in 2008 by virtue of its founding role in the Union for the Mediterranean, an initiative put forth by French President Nicolas Sarkozy to relaunch the EMP. Since then, it has been considered a key actor in Mediterranean cooperation and is responsible for developing the social, human and cultural dimensions of the partnership.

In order to shape "an area of co-operation, exchange, mobility, mutual understanding and peace," the national networks cover different fields of action: intercultural relations, heritage, religion, research, human rights, democracy and social development, the arts, education and youth, gender, the environment and sustainable development, and finally the media. The first three-year programme (2005-2007) launched six major strategic areas, each involving different projects. The *Our Common Future* strategic area aimed to involve youth in cooperation without borders thanks to projects such as *Traditional Euro-Mediterranean Music* and *Euro-Mediterranean School Magazines*. This latter project aimed to twin schools in countries on either shore of the Mediterranean having school magazines or annual reports. The programme *Avenues of*

Multiple Perspectives aimed at producing educational content by studying educational manuals and programmes relative to universal values such as non-discrimination. *Our Creative Diversity*, inspired by UNESCO's Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development and the Human Development Report (HDR), focuses on cultural diversity and aims to introduce a Euro-Mediterranean component into a number of projects underway. The programme *Science without Borders*, insofar as a synergetic mechanism, works on high-speed digital data exchange in southern Mediterranean partners. *The Euro-Mediterranean Information Society* encourages civil society to modernise educational, cultural, scientific and information technology policies. Finally, the *Women and Gender Equality* programme was launched representing an integral element of the entire Foundation programme.

Through calls for proposals, the Foundation annually grants subsidies to civil society organisations putting forth projects for improving intercultural dialogue, such as *Brain Drain in the Mediterranean*, which encourages cooperation and exchange between young researchers. There are other opportunities for aid as well. A great number of institutions and agencies grant financial support to civil society organisations.

In 2008, Euro-Mediterranean Year for Intercultural Dialogue, the Foundation launched a programme called *1001 Actions for Dialogue*, in order to raise awareness of the importance of intercultural dialogue in struggling against discrimination.

From 2009 to 2011, the ALF will continue its efforts, public opinion having evolved little or not at all despite Mediterranean cooperation. It enters a new phase of its programme, focussing on improving comprehension of the cultural and political processes that shape opinion and behaviour, and on carrying out large-scale initiatives in fields that have an impact on public perception (*Ideas and Ideologies; Education; Cultural Production; the Media; Religion, Spirituality and Values; and Cities and Diversity*).

For further information:
www.euromedalex.org

- To link culture to other domains of life (social policy, education, cultural industries, etc.) and to conceive of it as a trans-sectoral activity with significant potential to contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Barcelona Declaration.

The Programmes: Concrete Steps or Grains of Sand?

Cooperation in the field of culture is a mainstay of Euro-Mediterranean relations. From the start, programmes in the sector have emerged with a view to enabling the exchange of ideas, bringing citizens closer together and allowing us to get to know each other better. In general, the programmes have included many aspects relating to technical assistance, capac-

ity building and personal exchanges. Indeed, one could argue that the thousands of people who have directly benefited from the programmes, whether by attending training courses, drawing up specific projects, participating in exchanges or volunteer programmes, etc., are but a grain of sand in the universe of our interregional relations. However, the impact of these programmes should not be assessed in terms of the costs and benefits in relation to the number of people directly involved, but rather, and above all, in relation to the multiplier effect that these people may have had on their environments, by reinforcing organisations, enhancing perceptions in their respective population and in the opening generated in the participants. All of this is difficult to quantify.

One testament to the success of these programmes is that they have generated networks that currently operate independently from the programmes them-

selves. They have set into motion a dynamic of contacts and relations that continues to nourish the work of many of their participants.

The Euromed Programmes

In addition to the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and sector programmes that benefit all countries with which the European Commission cooperates, such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus (more than 160 institutions of higher education are cooperating to enable the mobility of around 1,800 students and academic staff members), the Commission has, since 1995, funded a series of cooperation programmes in the field of culture with those Mediterranean countries included under the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Euromed Heritage (www.euromedheritage.net)

The programme was created with the aim of underscoring the beauty and potential of the extraordinary Euro-Mediterranean heritage. Its first activities were the mapping of historical and cultural sites, the exchange of conservation techniques and the provision of heritage management and marketing training. The programme also serves as the framework for the development of networks and contacts. Euromed Heritage II and III built on the success of the first phase and focused on highlighting unique expressions of tangible and intangible culture in the Mediterranean. To this end, cultural tourism, maritime and musical heritage, and crafts and traditional cookery projects were launched. In 2008, the European Commission launched Euromed Heritage IV, focused on promoting and enhancing knowledge of the region's heritage. Under the programme, a 'strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage' through 2013 was drawn up.

Euromed Audiovisual (www.euromedaudiovisuel.net)

The first phase of the programme was launched in 2000 with a view to working jointly to preserve and distribute documentaries and to present films that showcased the life and culture of the region's peoples. Its actions included the exchange of experiences and knowledge; training in script writing and co-productions between independent companies; the scanning of 5,000 documentaries to ensure their conservation; and the participation of 60,000 people in the 'Caravan of Euro-Arab Cinema' festival, which travelled to 7 European cities and Amman (Jordan).

Additionally, 86 documentaries were made following the training courses in script writing, project development, marketing and distribution. Euromed Audiovisual II focused on training, development, promotion, distribution and exhibition of Mediterranean cinema, paying special attention to the pre-production and post-production processes. The programme owes its success to its training and development-oriented projects, which have enabled the completion of works by 478 young professionals. It likewise boosted the presence of southern Mediterranean films in European cinemas and vice versa. The programme's main new feature was the inclusion of support for public authorities to develop the sector.

As with other projects, its best result was the establishment of professional networks that augur fertile ground for future cooperation. Following the creation of the strategic document 'Towards a Strategy for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Audiovisual Cooperation' and with a view to meeting sectoral needs, a third phase for the programme is currently being prepared.

Euromed Youth (www.euromedyouth.net)

Youth exchanges have proven to be an important mechanism for promoting mobility, knowledge, respect and mutual understanding in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Euromed Youth programme's main activities are the promotion of exchanges lasting two to three weeks that bring together young people from at least four countries; a voluntary service, lasting one to 12 months, in different countries in the region; and supplementary measures to provide support for organisations via training, the exchange of best practices and strategic partnerships. Moreover, since 1999, it has allowed more than 25,000 young people from all the region's countries to participate in exchange programmes with other people their age and has facilitated the publication of studies on youth policy in partner countries, as well as the creation and development of youth networks in the region. The Euromed Youth Platform facilitates the exchange of information and networking between youth associations.

Euro-Mediterranean Regional Information and Communication Programme

(www.journalismnetwork.eu and www.EuromedInfo.eu)

When considering intercultural dialogue, one must not underestimate the considerable influence of the media. In accordance with the 'Euro-Mediterranean Regional Information and Communication Programme',

SIGNIFICANT EUROMED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS: SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HUMAN PARTNERSHIP

Regional Programme Projects under this priority are divided into various categories, namely: Audiovisual & Media, Culture, Education and Training, Local and Regional Cooperation, Women, Youth and Civil Society. These projects focus on improving institutional capacities, promoting principles such as modernisation, participation, equality, Human Rights, democracy and governance. All in all, 14 projects are currently being funded in the same Partner Countries involved in the above programmes.

- **Audiovisual – Euro-Mediterranean Audiovisual Cooperation – (2005-2008) – 15 million euros (MEDA funds):** Aims to reinforce the audiovisual and cinema sectors in MPCs as a way of promoting cooperation and mutual understanding between these countries and the European Union.
www.euromediaudiovisuel.net
- **Regional Information and Communication (2004-2007 and 2008-2011) – 10 million euros (MEDA funds) and 12 million euros (ENPI funds), respectively:** Aims to make the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) better known and understood and sensitise public opinion, essentially through activities targeting the media, civil society and youth.
www.euromedinfo.eu
- **Euromed Heritage II-III (2002-2008) – 40 million euros (MEDA funds):** Fosters cultural dialogue and concern for and conservation of Mediterranean cultural heritage.
www.euromedheritage.net
- **Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (2005-2008) – 5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Brings people and organisations on North and South Mediterranean shores closer and fosters dialogue through the implementation of joint projects.
www.euromedalex.org
- **Training of Public Administrations (2004-2008) – 6 million euros (MEDA funds):** Provides information to civil servants in the MPCs on matters relating to the EU and supports their efforts to implement Association Agreements.
www.eipa.eu/en/topics/
- **MEDA-ETE – Education and Training for Employment (2004-2007) – 5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Assists the MPCs in designing and implementing technical and vocational education and training policies that can contribute to promoting employment.
www.meda-ete.net
- **TEMPUS III (2000-2007) – 98.5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Offers faculty and administrative staff at universities in the MPCs the opportunity to collaborate with universities in the EU countries.
www.ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html

- **Erasmus Mundus – Foreign Cooperation Component (2007-2008) – 13 million euros:** Encourages cooperation between institutions of higher education in the EU and in the MPCs through partnerships and student, researcher and faculty exchanges.
www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/index_en.php
- **Role of Women in Economic Life (2006-2008) – 5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Encourages government institutions and NGOs to invest greater efforts towards improving women's perspectives for participating in economic life in the MPCs.
www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net/intro.html
- **Euromed Youth III (2005-2008) – 5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Promotes intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among young people of the Euro-Mediterranean Region.
www.euromedyouth.net
- **Euromed Civil Forum (since 1995) – budget established by each successive EU Presidency (MEDA funds):** Offers civil society associations a platform allowing them to network and establish ties, discuss their role and make recommendations to government institutions.
www.euromedplatform.org
- **Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils (since 1995) – 50,000 euros per year (MEDA funds):** This annual forum discusses social and economic issues of interest to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).
www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/rex/euromed/index_en.asp?id=3020rexen
- **TRESMED – Dialogue with Civil Society Actors – (2004-2010) – 907,000 euros:** Aims to improve the consultative role of economic and social partners and enhance their contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).
www.ces.es/TRESMED/tresmed_en.html
- **MED-PACT – Local Authorities (2006-2009) – 5 million euros (MEDA funds):** Fosters dialogue and cooperation among local government and civil society organisations on both sides of the Mediterranean with a view to improving mutual understanding and establishing social and cultural ties between EU countries and the MPCs.
www.med-pact.com

For further information:
www.enpi-info.eu

several activities have been launched to further knowledge of how the European Union works, its institutions, policies and programmes and its relations with other Mediterranean countries. The programme has made it possible to convey information through 170 hours of television programming, 80 radio programmes on international radio stations and press supplements in Mediterranean newspapers. Major activities include journalist training programmes, the creation of a network of professionals known as

the Euromed Media Task Force and the establishment of the Euromed Info Centre, which collects and disseminates information, produces informational material and maintains a website in English, French and Arabic.

More recently, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Alliance of Civilisations and the European Commission have jointly launched a rapid-response mechanism to address potential crises from the information standpoint.

Conclusions

Within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership process, the line separating the dialogue between cultures from cultural cooperation has always been permeable. Consequently, the ultimate goal of all cooperation in the cultural sector has been to bring people closer, to facilitate exchanges that allow us to get to know each other better and to strengthen our relations by building on our common heritage. Today, this objective continues to be a priority.

In the face of intolerance, fear, ignorance and lack of understanding, we must offer the option of dialogue based on knowledge, tolerance and open-mindedness. The caricature crisis, declarations by religious and political figures, etc., have underscored the importance of mutual knowledge and respect, the importance of the dialogue between cultures as an instrument to prevent conflict.

We must prevent mutual exchanges from being replaced by mutual incomprehension despite our many efforts. Some feel a clear resentment, anger and frustration toward the countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Others are concerned about the violence, economic hardships and political frustration experienced in certain countries on the southern shore. However, we must remember the aspects that bring us together.

The problems facing our societies are quite similar, including the reconciliation of traditional and modern values, assimilating demographic and economic changes, finding jobs and opportunities for young people, security and protecting the world we live in and the sea that surrounds us. It can thus logically be concluded that we must join forces to find shared solutions. Working together, we can more easily rise to the challenges.

The last 13 years of cultural partnership have led to the establishment of several successfully completed and current initiatives and the ground has been laid to forge deeper relations in the field of culture. The

dialogue between cultures begun in the context of individual and sectoral projects has been broadened to include new, often neglected voices, including those of civil society, women, young people and the media. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has likewise enabled extensive cooperation among civil society agents, giving rise to several networks of human rights organisations, research institutions, universities, environmental organisations, etc., which have now been operating for years.

These projects have helped us lay to rest certain stereotypes and misunderstandings, but much remains to be done: freedom of expression, respect for others, respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic minorities, the mobility of artists and art, the role of culture in generating wealth and jobs, the future of cultural production, etc. These are common challenges that call for a response in terms of cultural cooperation policy and cooperation between authorities and members of civil society.

To this end, the decision taken by the Culture Ministers at their meeting in Athens in May 2008 to draw up a cultural strategy in the Euro-Mediterranean region is an opportunity that must not be ignored. For the first time, a broad working framework has been established in which to create synergies among all the activities carried out by all partners. At the same time, dialogue about cultural policy, to date, nearly absent from the process, is being encouraged.

Whilst the economic and political partnerships are important, and the objectives they include are as relevant today as they were in 1995, it is the cultural and human dimension on which we must hang our joint hopes for peace and stability.

The re-launching of the Partnership under the name of the Union for the Mediterranean and the new focus on co-ownership and specific, visible projects must serve to further strengthen the trust between partners and, with it, the efforts to promote development, peace and prosperity in the region. These objectives of the Barcelona Process remain strikingly valid today.