

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

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

In January 1994, in view of the positive results of the Peace process in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the heads of state and government taking part in the Brussels NATO Summit called for a new initiative geared toward Mediterranean countries that were not NATO members. The main objective of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was, and still is, to contribute to regional stability and security, improve the mutual understanding between NATO and its Mediterranean Partners, eliminate distorted images, prejudice and stereotypes of the participating countries and strengthen regional relations. In February 1995, NATO invited Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia to participate in the Dialogue, which was expanded to Jordan in November 1995 and Algeria in 2000. This initiative also complements other international regional initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the OSCE Euro-Mediterranean Initiative and the 5+5 Dialogue.

The Mediterranean Dialogue consists of a political dialogue combined with participation in specific activities. Political consultations are conducted on both a bilateral (NATO+1) and multilateral (NATO+7) level, and on an ambassadorial level as well as by working groups. These meetings provide an opportunity to exchange points of view on a variety of issues related to Mediterranean security, as well as on the development of the Dialogue in political and cooperation terms. NATO+7 meetings usually follow the summits of NATO Heads of State and Government or are held in the event of exceptional circumstances.

This occurred, for instance, in October 2001 following the September 11 attacks and in 2004 to celebrate the ten years of the MD. The political dimension of the Dialogue includes visits by senior NATO officials to MD countries to meet with their authorities and become more familiar with the objectives and priorities of each country. The practical dimension includes activities aimed at planning for civil emergencies, crisis management and border security, in addition to a military programme. The latter includes the possibility for Mediterranean Partners to observe NATO's military exercises in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) framework, to attend seminars and workshops and visit the Atlantic Alliance's military installations. Another tool for consolidating the practical dimension of the Dialogue is the possibility of establishing Individual Cooperation Programmes (ICP) between NATO and each country. So far, only Israel is participating to the individual programme, while Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have expressed interest.

From the outset, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue was progressive in terms of participation and content. As a result, the number of participant countries and the initiative's contents have changed over the years. The relationship between NATO and its Mediterranean Partners is conceived as a *joint ownership*: the Alliance does not aim to impose anything but instead offers its experience and competence in security.

During the Madrid Summit in 1997, the Heads of State established a new political body comprising NATO political advisors: the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG). The MCG is responsible for the Mediterranean Dialogue under the supervision of the North Atlantic Council.

Since 1997, the measures of practical cooperation for enhancing mutual trust are laid down in an annual Work Programme that comprises a wide range of security-related activities.

At their Summit meeting in Istanbul in 2004, NATO leaders committed to work towards making the MD a true Partnership and individualising priority areas in the document, "A more Ambitious and Expanded Framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue" aimed at enhancing political dialogue; developing defence system reforms and contributing to the fight against terrorism.

In the context of change in relations between NATO and its Mediterranean partners, the alliance is ready to start up a new initiative to contribute to peace and security in the broader Middle East. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) promotes bilateral cooperation with interested countries in the Gulf area, beginning with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). These countries must subscribe to the initiative's aims, including combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Four countries are currently members of the ICI: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

The ICI and MD are separate yet complementary programmes, serving the same purpose, namely to build increasingly strong cooperative ties with countries in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Both programmes are based on common principles: non-discrimination (MD and ICI partners are offered the same basis for cooperation and negotiation with NATO), the possibility of adapting the level and intensity of participation to the specific needs of each country, non-imposition by NATO and

non-interference in the domestic affairs of its partners.

Chronology January 2006 – December 2006

- 16/18 January, Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany): Second Mediterranean Dialogue Conference hosted by the Marshall Center, over 50 politicians examine the progress of the MD and the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism.
- 9/10 February, Taormina (Italy): First meeting of Defence Ministers from the 26 NATO countries and Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Among other issues, they discuss NATO's political and military transformation and the implementation of the expeditionary NATO Response Force (NRF), which should be fully up and running by the end of the year. The ministers examine the different cases of possible intervention of the NRF and the means of financing its deployment.
- 13/14 February, Cairo (Egypt): Conference on the dialogue between NATO and Egypt co-sponsored by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division and the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs. The conference brings together officials, journalists, opinion leaders and military officers from Egypt to discuss NATO's transformation following the 2004 Istanbul Summit and Egypt's contribution to the enhancement of Mediterranean Dialogue.
- 6/7 April, Rabat (Morocco): Under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, the North Atlantic Council and representatives of the seven Mediterranean Dialogue countries meet to discuss the state of their cooperation and the initiative's future prospects. The political consultation is held in a Mediterranean Dialogue country for the first time. The high-level meeting represents a further step in the enhancement of the political dimension of the MD.
- 2/3 May, Istanbul (Turkey): 12th Mediterranean Dialogue Seminar organised by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The seminar gathers 50 parliamentarians from NATO countries and partners from the Middle East and North Africa. The debates focus on the Parliament's role in Arab countries and re-

lations with Islamic parties and movements.

- 2/3 July, Naples (Italy): *Middle Eastern Conflicts Burden Dialogue between the West and the Arab-Muslim World*. Mediterranean Seminar organised by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and Italian Parliament. The meeting gathers 45 parliamentarians and a number of government organisations, officials and journalists. The seminar focuses on the Iraqi and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, although one seminar session is entirely dedicated to migration, given its strong link with security issues.
- 11th September, London (United Kingdom): *NATO, the Mediterranean and the Broader Middle East: The Future*. Conference sponsored by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) to evaluate the Alliance's strategy in the region through the MD and ICI.
- 23rd October, Herzliya (Israel): *Nato's Transformation, the Mediterranean Dialogue, NATO-Israel Relations*, conference co-sponsored by the NATO's Public Diplomacy Division and the Atlantic Forum of Israel. The Deputy Secretary-General of NATO celebrates the conclusion with Israel of the first Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) in the framework of the MD. NATO officials, opinion leaders and policy makers from Israel take part in the conference.
- 12th December, Kuna (Kuwait): *Facing Common Challenges Through ICI*. Second International conference of NATO and Gulf Countries (GCC) to examine the state of security cooperation and implement the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

More information:

www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative:

www.nato.int/issues/ici/index.html

2. Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in OSCE

The OSCE maintains special relations with six countries on the Mediterranean Basin, the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation (MPCs): Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan (since 1998), Morocco and Tunisia. This relationship goes back to the Helsinki Process (1975) and the

Helsinki Final Act, which included a Mediterranean chapter stating that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole. In December 2003, with decision 571, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to explore new avenues of cooperation for sharing OSCE norms, principles and commitments with its Mediterranean Partners.

Relations between OSCE and its MPCs include invitations to take part in regular meetings with OSCE bodies, organising seminars on issues that are of particular concern to the region, regular meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group with OSCE member countries and Mediterranean partners and the annual Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean. They are also invited to participate in important OSCE meetings that address politico-military, economic and environmental, and human issues.

Belgium has held the OSCE Presidency in 2006 and Spain will do so in 2007. The Mediterranean Seminars are attended by high-level representatives from the Member States of the OSCE, the Mediterranean Partners and international organisations. The main objective of these meetings is to encourage the exchange of ideas and recommendations.

Mediterranean Seminar 2006

6th/7th November, Sharm el-Sheik (Egypt): *The OSCE Mediterranean Partnership: From Recommendation to Implementation*. Thirty-five OSCE member states and two Asian Partners for Cooperation (Japan and Korea) take part in the Seminar. At the opening session, the OSCE Secretary General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, recalls the importance of a multidimensional and comprehensive approach to the themes of immigration, integration and tolerance, underlining the beneficial effects of migration and intercultural dialogue. The Ambassador of Spain, José López Jorin states that understanding the issues of immigration and integration is a challenge in itself that should be considered as affording opportunities for mutual enrichment for the countries of origin, transit and destination. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue are factors of long-term security, while education on human rights

and tolerance is an important tool for tackling these issues, together with the strengthening of legislation and data collection as effective tools for combating hatred, crime and intolerance.

OSCE Contact Group

During the Budapest Summit in 1994, the Contact Group was established to facilitate the interchange of information of mutual interest. Despite the informal character of these meetings, the OSCE countries and MPCs are represented by their ambassadors. Contact Group meetings are usually preceded by a series of gatherings to prepare the meeting agenda. In 2006, the Contact Group invites representatives of other international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, UNHCR and International Center for Migration Policy Development. In 2006, under the Spanish presidency, the Contact Group holds regular meetings on a wide range of topics belonging to the OSCE's three security dimensions, including migration, anti-terrorism, tolerance and non-discrimination, trafficking in human beings and freedom of the press.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

With its 317 members, it constitutes the parliamentary dimension of the organisation. Founded in 1990 during the Paris Summit, its main task is to facilitate interparliamentary dialogue. The MPCs attend the Parliamentary Assembly sessions. The existence of a Special Representative for the Mediterranean clearly demonstrates the interest in the region. The Representative's functions include: reinforcing the Mediterranean dimension of the organisation, maintaining relations with MPCs and considering the tools required to promote the organisation of the Mediterranean Forum under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Forum is a response to the desire to strengthen ties between the Parliamentary Assembly and Mediterranean partners in order to jointly address the issues of security and stability in the Mediterranean. The fourth Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum is held in Malta (19th November 2006) and is primarily centred on the Middle East. In addition to the conflict, other issues dealt with include freedom of association, social development and the

environment in the Mediterranean.

More information:

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

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly: www.oscepa.org y www.oscepa.org/index.aspx?articleid=+495

OSCE Seminar: www.osce.org/ec/documents.html?lsi=true&limit=10&grp=322

3. Mediterranean Forum (Foromed)

In the framework of various proposals and initiatives for establishing long-lasting cooperation in the Mediterranean region, the Mediterranean Forum was created on 4th July 1994 in Alexandria (Egypt) as a result of a Franco-Egyptian initiative. Eleven countries take part: Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. It has a flexible structure and comprises three working groups in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. It is an independent initiative that aims to support and promote the Barcelona Process. At the outset, no new participating members were added and the Foromed countries decided in 1995 that only countries on the Mediterranean Basin accepted by consensus could become members. The FOROMED has a regional structure of inter-governmental dialogue. It has a rotating Presidency and at the end of each Presidency a Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting is held. Every year there are three or four high or expert-level meetings, as well as seminars and workshops addressing issues of common interest. There is also the possibility of holding extraordinary ad-hoc meetings such as those held in Agadir (Morocco) in October 2001 following the events of September 11 and on 22nd April 2006 in Cairo. The extraordinary Forum meeting addressed the crisis of the caricatures, as well as intercultural dialogue, the Alliance of Civilisations, education, youth and the press but, above all, it was an occasion to evaluate the results of the Barcelona 2005 Summit.

The Forum has no funds of its own and activities can only be carried out through the engagement of each state.

The Forum constitutes a framework for dialogue and negotiation between member countries and serves as a "laboratory of ideas" for the Barcelona Process. Like the 5+5 Dialogue (which only groups Western Mediterranean countries), Foromed aims to become a gathering point that facilitates agreements and exchange of ideas thanks to its smaller size. Spain holds the Forum Presidency in 2006.

This year's most important activity was the Ministerial Meeting of the Mediterranean Forum in Alicante (Spain) on 27th/28th October, by invitation of the Spanish Government and with the presence of Libya as special guest of the Presidency. The eleven countries were determined to develop "specific proposals" to promote the Peace Process in the Middle East, which should involve all the parties in achieving a global, long-term solution. The text of the Declaration of Alicante will be forwarded to the "Quartet" members (European Union, USA, Russia and United Nations) and gathers the commitments of its signatories "to a two-state solution agreed between Israelis and Palestinians resulting in a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian State existing side by side with Israel in peace and security, within recognised, secure borders established on the basis of the 1967 borders." The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Angel Moratinos, declared that the Spanish Presidency has made a priority commitment to cooperation and development (a monothematic meeting on these topics has been planned in Portugal to this effect), and explained that Foromed countries have decided to promote the launch of a Euro-Mediterranean energy market and explore the possibility of creating a Euro-Mediterranean bank to attract public and private investment and create employment. They also considered the possibility of launching initiatives such as a Euro-Mediterranean satellite TV channel and promoting a university fabric for the exchange of Arab and European university students that could be called Aristotle – Averroes.

More information: www.mae.es/NR/rdonlyres/240A9EF8-09DC-427A-AA10-77197F1D0FF7/0/DECLARACIONESoctnov.pdf

4. 5+5 Dialogue

Complementary to the Barcelona Process, the 5+5 Dialogue, or Forum for Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean, is an informal forum for collaboration between the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean Basin: five countries from the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya, and Tunisia) and five members of the European Union (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Malta). The first meeting was held in Rome in 1990. However, the situation in Algeria and the embargo imposed on Libya led to an interruption of the meetings. The informal structure of the 5+5 Dialogue, as well as the small number of countries and geographical constraints, helps to determine the common interests. The working method is based on informal meetings of Ministers for Home Affairs, Defence and Social Affairs. The Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting has been postponed to 2007.

Main meetings during 2006

- 5th May, Hammamet (Tunisia): First meeting of the Tourism Ministers ends with the Hammamet Declaration whereby the ministers agree to make the forum a place for reflection and concertation and to launch a project to promote sustainable Euro-Mediterranean tourism that is respectful of environmental resources and values Western Mediterranean civilisations.

www.infotunisie.com/2006/05/050506-8.html

- 11th/12th May, Nice (France): 12th Conference of Interior Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (CIMO). The main objective of the conference is to consolidate cooperation in the fight against terrorism, organised crime (particularly drug trafficking), illegal immigration and civil protection (to create a common contingent for monitoring and rapid intervention in the event of natural or human catastrophes).

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/actu/bulletin.asp?liste=20060515.html#Chapitre11

- 27th November, Rabat (Morocco): Third meeting of the 5+5 Parliamentary Presidents in the country presiding the 5+5 Dialogue in 2006. The issues on the meeting's agenda are: terrorism, illegal immigration, economic differences between the two shores, etc. The President

of the Chamber of Representatives, Abdelwahad Radi, says that the Mediterranean stands out as the most unequal border in the world.

www.maec.gov.ma/fr/default.asp

- 11th December 2006, Paris (France): Meeting of the Defence Ministers. The main issues of the meeting are maritime surveillance, air security and the contribution of armed forces in civil protection. Throughout 2006, 15 major activities have taken place including high-level seminars and manoeuvres, and the project to set up an Officer Training School has been materialised. New work themes include environmental protection, military medicine and cooperation between armies in the fight against illicit activities.
- 12th/13th December, Algeciras (Spain): Under the slogan "*Towards a Global Approach to Migration Processes*", the Ministers of Social Affairs meet for the fifth Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean hosted by Spain. Having verified that migration policies require a global, comprehensive and agreed approach that encompasses all stages of the migration process, the Conference discusses the necessary cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination to manage migration flows, reception processes and integration in the society of destination (the appropriate integration of the immigrant heightens his/her capacity to act as a development vector for his/her country) and the economic and human benefits of emigration for the countries of origin (in the form of remittances and non-financial transfers, that is, training and competence gained). The ministers observe that the informal nature of the Dialogue facilitates exchange, the identification of common interests and the sharing of ideas and solutions.

www.mtas.es/destacados/es/declaracion_algeciras.pdf

5. Euro-Arab Relations

The discussion forum between the European Community and the League of Arab States arose out of a French initiative and was launched during the Copenhagen Summit in December 1973, shortly after the "October War" and oil embargo. As the Europeans saw

it, it was to be a forum to discuss economic affairs, whereas the Arab side saw it rather as one to discuss political affairs.

Both sides decided that the dialogue should focus on cooperation efforts for industrialisation, infrastructures, agriculture and trade, in addition to scientific, technological, cultural and social cooperation.

The Dialogue comprises the General Committee, the Ministerial Troika and the working committees (in the economic, technical, social and cultural realms).

The General Committee is the central body of the Dialogue and meets at the discretion of the two sides. The Dublin Compromise enabled the PLO, which until then had not been recognised by the EC as representative of Palestine, to take part in the Committee. The Troika deals with the political side of the Dialogue, organising an annual ministerial meeting that is alternately held in either a European or an Arab capital.

The activity of the Dialogue was suspended in 1979 upon request of the League of Arab States, following the Camp David Agreements. Other obstacles also slowed down the initiative, such as the assassination of President Sadat, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987. In December 1989, on initiative of France, a Euro-Arab Ministerial Conference was convened to reactivate the Dialogue which was again blocked as a result of the Gulf War.

The First Forum of the Euro-Arab Dialogue was held in Paris on 26th-28th April before an auditorium of over seven hundred participants and with the presence of French Foreign Minister Blazy and the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. The Forum is held every year in a European or Arab capital with the purpose of benefiting from the different experiences presented in the framework of the dialogue and such cooperation as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Dialogue between the EU and states belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council. The main sessions of the Forum focused on the role of the private sector in social development, youth and education, the economy and Euro-Arab partnership, and the role of Europeans of Arab ori-

gin in supporting cooperation on both sides of the Mediterranean. The conclusion of the Forum is represented by the publication of the “Paris Declaration” that emphasises the need to adopt the Forum as a permanent instrument that strengthens rather than replaces other instruments of dialogue and cooperation. This document essentially states the need for an honest, open dialogue in order to overcome the negative stereotypes spread by the media on both sides of the Mediterranean. Other issues concern the self-determination of peoples, particularly regarding government elections, the fight against foreign occupation, and the need for the Middle Eastern region to become free from weapons of mass destruction. Another significant moment during the Euro-Arab Dialogue was the intervention of the Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, at the League of Arab States Summit in Khartoum on 28th March.

More information:

www.arableague.org

www.forumeuroarabe.org

6. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)

The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative was launched in May 2000 during the Ancona Conference attended by the Heads of State and Foreign Ministers of the coastal countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia). The worrying rise in organised crime and illegal immigration flows led to a reflection on the need to build a cooperation network between the region's countries. The All is a tool geared toward achieving political and economic stability in the region, enhancing and consolidating cooperation in the areas of economy, maritime transport and the fight against crime, as well as environmental, cultural and interuniversity cooperation. UNI-ADRION (www.uniadrion.unibo.it), a network of universities and research centres from the Adriatic-Ionian region, was set up in 2000. This organism is only the first stage of an initiative that aims to create

a virtual university for the entire Adriatic-Ionian Basin.

At present, the All has no permanent bodies. Its decision-making body is the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Council of Foreign Ministers whose agenda is prepared at periodic meetings attended by senior officials or national coordinators from each country. European Union representatives also take part in the All Council meetings. In addition to cooperation among member states, the All aims to assist in ensuring its member states an efficient integration in the EU. Activities are usually organised in six round tables that cover the following issues: fight against organised crime, environmental protection and sustainable development, economy, tourism and small and medium-sized enterprises, transport and maritime cooperation, culture and education, and interuniversity cooperation. The round tables are held at least twice a year in the presiding country that also organises the six round table sessions. The Council has a rotating Presidency that lasts a year (starting in May) and follows the alphabetical order of its member states beginning with Croatia, followed by Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro, Albania in May 2005, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

During its six months' presidency, Albania convened five round tables on 26th/27th January in Durres (no quorum was reached in the case of interuniversity cooperation). At the end of its Presidency, the eighth Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Council is held on 27th May in Tirana (Albania). Participants agree on a number of issues including the need to provide the Initiative with a legal framework and, above all, to create a permanent Secretariat to expedite communications among members. A number of weak points are identified such as the lack of implementation and scarce public participation. The synergy between the activities and conclusions of the round tables will serve to improve the results of the All.

More information:

Declaration of Ancona: www.uniadrion.unibo.it/Documents/AnconaDeclaration.pdf

Website of the Albanian Presidency: www.mfa.gov.al/english/ioniania1.asp
Round tables: www.mfa.gov.al/english/ioniana4.asp
Declaration of Tirana: www.mfa.gov.al/english/print.asp?id=4181

7. Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers of European Union Mediterranean Countries

At the end of the informal meeting held on 13th and 14th October 2006 in Lagonissi (Greece), the Foreign Ministers of the eight European Union Mediterranean countries (Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain and Portugal) express their will to work together on Mediterranean and other common issues and draw up a working document on the Middle East to be presented at the Mediterranean Forum in Alicante.

These gatherings are an opportunity to undertake informal negotiations on issues that are of paramount importance for these countries' citizens and affect the Mediterranean region and the European Union in general. In fact, in their concluding remarks, the eight countries agreed on the usefulness of these informal consultations and decided to continue to meet periodically at different levels.

During the meeting in Lagonissi, two working groups were set up, one focusing on Mediterranean issues and another on the Middle East. The latter resulted in the establishment of a working group at an ambassadorial level to discuss developments.

Another issue tackled is illegal immigration, and in this context the possibility of implementing a European coastguard to strengthen cooperation and protect the maritime borders of Southern Europe.

The meeting also discusses the Mediterranean aspect of the Neighbourhood Policy. The next meeting will be held in Malta in February.

More information:

www.foreign.gov.mt/showdoc.aspx?id=210&filesource=4&file=press%20release%20Lagonissi%20131006.pdf