Other Co-operation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), created in 1994 by the North Atlantic Council, brings together seven countries in the Mediterranean region that are not members of NATO: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. This initiative is an integral part of the adaptation of the Alliance to the security situation following the Cold War, as well as an important component of the policy of alliances and co-operation of the organisation.

The Mediterranean Dialogue reflects the view adopted by the Alliance which is that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The aim of this initiative is to contribute to regional security and stability, to arrive at improved mutual understanding and to eliminate the misconceived ideas the member countries have about NATO.

Throughout its more than ten years of history, the Mediterranean Dialogue and its ensuing development have been based on five principles. Firstly, the notion of what is progressive in terms of participation and content, which has enabled a continual increase in the number of member countries over the years (Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Mauritania in 1994; Tunisia and Jordan in 1995; and Algeria in 2000) and for the content of the initiative to develop over time. However, the fundamentally bilateral nature of the structure of MD (NATO+1) should be emphasised despite the fact that multilateral meetings are held on a regular basis (NATO+7).

The principle of non-discrimination is also a key element in the creation and development of the Dialogue; all the Mediterranean members are thus offered the same basis for co-operation and negotiation activities with NATO and the countries are free to choose the level and intensity of their participation in the Dialogue, which also includes the possibility of establishing Individual Cooperation Programmes (ICP). The fact that the Mediterranean Dialogue is seeking to strengthen and complement other international efforts such as the Euromediterranean Partnership and the Mediterranean Initiative of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is also highlighted. Finally, it should be mentioned that in principle, the activities undertaken within the framework of the Dialogue are developed on a self-financing basis; however, the allies have agreed to consider requests for financial assistance to support participation by the Mediterranean members in the Dialogue.

The Mediterranean Co-operation Group (MCG) established at the Madrid Summit in July 1997 under the supervision of the North Atlantic Council, a decision-making body of NATO, is responsible for the Mediterranean Dialogue. The political advisors hold regular meetings to address all the topics related to this initiative, including its future development. Political consultations in the NATO+1 format are conducted regularly at ambassadorial level as well as by task forces. These meetings provide an opportunity to exchange points of view on a variety of topics that are relevant to the security situation in the Mediterranean, as well as on the development of the dimension of political and military co-operation of the Dialogue. Meetings in the NATO+7 format are held regularly, including the meetings of the North Atlantic Council+7, in particular after the NATO ministerial meetings, summits of Heads of State and Government, and other NATO events. These meetings present an opportunity for NATO’s Secretary General to inform the Ambassadors of the Mediterranean Dialogue about the agenda of the Alliance.

The political dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue also includes visits by senior officials from NATO, including the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General, to the Mediterranean Dialogue Countries, with the objective of meeting the authorities of the respective countries and exchanging points of view on the initiative, as well as becoming more familiar with the objectives and specific priorities of the individual members.

The co-operation measures between NATO and the Mediterranean Dialogue Countries are based on an Annual Programme of Work, established in 1997, which includes seminars, workshops and other practical activities at public diplomacy level (information and press activities, scientific environmental co-operation), planning for civil emergencies, crisis management, border security, as well as consultations on terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, among other things.

The programme of work also has a military dimension that includes invitations to Dialogue Countries to observe – and in some cases to participate in – NATO’s military exercises, to attend courses and participate in other military activities of the Alliance. In addition, the consultation meetings NATO+7 that bring together NATO military personnel from the Mediterranean Dialogue Countries are held twice a
The Mediterranean Dialogue, in an ambitious and extensive framework for examining the implementation of a more cooperative framework by NATO's Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. It is the first visit by a Secretary General of the Alliance to the country by NATO's Secretary General, the first of its kind. The measures for reinforcing the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue are examined, primarily focusing on the fight against terrorism and illegal trafficking.

A new and different initiative, but complementary to the Mediterranean Dialogue, was simultaneously launched at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 with the aim of reaching interested countries in the Middle East region, commencing with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Istanbul Co-operation Initiative (ICI), accordingly seeks to reinforce security and stability by encouraging mutually beneficial bilateral relations, in particular in the context of the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Four of the six countries of the GCC – Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait (first three months of 2005) and the United Arab Emirates (June 2005) – have joined the initiative and ensuring implementation of these activities. In this sense, the group will also encourage member countries to participate in the ICI on the basis of 26+1 for the purpose of developing individual work plans.

**Chronology January 2005 – December 2005**

- 13th January, Jordan: Visit to the country by NATO’s Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. It is the first visit by a Secretary General of the Alliance to the country, with the objective of examining the implementation of a more ambitious and extensive framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue, in accordance with the resolution passed at the Istanbul Summit in June 2002.
- 17th February, Morocco: Visit to the country by NATO’s Secretary General, the first of its kind. The measures for reinforcing the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue are examined, primarily focusing on the fight against terrorism and illegal trafficking.
- 24th February, Israel: First visit by NATO’s Secretary General to Israel to examine ways of strengthening political and practical co-operation with the country.
- 18th March, Rome (Italy): NATO and the broader Middle East region. Conference that brings together a hundred senior officials, parliamentarians, academics and experts in the field of security of NATO and the Gulf countries to exchange points of view on the implementation of the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative.
- 28th April, Tunisia: Visit by Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to Tunisia to discuss the implementation of a more ambitious and wider framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue.
- 5th–7th May, Amman (Jordan): Recent Developments and New Political Perspectives in the Broader Middle East Region. NATO Conference and the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO.
- 15th–16th June, Israel: Meeting of the Secretary General with the Knesset Commissions for Foreign Affairs and Defence. During this visit, organised by NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division, the situation of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative are examined.
- 14th July, Mauritania: First visit by the Secretary General to the North African country. The meetings basically focus on two topics: how to continue and intensify co-operation between NATO and Mauritania, including areas such as general education and reform of defence; and how the international community could act more effectively against terrorism. This is the sixth visit by NATO’s Secretary General to the countries participating in the Dialogue, with the objective of continuing to strengthen the political and practical dimension of this initiative and building closer ties of trust, dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean.
- 26th September, Dubai (UAE): Promoting Co-operation and Fostering Relations: NATO-Gulf relations in the Framework of the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative. Conference organised by the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in collaboration with NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division. The principal topics discussed are the strategic balance of security in the Gulf from the differing perspectives of the Gulf and NATO, the definition of relations between NATO and the Gulf or the role of NATO in the promotion of co-operation in the areas of reform of defence and the fight against terrorism.
- 12th–13th October, Egypt: historic visit by NATO’s Secretary General to Egypt, testifying to the importance that the Alliance attached to the contribution by Egypt to the Mediterranean Dialogue and the strategic role of the country in the Middle East.
- 8th–9th November, Algiers (Algeria): La coopération entre l’Algerie et l’OTAN: évaluation et perspectives Seminar Algeria-NATO organised by the Institut National de Stratégie Globale (INESG) and NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division.
- 1st December, Doha (Qatar): Conference on NATO security and the Gulf. Sponsored by the government of Qatar, NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division and the RAND Corporation, this conference brings together NATO officials, company representatives and officials from the six countries that are likely to constitute the ICI. The debates focus on the development of security in the Gulf region and the promotion of ICI among the countries of the Middle East region.

More information:
- Mediterranean Dialogue: [www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm](http://www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm)
2. Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in the OSCE

At the beginning of the nineties the necessity for international organisations to show solidarity became apparent when challenges to the security of post-Cold War Europe were faced effectively. In this context, and taking into consideration the fact that many of the OSCE member states border on the Mediterranean, the importance of the Mediterranean dimension of European security becomes apparent.

The OSCE currently maintains special relations with six Mediterranean countries, the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation (MPCs): Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan (since 1998), Morocco and Tunisia (since 1994). These relations involve organising seminars dealing with issues that are of particular concern to the Mediterranean, regular meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group with member countries of the OSCE and holding Parliamentary Forums on the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation are also invited to participate in important meetings, including those which address the three OSCE dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human.

The OSCE Mediterranean seminars are attended by high ranking representatives from the member states of the organisation, the Mediterranean partners, and international organisations. Members of Parliament, academics and representatives from non-international organisations also attend. The objective of these meetings is to encourage the exchange of ideas and recommendations.

Mediterranean Seminar 2005

8th-9th September, Rabat (Morocco): The Role of the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation in Migration and Integration Policies.

Thirty-three member states of the OSCE participate in the seminar, together with the six Mediterranean partners for co-operation and another three partners for co-operation (Japan, Korea and Thailand). In its inaugural debate, the Slovene Minister for Foreign Affairs Dimitrij Rupel emphasised that if migration is managed in an appropriate manner, it could be of benefit to everyone, otherwise it could cause tension, inequality, prejudice, racism, populism and even violence. Of the main proposals that emerged from the seminar, the creation of a task force of experts on migration under the auspices of the Permanent Council of OSCE and the creation of a financial instrument to encourage greater involvement by the OSCE in the activities with its partners for co-operation are highlighted.


The OSCE Contact Group was established within the framework of the Permanent Council of the OSCE to facilitate the exchange of information of mutual interest and the generation of ideas (Bucharest Summit in 1994). Despite the informal character of these meetings, the participating states in the OSCE and the Mediterranean partners are usually represented by their ambassadors. The meetings between the Contact Group and the Mediterranean partners are preceded by a series of gatherings to prepare the agenda of the meeting and to explore other types of co-operation in the OSCE’s Mediterranean dimension. It should also be emphasised that the Contact Group invites representatives from other international organisations as well, such as the Director of the Venice Commission or representatives from the presidency of the EU in the Barcelona Process. In 2005, under the Belgian presidency, the Contact Group held regular meetings and one special meeting, to debate a wide range of topics in the three security dimensions of the OSCE, including anti-terrorism, tolerance and non-discrimination, the Barcelona Process and NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue, the reform of the OSCE, border control and security and human rights.

Finally, the activities of the OSCE’s Parliamentary Assembly deserves a special mention; with its 317 members it constitutes the parliamentary dimension of the organisation. Founded in 1990 after the Paris Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), its main task is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue. The Mediterranean partners for co-operation are invited to attend the Parliamentary Assembly sessions. In addition, the existence of a Special Representative for the Mediterranean clearly demonstrates the interest in the Mediterranean. Appointments to this post are the responsibility of the President of the Assembly and until July 2004 it was held by the Scot Bruce George, who replaced the Frenchman Michel Voisin. The following functions of the special representative are relevant: reinforcement of the Mediterranean dimension of the organisation, maintaining relations with the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, and consideration of the instruments required to promote the organisation of the Mediterranean Forum under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Forum is the response to the desire to strengthen the ties between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation in order to be able to show solidarity in addressing the issues related to security and stability in the Mediterranean. Following the meetings in Rome (11th October 2003) and on Rhodes (1st October 2004), between 7th and 9th October 2005, the third Euromediterranean Parliamentary Forum was accordingly held in Sveti-Stefan (Serbia and Montenegro). Among the topics discussed, those that are highlighted are primarily related to economic security, trade and co-operation in the Mediterranean, security risks in the Mediterranean, in addition to the threats and challenges in the region.


Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation: www.osce.org/ec

Annual OSCE Report, 2005:

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly: www.oscepa.org
3. Mediterranean Forum (Foromed)

Created in 1994 on the basis of a verbal declaration in Alexandria as a result of a Franco-Egyptian initiative, the Mediterranean Forum brings together eleven Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Turkey. This Forum constitutes an informal type of reflection, agreement and dialogue between the member states, with the objective of encouraging an exchange of perspectives with a view to bringing the positions of its participants closer together prior to the meetings that are held within the framework of the Euromediterranean Partnership.

With its flexible character into consideration, its restricted number of members, and the absence of protagonists directly involved in the conflict in the Middle East, the Mediterranean Forum is regarded as a “laboratory of ideas” from the Barcelona Process. Thus, by affirming the specificity of the Forum and each of the different discussion forums that exist in the basins of the Mediterranean, the member countries strive to give more visibility and substance to the work of the Forum with a view to making it the driving force of the Euromediterranean Partnership. This initiative is interested in the many challenges that face the Mediterranean region in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres, which has resulted in the creation of three task forces.

Throughout the year, various preparatory meetings of senior officials from the member countries were held, and focused on examining the measures to rationalise the work of the forum and address in greater depth the specific topics that are discussed at the annual ministerial meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

During its presidency of the Mediterranean Forum in 2005, Tunisia hosted the twelfth session on 1st and 2nd October 2005 of the Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs from the member countries of the Mediterranean Forum. The Conference, held in Hammamet and opened by the Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdelwaheb Abdallah, anticipated the presence of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs from Algeria, Morocco, France, Malta, Greece, Turkey and Spain, in addition to the Egyptian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs from Italy and Portugal. This ministerial meeting, with its informal character, focused on three issues: the Mediterranean dimension of European Community Policy; movement of financial resources and promotion of direct investments in the Mediterranean area; and the establishment of a balanced dialogue between the cultures and civilisations in the Mediterranean basin. This edition of Foromed has a certain symbolic significance due to the fact that it is the last opportunity to focus on the media to drive the dialogue forward within the framework of the forum before the Barcelona Summit (27th-29th November) and the Global Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia (16th-18th November).

Taking into consideration the spirit of the Mediterranean Forum which is one of collective reflection, during the meeting various documents were drafted on emigration and migration of people, reinforcement of political dialogue and co-operation in the matters of security and defence, the fight against terrorism, Euromediterranean co-operation in the health sector, tourism, and investments in the region. These documents were produced in collaboration with two or three different delegations representing the countries of the forum to be presented for scrutiny at the Barcelona Summit in November. Tunisia also has the task, however, of presenting the participants with a global document entitled “Une vision commune de progrès et de solidarité dans le cadre du partenariat euroméditerranéen”. This document has been produced in collaboration with the member countries of the forum and was scrutinised during the meeting of senior officials on 30th September in Hammamet and has since been adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Secretaries of State representing the eleven countries of the forum. The meeting also enabled stock to be taken of the existing interest in working towards strengthening the partnership, in particular in the spheres of economic, social and cultural co-operation. Proposals for the establishment of a Euromediterranean bank, implementation of financial instruments more suited to the urgent requirements of the entire region, social aspects, tourism, and the fight against terrorism were presented. With regard to the subject of terrorism, approval by the Participating States of a Code of Conduct on terrorism is noteworthy since it testifies to the existence of a common desire to confront this phenomenon so that it may be adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Barcelonà Summit. Migration issues also deserve a special mention since they highlight an important phenomenon that must be taken into consideration; namely that the Maghreb countries are not only countries of origin in terms of migration, but must also face the challenge of a significant presence of a sub-Saharan population.

After the meeting, Spain took over the presidency of the Mediterranean Forum for 2006 with the announcement that it would hold the thirteenth ministerial meeting during the last three months of the year in Alicante.

4. Dialogue 5+5

The Forum for the Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean, also known as Dialogue 5+5, is an informal political dialogue that brings together ten riparian countries in the Western basin of the Mediterranean: five countries from the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia) and five members of the European Union (Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal). This initiative was created in Rome on 10 December 1990 with the aim of reinforcing and enriching the political, economic and cultural dialogue between the two banks of the Mediterranean. However, the consequences of the Gulf War, events in Algeria or the embargo imposed on Libya, among other things, weakened the development of this initiative during the nineties. It was not until January 2001 that the 5+5 found itself being relaunched at the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Af-
fairs in Lisbon which has met regularly once a year in the Maghreb and in Europe alternatively since then. The 5+5 also holds regular meetings at other levels, such as that of the Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs or national Parliaments.

Main meeting during 2005

• 29th-30th June, Valetta (Malta): Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs. It discussed regional topical issues such as the situation in Iraq or the resumption of the Barcelona Process, against the background of the tenth anniversary in November. The participating ministers demonstrated their agreement on the importance of strengthening the social welfare systems in the Southern Mediterranean countries. The issue of illegal immigration was also subject to intensive debate and agreement was reached on the preparation of a high-level conference on this subject, which will bring together Euromediterranean transit and destination countries as well as sub-Saharan countries of origin. Other topics discussed apart from regional issues were the Libyan proposal of the Road Map for Peace and Security in the Western Mediterranean, the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, a Tunisian-Maltese report on Culture and Development and a Tunisian report on the Year of the Mediterranean. Morocco will take over from the Maltese presidency in 2006, which means that the next meeting will take place in the Maghreb country.

• 9th-10th November, Paris (France): Fourth Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean. The Conference brings together the Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs from the basins of the Western Mediterranean at the invitation of France, the first country in the Northern basin to assume the annual presidency of this organisation. The conference was basically set up with the objective of consolidating the dialogue initiated in Tunisia in 2002 which has assumed dramatic significance recently due to the growth of the phenomenon of clandestine immigration. The aim is to be able to provide a global response to the phenomenon of migration (control of migratory movements, integration and co-development policies), also taking observance of the interests of the origin and host countries into consideration in a dynamic of solidarity, cooperation and development. More information: www.cohesionssociale.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/DP_4_conference_migration_mediterraneee.pdf

• 11th-12th December, Algiers (Algeria): Meeting of the Ministers for Defence with the aim of taking stock of the actions implemented during the year and to determine the objectives for 2006. Hence, and in accordance with the French initiative of 2004, the 5+5 determined a plan of agreed action on maritime security, civil protection and aviation security in the Mediterranean, to combat terrorism, clandestine immigration and even illegal trafficking.

5. Euro-Arab Relations

The Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are topics that occupy a large part of the agenda of the League of the Arab States, in particular that of its Ministers for Foreign Affairs, under the heading Euro-Arab relations. Among the activities undertaken within this framework during 2005, first and foremost, the participation of the Secretary General in the League of Arab States in the Euromediterranean Summit of November 2005 in Barcelona. Participation by the delegation of the League of Arab States, headed by its Secretary General Amr Moussa, is an important opportunity to take stock of the ten years of Euromediterranean Partnership, highlighting the significance of its consolidation as an effective process which, however, needs to be relaunched in order to achieve the many objectives indicated since its launch.

In this sense, the League of Arab States continues to support the Barcelona Process as the sole strategic option that offers a diplomatic channel through which to address issues of common interest, assisting the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean to boost their economies with the objective of abolishing the differences between the north and south. Participation of the organisation along the same lines in the next ministerial meeting which will be held under the European presidency in the second quarter of 2006 is also planned. This meeting will be a valuable opportunity to take stock of Barcelona II and to drive forward the activities contained in the plan of work adopted at the Euromediterranean Summit held in Barcelona in November 2005. The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States also participated in the fourth conference on the Euro-Arab Partnership, organised by the centre of the League of Arab States in Tunisia, in September 2005 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. However, among the activities highlighted, mention should also be made of participation by the members of the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States, such as the head of the Paris and Geneva Missions, in the Conference organised by the Frederich Ebert Foundation in the city of Berlin in November with the objective of taking stock of the Barcelona Process. More information: www.arableagueonline.org

6. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)

The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative is one of the most recent in the south-eastern region of Europe and the Adriatic. It has been functioning as a forum of co-operation for general issues since its creation at the Conference on Development and Security of the Adriatic and Ionian (Ancona, Italy) seas held on 19th and 20th May 2000. This initiative brings together Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia. In accordance with the Declaration of Ancona, reinforcement of regional co-operation assists in promoting political and economic stability by creating a solid basis for the process of European integration. The activities of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative are spread over six full months: fight against organised crime, economic and touristic co-operation between small and medium-sized enterprises, environmental protection and sustainable development, co-operation in the sphere of maritime transport and cultural and inter-university co-operation.
The initiative lacks permanent bodies and the decision-making body is the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs (Adriatic-Ionian Council) whose agenda is prepared at the periodic meetings held by the national co-ordinators or senior officials. The committee of senior officials meets two or three times throughout the year, depending on requirements and the periodicity determined by the presidency, whereas the round tables meet at least twice a year. In addition, the presidency of the round tables also varies each year during the period from May-June, depending on the country that assumes the presidency. The representatives from the European Union are invited to participate in the meetings of the Adriatic-Ionian Council in accordance with the rules of the Council, adopted on 24 November 2000 in Zagreb. However, the initiative has a rotating annual presidency that commences in May of each year and follows the alphabetic order of the member states. Hence, after the Croatian, Greek, Italian and Slovene presidencies, Serbia and Montenegro took over in May 2004, and Albania took over the presidency of the Initiative in May 2005. The main function of the presidency is to chair and organise the sessions during the six full months that represent the framework of the activities. Of the principal activities undertaken in 2005, the Adriatic-Ionic Council is highlighted; it was held on 7 June 2005 in the town of Cetinje (Montenegro) to debate the topics discussed during the six months of work of the initiatives held between 14 and 15 April 2005 in Mločer and Pržno (Montenegro): environmental protection and sustainable development; transport and maritime co-operation culture; economy, tourism and co-operation between small and medium-sized enterprises.

More information:
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, Adriatic-Ionian Initiative: www.mfa.gov.yu/Foreignframe.htm
Republic of Montenegro, Adriatic-Ionian Initiative: www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/ji