

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) is considered an integral part of the North Atlantic Alliance's cooperative approach to security and it reflects the Alliance's views that security in Europe is deeply linked to stability in the Mediterranean region. The MD indeed aims at: contributing to regional security and stability, achieving better mutual understanding between NATO and its Mediterranean Partners and dispelling misconceptions about the Alliance among participating countries. It complements other initiatives in the region such as the Barcelona Process, the OSCE Mediterranean Partner Countries for Cooperation, and the 5+5 Dialogue. The MD has its origins in the Brussels Summit Declaration in 1994, when, after the positive developments in the Middle East Peace process, the Heads of State and Government declared their readiness to establish contacts between the Alliance and Mediterranean non-member countries on a case-by-case basis. During 1995, Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan were invited to participate in a dialogue with NATO. In 2000 Algeria also joined the MD. During the 1997 Madrid Summit the Mediterranean Cooperation group was established: all NATO members are represented in it and it is the steering body for all questions related to the dialogue and its development.

The MD consists of a political dialogue combined with participation on specific and practical activities. These meetings are normally chaired by NATO's Secretary General and are conducted between the North Atlantic Council and the ambassador of each Mediterranean country. They represent a privileged opportunity to

share views on security matters and discuss the current status of the MD. The structure of the MD can be conducted on a bilateral level (that is to say 26 NATO countries and the MD country interested), on a multilateral level (involving the 26 NATO countries and the 7 MD countries) or, finally, on a regional level (involving two or more countries in the cooperation). The dialogue is progressive in terms of participation and substance, thus allowing the number of partners and the content of the Dialogue to evolve over time. Besides, all the Mediterranean partners are offered the same basis for cooperation within a non discriminatory framework. On the practical dimension, activities such as civil emergency planning, science, information and also military exercises are held. This programme includes: observation of NATO/PfP (Partnership for Peace) military exercises, attending courses and seminars at NATO schools and visiting NATO military bodies. All these activities are included in the Annual Work Programme together with seminars, workshops and other practical activities in areas such as the environment, information, crisis management, defence policy and strategy, small arms and light weapons, global humanitarian mine action and non-proliferation. Mediterranean countries contribute to NATO-led peacekeeping operations: Jordan, Egypt and Morocco participated in the NATO mission of the Balkans.

During the Istanbul Summit in 2004, NATO's Heads of State and Government decided to enhance the practical dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue. A number of principles guided the Alliance's work: the need for close consultation with the MD countries, the importance of being responsive to their interests and needs, the possibility of

self-differentiation while preserving unity and the non-discriminatory character of the MD. This improvement in the practical field of the MD consisted in: promoting military-to-military cooperation, combating terrorism through effective intelligence sharing and maritime cooperation, promoting democratic control of armed forces and enhancing cooperation in the area of civil emergency planning. At the same Summit, the Alliance, considering itself ready for new challenges, decided to undertake a new initiative. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) aims at contributing to long-term global and regional security by offering practical bilateral cooperation with NATO to countries of the broader Middle East region starting with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). The initiative is open to all interested countries of the above region who subscribe to its contents, including fighting against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the present moment Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have joined the initiative. Within the framework of the initiative NATO countries decided to establish the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Group composed of political counsellors from the 26 delegations of member countries to NATO. The group defines the procedures for the development of practical activities with interested countries and engages countries participating in the Initiative on a "26+1" basis for developing individual work plans and their implementation.

The Mediterranean Dialogue is a forum for political consultations and practical cooperation which is addressed to countries involved in Mediterranean-related process-

es; the ICI is meant to promote essentially practical cooperation on a bilateral basis and it concerns the Broader Middle East region. The two initiatives are complementary and they serve the same purpose of building strong ties in cooperation fields with interested countries. In this framework, it is worth stressing the activity of the NATO Parliamentary Special Group (GSM) that provides a forum for parliamentarians from NATO and MENA countries. It is one of the first institutions engaged with the region and it evolves according to the new challenges and initiatives that come to light. Reflecting the strategic importance of the Gulf region and the new ICI, the NATO PA has also started establishing links with parliamentary institutions and advisory councils in the countries of the Gulf region.

Chronology January 2007 – December 2007

- 21 January, Riyadh (Saudi Arabia): The NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Diplomatic Institute of Foreign Ministry of Saudi Arabia co-sponsor the “NATO and GCC Countries Symposium. Cooperation within the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.” Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Minuto Rizzo, stresses that NATO would very much value the participation of Saudi Arabia in the ICI considering the key role it plays in the region;
- 9 February, Seville (Spain): During an informal meeting NATO Defence Ministers meet their counterparts of the MD countries. This is the second event ever between NATO and the MD countries at the level of Defence Ministers. During the meeting the ministers discuss the consolidation of the progress achieved and exchange ideas on future cooperation. The activities of the Mediterranean Dialogue work programme have increased from more than 100 activities in 2004 to more than 600 in 2007. The 2007 work programme includes activities in 28 different fields: military activities, civil emergency planning, crisis management, language training and others;
- 28 March-1 April, Bahrain and Kuwait: The annual country visit of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Mediterranean Special Group takes place. A group of some 20 European and North American parliamentarians

- meet legislators and senior government officials from the two Gulf countries. NATO parliamentarians also meet with media and civil society representatives. The most important outcome of the visit is that parliamentarians of the two countries are invited as observers in selected NATO PA activities;
- 5-6 June, Manama (Bahrain): NATO-Bahrain Public Diplomacy Conference on “Media in a Changing World: Perspectives from GCC and NATO.” Participants include academics, elected and government officials, civil society and diplomatic representatives from the Kingdom of Bahrain and other countries taking part in the ICI;
 - 18-19 June, Tunis (Tunisia): Seminar organised by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Diplomatic Institute for Formation and Studies of the Tunisian Foreign Ministry on the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue. The main themes dealt with are: the transformation of the Mediterranean Dialogue and its implementation especially regarding Tunisia, Security and Environmental Challenges in the Mediterranean Region;
 - 1-2 July, Naples (Italy): Fourth Naples Seminar organised in co-operation with the Italian delegation of the NATO PA and the Mediterranean Special Group (GSM). 40 members from NATO and NATO PA and Mediterranean Associates (Algeria, Israel and Jordan) meet to discuss security issues in the MENA region. The final session is focused on recent NATO developments regarding the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: the creation of a Middle East faculty at the NATO Defence College in Rome;
 - 5 September, Kuwait City (Kuwait): The NATO Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Minuto Rizzo, delivers a speech during the Public Diplomacy Symposium at the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) discussing NATO-Kuwait relations in the framework of NATO's transformation. He underlines the growing practical cooperation particularly in the promising area of training and education: the Training Cooperative Initiative aims at making available to MD and ICI interested partners, the Alliance's expertise in the field of training military forces;
 - 10 September, Doha (Qatar): NATO Deputy Secretary General meets the Crown Prince of Qatar. The talks focus

- on the future prospects of NATO-Qatar relations: how to enhance political consultations and how to develop a 2008 menu of practical cooperation between NATO and Qatar;
- 9 October, Egypt: NATO and Egypt finalise their Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) under the enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue. During Istanbul Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government offered the MD partner countries the possibility to agree with NATO Individual Cooperation Programmes. The ICP helps to frame NATO's cooperation with Egypt in a more strategic way than is currently done with the Mediterranean Dialogue Work programme;
 - 21 October, Amman (Jordan): First official visit to Jordan of the new Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Bisogniero. Talks focus on NATO-Jordan relations in the framework of the MD and on the way to forward the implementation of practical cooperation;
 - 22-23 October, Herzliya (Israel): Two-day Symposium on “NATO-Israel Relations and the Mediterranean Dialogue” co-sponsored by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Atlantic Forum of Israel. The symposium brings together high level opinion leaders and policy makers from Israel and officials from NATO;
 - 17 November Brussels (Belgium): The Emir of the State of Qatar pays an historic visit to NATO headquarters. This is the first visit of this kind by a Head of State of a member country of the ICI.
 - 3 December, Brussels (Belgium): NATO launches the first ever Mediterranean Dialogue Trust Fund with Jordan to assist the country with the elimination of explosive remnants of war. It marks the start of a new kind of cooperation where civilian and military expertise is combined;
 - 4-5 December, Brussels (Belgium): NATO Public Diplomacy Division organises a two-day press tour at NATO Headquarters for senior media representatives from MD and ICI countries, as well as Oman and Saudi Arabia. Topics covered are: the agenda of NATO Ministerial meetings, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, NATO's relations with Russia and the Ukraine, NATO's role in security and stabilisation from the Balkans to Afghanistan;

- 7 December, Brussels (Belgium): Foreign Affairs Ministers and their counterparts from the MD countries meet for the second time since the Istanbul Summit in 2004. Ministers agree that political dialogue and practical cooperation must go hand in hand.

For further information:

Mediterranean Dialogue: www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: www.nato.int/ici/home.htm

2. Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in OSCE

The relationship between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) goes back to the Helsinki Process. In the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 it was affirmed with conviction that security in Europe was to be considered in the broader context of world security and closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole. In 1992, during the Helsinki Summit, it was considered essential to maintain closer contact with Mediterranean Partners. From this moment on, the Partners have been regularly invited to meetings of the OSCE Council of Ministers, conferences and to the yearly Mediterranean Seminars. These latter together with the Parliamentary forum on the Mediterranean, are privileged moments for the exchange of ideas and experiences. At the Budapest Summit of 1994, another key moment took place: the creation of an informal Contact Group under the permanent Council. At present, the Contact Group represents the main channel for ongoing political dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners besides facilitating the interchange of information and generation of ideas. At the Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht in 2003, the adoption of the *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century* represented another turning point. It was a chance to strengthen interaction especially identifying areas of common interest for co-ordinated action. This expanding range of co-operation now includes different aspects of the Organization's work – confidence-building, political dialogue, more specific collaboration in tackling specific issues: in-

tolerance, discrimination, terrorism, linkage between economic and environmental well-being and security, migration management. The broad framework for regular contact is represented by: the participation as observers of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, high-level meetings with the OSCE Ministerial Troika and Secretary General, the Annual Security Review Conference, the Economic Forum, the Annual and Winter Sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and finally the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar which is normally attended also by international organizations, parliamentarians and NGOs.

The Spanish Chairmanship organized an informal meeting between the personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on Tolerance and the Mediterranean Partners. Promoting tolerance and non-discrimination was one of the priorities of the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE during 2007; the other priorities were: combating terrorism, human trafficking and protecting the rights of national minorities. As per tolerance and non-discrimination, they were at the core of some important meetings during 2007: the 13th Mediterranean Seminar and the Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims held in Cordoba and the Bucharest Conference on Combating Discrimination.

Mediterranean Seminar 2006

17-18 December, Tel Aviv (Israel): the 13th Mediterranean Seminar is hosted by the Israeli Government and it is attended by OSCE's participating states and its Mediterranean partner countries. On the eve of the seminar non-governmental organisations from the Mediterranean take part in a discussion on the role of NGOs in combating intolerance and discrimination. Topics on the agenda of the Seminar include promoting respect for cultural and religious diversity and facilitating dialogue; combating discrimination against women, migrants and other groups; the role of women, educators and the media in countering intolerance and OSCE tolerance-related commitments as well as OSCE tools to implement them. Spanish Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado, who chairs the Permanent Council, states that the OSCE promotes en-

counters to help avoid the erosion of democratic legitimacy, plurality and co-existence. Encouraging participation in pluralistic societies and combating intolerance are priorities for the 2007 Spanish OSCE Chairmanship and these aims were reaffirmed at the Madrid Ministerial Council in late November when a decision on tolerance and non-discrimination was adopted.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

29 September-1 October, Portoroz (Slovenia): parliamentarians from around the OSCE countries and Mediterranean Partners meet for the annual meetings which consist in a meeting of the standing committee and a forum on the Mediterranean. Especially on 1 October, parliamentarians' attention is focused on the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE and particularly on minority protection and non-discrimination in the Mediterranean.

OSCE International Conference

9-10 October, Cordoba (Spain): "Countering intolerance and discrimination against Muslims" is the title of the OSCE International Conference. The goal of the Cordoba conference is to introduce the phenomenon of intolerance and discrimination against Muslim communities into the political realm within the OSCE, and to approach the issue with the objective of proposing a solution to this specific form of discrimination. Two Mediterranean Partners, Algeria and Egypt, make statements during plenary sessions on the role of education and the media in countering discrimination against Muslims.

OSCE Workshops

13-15 November, Madrid (Spain): the workshop on "Travel Document Security in the Mediterranean Region" is designed to help OSCE participating states and Mediterranean Partners to comply with a decision taken in 2003 that called for improved passports: travel documents need to be machine-readable, have digitized photos and biometric data when possible.

10-11 December, Valencia (Spain): the theme of the workshop is "Water Scarcity, Land Degradation and Desertification in the Mediterranean Region" the purpose is to assess links between these

three elements on the one hand and security on the other.

For further information:

Mediterranean Seminar: www.osce.org/item/27874.html

Conference of Cordoba: www.osce.org/conferences/tnd_muslim_2007.html

3. Mediterranean Forum (Foromed)

Since its founding in 1994, the Mediterranean Forum has represented an informal framework for cooperation between six Mediterranean EU countries and five Mediterranean partners: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey. It is an informal forum of dialogue and confrontation amongst the participating countries and it acts as a testing ground of ideas and a promoter of initiatives within the general framework of the Barcelona Process. It has no founding charter or any permanent structural basis or financial resources of its own, which is to say that all of its activities are funded by the states that want to take part in the activities. The Chairmanship rotates annually and the coordinator of each Chairmanship carries out the secretariat's functions. At the end of each Chairmanship a Ministerial meeting takes place and this is considered the Forum's main body. Every year there are three or four expert-level meetings, as well as seminars and workshops. Extraordinary ad-hoc meetings were also held in special circumstances such as in October 2001, following the events of September 11, and in April 2006 to address the cartoons crisis.

The Mediterranean Forum is the realization of a Franco-Egyptian initiative providing for multilateral cooperation between Mediterranean EU member states and other Mediterranean countries. It is composed of three working groups: political, economic and cultural. With the launching of the Barcelona Process in November 1995, the usefulness of the Mediterranean Forum was called into question and it became less active mainly due to its lack of financial support. It was decided to maintain it as a support instrument for the Barcelona Process due to its flexible nature. In recent years it has worked basically as a forum for informal consultations and exchange of views in preparation for the ministerial meetings of the Barcelona Process. At

the 2nd Ministerial Meeting, the two criteria to admit a new member to the Forum were decided on: any potential member has to have a Mediterranean coastline, thus being a Mediterranean state, and there must be consensus among the existing members regarding admission of a new member.

This year's main event was the 14th regular Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Mediterranean Forum held in Rethymno (Crete), on 1 and 2 June 2007, under the Chairmanship of Greece. Besides the delegations from the 11 founding members of the Mediterranean Forum, a Libyan delegation was also invited by the Presidency. Ministers restated their conviction that the Mediterranean Forum constituted a useful tribune of reflection and deepening of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership and they recalled the ultimate goal to contribute to the consolidation of peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean. Ministers focused their discussion on topics of utmost importance for the region: the situation in the Middle East, migration and energy.

Despite recent outbursts of violence in the Middle East, new prospects for the promotion of the peace process are emerging thanks to some political developments: the renewal of the Arab peace initiative, the promotion of the Palestinian government for national unity and the activation of the international community. The situation of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership in the energy sector was reviewed and the need to promote the gradual integration of Euro-Mediterranean energy markets was underlined. Energy Ministers agreed that they could further deliberate on the feasibility of creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Community. On migration, they stressed the importance of addressing the phenomenon with a comprehensive and integrated approach. Ministers also reconfirmed the threefold dimension of the issue i.e. legal migration, migration and development, illegal immigration. They underlined the need for closer cooperation and a regular exchange of information between the different institutions of the Barcelona Process especially with the Euro Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly whose role should be enhanced.

Finally they agreed that Algeria will hold the next Presidency of the Mediterranean Forum for 2008.

For further information:

www.maec.es/SiteCollectionDocuments/Pa%C3%ADses%20y%20regiones/Mediterraneo/COMUNICADO_CONJUNTO.pdf

4. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)

Adriatic-Ionian Initiative was officially promoted during the summit on development and security of the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, in Ancona in 2000. At the end of the summit the Ancona Declaration was approved, thus establishing political enactment of this Initiative. It has eight European member countries that have an exit to the Adriatic and Ionian Sea: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The Initiative is supported by the European Union. The goal of this initiative is to develop and strengthen security in the Adriatic-Ionian region, to intensify co-operation between countries of the region and stimulate the process of integration with the EU for those countries (Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) that are not currently members of the EU but which are all candidates for EU accession. The initiative is a forum to exchange political opinions and at the same time to enable multilateral co-operation in different fields: the fight against organised crime, economy-tourism-cooperation among and between small and medium sized enterprises, environmental protection and sustainable development, transport and shipping cooperation and cultural and inter-university cooperation with the Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin (www.uniadriion.net/). The All does not have a permanent body but it does have an organisational structure: the Adriatic-Ionian Council, the Committee of Senior Officials and the six thematic Round Tables. The Adriatic Ionian Council is the major body in the All decision-making process. It gathers at Foreign Minister level and it meets regularly once a year. It is chaired on a rotation basis with a new chair every year; during 2007, Bosnia-Herzegovina presided over the Initiative until May, while Croatia will chair the All until May 2008. The Committee of Senior Officials is a body responsible for the coordination of activities, preparation of ministerial meetings

and for the implementation of ideas and conclusions of the Round Tables; these latter are divided into six thematic units through which the Initiative's activities unfold. The Round Tables are convened at least twice a year. There is a great flexibility in scheduling the meetings and it sometimes leads to inefficiency and interrupted work continuity.

One of the round tables scheduled during the Bosnian Presidency concerned security. On 2 April in Sarajevo, representatives of security institutions and law enforcement agencies from Bosnia, Albania, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Greece presented their operational plans to combat organized crime and discussed improving regional cooperation in breaking up organized crime networks. During the ministerial meeting, held in Sarajevo on 1 June, the Sarajevo Declaration was approved as the final document of the Bosnia-Herzegovina chairmanship of the All. It highlighted the decision to establish a permanent operative Secretariat, probably to be based in Ancona (Italy), that will help to better coordinate and implement activities. Another important decision was to reduce the number of topics that the Initiative will discuss in the future in order to increase efficiency: environmental protection, transport and communication networking, and the protection of valuable and cultural heritage in the region. At the Adriatic-Ionian Council of Sarajevo, Serbia and Montenegro participated for the first time as independent countries.

5. 3rd and 4th Informal Meetings of Foreign Ministers of European Mediterranean States

During 2007 two informal meetings of Foreign Ministers of the eight EU Member States which form the southern border of the European Union were held. The meetings' objectives were to ensure a constant Mediterranean perspective in the EU's policies and actions. They were an opportunity for a frank and open exchange of views on a number of issues considered of primary importance for the EU and its Mediterranean and Southern dimension agenda. The participating countries were: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain and Portugal, the so called "Olive Tree Group." Although not having a particular Mediter-

anean character geographically, Bulgaria and Romania, the two new EU member states were accepted and will take part in the fourth meeting.

- 1-2 February, Valletta (Malta): At the core of the third informal meeting is the discussion on enhancing relations with Mediterranean partners within the ENP. In this regard, emphasis is also placed on improved visa mechanisms as an essential tool for an effective neighbourhood policy. The project of a so-called Malta Initiative is also discussed: this would be a new framework of dialogue between the Union and the Arab League within a more visible, structured and engaged format such as meetings of Foreign Ministers of the member states of both organizations. The Middle East and illegal migration are also special discussion items together with a debate on the future of Europe and its strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy supplies;

- 5-6 July Koper (Slovenia): Middle East, migration and ENP are central items of the fourth informal meeting of Foreign Ministers of Mediterranean EU Member States. Ministers send an open letter to the newly-appointed Quartet Special Envoy Tony Blair, in which they propose the establishment of an international force to promote the resolution of the conflict. The document also calls on Israel to take concrete steps such as the payment of taxes Israel owes to Palestinians. Regarding the ENP, Ministers agree to more actively involve Mediterranean and Eastern European partners on issues of mutual concern: energy, transport, migration, etc.. Ministers also agree to further develop the Black Sea Synergy initiative. The Foreign Ministers also stress that EU migration policies must take account of all aspects of migration: EU internal security and respect for human rights. They also call for an intensified partnership between EU and countries of origin/transit of migratory flows. Ministers also discuss the future of Kosovo, agreeing that it is an EU responsibility and reiterating that the unity of the EU on this subject is crucial. The Slovenian side presents an initiative concerning the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean University located on the Slovenian coast. For the first time, Bulgaria and Romania take part in the meeting.

For further information:

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Malta): www2.mfa.gov.mt/pages/news.asp?sec=9&id=359

Republic of Slovenia Government Communication Office: www.ukom.gov.si/eng/slovenia/publications/slovenia-news/5042/5082/

6. 5+5 Dialogue

The 5+5 Dialogue was set up on 10 October 1990 during a ministerial meeting of the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean Basin: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta – representing the Northern shore and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania – representing the Southern. Initially set up as a meeting of Foreign Ministers, since 1990 there have been 7 meetings with a ten-year interval between the first two and the five following, due to the international sanctions imposed on Libya. The 5+5 Dialogue has a flexible and informal character, over the years its character has changed from the merely political, becoming a forum for a strengthened regional and multidisciplinary cooperation in the Western Mediterranean. Foreign Affairs ministerial meetings are held at an informal level, as well as Defence, Home Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, Interparliamentary relations, and Tourism, and Transport meetings. Considering that there is no specific forum of dialogue between the EU and the Maghreb, the 5+5 Dialogue stands out as the unique framework in relations between European and Maghreb countries. Due to its practical and operative character it is a privileged forum for the interchange of ideas and launching of new initiatives besides taking advantage of the restricted geographical field limited to the Western Mediterranean. This initiative has encouraged the insertion of Libya and Mauritania in the regional context.

Main Meetings during 2007

- 1-2 March, Tunis (Tunisia): 4th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport (GTMO 5+5). Present at the conference are the Transport Ministers of Algeria, Spain, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and senior representatives of the French, Italian and Mauritanian ministries. Also present

in their capacity as observers were representatives of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the EC. The Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO) has been in existence since 1995. Since its creation, it has promoted cooperation in the Western Mediterranean transport industry and contributed towards strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements. The 4th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport is a result of close collaboration between Tunisia and Spain (incoming and outgoing Presidents, respectively). At the Conference, the GTMO Presidency passes to Tunisia, which will hold the position for the next two years. The GTMO Euro-Mediterranean cooperation group now has three new members (Libya, Malta and Mauritania), thereby obtaining the 5+5 structure (5 Maghreb countries and 5 EU countries) that exists in other sectors. Other important milestones at the Conference are the adoption and signing of a Protocol of Cooperation that institutionalizes and confirms GTMO cooperation in the area of transport. According to the protocol, priority areas for work include: defining a multimodal transport network in the region, improving transport conditions to facilitate trade in the region, developing R&D on transport in the Mediterranean area;

- 10-11 September, Madrid (Spain): meeting of the follow-up group of the ministerial conference on migration. During the meeting the issues tackled are: global and cooperative governance of mobility, reception and integration processes in the host society, economic and human benefits for the country of origin and destination. The Presidency of the Conference on Migration passes from Spain to Portugal;

- 9-10 December, Cagliari (Italy): The "5+5 Initiative" is a forum of cooperation where defence and security matters are discussed. First launched in 2004, it counts on the participation of ten Western Mediterranean nations. Through practical activities and a permanent exchange of ideas and experience, the "5+5 Initiative" aims at enhancing mutual understanding and trust in order to cope with security-challenging issues in the region. In just three years, studies about requirements have evolved

into a set of specific activities and joint air and naval exercises. Three major cooperation fields have been identified so far: maritime security, which includes prevention and the fight against illegal trafficking and the fight against marine pollution; Civil Protection, with special reference to responding to serious, man-made disasters; air security through the exchange of information among the military about air traffic to be suitably prepared in case of improper use of air spaces. "Education" is becoming the fourth cooperation field through the French Tunisian proposal to create a 5+5 Defence College. On 29 September, in Évora (Portugal) EU Defence Ministers meet the Defence Ministers of the five North African countries participating in the "5+5 Initiative", thus reaffirming the importance of the latter as a model of cooperation and test bench for new experiences. The rotating chairmanship passes from Italy to Libya for 2008.

For further information:

General Information: <http://www.maec.es>
Group of Transport:

www.cetmo.org/s_gtmo.htm

5+5 Initiative: www.difesa.it/ministro/compti+e+attivita/dettaglio+agenda.htm?detailid=4177

7. Euro-Arab Relations

During the first Euro-Arab Dialogue Forum, which took place in Paris in 2006, participants agreed on the need to revitalize and reinforce this strategic partnership, particularly trying to connect with citizens, thus shifting the focus from economic partnership towards partnership with people. In its origins, which date back to the early seventies, the Euro-Arab Dialogue (DEA), a discussion forum between the member countries of the European Community and the League of Arab States, sought to respond to a double necessity: on the one hand, Arab countries were interested in European support for their stand on the Arab Israeli conflict; on the other, Europe was concerned with the oil supplies that Arab countries could grant.

In 1973, five delegations from Arab countries took part in the European summit of Copenhagen and the idea of a special Euro-Arab Dialogue was pre-

sented. One of the first questions to face was the status of the PLO as observer in the General Commission of the Dialogue and legal representative of the Palestinian people. Since Europe did not recognise the PLO, the Dialogue remained blocked until the Dublin compromise resolved the situation: the General Commission would gather not on a state-basis but as a European and an Arab delegation. The main objectives of the cooperation focused on issues of economy, trade, technology and culture. In the course of time, the Dialogue suffered setbacks which slowed down the initiative, but, equally, the Dialogue has always been resumed. During 2007, cooperation between Europe and the Arab League has been testified to by meetings at different levels. On 22 January, the European Commission President Barroso meets the Arab League Secretary General, Amr Moussa, to exchange views on current regional issues: the situation of Lebanon, the Israel-Palestine conflict and Iraq, as well as EC cooperation with the Arab League. The framework of the Barcelona Process is considered a valuable diplomatic channel to address issues of common interest for both parties. The Secretary General's participation in the plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly on 16/17 March should be viewed in this way. The main topics tackled are: the Middle-East situation, dialogue between civilizations, religions, cultures, migration, women's rights in the Mediterranean and the results achieved by the Barcelona Process. During the same month the Summit Conference of the Arab League Council was celebrated in Riyadh and it is worth mentioning the participation of the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, as a further demonstration of good cooperation between the parties. A delegation of the Arab League also took part in the OSCE Ministerial Meeting on 30 November in Madrid and Secretary General Amr Moussa participated in the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon on 6 November.

For further information:

OSCE Meeting: www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2007/11/28507_en.pdf