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# Table of Contents

**FOREWORD**
Senén Florensa, Director General of the European Institute of the Mediterranean, (IEMed)
Narcís Serra, President of the CIDOB Foundation .................................................. 9

**PERSPECTIVES**

**KEYS**
The UfM Is Born, a New Euro-Mediterranean Model
The Union for the Mediterranean: A New Paradigm Anchored in the Tradition of Barcelona, *Miguel Ángel Moratinos* ................................................................. 17
Birth of the Union for the Mediterranean: A New Euro-Mediterranean Paradigm?, *Benita Ferrero-Waldner* ................................................................. 22
The Union for the Mediterranean: An Active Commitment for Ambitious Accomplishments, *Taib Fassi Fihri* ................................................................. 27

The Role of the USA in the Mediterranean
From Bush to Obama: A Year of Transition in American Policy Toward The Mediterranean and the Near East, *Ian O. Lesser* ................................................................. 30
A Year of Transition: US Policy in the Middle East and Mediterranean, 2008, *David Pollock* .... 35
What Role Does the USA Play in the Mediterranean?, *Abdennour Benantar* ....................... 40

Economic Crisis: Effects on the Mediterranean
The Euro-Mediterranean Area and the Global Economic Crisis, *Josep Piqué* ....................... 46
The Role of the Euro-Mediterranean Relations Facing the Economic Crisis, *Sergio Alessandrini* .... 51

Political Governance, Reforms and Transitions
Political Reform and Euro-Mediterranean Relations, *Richard Youngs* ............................... 58
‘Election Fever’ in the Arab Middle East, *Larbi Sadiki* .................................................. 62

**DOSSIER:**
FROM THE BARCELONA PROCESS TO THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
From Classic Barcelona to the Union for the Mediterranean: The Consolidation of the Partnership, *Senén Florensa* ................................................................. 71
From Barcelona to the UfM: Ideological and Political Evolution of the EU’s Vision for the Mediterranean Region, *Hassan Abouyoub* ................................................................. 76
Civil Society in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, *Ridha Kéfi* ....................................... 82
The Union for the Mediterranean: The Difficulty of ‘Managing Proximity’, Khadija Mohsen-Finan .................................................. 96
The Evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Trade Framework, Gonzalo Escribano .................................................. 101
Economic Convergence and Divergence of Southern Mediterranean Countries with the European Union, Center for Research on the Economics of the Mediterranean (CREMed) .................................................. 109
Euromed Trade Union Forum: Towards a Social Dimension and Sustainable Cooperation, Peter Seideneck .................................................. 119
Human Mobility in the Mediterranean Basin: An Integral Element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Catherine Wihtol de Wenden .................................................. 125
Cultural Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership from 1995 to 2008, Imma Roca i Cortes .................................................. 132
Gender Equality in the Mediterranean: Continuity and Rupture, Aicha Ait Mhand .................................................. 139

PANORAMA: THE MEDITERRANEAN YEAR

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
The Morocco/EU Advanced Status: What Value Does it Add to the European Neighbourhood Policy?, Larbi Jaidi .................................................. 149
Coming Home. Albania in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, Manuel Montobbio .................................................. 155
The French Presidency of the EU and the Union for the Mediterranean: Forced Europeanisation?, Eduard Soler i Lecha .................................................. 161

Security
Western Sahara: A Year of UN Impotence, Toby Shelley .................................................. 165
Russia in the Mediterranean Region: (Re)sources of Influence, Andrey S. Makarychev .................................................. 169
The Union for the Mediterranean: Political Deadlock, Álvaro de Vasconcelos .................................................. 173

Mediterranean Politics
Europe
A New Way Forward on Cyprus, Hugh Pope .................................................. 175
The Future of Europe: The External Trade Dimension, Selen Sarisoy Guerin .................................................. 178
Germany: A Player in the Mediterranean, Tobias Schumacher .................................................. 182

Maghreb
Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb in 2008, Jean-Pierre Filiu .................................................. 187
Reorganisation of the Moroccan Political Landscape, Mohamed Tozy .................................................. 190

Middle East
Political and Social Recomposition in Israel and Palestine, Pere Vilanova .................................................. 197
Lebanon in the Run-up to Legislative Elections and under the Shadow of the International Special Tribunal, Tomás Alcoverro .................................................. 201
The Growing Economic Presence of Gulf Countries in the Mediterranean Region, Abdullah Baabood .................................................. 203

Turkey and the Balkans
The Role of Turkey in the Middle East, Meliha Benli Altunisik .................................................. 210
Turkish Politics in 2008, Sahin Alpay .................................................. 214
Kosovo’s Independence and International Repercussions, Jens Bastian .................................................. 217
Europe as a Pole of Attraction for Serbia, Ivan Vejvoda .................................................. 221
EU Presence in the Balkans: 2008 and the Promise of Europeanisation, Gerald Knaus .................................................. 225
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy and Territory</td>
<td>Productive Structure and Labour Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Employment in Arab Mediterranean Countries: The Key to the Future, Iván Martín</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Supply Crisis and the Role of Agriculture in the Middle East &amp; North Africa (MENA) Region, Gamal Siam</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Relations</td>
<td>The EU-Arab South and East Mediterranean Free Trade Area: Brief Overview and Perspectives, Azzam Mahjoub</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberalisation of Trade in Services in Four Arab South Mediterranean Countries: An Unutilised Vehicle for Intra-regional Trade Integration, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Components of Marine De-pollution in the Mediterranean Region, Selim L. Sanin</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territory and Transport</td>
<td>The Components of Maritime Transport in the Mediterranean, Christian Reynaud</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure Paves the Way, Saki Aciman</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Development of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA)</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Society</td>
<td>Development and Cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet Freedom in the Arab World: Its Impact, State Controls, Islamisation and the Overestimation of it All, Khaled Hroub</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The State of Freedom in the Arab World Five Years after the First Arab Human Development Report, Nader Fergany</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrations</td>
<td>Negotiating Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean: The Potential for EC Mobility Partnerships, Uyen Do and Thomas Huddleston</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euro-African Relations in the Field of Migration, 2008, Michael Collyer</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Dialogue</td>
<td>The Partnership in the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, Gerarda Ventura</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Paul Balta</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronologies</td>
<td>Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronology of Events in Israel and Palestine</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronology of the Barcelona Process</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Electoral Observatory</td>
<td></td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>European Union Cooperation</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrations in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>387</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Multilateral Treaties and Conventions</td>
<td>391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mediterranean in Brief</td>
<td>393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of the Organisms Consulted for Drawing Up Tables, Charts and Maps</td>
<td>428</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Abbreviations in Tables, Charts and Maps</td>
<td>430</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms and Abbreviations</td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Boxes</td>
<td>438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Tables</td>
<td>439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Charts and Figures</td>
<td>441</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Maps</td>
<td>443</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The year 2008 was an intricate mosaic of the different realities that make up the Mediterranean region. It was a year full of events that underscored, first, how the Mediterranean region has captured the world’s attention and, second, how global events have a direct impact on the development of Mediterranean countries. These are the subjects that we sought to address and analyse in the sixth edition of the Mediterranean Yearbook.

Since its launch in 2004, the Yearbook has remained faithful to its goal of offering insight into the Mediterranean reality and providing its readers with crucial information and tools for understanding and analysing the region.

The year 2008 saw historic events for the Mediterranean region, which will shape its future and are the main themes of this year’s Mediterranean Yearbook. The development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership reached a decisive turning point through the creation, in July 2008, of the Union for the Mediterranean, which served to relaunch the Barcelona Process begun in 2005, and the establishment of a stable, institutionalised framework for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. The implementation and relaunching of institutions and instruments intended to fulfil the objectives set out in the Barcelona Declaration represent a new stage in the relations between the European Union and the Mediterranean, which the Yearbook could not ignore.

In addition to this watershed moment in Euro-Mediterranean relations, the Yearbook’s key themes also include two events that, whilst not specifically Mediterranean, did have (and will continue to have) major repercussions for the Mediterranean region. First, the change in the US administration has brought changes in that country’s influence in different spheres of the Mediterranean reality, in particular, its role in the conflict in the Middle East. President Barack Obama’s arrival to the White House and the global repercussions of this change embody the hope that the world’s most powerful nation has realised it must refocus its relations with the rest of the world, including the Mediterranean region. The Yearbook’s articles draw attention to the potential scope of this transformation with regard to its impact on the Mediterranean.

Second, among other major issues in 2008, we could not ignore the first early assessments of the effects of the global economic crisis on Mediterranean countries. The economic crisis that violently erupted in the second half of 2008 has affected different Mediterranean countries at different levels and rates and will require a huge effort to overcome.

In both cases, it is still too soon to determine the full impact of the event on the Mediterranean region; however, in light of these change’s current and future impact on the lives of the inhabitants on both shores of the Mediterranean, the Yearbook nevertheless offers some preliminary analyses of their repercussions.

On the cusp of 2010, the upcoming 15th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration has set the agenda for the Yearbook’s ‘Dossier’. It was impossible not to take an in-depth look at the evolution of the Barcelona Process, going beyond recent events, which are discussed in other sections of the Yearbook, to offer a series of rigorous articles dealing with how the process has been carried out in the different
relevant spheres. The ‘Dossier’ likewise explores policy, security, macroeconomics, free trade, the role of civil society, culture, migrations, etc., within the framework of the Barcelona Process from 1995 to 2009, offering a comprehensive overview of the most important aspects of the evolution of a process that, whilst often criticised, is nevertheless critical to progressing toward an area of shared security and prosperity.

As in previous editions, the Yearbook also offers an overview of the year’s most salient issues as seen by more than fifty authors from both shores of the Mediterranean. The plurality of opinions and diversity of perspectives used to address the wide range of subjects included in the Yearbook are the publication’s most valuable assets. With the invaluable support of another of the Yearbook’s major assets, the extensive statistical, cartographical and chronological appendices, the ‘Panorama’ section offers an exhaustive overview of the Euro-Mediterranean reality.

The Mediterranean Yearbook is intended to serve as a quality resource, offering major players and interested members of the public alike crucial tools and information to understand and analyse the different Mediterranean realities. This is the commitment that the CIDOB Foundation and the European Institute of the Mediterranean undertook seven years ago. Today, they continue to offer a publication that, through its editions in Catalan, Spanish, English, French and Arabic, has emerged as a unique resource for the Mediterranean region.
Perspectives
The EU’s Perspective of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 2008

Javier Solana
European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Brussels

To say that 2008 was a year of change for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership would be an understatement. This evolution actually started during 2007, when the Mediterranean emerged as one of the issues in the French presidential campaign. Ideas were circulating about innovative ways to address this crucial and sensitive region lying on our doorstep, attracting a great deal of interest among those of us who have been involved in Euro-Mediterranean issues for a number of years. The Barcelona Process, though certainly not the failure some have depicted it to be, appeared to have run out of steam. It was a good time to re-package the initiative and to give it a new focus.

The early months of 2008 saw intensive discussions within the EU on how to adapt to this new way of thinking and how to manage it in a manner that was compatible with the EU’s own existing policies. This initiative stressed citizen-oriented projects in various fields, including energy, infrastructure, environment, higher education and others. It removed the emphasis on a political process, which was too frequently compromised by the many troubles that plague this region, premier among them the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the European Council in March 2008, the EU approved the principle of a Union for the Mediterranean to include the Member States of the EU and the non-EU Mediterranean coastal states.

The Paris Summit of 13 July 2008 was a very significant diplomatic event. Of course, it saw the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean, which is essentially the next phase of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It was, however, much more than this. We witnessed bilateral meetings between the Presidents of Syria and Lebanon, signalling the start of a historic normalization between these two states. The importance of the event was such that the leaders of Syria and Israel overcame their differences, even if only for a few hours, to be present together at this meeting. Crucial exchanges were held between the Heads of Government of Israel and Palestine. In Paris, I was privileged to be present when the leaders of 43 countries committed themselves to revitalizing efforts to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, co-operation and prosperity, building on the acquis of the Barcelona Process. The Paris Declaration gave a new impulse to the Partnership by upgrading the political level of the relationship (including by introducing summits every two years), by increasing co-ownership (primarily by introducing a system of co-presidency) and, as mentioned earlier, by focusing on concrete projects. The Heads of State and Government entrusted their Ministers of Foreign Affairs with the task of setting out the modalities required to implement these principles.

The Ministers, meeting in Marseille in November 2008, elaborated these ideas further. It was agreed that a secretariat would be set up in Barcelona to manage the projects. In furtherance of the spirit of co-ownership, this body would be headed by a Secretary General from a Mediterranean Partner Country. It was felt that the new approach would place too much of a burden on the monthly Senior Officials meetings, and therefore a new Brussels-
based body, the Joint Permanent Committee, was set up to assist these Ambassadors in the running of the process.

There has been no shortage of challenges. The first few months after the Paris Summit were consumed by a controversy over the status conferred by the Declaration on the League of Arab States. That was resolved in time to allow the Marseille meeting to go ahead. Unfortunately, only a few weeks later the Israeli military operations in Gaza and, subsequently, the election of a new government in Israel led to a freeze in proceedings that has persisted, more or less, until now.

I am optimistic that as the situation in the region improves, we can put these difficult times behind us. There is a great deal of potential that we cannot afford to squander.

There have been efforts to re-engage. I participated in a political dialogue meeting with the 43 states on 23 April, in an attempt to bring the parties to the table. That meeting was, in itself, a success because the various delegations could express their views and feelings on the events of the previous weeks. Nevertheless, the time was not right to formally resume the regular schedule of meetings and events. I understand that some informal work has been able to go ahead in relation to the drafting of statutes for the new secretariat. It is important that, even if there are valid reasons to make a political statement, the entire process is not put at risk.

It is ironic that while an attempt was made to unhook the Partnership from the political obstacles, we find ourselves hampered by these issues in a way we had not been before. I am optimistic that as the situation in the region improves, we can put these difficult times behind us and concentrate on the main objectives of this initiative. There is a great deal of potential that we cannot afford to squander.

Irrespective of these problems, I feel that there is a great deal to look forward to. After the excitement of 2008, we need to flesh out the noble ambitions of this project and start ensuring that they are implemented in an efficient and effective manner. This is what our citizens, the almost 800 million people who inhabit this Partnership, expect of us.
Keys
The Mediterranean, a region marked by a deep economic asymmetry, has been an area prolific in forums, initiatives, and cooperative framework designed to unite efforts to confront those important challenges that need to be dealt with. All of these efforts are driven by a creativity arising from a geographical setting marked by vast socio-economic differences.

This was the creativity and the drive that prompted the launch of the Barcelona Process in 1995, in a context that seemed to favour peace on a regional level. This Process already implied a change of paradigm in a strict sense, since it broke from the principles that had defined cooperation policies since the 1970s, substituting this economistic vision with a much wider approach and proposing, for the first time, a true Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that boldly confronts Mediterranean problems in all their dimensions and complexities.

Thus, the old dream of many began to take shape, and a model of multilateralism arose that considers the Mediterranean as a regional unit, not only in economic, but also political, cultural, and civil society terms. It is a unit that avoids homogeneity and respects differences and identities and it is based on a novel political document, clearly relevant today: the 1995 Barcelona Declaration.

As a pioneering initiative, it is worth underscoring the fact that the Barcelona Process has allowed an exceptional channel for permanent political dialogue in the region to remain open, in addition to providing a notable framework for regional cooperation in areas such as education, trade, industry and culture, in which the creativity of civil society, through multiple forums and platforms, has played an essential role.

In short, it was a novel paradigm, just as the Union for the Mediterranean is now.
greater prominence with the aim that little by little it would acquire a more relevant role in the decision-making process. Likewise, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean was created, which was very relevant since many of the decisions that are Euro-Mediterranean in scope should be put into practice by sub-national government bodies of a local and regional nature.

The name change reflects precisely this change of paradigm. We have gone from a political “process” to laying the foundations of a true “union,” hence the denomination “Union for the Mediterranean”

This plurality was reinforced by a strong bid for co-appropriation through a biannual system of co-presidencies, which in the first term have gone to France, for the northern side, and Egypt, in the south, an innovative factor that balances both shores, even more so at the institutional level. Likewise, the launch of a system of biannual summits of Heads of State and Government was agreed upon, and the second one (the third Euro-Mediterranean one) will take place in 2010 under the Spanish Presidency of the EU.

The system of co-presidencies is not the only organizational innovation; a true institutional structure was also created, in which the Secretariat, which is meant to play a key role and shall be based in Barcelona, is especially noteworthy. We are working very hard and dedicatedly to achieve this, because Spain has a clear calling to leadership in the Union for the Mediterranean. This foreign policy achievement is also an achievement for the coordinated action between the Spanish Government, the autonomous government of Catalonia, and the city of Barcelona, each making fundamental contributions within its own sphere of responsibility.

In the strictly political dimension, now more than ever it is necessary to return our sights to the Conference that less than a year ago united in Paris the Heads of State and Government of 43 countries and to the achievements made subsequently in Marseille, where a rapprochement of positions between Arabs and Israelis was reached. There, in Marseille, only a month before the Gaza crisis broke out, a consensus formula was obtained and many differences were overcome. Especially important was the presence of Syria at the Paris summit, which, as we have seen, has evolved towards a normalization process in its foreign projection, and the fact that Israel accepted that the final declaration of Marseille mentioned the “importance of the Arab peace initiative” as a base for future negotiations. Many consider this a historic gesture, and it was truly stimulating to see an Israeli delegate extend his hand towards his Arab and Palestinian neighbours for peace.

Nevertheless, we must highlight the difficult political context in which we find ourselves in 2009 in the Mediterranean region, which has weighed down the beginnings of this new stage: in the Mediterranean setting, the terrible news from Gaza on 27 December 2008 was received with much concern and deep discouragement. The echoes from Gaza are still being heard and, as in all conflicts of such magnitude, they should continue to be heard for one main reason: so that the resonance of its harshness keeps it from happening again. We know that sensitivities run skin-deep and that it has become difficult to continue the efforts for institutional coordination and project promotion. However, there is too much at stake. And even though the advance towards Mediterranean integration has been affected by these regrettable events, we must avoid its interruption at all costs, multiplying our efforts in favour of peace in this and other forums.

Our message is clear and emphatic in the current circumstances: we understand the Arab sensitivity that has been translated into a halt of work meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean for practically half of the first semester of 2009; however, we think that it is not a time for closing doors but for keeping open the ones that already exist. That is why the Government of Spain has carried out an important effort in connection with the Gaza crisis, proportional to our degree of involvement in the UfM: we have committed more than 180 million euros for the next two years for reconstruction in Palestine in the framework of last March’s Sharm el-Sheikh conference, subject to the formation of a Palestinian government of National Unity, a government capable, additionally, of directing reconstruction funds in Gaza. Palestinian reconciliation cannot wait, because the perpetuation of differences moves the possibility of creating a Palestinian state further and further away.
The Central Role of the Permanent Secretariat

I could not fail to mention one of the main successes of this new phase, the permanent Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, promoted in spite of the difficulties previously indicated. Having given such a politically divided region a common institution with a deeply inclusive vocation is a significant success.

The permanent Secretariat is born precisely from the clear need for providing a Partnership of this magnitude with a common institution to promote and centralize its initiatives in order to make them concrete and visible. It was a demand already existing in our Partnership and expressed by the President of Spain at the 10th Anniversary Summit celebrated in Barcelona in 2005, which has crystallized with the Union for the Mediterranean.

We are enormously pleased at the selection of Barcelona, a true Euro-Mediterranean capital, as the seat of this institution, but the more intense task of investing most of our efforts in guaranteeing its effectiveness is yet to come. It is a key factor for the good development of the UfM, as the success and strength of this new phase of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will depend to a very high degree on the roots and strength of its Secretariat.

We must make an effort to build a representative, cohesive, proactive, executive and transparent Secretariat. The Secretariat has the important mission of making the UfM visible to its citizens by means of proposing and coordinating concrete projects that benefit Euro-Mediterranean societies in practice. Everyone, i.e. Spanish institutions –especially the Ministry that I represent, but also the rest of the ministries linked with UfM projects, Autonomous Communities and local governments–, EU Member States, southern Partner Countries, civil societies, the different forums and so on, must move in the same direction. They all must grant a clear and manifest vote of confidence in favour of this Secretariat, a true bid in favour of a much more cohesive Mediterranean.

In an international context such as the current one, where the media plays such an important role and in which, on too many occasions, differences are stressed instead of emphasizing what unites us, I cannot fail to point out the symbolic importance of this Secretariat, from its legal nature as a common institution –in a deeply divided and conflictive region– to the very plurality of its composition, as it will be located in Europe, with a Secretary General from one of our southern partners, and with six Deputy Secretary Generals, one Palestinian and another Israeli, working side by side for the construction of a common future.

The Importance of the Projects and Their Relationship with the Secretariat

At the June 2008 Paris summit six projects with which the UfM will be launched were approved. All six initiatives are of great importance for development in different fields: the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, the Mediterranean Solar Plan, Development of Maritime and Land Highways, the Euro-Mediterranean University, the UfM Civil Protection Project and the De-pollution of the Mediterranean Project. These projects join those promoted by the European Commission since 1995 within the framework of the Barcelona Process and those developed within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the bilateral Action Plans.

The role of the Secretariat takes on great significance in connection with these initiatives. It will focus on identifying, seeking financing for, and monitoring Euro-Mediterranean projects, which can come from all fields, mainly the private sector, but without ruling out civil society or national and regional authorities. That is, partners can choose or propose the projects that are most suitable to their interests or specific development needs. Everyone, however, must abide by some common parameters of promotion of economic integration, interconnection of infrastructures, and social cohesion in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Spain has been the driving force behind the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, along with Italy. It is a joint project giving support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) whose
objective is to encourage the creation of employment in Mediterranean Partner Countries, as well as to contribute social stability and economic integration of both shores of the Mediterranean, and to facilitate technological transfer. This initiative is, if such a thing is possible, even timelier in the current context of crisis, since SMEs and micro-enterprises represent the economic and social backbone of the region.

The Mediterranean Solar Plan is the other project to which Spain can make significant contributions due to the world leadership of our industry with regard to renewable energies. The Plan aims to boost the production of solar energy in North Africa through the assembly of solar thermal plants using European technology, from which both shores shall benefit in terms of the importation of clean energy, creation of jobs and transfer of technology.

Of course, all these projects will be developed in a manner parallel to the Euro-Mediterranean programmes that the Commission has administered since 1995, within the framework of the Partnership’s four baskets: the Political and Security Basket, the Economic and Financial Basket, the Social and Cultural Basket, and the Liberty, Security and Justice Basket.

The Importance of the Socio-Cultural Dimension: The Anna Lindh Foundation

I believe that the socio-cultural and educational dimensions of the Union for the Mediterranean, spheres that both represent a challenge of the first order in the Mediterranean, deserve a special mention. In this context the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF), which entered its second period of activity in 2009 –closing the temporary internal structural adjustment stage–, and which has emerged as a focal point of the Alliance of Civilizations in the Mediterranean, has become particularly important.

The Foundation is becoming consolidated as a pillar for meetings and as an opinion leader in Euro-Mediterranean relations, maintaining bridges of dialogue open

Working together, all of us lend the Foundation a renewed, reinforced magnitude in line with the challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region, two of the biggest of which lie in the spheres of education and socio-cultural dialogue. The Foundation played a prominent role at the meeting of the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations, which took place in Istanbul last April, and it is becoming consolidated as a pillar for meetings and as an opinion leader in Euro-Mediterranean relations, maintaining bridges of dialogue open even in the most adverse situations.

With the inclusion of new members into the Union for the Mediterranean, the Foundation will be able to spread its activities to other geographical areas, making the most of the new Triennial Programme. The ALF intends to become an institution of reference for the UfM, acting primarily in the following fields: ideas and ideologies; education; cultural production; the media; religion, spirituality and values; and cities and diversity. It is important to emphasize as well the launch of the Observatory for Intercultural Trends, whose main goal is to improve mutual perceptions between the two shores, contributing to building up this institution as a centre of observation, analysis, and recommendation within the third basket of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Mediterranean Challenges for the Spanish Presidency of the EU

In the first semester of 2010, Spain will take up the Presidency of the European Union. Hence, at the moment we are now deeply involved in developing our priorities for that period in a region that was, is, and will be a priority in our foreign policy. The coming year will be a decisive one, since the second summit of the Union for the Mediterranean will take place, during which the UfM’s biannual work plan will have to be established, the one approved in 2005 having expired, and the permanent Secretariat will demonstrate its full operational capacity. This work programme will include action in the four areas of the former Barcelona Process (political and security, economic-cultural, socio-cultural, and justice and emigration) and will be fuelled by the different initiatives adopted in the sectoral ministerial meetings taking place during the last EU Presidencies, particularly the Swedish one.

We face a series of challenges in different subjects. Regarding the creation of the Free Trade Area (FTA), as is well known, in 1995 the year 2010 was estab-
lished as the “target” date for the creation of a Euromed Free Trade Area, one of the pillars of our Euro-Mediterrenean Partnership. Despite the fact that next year we will still not have a complete free trade area, neither in sectoral coverage nor in geographical terms, we will probably have a finalized network of Association Agreements with the inclusion of Syria, which will contribute to our aspiration of strengthening north-south trade and initiating new and more powerful Association Agreements. All of this aims to lay the foundations for balanced south-south relations. Under the Spanish Presidency, the 2010 Trade Roadmap or a possible New Future Agenda (roadmap beyond 2010) will surely be established, the progress made in this field being consolidated in any case.

In the socio-cultural basket, we will incorporate as horizontal priorities first order challenges for the Euro-Mediterranean region, in particular culture, the role of women in society, education and research, work and social security. Additionally, just as the President of Spain stated last June in his speech on the major Spanish foreign policy lines, we have begun work so that Euro-Mediterranean Charters for Food Security and Education may take shape by 2010.

Finally, the Summit will provide a magnificent opportunity to analyze how the Secretariat’s early stage is going and the implementation of the projects that we undertook two years earlier at the Paris summit, fostering their development through viability studies and agreements with participating countries, increasing their financial backing and possibly introducing new initiatives.

**Conclusion: A New Paradigm Anchored in the Tradition of Barcelona**

In conclusion, and in reference to the title of this monograph on the Mediterranean, the Union for the Mediterranean emerges as a new paradigm to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean relations, with a new practical and institutional dimension, following the launch of the Secretariat and innovative projects in six strategic areas.

This new stage of relations between both shores is not free from complexity and its rate can be slow in such a difficult regional situation, both politically and economically speaking. But it is precisely the strength of the consensus and of the co-appropriation that will permit us to overcome the difficulties and thoroughly deal with those matters that are of interest to both shores. Consensus, co-appropriation, and multilateralism are all words that refer to the Union for the Mediterranean. We must simply get to work on defining an agenda of challenges and common priorities allowing us to unite forces and define a joint agenda for the coming years that will meet the demands and priorities of the Euro-Mediterranean societies.
The UfM Is Born, a New Euro-Mediterranean Model

Birth of the Union for the Mediterranean: A New Euro-Mediterranean Paradigm?

New Paradigm or Continuum?

The Union for the Mediterranean. A new Euro-Mediterranean paradigm? No! A new departure for regional cooperation with our Mediterranean partners? Yes! A rethinking and revamping of the institutional and cooperation links that bond us? Yes! A continuum of Euro-Mediterranean relations from Barcelona 2005 through to Paris 2008 and beyond? Yes! But a new paradigm? No, because the same philosophies and principles that gave birth to our relationship, and guided and inspired it, still exist. I will, therefore, try to show in this article that the body of work and accumulated achievements of the Barcelona Process can act as both an important link in the chain of continuum and be used as a foundation for future developments. What the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) offers, I will also underline, is continuity and innovation in our relations with Mediterranean partners. We have arrived at a critical juncture in our partnership, so allow me, therefore, to set my stall out from the beginning.

The Barcelona Process has served us –Europe and our Mediterranean partners– well in our 13-year Partnership. It has helped navigate a course through the troubled waters of regional conflict in the direction of our shared joint destination of peace, prosperity and security for the region. The journey has been tortuous at times, but our vision, determination and stamina remain undiluted. What is needed now, and this we have known for a while, is a gear change, a new driving force to add vigour to our efforts. Our partnership needs revitalisation and recalibration to imbue a renewed sense of endeavour. The Union for the Mediterranean will provide that impetus.

Europe and the Mediterranean: Regional Partners in a Global Framework

The European Union (EU) is recognised as one of the leading players on the global stage. With a population of almost 500 million, the third largest after China and India, its size and impact in economic, commercial and financial terms are factors that demand it play a major role as an important international power. Reflecting and reacting to this status, the EU has established many regional cooperation agreements on the global stage. The EU acts out of enlightened self-interest, as much as global solidarity. The Mediterranean basin –the nexus of our neighbourhood and the confluence of three continents– has been intrinsically linked with Europe for centuries. Just like Europe, which thrives on its diverse constituents, the Mediterranean region is also a region of contrasts. In Braudel’s language it is a place where contradictions converge and diverge. It is a region of rich physical and cultural heritage. A region that houses three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam); a region governed by three forms of government (monarchies, presidential republics and democracies); a region with close historical, geographical and cultural ties to Europe.

These relations, let me underline, do not exist in a political vacuum. There are global as well as regional imperatives for revamping the ties that bind us. This has become increasingly evident as we enter uncertain times in our joint challenges –security, environmental protection and climate change, the secured supply of sustainable energy resources, respect of human rights and democratic governance, the fight
against terrorism, the positive governance of immigration, the insidious spread of organised crime and the global financial and economic crises. Many of these problems are, of course, not new, and nor is our common desire, articulated in the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 and reiterated in the Paris Summit Declaration launching the Union for the Mediterranean, to build an area of peace, prosperity and security. It is also a question of mutual interests. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, Europe cannot assure its own stability, security and prosperity without helping our neighbours achieve similar and relative levels. This provided the inspiration and motivation to the signatories of the Declaration. The Barcelona Process, with its accumulated acquis, structures and goals –along with the European Neighbourhood Policy– still remains the bedrock of our relations.

Barcelona and the Middle East:
Decoupling the Processes

While the fundamental aspirations and articulations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership have always espoused peace and security for the region, strenuous efforts have been made to decouple the two processes, the Barcelona Process from the Middle East peace process, to not allow advances in one to be hampered by reverses in the other. Sadly, this has not been the experience, and we have seen what should have been the natural progression of our partnership taken hostage by the spill over of events in the region’s conflicts. Europe’s position on the peace process has been constant and clear: the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for us. The EU’s objective is a two-state solution, with an independent, viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours. Europe will continue, with its international partners, to contribute, by all means at its disposal, towards this end. But we must also be resolute in trying to ensure that our cooperation agreements, our partnerships, are not undermined and held hostage by the political challenges.

Barcelona’s Track Record:
Steady Progress Despite the Impediments

The Barcelona Process has known good days and bad and has its champions and critics. The European Commission (EC) has always been a staunch supporter of the Partnership, and has underlined this support with the provision of over nine billion euros in grants since its launch in 1995. Our joint achievements have not been insignificant. Over the past 14 years we have seen this unique relationship help in maintaining dialogue and enjoy successes in the respective political, economic and social sectors. Substantial progress has been made in a number of areas, such as moves towards a Euromed free trade area and advances in economic reforms. Mediterranean countries have registered a remarkable reduction in inflation over the past decade. We have also witnessed the establishment of new institutions and networks. The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly was established in 2004 and is now an Assembly that is welcomed both as a contribution to democracy and as evidence of the successful implementation of the policy of joint ownership. The Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) was set up in 2002 within the European Investment Bank and is providing over two billion euros in loans to Mediterranean Partners. Euro-Mediterranean networks have been created and are operational in areas such as institutes of economic research (FEMISE), political science institutes (EuroMeSCo), investment promotion agencies (ANIMA), transport, energy, environment, and local water management (EMWIS) and media (Euromed and the Media). Exchange programmes are functioning between youth and universities under the Tempus scheme. There are numerous regional civil society programmes in culture and youth as well as significant advances in civil protection cooperation. Human development indicators continue to display encouraging signs. Health conditions have broadly improved in the region, particularly in the sectors of child health and overall life expectancy.

Matching Past Achievements
with Future Aspirations

However, if we recognise that much has been achieved in our 14 years of Partnership, we are also very much aware that much remains to be done if achievements are to match our high aspirations and the expectations of our respective populations. We recognise that certain shortcomings might have distanced it from a wider popular acceptance. A gulf between expectations and achievements has become
evident. Despite the tempering of ambitions—and achievements—by the continuing conflicts in the region, there is a tangible political and popular will to make efforts towards a closer relationship. The birth of the Union for the Mediterranean will allow us to capitalise on that will by enhancing the joint governance of our partnership through an emphasis on practical, manageable projects and by increasing the visibility and viability of our actions.

At its launching at the Paris Summit in July 2008, the UfM extended membership to include the Balkan states and Monaco, with the Arab League also included in a Partnership that now includes 43 countries: the 27 Member States of the European Union and Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Croatia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

**Governance by Partnership and Consent**

The UfM oversees the upgrading of the political level of the EU’s relationship with its Mediterranean partners. The planned hosting of biennial summits underlines the increased political commitment while co-ownership of our multilateral relations will be further enhanced by a system of co-presidency (one from the EU and one from the Mediterranean partner side—currently Egypt). The setting up of a north-south project-oriented Secretariat and the establishment of a Joint Permanent Committee based in Brussels add up to a more evenly balanced construct. This shared governance provides for collaboration, deliberation and accountability that can foster cooperative interaction. It should also be a self-correcting and self-monitoring process.

**Projects: Crucial Mosaics in the Fresco**

The heartbeat of the Union for the Mediterranean is projects. The concentration on major infrastructure enterprises, environmental initiatives, civil protection, education and research initiatives and assistance for micro, small and medium-sized businesses will not only make our partnership more tangible but also significantly contributes to improving and enhancing the lives and livelihoods of its citizens. The Summit of Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government that met in Paris in July 2008 endorsed a series of projects that can radically transform the landscape of the Mediterranean and provide engines for its sustainable growth and development. The list below certainly does not lack in ambition:

*De-pollution of the Mediterranean*

The Mediterranean is resonant with culture and history. But it is much more than a symbol or an icon for the region. It also provides employment and pleasure for its people. However, its environmental quality has suffered serious degradation in recent times. A United Nations study has found that more than half of urban areas with a population of over 100,000 on the Mediterranean do not have wastewater treatment plants and 60% of their wastewater is directly discharged into the sea. This threatens the health of the 143 million people living on its shores and jeopardises the long-term development of key economic sectors such as fishing and tourism. Building on the Horizon 2020 programme, the de-pollution of the Mediterranean, including coastal and protected marine areas, particularly in the water and waste sector, will therefore be of major benefit for the lives and livelihoods of its people.

*Maritime and Land Highways*

The Mediterranean is a sea that joins, not separates, its people. It is also a highway for commerce and a bridge between three continents. Its historic role as a major maritime highway for trade continues unabated into the 21st century. Maritime traffic is expected to increase overall by 18% in the next decade, and much of the Mediterranean traffic goes through Northern European or other ports. The Mediterranean Sea is also a vital global energy route. Easy and safe access and flow of goods and people, on land and sea, are essential for maintaining relations and enhancing regional trade. The development of motorways of the sea, including the connection of ports, throughout the entire Mediterranean Basin as well as the creation of coastal motorways and the modernisation of the trans-Maghreb train network, will increase the flow and freedom of the movement of people and goods. As has been sadly witnessed in other waters, where piracy has plagued the safe transit of goods and people, particular attention should be devoted to cooperation in the field of maritime security and safety, in a perspective of global integration in the Mediterranean region.
Civil Protection

The global landscape is littered with examples of the devastation caused by man-made and natural disasters. From disappearing rainforests, tsunamis and earthquakes to intensifying desertification, the effects of climate change are evident for all. While advances in science and technology have increased the capacity to predict and prevent such disasters, there is also a parallel tendency for such occurrences to increase because –inter alia– of intense urbanization and mass pollution. The Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable and exposed to three types of natural disasters: earthquakes, forest fires and floods. A joint Civil Protection programme on prevention, preparation and response to disasters, linking the region more closely to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, is, therefore, one of the main priorities for the region.

Alternative Energies: Mediterranean Solar Plan

The strategic importance of energy markets in terms of supply, demand and transit confirms the need to focus on alternative energy sources. Problems of climate change and the associated causes such as greenhouse gases need to be addressed. Market deployment as well as research and development of all alternative sources of energy are therefore major priorities in efforts towards assuring sustainable development. Recent events underscore the importance of diversifying energy imports in terms of energy mix, origin and transport routes. It is clear that this energy diversification strategy must include a significant shift to renewable energies and in particular solar energy. The Mediterranean Solar Plan is just one strand –but a vital new one– in our wider strategy for enhancing energy security.

Higher Education and Research, Euro-Mediterranean University

A Euro-Mediterranean University (with its seat in Slovenia) will contribute to understanding among people and encourage cooperation in higher education, following up on the objectives of the Catania Process and of the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, June 2007). Through a cooperation network of partner institutions and existing universities from the Euromed region, the Euro-Mediterranean University will develop postgraduate and research programmes and thus contribute to the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education, Science and Research Area. Partner countries will be encouraged to make full use of possibilities offered by existing higher education cooperation programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, including the External Cooperation Window. Particular attention will be paid to enhancing quality and to ensuring the relevance of vocational training to labour market needs.

The Mediterranean Business Development Initiative

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form more than 90% of the Euro-Mediterranean companies, but at the same time, they are the ones facing more difficulties and suffering from a higher mortality rate. Yet SMEs are the engines of economic growth in the region. This initiative is aimed at assisting the existing entities in partner countries operating in support of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises by assessing the needs of these enterprises, defining policy solutions and providing these entities with resources in the form of technical assistance and financial instruments. It will be based on the principle of co-ownership and its activities are expected to be complementary to those of the existing entities working in the field. Contributions by countries from both rims of the Mediterranean will be done on a voluntary basis.

Visibility: From the Elite to the Street

My travels on the international stage have made me acutely aware that the image of Europe does not reflect its input and investment in global affairs. This always surprises and dismays me. Europe is, after all, the largest global donor of development and humanitarian aid and more than punches its weight in trade and environment; it is a leading player in the promotion of human rights and its global education and exchange programmes are renowned worldwide. In the last ten years we have seen the introduction of the euro and its progress through murky financial waters to become the world’s second reserve currency; the union has expanded to 27 countries and trade, aid and cooperation agreements have been signed with most countries/regions in the world, including the Mediterranean region.
The message is certainly strong but perhaps the messenger has been off target, particularly with our southern partners. The EU needs to address its communication and credibility problem, which results from the plethora and confusing complexity of its different Mediterranean policies. Europe also needs to move from the elite to the street in its communication activities. George Bernard Shaw said, "The single most important problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished," and we need to be more dynamic and more inclusive and engage people more in our political, economic, social and communication strategies. Rather than impose our opinions we have to inform, to explain, and to share our thinking. We need to debate our decisions and account for our actions. This, after all, is the very ethos of communication. We should be careful and aware of the distorting use of language and, for example, move from idioms such as processes and policies to a more user-friendly partnership.

A Partnership for the People, with the People

There are perceptions that our Partnership is no more than an inter-governmental arrangement, and this needs to be corrected. We have a vibrant, thriving civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean. The creation of the Civil Forum and Civil Society Platform has helped to structure the activities of civil society and provide a better interface with the official activities of the Partnership. There has been increased networking among civil societies, both north-south and south-south; exchanges of people have increased, particularly among youth; and cooperation has developed among NGOs from north and south.

The establishment of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures is the first Euromed common institution financed by all partners and the European Commission. It now has over 2,000 civil society organisations in its network covering all Partnership countries and is actively and imaginatively working towards diminishing the perceived cultural divide and taking preventive action against the potential polarisation of communities in the wake of cultural crises.

Bilateral vs. Multilateral: Much Ado About Something

I am aware that there are academic arguments that blur the frontiers between our multilateral and bilateral approaches to Euro-Mediterranean relations. Let me therefore reiterate that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) remains untouched by this new regional departure.

The Union for the Mediterranean is complementary to EU bilateral relations with these countries of the region, which will continue under existing policy frameworks such as the Association Agreements, the ENP action plans, and, in the case of Mauritania, the African Caribbean Pacific framework.

The ENP is the political framework within which the EU can establish bilateral relations with its immediate neighbours and intensify the work of action plans based on bilateral agreements. However, intra- and interregional integration will get a timely boost by the new structures and management offered by the Union for the Mediterranean, while also complementing the bilateral efforts.

Shared Challenges: An Optimistic Journey

In conclusion, let me say that the Barcelona Process has overseen the formative years of our Partnership while the Union for the Mediterranean responds to the current need for an upgrading of those same Mediterranean multilateral relations. The challenges remain the same, but with the enhanced governance and ownership, and the associated shared responsibility that follows, we are better equipped to deal with those challenges.

This is an ambitious undertaking. However, with our cooperation underpinned by political will, shared governance and the new institutional architecture, I am certain we can succeed. Together we can close the gap between ambition and achievement and place people at the epicentre of our efforts by charting out this confident future.

We do so in partnership, in friendship. Together. As Albert Camus, our great French/Algerian author and thinker said, "Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend."
The Union for the Mediterranean: An Active Commitment for Ambitious Accomplishments

Mr. Taib Fassi Fihri
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Kingdom of Morocco

Beyond the geopolitical uncertainties inherent to the Middle East conflict or the doubts arising from the international crisis, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) continues to have all the potential required for building a new Euro-Mediterranean Region. Without lapsing into complacent optimism nor giving way to an exaggerated, pro-Euro-Mediterranean orientation, much less shirking our collective responsibility with regard to the regional conjuncture, there is no denying that, despite the painful events that this region has experienced, the UfM has survived all attempts at discrediting and instances of questioning to which it has been subject to date.

Based on the overriding need for protection against possible relapses of the crisis intermittently shaking the region and for overcoming the obstacles that the Barcelona Process already came up against, the UfM should be invested with all political legitimacy and be equipped with all the tools and mechanisms necessary for it to function.

It is through this approach and not by undergoing abrupt stops at the mercy of events that the UfM will manage to mobilise all of the potential and energy that it possesses in order to contribute lucid, balanced and pertinent responses to the challenges and threats of all sorts that the Mediterranean faces.

The Kingdom of Morocco is fully convinced that the establishment of a ‘zone of specific interests’ among the Mediterranean countries to interconnect diverse initiatives and involve numerous actors and stakeholders is today a need. This approach constitutes the ideal means for overcoming antagonisms, reconciling contrasts and foreseeing a common future. In this regard, His Majesty King Mohammed VI solemnly expressed Morocco’s entire and thorough support for this initiative in October 2007, which the King had qualified as “visionary and audacious”. This commitment was reiterated again at the Paris Summit (July 2008) when His Majesty indicated his great satisfaction at the launching of this initiative, which he described as “founding a renewed regional order and generating a laudable partnership dynamic in the region, the cradle of monotheistic religions and melting pot of ancient civilisations.”

It is in regard to these many considerations that the 43 countries undersigning the Paris Declaration in July 2008 called upon one another to maintain the political momentum created by the Paris Declaration in order to attempt to establish a new regionalism that could rise to the challenges of the 21st century.

More than any other geographic region in the world, the Euro-Mediterranean Region has been particularly sensitive to the unrest born of the international crisis, considering not only the imbalances, gaps and disparities, but also the de facto solidarity, the interconnections of varying nature and numerous networks that singularise the Mediterranean.

The uncertainties raised by the crisis and the calling into question of schemes and parameters that were incontestable and uncontested not long ago are causing the world to prepare for undergoing a transition whose stakes and scope we have not yet managed to define.

In the Mediterranean at present, there is a conjunction of several phenomena that transcend the economic jolts and raise questions about regulatory mechanisms and reformed regional governance.

Beyond the strategic centrality of the Mediterranean, which it has managed to restore, the UfM should also foster the convergence of the respective concepts regarding the future of the Mediterranean, at a time when a number of geopolitical constellations affect our region. The UfM should thus set into motion a daring, innovative change of course in part-
nnership approaches implemented to date and promote the concept of regional governance prioritising the values and advantages of geographical proximity at a time when the repercussions of the international crisis afflict the countries along the two shores.

In order to do so, the UfM should be conceived as an eminently political project whose goal is to lend regional solidarity its full meaning.

In this regard, His Majesty has emphasised that this project constitutes “a propitious occasion for opening the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to new attempts at rallying the Partners so as to capitalise on strong points and optimise impetus."

In this perspective, it is important to insure that institutional debate on the UfM does not undermine the original intention and goals of this new partnership framework. To this end, it is also important that the attributions and prerogatives with which the UfM Secretariat will be invested allow it to take up a position as interface between policy and operational matters, insofar as it is called to formulate proposals so as to foster the initiative while ensuring the necessary links among government bodies, the parliamentary segment and the other Partners (employers, regional authorities, Civil Forum and so on) for the identification and implementation of projects.

Moreover, the mechanism of variable geometry, rightly considered the major innovation of the UfM, should be sufficiently mastered so as to insure flexibility, efficiency, transparency and non-discrimination among the Partners.

The objective is to foster a coherent overall approach in dealing with spaces for initiatives involving a determined number of countries according to well-identified geographic specificities and assets.

Though it is objectively unrealistic to expect to realize the objectives established with the ensemble of partners from the South at an identical pace, it is, however, necessary, within a framework of overall coherence and strategic approaches, to be able to advance, namely with those who are ready and willing.

This is why the UfM should contain intrinsic mechanisms of differentiation so as to foster the development of partnerships modulated according to each partner’s ambitions and strengths.

Thanks to its long and rich tradition in its relations with the EU and in favour of the promising dynamic conferred by its ‘Advanced Status,’ Morocco cannot but be a pioneer in the innovative approach of building the Mediterranean Region.

Today, the UfM offers a singular framework, ambitious and appropriate for addressing numerous common issues, in particular issues relating to energy, water, the environment, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and industries, migration and culture.

**The Union for the Mediterranean should be conceived as an eminently political project whose goal is to lend regional solidarity its full meaning**

Consequently, Morocco expects the rapid and efficient implementation of the six major structuring projects established at the Paris Summit.

In this context, the Kingdom is pleased at its adoption of the Euro-Mediterranean Fez University Project at the Conference of Marseille, whose academic vocation, curriculum and pedagogical specialisations will be complementary to and in synergy with those at the University of Portoroz in Slovenia. With this new initiative, Morocco once again demonstrates its Euro-Mediterranean vocation, though its track record has already made this quite clear.

This project will pay tribute to the city of Fez, which is celebrating the 1200th anniversary of its founding this year, allowing the Moroccan university and academic tradition to be celebrated within a dynamic of openness, exchange and interculturality.

Moreover, the UfM should be able to apprehend the economic dimension through the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area (EMEA) which would be, to a certain extent, based on the European Economic Area (EEA) uniting the EU with its northern neighbours and which would transcend the strictly commercial logic to cover aspects relating to the knowledge economy, education and human development.

Moreover, and in order to allow the UfM to be in tune with the imperatives that really concern public opinion on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, it will be important to conceive of a participative, solidary and transparent governance regarding cross-cutting issues such as migra-
tory flows, environmental protection, the struggle against global warming and desertification, infrastructure, transport and energy networks, and so forth.

Taking into account all of these parameters, along with the effective involvement of all Partners, in good faith, will allow us to remain true to the spirit of Barcelona, which, for its perspicacity and pertinence, remains more relevant than ever.

Thanks to its long and rich tradition in its relations with the EU and in favour of the promising dynamic conferred by its ‘Advanced Status,’ Morocco cannot but be a pioneer in the innovative approach of building the Mediterranean Region.

All of this demonstrates that the success of the UfM is everyone’s business. As His Majesty, King Mohammed VI indicated, “the ambitions are great, on a par with the challenges to be met, and the expectations are immense, on a level with the hopes roused by this project.” He also recalled “the responsibility of doing everything in one’s power to attain the objectives established with a view to the construction of a space of peace and security, development and prosperity, exchange and dialogue among the peoples of the two shores.”

By way of conclusion, I would like to pay an elated tribute to the Catalan Metropolis that now epitomises this formidable Euro-Mediterranean identity. The choice of Barcelona as host to the UfM Secretariat is not fortuitous insofar as it represents the symbol of a space where the concepts of openness, solidarity, collective intelligence and complementary synergies between the northern and southern shores will prevail, and these concepts incontestably constitute the pedestal of the UfM’s values.

More than ever committed to peace, security and stability in this part of the world, Morocco, an age-old Mediterranean country if any there are, will not spare any efforts to achieve the success of this commendable initiative.
The eight years of the Bush administration were highly distinctive in terms of American foreign policy priorities and behaviour. A limited set of concerns led by the "global war on terrorism" came to dominate Washington’s foreign and security policies. Relations with allies and adversaries were affected by sharper judgments about cooperation and leadership. At the same time, global attitudes toward the US deteriorated markedly. Some of this deterioration could be ascribed to specific policies, above all, the war in Iraq. Other shifts in international perception may be more structural in nature, pointing to a fundamental change in the global debate over American power. These forces have been felt strongly around the Mediterranean basin, including southern Europe, North Africa, Turkey and the Levant. The advent of the Obama administration and the prospect of a new look in American policy hold equally significant promise for the region.

Signs of change were already apparent over the course of 2008, driven by the demands of crisis management in and around the Mediterranean —especially in the Levant and the Gulf— and the recalibration of key partnerships with France, Turkey and others. The fact that Washington has never articulated a Mediterranean policy per se means that much of the change in American behaviour affecting the region is still driven by bilateral relationships and events somewhat beyond Mediterranean shores (Lesser, 2008).

Leaving Iraq

The surge of American military presence in Iraq, and a movement toward tentative equilibrium in Iraqi politics, contributed to a general improvement in the security situation across the country in 2008. One exception has been the rise of unrest in the previously stable Kurdish region of northern Iraq. This is meaningful for American interests precisely because this is the area of Iraq where the US presence has been relatively limited, and where stability has been assured through proxies in the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). This is also an area where Turkish interests are heavily engaged, and the extent of US-Turkish cooperation in containing the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) insurgency has been a persistent irritant in relations between Ankara and Washington, a source of friction dating back to the mid-1990s. Over the course of 2008, US-Turkish cooperation against the PKK accelerated based on the provision of actionable intelligence and greater US pressure on the KRG to limit or end the PKK presence in northern Iraq. Cooperation in this sphere is likely to continue as a key facet of US-Turkish security cooperation over the coming year. At the same time, progress toward disengagement in Iraq has made American access to Incirlik airbase in southeastern Turkey important as a logistical hub for operations in Iraq—and Afghanistan.

Normalization of Ties with Libya

The past year saw the formal completion of a protracted process of normalization in US-Libyan rela-
tions. This was made possible by Libya's payment of the final tranche of compensation to families of the Lockerbie victims in November 2008. This followed Libya's high-profile divestiture of its nascent nuclear and missile programs, a development touted by the Bush administration as a leading success in rolling back Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) proliferation—a significant contribution to Mediterranean security to be sure, but hardly transforming on a regional or global level. The full normalization of relations allowed for the mutual accreditation of ambassadors, the end of economic sanctions and the recovery of Libya's sovereign immunity in the US. All of this can be expected to contribute to an expansion of investment ties, especially in the energy sector. Cooperation on intelligence sharing and counter-terrorism was already well established and dates from the period after September 2001.

The extent to which relations with Washington will become an important facet of Libyan foreign policy remains an open question. Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi, the reform-minded son of the Libyan leader, visited Washington within weeks of the normalization of relations, but significant foreign policy cooperation could prove elusive as Libya focuses on other priorities with Africa, Russia and Europe. From Washington's perspective, consolidating détente with Tripoli is likely to be seen as a useful part of wider engagement in North Africa, but hardly a top priority in the face of more pressing challenges elsewhere. Continued sensitivity regarding Libya's human rights record in Congress and elsewhere within the American foreign policy establishment will impose further limits on the scope for enhanced relations.

A Ticking Clock with Iran— and an Opening for Détente?

Not surprisingly, relations with Iran continued to vex American policymakers in 2008. Not a Mediterranean issue per se, the longstanding friction with Iran over Tehran’s nuclear program nonetheless exerts a strong influence over the regional security in the eastern Mediterranean. American partners in southern Europe, as well as Israel, would be among the states most directly affected by an American confrontation with Iran—or serious moves toward détente. Iran’s support for proxies in Lebanon and Gaza, and the regime’s role in energy supply on a regional and global basis, further underscore the centrality of US-Iranian relations in the strategic environment around the Mediterranean Basin.

The Bush administration left office defying the expectations of many observers that the US would act militarily to “set back the clock” on Iran’s nuclear enrichment programme. In its final months, the Bush administration redoubled its efforts to achieve Security Council backing for an additional round of economic sanctions against Tehran. But critical decisions about how to deal with Iran’s nuclear ambitions have been left to the Obama administration. The issue of whether and how to open a dialogue with Tehran was a prominent part of the foreign policy debate during the presidential campaign, and Senator McCain was particularly critical of Obama’s willingness to open high-level discussions with the Iranian regime. The new administration appears serious about its interest in exploring a strategic dialogue with Iran and has announced the appointment of a special envoy for this purpose. At the same time, the Obama team could well prove as sensitive as its predecessor on the nuclear question, and no more willing to accept the emergence of Iran as a nuclear-armed state. The military option therefore remains on the table, and Washington is likely to seek early signs of Tehran’s flexibility on the enrichment issue. American decision-making in this regard will continue to be driven by intelligence judgments about the status and pace of the enrichment and weaponisation programmes. The National Intelligence Estimate on Iran’s nuclear programmes, released in November 2007, offered the surprising judgment that Tehran suspended its weaponisation efforts in 2003. This finding has been interpreted in disparate ways, with some seeing an indication of Iran’s caution and, perhaps, interest in remaining a nuclear-ready or near nuclear power for some time to come. Others are disturbed by evidence that, at least prior to 2003, Iran pursued a weapons programmes.

The new administration appears serious about its interest in exploring a strategic dialogue with Iran

The Obama administration inherits an approach to Iran heavily influenced by the post-9/11 preoccupation with homeland security and a policy of containment framed essentially in national rather than multi-
lateral terms. The administration is likely to seek a broader regional consensus on the nuclear dispute and other aspects of relations with Iran, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Hezbollah, Hamas and energy security. In 2008, the Bush administration was already exploring approaches to ballistic missile defence that would address the growing exposure of NATO Europe, and especially southern Europe, to Iranian systems. The new administration is likely to move even further in the direction of theatre defences against ballistic missiles of trans-Mediterranean range, with less obvious attachment to the concept of strategic defences based in Central and Eastern Europe.

Crisis and Engagement in the Middle East Peace Process

The past year has seen marked deterioration in Israeli-Palestinian relations and changing dynamics in Washington’s engagement in the Middle East peace process. Like most of its predecessors, the Bush administration came very late to the business of active involvement in the process, a product of judgments about the viability of new initiatives and distractions elsewhere. The Annapolis Conference of November 2007 was innovative to the extent that it pushed the multilateral aspect of the process substantially beyond the existing quartet structure. It did not, however, succeed in reviving a process severely eroded by political divisions on the Palestinian side and shifting Israeli definitions of what “end of conflict” implies. Many observers saw the shadow of Iran over Annapolis, with Tehran an increasingly central factor in both Israeli and Arab security perceptions. Annapolis was widely seen as “too little, too late.” The Bush administration, like the Clinton administration, left office frustrated by its inability to bring about a transforming success, or even to leave its successor with a solid basis for new initiatives.

Worse was to come. The Israeli intervention in Gaza in November 2008 presented the new Obama administration with an immediate problem of crisis management in Arab-Israeli relations at a time of pressing challenges in other areas, from the economy to Iraq and Afghanistan. The timing of the Gaza crisis required an early response, and the Obama administration moved quickly to demonstrate its commitment to the process with the appointment of former Senator George Mitchell, a seasoned negotiator widely admired for his contribution to peace efforts in Northern Ireland. The choice of a respected figure from outside the established cohort of Middle East policymakers and advisors points to a preference for patient confidence building rather than sweeping new initiatives. In all likelihood, the new administration is no more optimistic than its predecessor about the near-term prospects for a two-state solution, and the overwhelming scale of the economic crisis probably precludes the early, active involvement of the President in the process. Protracted political uncertainty in Israel further complicates the near-term outlook for engagement in a process critical to stability in the Mediterranean and the Middle East—and increasingly vital to European and US security.

Recalibrating Relations with Turkey

The history of US-Turkish relations has been characterized by recurrent tensions alongside strategic cooperation. Many Turks are inclined to see the Clinton years as a lost “golden age” in bilateral relations. The Clinton years, too, saw some significant differences over northern Iraq, Cyprus, human rights and other issues. But the period since 2003 has, by any measure, been one of extraordinary suspicion and tension in relations between Ankara and Washington. The deterioration in Turkish public attitudes toward the US in recent years has been among the most dramatic anywhere in the world, and especially striking in a NATO context. Differences over Iraq policy, and especially the Kurdish issue in northern Iraq, have been at the heart of bilateral tensions, reinforced by rising Turkish nationalism and a deep suspicion regarding American intentions in Turkey’s neighbourhood, including the Black Sea and the Gulf. To an extent, friction with Washington has paralleled Turkey’s troubled relations with the EU in recent years.

The 2007-2008 period witnessed substantial improvement in the bilateral relationship at policy level, if not yet at the level of public opinion. Enhanced cooperation against the PKK and Washington’s continued interest in promoting Turkey as an alternative to Russia in energy transport have been at the heart of the enhanced bilateral agenda. Over the past year, and after some early scepticism, the Bush administration

also developed a more positive view of Turkey’s role as a facilitator in Israeli-Syrian talks. Ankara’s involvement in this track of the peace process is by no means new, but the full extent of Turkey’s role is now more openly discussed by all sides. With the advent of a new administration in Washington, and the prospect of an Obama visit to Turkey in the context of the April 2009 Alliance of Civilizations meeting in Istanbul, observers on both sides are hopeful that relations can be recalibrated, even if significant differences persist on the Palestinian issue, Iran and other questions.

In the spring of 2008, in the face of significant political pressure, the Bush administration succeeded in preventing Congress from passing a symbolic “Armenian Genocide” resolution. The resolution is a perennial irritant in bilateral relations, and could provoke a serious rift in a relationship already strained on other fronts. If a resolution along these lines is passed—and the Obama administration will confront this issue early in its term—Ankara could well respond by suspending American access to Incirlik airbase for non-NATO uses.³

The Revival of Franco-American Relations—and Mediterranean Implications

The marked improvement in Franco-American relations since the election of President Sarkozy has significant implications for American interests and policy, not least in the Mediterranean. These, and the potential for more transformative cooperation in the future, have been especially visible over the course of 2008. Two aspects of this shift are worth noting. First, France’s commitment to rejoin NATO’s integrated military command, announced in 2008, is widely seen as a tangible demonstration of more direct French engagement in transatlantic security affairs. This comes at a time when Washington’s interest in a more expeditionary approach to alliance strategy elevates the role of France as a willing and capable partner, in contrast to more apparently reluctant allies. The consequences of this shift would be felt most directly in the Levant and the Mediterranean where France is already a capable and engaged actor.

Second, French leadership in the new Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) gave rise to a surprising amount of interest within the American foreign policy community. This has been in sharp contrast to the Barcelona Process prior to UfM, which was largely ignored, even by American specialists. To be sure, a substantial amount of this interest could be ascribed to the “Sarkozy effect.” But the practical, project-oriented character of the new initiative struck a chord with American observers. It would not be surprising if the Obama administration seeks ways to cooperate with France and Mediterranean partners in the context of UfM, even if direct participation is unlikely.

Toward a Mediterranean Policy?

The response to the UfM anticipates in some respects the likely future drift of broader US policy toward the Mediterranean and the Middle East, elements of which were already visible in the final year of the Bush administration. One aspect of the new look is a declining emphasis on democratization and transformative interventions, diplomatic or military, and greater emphasis on traditional human rights concerns and south-south cooperation in the Maghreb. In key respects, this represents a return to regional policies such as the “Eizenstat initiative” developed in the Clinton administration as a response to developments in Algeria and elsewhere around the Mediterranean. With Europe, American development and security programmes will likely give increasing priority to regional integration and cooperation, including energy and infrastructure initiatives (Hufbauer and Brunel, 2008). Climate change and the environment are also clearly on the agenda for the new administration, and some of these new policy interests will surely find their way into Washington’s regional policies in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. As an example, there is increased official and commercial American interest in new solar and other renewable energy initiatives in North Africa, along the lines of those in the Mediterranean Solar Plan.

³ Perhaps 70% of the supplies for operations in Iraq use Turkish ports and airfields, including Incirlik.
Maritime security is another likely priority for the future, an interest already discernible in the second Bush administration. Counter-terrorism and energy security concerns in the Mediterranean and the Gulf are part of this equation. The sharp rise in piracy in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean has also spurred attention to maritime security as a multilateral issue. This will also have important implications for the Mediterranean to the extent that shipping avoids the Red Sea route and thus deprives Egypt of significant revenue from the Suez Canal. Linkages of this kind can be expected to reinforce the already strong US interest in maritime security cooperation, including cooperation with southern European and southern Mediterranean partners.

American interest in the functional issues that dominate the Mediterranean agenda, from energy security to counter-terrorism and from migration to the environment, has certainly increased over the past few years. In North Africa, American military engagement has been affected by the creation of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 (it became a fully independent unified command in 2008). The experience of the past year underscored the reality that AFRICOM headquarters are likely to remain in Germany for some time to come. Regional states, including partners in North Africa, have been reluctant to encourage an AFRICOM presence on the ground, and even more reluctant to see the command’s headquarters move across the Mediterranean. Over time, AFRICOM could prove useful in addressing many of the security issues flowing from sub-Saharan Africa northward to the Maghreb and the Mediterranean.

Pressing challenges in Afghanistan and around the Black Sea in the wake of the Georgia crisis have kept NATO focused on these issues. But with the launch of NATO’s reflection on a new strategic concept set to begin in earnest with the April 2009 NATO Summit, it is likely that US strategists will pay greater attention to security issues emanating from the south and the Mediterranean aspects of Alliance strategy. A greater French role in NATO could also encourage a shift southward in American thinking about transatlantic strategy. The return of Russia to a modest level of defence-related activity in North Africa and the Levant (e.g. defence sales to Algeria and proposed naval bases in Libya and Syria) and the growth of Chinese commercial and political involvement in the region have also heightened American attention to Mediterranean developments over the past year. One aspect of American strategy that has not changed, and is unlikely to change, is the absence of a “Mediterranean policy” per se. The US has been a Mediterranean power for over two hundred years. But in contrast to Europe, there is no tradition of Mediterranean consciousness and engagement. Intellectually and bureaucratically, Washington has pursued a bifurcated approach, with quite separate policies toward Europe, including southern Europe and Turkey, on the one hand, and North Africa and the Middle East on the other. The various tracks of the Middle East peace process have rarely if ever been described as Mediterranean challenges in the American foreign policy lexicon. With the exception of military commands such as the Sixth Fleet, there is no element of the American foreign and security policy structure with a specific Mediterranean mandate. This approach complicates but does not preclude the emergence of a more deliberate policy toward the region as a priority for a revived transatlantic relationship. The development of a more concerted approach to problems around the Mediterranean Basin —regardless of terminology— may be a key test of transatlantic relations with a new administration in Washington.

References


The Role of the USA in the Mediterranean

A Year of Transition: US Policy in the Middle East and Mediterranean, 2008

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The last year of President George W. Bush’s administration in Washington, DC marked the consolidation of several significant shifts away from its previous policies in the wider Mediterranean region. As a result, this year offered a relatively gentle transition to the administration of the newly elected US President—despite all the heated campaign debates about Iraq or Iran and the superficial media outpouring about radical change.

Six issues were most notable in this regard during 2008: the much greater diplomatic focus on the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli peace process; the shift toward planning for a gradual US military withdrawal from Iraq, as the security situation there became more manageable and stable; the subtle move away from military confrontation and toward dialogue with Iran; the strengthening of US security, economic, and political ties with the North African states, including traditional friends like Morocco or Tunisia and new ones like Algeria, Mauritania, and Libya; the continued dilution of previous US efforts to promote the rapid democratization of Arab autocracies, around the southeastern Mediterranean rim and beyond, particularly in Egypt or Lebanon; and the attempt, only partially successful, to repair relations with Turkey, the only major Muslim EU aspirant and NATO ally of the United States.

The Arab-Israeli Peace Process

The US shift toward a more activist approach to this longstanding impasse had crystallized in November 2007 with the convening of an international meeting to restart Palestinian-Israeli peace talks at Annapolis, Maryland. This broke the diplomatic deadlock for the first time since 2000, when the late Yasser Arafat aborted US President Bill Clinton’s Camp David summit and launched an armed uprising against Israelis instead. Resuming peace talks seven years later offered no guarantee of reaching any agreements—indeed, none were reached by the end of 2008—but at least it provided a framework to keep the peacemaking option open for the next American administration.

Soon after Annapolis, and throughout the following year, President Bush and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice engaged in a whole new series of high-level, high-profile meetings and trips to the region to urge the parties forward—quite unlike anything the Bush administration had attempted all during its previous tenure in office. Nevertheless, they did not succeed in overcoming the daunting obstacles: many difficult and unresolved issues (borders, refugees, Jerusalem, etc.), weak leaders, fragile governments, and the ever-present distraction of other issues.

Most of all, there remained the problem that Hamas, which refused to have anything to do with peace talks, still controlled the Gaza half of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Palestinian Authority, led by President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and deeply engaged in these peace talks, controlled only the West Bank. US support for these negotiations therefore had somehow to manoeuvre around this hard fact on the ground, knowing that it made any agreement even more difficult to achieve and well-nigh impossible to implement.
Midway through 2008, in late May, President Bush returned to the region to attend Israel’s 60th anniversary ceremonies and then a World Economic Forum conference at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Both visits were largely symbolic, with the first focused on the continuing US commitment to Israel’s security. Underlying this commitment was a newly announced package of advanced arms sales, including long-range combat aircraft and anti-missile radars, largely paid for by a 10-year programme of US military aid worth three billion dollars annually. Also symbolic, however, was the absence of a trilateral US-Israeli-Palestinian meeting, indicating a lack of progress in the peace talks. The inability of the parties to produce a joint document or even a public statement indicated that serious obstacles remained.

Those obstacles multiplied in the second half of the year. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s legal troubles over old corruption charges gradually intensified, to the point where he was forced in September to announce his intent to withdraw from office whenever a new government could be formed. And in the last weeks of 2008, Hamas broke its informal ceasefire with Israel and accelerated the rain of rockets on cities and towns across the border, leading to an intensive but inconclusive Israeli assault on Gaza that lasted right up until the eve of President Obama’s inauguration on 20 January 2009. The new US President’s pledge to accelerate Israeli-Palestinian peace talks clearly confronted an impasse. Wisely, however, he held on to his predecessor’s belated decision to boycott Hamas until it renounced its policy of jihad to the death against Israel, which threatened to turn impasse into eternal conflict.

North Africa

In its last year in office, the Bush administration consolidated a little-known but quite significant set of initiatives to strengthen US political, economic, and security relations with the Arab countries of the Maghreb, or North Africa. These policies were the more notable for encompassing every single one of those countries, across thousands of kilometres of southern Mediterranean coastline, almost regardless of their vastly different systems of government, levels of development, or previous history of either friendship with or hostility to Washington.

Morocco, which had signed a free trade agreement with the US, was now made eligible for major aid disbursements from the reform-oriented Millennium Challenge Account, potentially reaching nearly 700 million dollars over a relatively brief period. Algeria quietly became one of the leading trade partners for the US in the entire region, with bilateral exchanges jumping into the double-digit billion-dollar column, almost a tenfold increase over a decade earlier. Full diplomatic relations were restored with Libya, culminating the gradual process of rapprochement begun in 2003 when Muammar Gaddafi renounced weapons of mass destruction and agreed to pay compensation for terrorist victims. Secretary Rice even made an official visit to Tripoli, the first such stop since Gaddafi took power four decades before, opening the doors for normalized commercial, diplomatic, and even selected security ties. Tunisia became the new hub for American military and technical support as part of a new Trans-Sahel Security Assistance Partnership for host governments acting against al-Qaeda, its local offshoots, and related threats. Even distant, impoverished, and thinly populated Mauritania was included in substantial fashion in this latter programme.

Above and beyond the intrinsic importance of this new sub-regional focus, its relative success belied the sweeping generalisations about “growing US-Arab estrangement” during the latter part of the Bush administration. And as such, the reality of closer US links with the Maghreb, even as problems persisted with Iraq, Iran, and Arab-Israeli affairs, suggests that all these regional issues are really not inextricably intertwined, as conventional wisdom would have it. Instead, a more discriminating focus on specific sub-regional dynamics, at different arcs around the vast Mediterranean coast, offers a better vantage point for both analysis and policy prescription.

Iran’s Nuclear Challenge

The last year of the Bush administration marked a decision to refrain from exercising any American military option against Iran’s nuclear programme. As important, according to plausible American press reports, the US President also decided to discourage Israel from choosing that option either, by denying it certain “bunker-buster” bombs, aerial refuelling technology, or air transit rights over Iraq. At mid-year, the State Department’s point-man for this issue signalled that Bush was effectively deferring its
resolution to his successor: “At a minimum, it seems to me, it is important to create in this Administration as strong an international diplomatic mechanism as we possibly can to constrain Iranian behaviour, on which the next Administration can build.”

In this vein, the US moved ever closer to the multilateral model of dealing with Iran diplomatically, in close coordination with the EU and especially the E-3 (United Kingdom, Germany, and France), as part of the dialogue with Tehran conducted by the Permanent Five (members of the UN Security Council) Plus One (P-5+1). Accordingly, the US, which had previously insisted that Iran restore its freeze on uranium enrichment before Washington would join this dialogue directly, agreed in 2008 to send a senior representative, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns, to a formal meeting of this dialogue in Geneva, even though Iran continued to reject that precondition.

In July 2008, Burns testified to Congress about the “sometimes frustratingly slow but nonetheless tangible” progress in “sharpening the downsides for Iran of its continued refusal to heed the Security Council or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).” He laid special stress on US cooperation with the EU on both sticks and carrots for Iran. On the former, “renewed willingness by EU states to tighten pressure on Iran is especially welcome. Two weeks ago, the EU adopted new sanctions against 38 individuals and entities, including an assets freeze on Iran’s largest bank, Bank Melli. Last week, the EU began formal consideration of additional measures.” As for carrots, Burns asserted that “Javier Solana’s recent visit to Tehran helped highlight the opportunities before Iran if it cooperates with the international community. Solana carried a package of incentives, including an offer of assistance on state-of-the-art light water reactor technology, along with a letter signed by the P-5+1 foreign ministers, including Secretary Rice.”

But as the year wound down, it became ever more apparent that Iran was not about to budge on its nuclear programme. It would be up to President Obama, who had said during the electoral campaign that he would negotiate directly with Iran but also that it should not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons, to address this issue early in his first term.

### Democratization

The last year of the Bush administration witnessed a further retreat from one of its earlier signal initiatives, viz., active intervention on behalf of immediate democratic political reform in the broader southern Mediterranean and Middle East region. By midyear, President Bush himself was speaking publicly about a 60-year horizon for the achievement of this visionary objective. Secretary Rice candidly conceded the gap between rhetoric and reality in an article she published during the summer of 2008, which included several remarkable passages worth quoting at some length (Rice, 2008).

After first noting that the quest for Mid-East democratization marked her government’s “most vivid departure from prior policy” in the region, Ms. Rice next emphasized that the very extended time frame required for this quest had been underestimated. “The President’s second inaugural address and my speech at the American University in Cairo in June 2005,” she allowed, “have been held up as rhetorical declarations that have faded in the face of hard realities. No one will argue that the goal of democratization and modernization in the broader Middle East lacks ambition, and we who support it fully acknowledge that it will be a difficult, generational task. No one event, and certainly not a speech, will bring it into being.”

Even more remarkable for its candour was the next paragraph, which explained Washington’s dilemma in this regard. “The goal is made more complicated by the fact that the future of the Middle East is bound up in many of our other vital interests: energy security, non-proliferation, the defence of friends and allies, the resolution of old conflicts, and, most of all, the need for near-term partners in the struggle against violent Islamic extremism… Admittedly, our interests and our ideals do come into tension at times in the short term. America is not an NGO and must balance myriad factors in our relations with all countries.”

Then, a few paragraphs later, the US Secretary of State offered the most concrete, comprehensive, and compelling qualification yet of American efforts to democratize the Middle East: “Admittedly, our interests in both democratic development and fighting terrorism and extremism lead to some hard choices,

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1 Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William J. Burns. Opening Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 9th July 2008.
2 Ibid.
because we do need capable friends in the broader Middle East who can root out terrorists now. These states are often not democratic, so we must balance the tensions between our short-term and our long-term goals. We cannot deny non-democratic states the security assistance to fight terrorism or defend themselves."

In practice, this judgment was rendered most dramatically in the case of Egypt. In March 2008, Secretary Rice herself, on a visit to that country, announced a “national security waiver” for military assistance to that country— even as the Egyptian government continued to crack down hard on the democratic opposition that the US had earlier vociferously encouraged.

**Syria and Lebanon**

A particular case in point of US retrenchment from activist promotion of democracy in the region was its unwillingness to offer more than token support to the beleaguered Lebanese government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora in the face of a renewed violent challenge from Hezbollah in May 2008. To be fair, the Lebanese Armed Forces supported by Washington showed no appetite for combat against Hezbollah; and, as President Bush commented at the time, “it’s hard to help people have courage.”

Nor was democratization a major theme of US policy toward Lebanon’s dictatorial and overbearing neighbour, Syria. Yet throughout 2008, as in the previous three years since the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and Lebanon’s Cedar Revolution that compelled Syria to withdraw its troops from that country, the Bush administration showed little interest in any enhanced diplomatic engagement with Damascus. On the contrary, the US kept to its policy of maintaining strict sanctions, refusing any high-level consultations and leaving the US embassy in the Syrian capital without an ambassador. This continuing attempt to isolate and pressure Syria went so far as to lead Washington, according to Israeli reports, to warn Israel against proceeding too far in the new, indirect peace talks with Syria mediated by Turkey throughout the year.

As the year ended, the newly elected Obama government hinted strongly that this was one Mid-East policy it was determined to change with all deliberate speed. What remained unclear, however, were the terms on which the US would now shift toward overtures to Syria, and the effects this would have on American policy and American interests, not only in Lebanon, but also as far afield as Syria’s ally Iran and beyond. Also unclear was the extent to which the Obama team would try to coordinate their new approach to Syria with European partners, who had already moved to a much deeper engagement with President Assad’s regime in Damascus. The one clear point was that any action, or even serious talk, on behalf of democratization of that regime would not be on the agenda.

**Turkey**

In early 2008, the US took an important step to restore good relations with Ankara by quietly giving the green light—and the precise intelligence— for Turkey’s armed forces to take action against Kurdish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) rebels ensconced in the bordering mountains of northern Iraq. This shift was intended to repair some of the damage of previous years, aptly described by two expert observers at the time: “Turks deeply resent the effect that the war in Iraq has had on their own Kurdish separatism problem … In that sense, the US invasion of Iraq and the ensuing disorder in the country threaten 50 years of US-Turkish strategic partnership” (Gordon and Taspınar, 2008).

Despite this US attempt to make amends, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the ruling party in Ankara, catering to its Islamist constituency, evinced only limited interest in a tighter embrace with the US. The Turkish government also showed less enthusiasm than previously for EU membership; and several EU countries, notably France, returned the sentiment— this time with only pro forma protests from Washington. The sense of mutual distance was symbolized, and reinforced, by the lavish Turkish official reception of the virulently anti-Western Iranian President Ahmadinejad in August 2008. As one astute Turkish observer remarked at the time, it was unfortunately and increasingly plausible that “years from now, Ahmadinejad’s visit to Istanbul will be remembered as the tipping point at which the West lost Turkey, and Turkey lost its soul” (Cagaptay, 2008).

The newly elected US President Obama reportedly planned to visit Turkey early in the next year in an effort to reverse this tide, but given the deep cultural divergence of recent years, success in this venture is far from assured.
Iraq: Saving the Best for Last

The year 2008 marked a tipping point of a more positive sort in the equally important case of Iraq, where internal political violence declined so sharply that the US was able to announce the “return on success” of some thousands of the additional troops that had surged to that country during the previous year. The improvement was succinctly analyzed by its leading architect, US General David Petraeus: “It wasn’t just “the surge.” It wasn’t just extra forces. It was the kind of conceptual guidance that was put out at the same time … starting with a focus on securing the population, which can only be done by living among them… We have to identify and separate the irreconcilables from the reconcilables, but that you’re not going to kill your way out of an insurgency; you got to reconcile with as many as you can…. That leads to, at the local level, political reconciliation and Awakenings, and then … as the security situation allows, people start focusing on laws and budgets and all the rest of that”.

Even as the situation on the ground improved, US policy in Iraq became a major focus of the presidential electoral campaign, with Democratic Senator Barack Obama arguing for withdrawal sooner, and Republican Senator John McCain demurring. At the very end of the Bush administration, the US and Iraq reached a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) promising a US troop withdrawal by the end of 2011. After he won the November 2008 election and assumed office, President Obama decided on a very similar withdrawal schedule. The ultimate test of this new policy would be how Iraq fared as US troops actually withdrew, but it seemed clear that 2008 was the last year of such a vast American military commitment to that country.

Epilogue: The Rise of Economic Issues as Economies Decline

As the year 2008 began, President Bush gave voice in Abu Dhabi to the US assessment of policies aimed at promoting Mid-East economic growth and reform. “In the last few years,” he declared, “the nations of this region have made some great progress. The World Bank reports that economic growth is strong and it is rising. Saudi Arabia has joined the World Trade Organization. Jordan, Oman, Bahrain and Morocco have signed free trade agreements with the United States…. The nations of the Middle East are now investing in their people, and building infrastructure, and opening the door to foreign trade and investment.”

At the same time, President Bush dutifully observed that “oil accounts for much of the economic growth here.” Indeed, during the first half of the year, oil prices went on a wild climb, roughly doubling to nearly 150 dollars per barrel –only to fall back precipitously to under 50 dollars per barrel by the year’s end, as the global economy sank into a severe slump. As a result, US entreaties to Saudi Arabia to moderate oil prices in early 2008 were soon replaced by acute economic concerns much closer to home: the sub-prime mortgage crisis and consequent wider financial meltdown, the drastic fall in housing and stock market prices, the rise in unemployment, and the overall spectre of a major worldwide recession.

In the last quarter of 2008 leading up to the November election, this US domestic economic crisis eclipsed foreign policy as a presidential campaign issue. Moreover, as the new year dawned and President Obama took over, the continued economic slump maintained its dominance of both high-level and public attention. The policy adjustments toward the end of the Bush administration had made it less urgent for his successor, despite the slogan of change, to shift course drastically in the wider Mediterranean and Middle East, whether in Iraq, in the Arab-Israeli arena, or elsewhere. And the acute economic troubles faced by the new US government made it still less likely to risk bold and necessarily risky policy departures in the region –leaving the initiative for the time being as much in the hands of local powers as in the distant superpower in Washington.

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It was with an Israeli war against Gaza that the year 2008 closed, coinciding with the end of George Bush’s second presidential term. It was a lean year in terms of the United States’ involvement in the Mediterranean. What were the key actions of this American year in the Mediterranean? Before continuing, we shall first ask an underlying question in order to better define the issue. Does the United States really play a role in the Mediterranean? The response is far from simple: certainly it is a Mediterranean actor, but without a Mediterranean strategy. In this paper, we will discuss this absence of strategy in depth and examine how the USA perceives the Mediterranean, using an approach combining analysis and information, and having recourse to factual data to support our analyses.

The United States of America, a Mediterranean Actor

The US burst onto the Mediterranean stage early on and its involvement has never been interrupted since then. Its presence has been permanent thenceforth (6th Fleet). This strong, continuous presence denotes a certain interest in the area. Due to its historical presence and above all its unmatched strength, the United States is a Mediterranean actor par excellence, even if it has no Mediterranean strategy. This would seem like a paradox. Latent and open conflicts (the Arab-Israeli conflict, Western Sahara, the Balkans, Cyprus, Ceuta and Melilla, etc.) cannot be stabilized—i.e. main-
tenance of the status quo—nor regulated without US involvement. Even low-intensity crises (of the Perejil/Leila type) require its intervention. We might therefore consider whether the failure/mixed results of initiatives in the Mediterranean Region are not due to the absence of US involvement as well. Local actors count on its intervention. It is sometimes called upon to intervene and when it does so, not always in the best manner, it is denounced. It is true that the United States cannot manage to find the balance between indifference and interventionism. In sum, in certain matters, US strategic exclusiveness remains intact.

Lack of a Mediterranean Strategy

All of this contrasts with the absence of the Mediterranean as an independent, or at least autonomous, category in American perception and strategy. The Mediterranean is considered a route, hence its particular position, not as an area but as a strategic passageway for oil from the Gulf and North Africa and for American troops. No need for a strategy, therefore, for a corridor.

Insofar as geography, interests and concerns, the Europeans employ the Mediterranean as an operative concept, a category structuring their thought and regional strategies. The Americans, on the other hand, do not think in terms of a Mediterranean area, but in terms of the Middle East, an area whose borders change according to events and the strategies developed in Washington. Moreover, the Mediterranean constitutes an area of rivalry with Europe, though it is an inclusive rather than an exclusive rivalry (in the Middle East, American handling of Israeli-Arab matters is exclusive). In fact, it is the Mediterranean periphery (the Persian Gulf, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and so on) that interests it the most. Hence, to speak
A US role in the Mediterranean is to give the latter a status that it does not have in American strategic planning. The Mediterranean is a flexible concept allowing the Americans to conceive of it more as Europe or more as the Middle East. A flexibility that reveals its dependence vis-à-vis other circles. Three essential elements explain the absence of a Mediterranean strategy for the US: 1) The Mediterranean is a corridor not requiring a global strategy; 2) The density of Euro-Mediterranean relations obliges acknowledgement—not necessarily implying non-competitive behaviour—of European influence. In the Middle East, however, American monopoly is evident, whereas the role of Europe there is minor; and 3) The possibility for America to take an interest in the peripheries without having a Mediterranean strategy. This geopolitical flexibility combined with the attractiveness for Mediterranean States of bilateral relations with the United States do not incite the latter to approach the Mediterranean as a separate region.

The Mediterranean Perceived through its Peripheries

Hence, not having construed the Mediterranean as a strategic zone, the United States does not feel the need for a Mediterranean policy. It plays a clever game in the Mediterranean: it tolerates the fact that it is an area of European influence, but via bilateral tracks, it undermines this influence from within. This effective bilateralism based on a subregional approach allows them, moreover, to avoid entering into open rivalry with Europe and to employ a selective approach insofar as regional issues to be dealt with. Yet its differences with Europe are relative. On global issues, they disappear: with regard to weapons of massive destruction (WMDs) and terrorism, it is difficult to find any major differences. Indeed, it is the nature of these issues that define their regional extent. The proliferation of WMDs and missiles lends the Mediterranean, in American perception/practice, its entire strategic significance, though always in a relationship of subordination to the Middle East.

The Mediterranean is divided into subregions, and when it is approached in a more or less global manner, it becomes dependent on a circle or a subregion, whether it be Europe—as well as NATO—when it is approached in terms of threats from the South, including the Maghreb; or the Middle East when the Arab-Israeli and/or Gulf (Iraq and Iran) issues take precedence over other considerations. Thus, the Americans perceive it according to a breakdown into the subgroups (Near or Middle East, Maghreb, Balkans, etc.) comprising it, and they act accordingly. In perceiving it in a subregional light, they follow an issue area approach, as testified by certain prioritised spheres of cooperation with the countries in the region: antiterrorist struggle (Algeria, Morocco...), normalisation of Arab-Israeli relations (Egypt, Jordan, Turkey), energy (Gulf States, Algeria and Libya). This multiple-level strategy allows the US to simultaneously deal with their old and new Arab allies (from another regional political chessboard).

The United States plays a clever game in the Mediterranean: it tolerates the fact that it is an area of European influence, but via bilateral tracks, it undermines this influence from within.

In addition, the Mediterranean does not exist in the US strategic breakdown of the world. The geographical distribution of military commands reveals that the majority of Mediterranean countries fall under the jurisdiction of the US European Command (USEUCOM), while others fall under the jurisdiction of the US Central Command (USCENTCOM). With the creation of the US African Command (USAFRICOM), three US military commands will have jurisdiction over the Mediterranean. This obviously poses the question of the absence of a strategic Mediterranean identity.

This American approach makes a certain amount of sense. The Mediterranean is a set of subregions that, despite certain common features, are rather or even very different: distance between the North and South shores; difference between a structurally unstable Near/Middle East and a relatively stable Maghreb. For the US, what matters most is the nature of the Mediterranean areas and contiguous zones: the Middle East (Israel and the Gulf States), Europe, and recently, the Maghreb as well as the Sahel. These zones lend it its strategic importance as a pathway. Since threats and interests evolve, certain adjoining regions can gain importance, lending the Mediterranean value. This is the case of the Sahel, which has
become a focal point in the US struggle against terrorism and US deployment in Africa, lending value to the Maghreb and, indirectly, the Mediterranean. The American military relocation from Europe towards the Maghreb/Sahel, as attested by the creation of USAFRICOM –still homeless for lack of a country wishing to host their headquarters—attests to this strategic flight across the Mediterranean. The United States is thus interested in the peripheries of the Mediterranean, as it was interested in Europe during the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War period (stabilisation of the East and enlargement of NATO). At the same time, it has maintained an interest in the eastern periphery, namely the Gulf States. Following the 9/11 attacks, redeployment has focussed on the Mediterranean area itself to a certain extent through the intervention of NATO (Active Endeavour), but the predominant trend of conceiving of the Mediterranean through its peripheries remains intact (Sahel).

Regarding highly sensitive bilateral Mediterranean border demarcations, the United States has registered success in the stabilisation of Greek-Turkish relations, assisted in this undertaking by NATO and the EU (as per Greece and Turkey’s Member status in NATO, as well as their Member and pre-accession status in the EU, respectively). Greek-Turkish pacification was therefore not exclusively the USA’s doing. On the other hand, it did not succeed in carrying out a similar feat with Algeria and Morocco. Its alignment on Morocco’s position concerning Western Sahara and its designation of said country as a major non-NATO ally confirm its preference for Morocco. But this has not prevented it from developing relations with Algeria, engaging in a dangerous balancing game in the Maghreb.

**The American Mediterranean, More Eastern than Western-Oriented**

Though the Western Mediterranean is the centre of gravity of the United States military presence in the Mediterranean, US priorities are essentially eastern. Only the anti-terrorist struggle encourages consideration of the western part of the Basin. This eastern penchant can be ascribed to a certain US acknowledgement of European influence in the Maghreb. But this explanation is insufficient. A certain degree of American deployment (security and economy) in the Maghreb is also done to the detriment of Europe. Moreover, it is the USA that sets the tone for European conduct in the Mediterranean: the rehabilitation of Libya was an American doing; Europe did nothing but follow suit. It is the USA that points out the direction for certain European policies relating to the Mediterranean. It is the major actor in the Mediterranean arena, even if this region is absent from US strategic discourse, and therefore highly developed and at times even inflationist in terms of concepts and categorisations. In fact, the eastern penchant is dictated by two primary factors: Israel and energy (Persian Gulf). Not one Strategy, therefore, but many pressure point strategies according to each country’s profile and American interests at a given moment. The reorientation towards the East (Afghanistan) undertaken by the new administration would imply that the Mediterranean will remain a simple pathway, all the more so because a certain European follow-my-leader attitude does not prompt the Americans to Mediterraneise their priorities.

**Though the Western Mediterranean is the centre of gravity of the United States military presence in the Mediterranean, US priorities are essentially eastern**

The four main lines of action underlying US conduct in the Mediterranean remain: the security of Israel; the security of energy supplies; hard security (proliferation of WMDs and terrorism); economic markets and, incidentally, democratisation—if not contrary to strategic imperatives. To succeed in these lines, it relies on a number of States according to an issue area logic. A single country can form part of two or even three issue areas (anti-terrorist struggle, energy, etc).

**Two Functions of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**

Although American support for the UfM at its founding summit (July 2008) was circumspect, the Arab-Israeli dimension boldly addressed at the summit could not leave the United States indifferent. Yet
its position seems ambivalent. The USA appreciates the fact that the UfM is involved in the Arab-Israeli process and has made Syria enter the ranks, but it does not approve of this rehabilitation of Syria without its having broken its alliance with Iran. Normalising relations with Lebanon was too exorbitant a price to pay for reintegration, and a strategic concession was necessary as well. The UfM’s function as a tribune for Israeli-Arab normalisation thus interests the United States, as long as it does not undermine the US monopoly in any way. The other UfM function that the US certainly hopes for is eminently strategic; an updating of the dependence of the Southern shore vis-à-vis the EU and, indirectly, a response to serious US and EU competitors (China, Russia and India). By admitting the fact that the Mediterranean is traditionally a zone of European influence, they expect Europe to assume its role as a shield against the establishment of these global competitors in the Mediterranean in exchange. Certain strategic parameters go beyond the Mediterranean sphere proper.

A War instead of a Palestinian State

The USA was absent from the Arab-Israeli arena in 2008 and the 2007 Annapolis Conference produced no results. Insofar as the Road Map, it went off route. The situation deteriorated, culminating in a war against Gaza. Nevertheless, in 2004 Bush committed to working towards the creation of a Palestinian State by the end of 2008 and reiterated this in Annapolis. No-one expected his engagement to be concrete, yet no-one imagined a war of such magnitude as a close to the American year in the Middle East. Instead of culminating in a Palestinian State, the two initiatives (the Road Map and the Annapolis Conference) have led to a war against the Palestinians. A great deal of conferences and processes, but very little peace!

For an entire year, the United States was content to simply deal with the consequences of the occupation by using Hamas as a target and reiterating the right to legitimate defence. At the same time, they deny that the Palestinians this same right and, incidentally, forget that Hamas is a product of Israeli occupation. In fact, on the Israeli-Palestinian level, the year began with an Israeli military operation against Gaza (February) causing 130 Palestinian victims, and ended with a war, once again against Gaza, causing the death of over 5,000 Palestinians as well as thousands of wounded.

Following more or less in the tracks of his predecessor on the Palestinian issue, Barack Obama will apply the memorandum of understanding signed with Israel to tighten the noose on Hamas via a maritime blockade of Gaza (already operative), imposing unilateral disarmament.

Pressure on Syria

American pressure on Syria continued with the aim of causing a fissure in the Syrian-Iranian alliance and definitively neutralising Syrian influence on Lebanon, to no avail. In targeting Syria for an entire year, the United States was thinking more of Iran and Israel than of Lebanon. It maintained sanctions against Syria and supported the Israeli raid against Syria’s nuclear facilities. Yet its pressure was slightly disrupted by Israeli ambivalence and by a French initiative. Israel engaged in indirect negotiations with Syria under the aegis of Turkey while the Bush Administration was banking on its isolation. And France organised Syria’s return to the Mediterranean arena, proceeding to a separation of the Lebanese and Iranian tracks. Nonetheless, contact between the two countries was not broken off thanks to parliamentary diplomacy (visit of French Congress Members to Damascus in 2008).

Focus on the African Peripheries of the Mediterranean

The United States was more occupied in 2008 with Mediterranean peripheries than with the Mediterranean itself: the Sahel insofar as terrorism, and Sub-Saharan Africa in general with a view to installing USAFRICOM. The tools of their presence are: the Trans-Sahara Counterrorism Initiative, designed to provide support and aid to countries in the region; and the military bases of Djibouti and São Tomé e Príncipe. Securing maritime routes in Africa (the Gulf of Guinea in the west and the Gulf of Aden/Horn of Africa in the east) is their priority, particularly in the face of piracy near Somalia. In 2008, pirates intercepted some 40 ships, including a Saudi oil tanker and a ship transporting Ukrainian military material to Kenya, inciting the United States and France to mobilise their troops to secure navigation in this key zone.
Western Sahara:
All Quiet on the Western Front

The US position on the Western Sahara issue is favourable to Morocco and therefore against the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination. According to Robert Ford, then US Ambassador to Algeria, “the Polisario and the Moroccans must discuss the perspective of an autonomy [under Moroccan sovereignty].” (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 23 June 2008) After travelling through the Maghreb in September 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared in Rabat that the United States was in favour of a “mutually acceptable” solution. Did this amount to making the Polisario settle for an autonomy status within Morocco? This declaration was thus meant to clear the way for advancing in the Manhasset negotiations process, at a deadlock.

The interest shown by the United States in the struggle against terrorism and the precious collaboration of Maghreb countries does not encourage them to work towards a modification of the regional configuration. This can be attributed to the fact that the status quo suits the United States and Morocco fine, and to the fact that the threshold of Maghrebi demands is so low that the Americans make no efforts in favour of the Maghreb as a region.

The Maghreb, Marginal among American Priorities

The Maghreb has always occupied a marginal position in American politics; even the struggle against terrorism and the issue of energy, two supreme motivations for US deployment, do not allow it to compete with the Middle East for US priorities. Three major elements relegate the Maghreb to a minor status. Firstly, the centrality of Israeli security to American strategy; and Israel’s immediate strategic environment is certainly the Middle East, from the Near East to the Persian Gulf (Iran). Secondly, the Maghreb is closer to Europe, and thus considered its zone of influence, even if this does not rule out economic rivalry. Moreover, the absence of major strategic imperatives in the Maghreb, in contrast to the Middle East, makes it a relatively stable area. The USA can therefore afford to let Europe take care of things, but it cannot outsource strategic matters, which explains the perpetuity of the American monopoly on the Israeli-Palestinian case despite a proliferation of European initiatives in the Mediterranean since the Oslo agreements. In sum, the Americans define the strategic contours of European regional projects. The Maghreb is still contingent to extra-regional considerations (interests in the Middle East and rivalry with Europe). Purely Middle Eastern issues condition the conduct of the United States in the Maghreb, as demonstrated by its attitude towards democratisation. In this regard, it should be kept in mind that the year 2008 was marked by a downgrading of the democracy issue in its policy. Certain of its initiatives continue to function, such as the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), through which several subsidies were granted in 2008. This notwithstanding, strategic imperatives always take priority over ethical considerations for the USA (the case of Libya).

With this perspective, what can we say about the bilateral track? US relations with Morocco, its traditional ally, are experiencing a strategic convergence (major ally status, free trade agreement…) and are constantly being reinforced. But the key element in 2008 was the reaffirmation of support to Morocco concerning Western Sahara. This is not surprising, but from a Moroccan perspective, it represents the consolidation of a certain strategic position in the Maghreb. Apart from the struggle against terrorism, energy is in the process of becoming a key element in US-Algerian cooperation (Algeria is a supplier of the United States). The third element is the role of stabiliser played by Algeria in the Sahel and in combating terrorism and traffic of all sorts in that zone. Insofar as US-Tunisian relations, they have developed over the past few years, in particular with regard to security (struggle against terrorism) and economic issues, but in 2008, the Bush administration did not succeed in two of its major endeavours in its relations with Tunisia: concluding a SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) and a free trade agreement. With Libya, on the other hand, it completed the last year in the process of rapprochement: a visit by Rice to Tripoli and the investiture of the American ambassador to Libya. And finally, with Mauritania, relations are rather at a standstill since the coup d’état. Contact is contingent on a return to democracy. The military leaders affirmed they would maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, which was well-received by the Americans. But after the war against Gaza, they decided to break them off, which will complicate their position.

Once the United States has adopted a clear Maghrebi strategy, it could then outline a Mediterranean strat-
egy. The parallel with Europe is interesting: Europe’s Mediterranean policies have always had their point of reference in the Maghreb. From a European perspective, to think of the Maghreb is to think of the Mediterranean, and to think of the latter is, above all, to think of the Maghreb.

**What Are the Perspectives?**

The Mediterranean will continue to be conceived of as a passageway whose securing is a means and not a goal in and of itself. Nothing would indicate that Obama will yield to a structural trend in American conduct. The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the hotbed of cross-cutting tension par excellence because its implications are multi-directional. In terms of instability/insecurity, it lends the Mediterranean a certain strategic sense. It is on the analysis level that we should seek the possible perspectives. But the change that Obama advocates does not seem to affect US policy concerning this conflict, apart from possible superficial adjustments. His election elicited a certain degree of hope in the region, but it evaporated upon US silence on the war against Gaza. The American attitude towards this conflict has further complicated regional imperatives, polarising inter-Arab policy and putting Washington’s Arab “allies” in a poor regional position: infra-State forces (Hezbollah in 2006 and Hamas in 2008) have succeeded in standing up to Israel where the Arab States have failed... This is the primary strategic lesson to be gleaned from the Israeli war against Gaza.

The Mediterranean will continue to be conceived of as a passageway whose securing is a means and not a goal in and of itself

With Israel’s veering to the far right and the geographic accents (Gaza vs. the West Bank) of inter-Palestinian divisions, peace efforts will settle for a minimum requisite (the status quo). One could, on the other hand, envisage the US opening to Syria, but that could become a sort of surrogate measure, failing a real breakthrough on Israeli-Palestinian affairs. Relations with Syria could take on strategic overtones, given Russia’s repositioning on the Mediterranean stage. In the Maghreb, Obama’s policy could be limited to the anti-terrorist struggle and energy, which does not differentiate it greatly from that of Bush. The centre of gravity of US policy is eastern (the Iraq-Iran-Afghanistan triangle), far from the Mediterranean, therefore, even if the inclusion of Iran is linked to the preservation of Israeli nuclear exclusivity. The prolonged American moment in the Middle East contrasts with its deserting the Mediterranean, except as a route of passage towards other areas.
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Today, it can no longer be denied that we are in the midst of a global economic crisis, one that affects the entire planet and is of a scope unseen since the crash of 1929 shook the very foundations of the capitalist world. Eighty long years have passed since then! Yet even today people debate the causes of that crisis. There are two main schools of thought, which, though divergent, are not necessarily incompatible. For some (Milton Friedman and his acolytes), its origin can be traced to an unconventional and unpredictable monetary policy that was unable to ensure a constant flow of liquidity. For others, the cause lay in a fiscal policy too insufficiently proactive to provide what Keynes called ‘effective demand’ in a context where monetary policy had been rendered inefficient as a result of what Keynes termed the ‘liquidity trap’.

The standard conclusion (which is most likely also the correct one) is that, faced with such deep crises, the best solution is a sound combination of monetary policy (stable and predictable) and fiscal policy (expansive, when necessary, but stable in the medium term and generally aimed at ensuring a balanced budget).

However, irrespective of conventional macro-economic policy (which would also include exchange rate policy in those countries where that is still possible, given the current circumstances), other policies are strictly required.

Specifically, policies geared toward carrying out structural reforms in our economic systems are needed, including:

- Reforms in strategic sectors, such as telecommunications, transport and energy.
- Reforms in the markets for productive factors, such as the capital market, where the reform and strengthening of the mechanisms for central bank oversight of financial institutions appears critical, or labour market, where the optimum blend of flexibility and security and the appropriate allocation of financial and human resources must be sought.
- Reforms in highly sensitive spheres that are essential to achieving and maintaining the competitiveness required in an increasingly open and competitive global world, such as the sphere of education and professional training or the operation of government and the public sector.
- Reforms in tax systems and the role of different taxes in the breakdown of public spending, or reforms in legislation, to provide legal security and stability, as well as incentives for private initiative.
- Reforms that leave sufficient margin for well-regulated and supervised market freedom and that privatise anything that can be done in the private sector without allowing political considerations to distort the decision-taking process.
- And many, many more...

In a word, there is much to be done. And the first step is to diagnose the situation properly. To this end, a closer look is in order. The first observation is that we are clearly dealing with the convergence of multiple crises. There is a glaring real estate crisis in western countries; there is a crisis caused by supply shocks, due to the enormous volatility in the prices of basic raw materials; and there is a financial crisis, which can only be described as unprecedented.

And let us not forget, those of us beyond a certain age have witnessed many crises. We have certainly experienced real estate crises, although none as deep as...
the current one or with such a distant horizon in terms of absorbing the huge stock of finished and unsold homes. The dust will take time to settle, several years even, and in some countries, such as Spain, more.

We have also experienced supply-side crises: in 1973 and again in 1979... We know what must be done to move on: restructure the current breakdown of productive factors to adapt it to the new relative prices thereof. It is hard, complicated and costly, but we know how to do it and how long the adjustment will take.

We have also lived through financial crises, both local and global.

We have seen local crises such as those undergone in my country, Spain, which was racked by a severe banking crisis in the early eighties, when half the existing banks quite literally disappeared (approximately 50 out of 100). We watched as an entire sector teetered on the brink (the so-called industrial banking sector, which had earlier played a crucial role in safeguarding Spanish industry) and then, seemingly overnight, simply ceased to exist (as has occurred, in a certain sense and on a much larger scale, with investment banks).

One good lesson to be drawn from everything happening now is that no one and nothing is safe from the storm, including institutions that once seemed indestructible but have since shown themselves to be fragile.

Regardless of the western world’s capacity to absorb the real estate crisis and of the crises caused by the prices of strategic raw materials, what makes this crisis new is the nature and scope of its financial facet.

One need only look at the last ten years, over which the world has experienced financial crises such as the ‘tequila effect’, Russia’s default, Argentina’s ‘corralito’, the financial crisis in southeast Asia, the Turkish banking crisis of 2000 or the virtual (and real) collapse of the Japanese banking system.

In short, we have multiple examples of multiple crises. Res novum sub sole. Nothing new under the sun.

So then? Whence the worry and gloom? The politically correct conclusion is that, as in the past, nothing is preventing anyone from assuming that, despite the current context, we will once again overcome. This is the argument espoused by the ‘anthropological optimists’: there is no sense in worrying too much, since, sooner or later, everything will go back to normal.

The problem arises when one believes that this is not just another crisis. Which, of course, it is not.

For regardless of the western world’s capacity to absorb the real estate crisis (which is not due to a demand shock sprung from real need, but rather to excess supply, brought about in response to speculation, whose flames were fanned by the massive liquidity on the markets, which, in many cases, were offering negative real interest rates, thereby making it ‘rational’ to take on debt, as a result of monetary policies that remained expansive over a long period of time), and regardless of the crises caused by the highly volatile prices of strategic raw materials, what makes this crisis new – what makes it unprecedented and unique – is the nature and scope of its financial facet.

Let us now take a closer look.

The main problem lies in the lack of confidence in our financial systems, that is, in the widespread distrust in the real quality and, thus, assigned value of the assets held on financial institutions’ balance sheets. Moreover, whilst we know what the banks owe, and know that it is a lot and quite important, we do not know what they own. Consequently, we have no way of knowing whether they are solvent. We do not know if, under current circumstances, they will be able to pay off their debts.

Because we are dealing with the financial system, this situation is especially dramatic, for we are not talking about specific economic sectors, no matter how large or strategic, but something even bigger, namely, our circulatory system. When the lifeblood ceases to flow, an organism will die, no matter how healthy its vital organs, muscles and tissues may be. That is what is happening today.

It is also the main challenge: how to restore confidence in the international financial system, first and foremost, the financial system’s confidence in itself. For that is, most likely, the first step: for financial institutions to regain their faith in themselves and each other. This can only be achieved via a twofold process. First, it requires bank recapitalisation, which, as we are seeing, calls for major commitments from the public authorities. In other words, governments (and, to the extent possible, markets) must recapitalise their...
banks. This gives rise to another debate: to what extent should banks be recapitalised? To the point of outright nationalisation?

Second, banks clearly need to ‘clean up’ their balance sheets, re-assessing (according to current market criteria) and re-allocating the value of their assets, so that everyone knows what to believe and can gauge the true ‘health’ of our financial institutions.

Until this occurs – and surely both steps go hand in hand –, we will not meet the necessary, let alone sufficient, conditions to emerge from the crisis.

Hence, the current climate of pervasive uncertainty. For it cannot be stressed enough that we are talking about the necessary, rather than sufficient, conditions to overcome the crisis: if financial institutions do not clear up their balance sheets, any other measures taken will be insufficient and, thus, counterproductive, even if only as a result of their futility.

However, let us go one step further, refusing to allow ourselves to be ‘paralysed by fear’.

Obviously, nothing is possible if we do not settle the financial issue. It is a sine qua non condition.

Therefore, for the time being, we must concentrate our efforts on solving it. Irrespective of ideological determinants and political prejudices, either we save our ‘circulatory system’ or we will not survive. Once we have done that, we can begin to determine how to strengthen our muscles and improve our overall health. Without blood, however, nothing else matters.

Fortunately, governments at last seem to have understood this. They may be improvising measures, designing methods by ‘trial and error’, etc., but it seems to have dawned on them all that they must save our financial systems or nothing else will matter. Proof of this can be found in the so-called ‘stress tests’ set up for financial institutions in the United States or, also in the US, the implementation, following a series of failed attempts by the previous administration (the so-called Paulson Plans), of the so-called Geithner Plan, named after the new treasury secretary, which seeks an attractive combination of (or ‘complicity’ between) the public and private sectors to recapitalise the banks and ‘set’ realistic market prices for their assets.

There will be time to assess and judge what has happened later and, of course, to determine how much of the responsibility lies with the managers of our financial institutions. Some will need to ‘purge’ themselves of their excesses, errors and, in some cases, fraudulent decisions.

However, right now the safeguarding of the international financial system must take priority over all other considerations.

In any case, regardless of the dramatic consequences of the current global crisis, we must not forget that the world continues to evolve in accordance with the underlying trends.

I am referring to the major geostrategic trends that will shape the course of the coming decades and, no doubt, the first half of this tumultuous and uncertain 21st century.

To this end, it is worth looking to history.

Ever since the industrial revolution, the world has been ‘Euro-centric’. The major European powers believed they had a ‘natural’ right – wholly unacceptable from an ethical standpoint today – to ‘split’ the world between them. And so it went: so began the era that came to be known as ‘colonialism’. However, things have changed dramatically since then.

From a geostrategic perspective, Euro-centricity peaked during World War I and then entered into decline. This decline was paralleled by the global rise of what would eventually become the two main ‘super-powers’ of the last century: the United States and the Soviet Union. However, Europe continued to serve as the ‘theatre’ for the world’s great strategic struggle. The rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe inexorably led to an unprecedented armed conflict with the continent’s democracies and, as a result of ‘unholy’ alliances, with a Soviet Union ruled by a totalitarian communist regime.

These strange alliances later evolved into deep-seat ed confrontations, which set the basic geostrategic stage for the second half of the 21st century. With the defeat of the Nazis and fascism, the world saw the dawn of a vast new conflict, affecting all levels of life, between two main blocks: on the one hand, the West, led by the United States; on the other, the Soviet Union and its so-called ‘satellite states’.

This situation lasted until 1989. It was the so-called ‘balance of terror’, also known as the doctrine of ‘mutually assured destruction’. True, we had reached the edge of the abyss, especially during the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early sixties. However, for the first time in centuries, the major powers did not dare to fight each other directly, but rather fought through proxies in Central and South America, Africa and Southeast Asia. They were engaged in a vast strategic struggle that spanned the globe, from Vietnam to Indonesia, as well as, of course, the Middle East. All conflicts were related to this giant struggle between the two
powers, which was at once political, economic, social, ideological and cultural, in short, global. Then, the conflict ended, graphically, with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. This was followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its partition into no fewer than 15 countries, as a result of the failed coup d’etat of August 1991. A world disappeared, and one side surrendered unconditionally. The ‘Cold War’ ended with a clear victor: the West, led by the United States, and, apparently, its values.

Certain eminent political scientists were explicit, claiming we had reached ‘the end of history’. The triumph of western values was clear: the market economy, representative democracy and social tolerance had clearly won the round, and the whole world would continue down that path. We had seemingly entered a sort of ‘happy Arcadia’, where ‘western’ values were spreading around the globe.

Nothing could be further from the harsh truth. The illusion was shattered, in brutal fashion, on 11 September 2001. On that day, the Western World discovered, through the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York (and of the Pentagon in Washington), that the threats to our collective security had not disappeared with the Soviet Union, but rather, for the first time, were able to launch their attacks on American soil. They did so using ‘asymmetric’ techniques. They were not armies, and they did not launch a conventional attack; rather, they aimed straight for the ‘heart’, at our societies’ morale and capacity for democratic resistance.

Hence, the transformation in the focus of US foreign policy and, by extension, that of the policies of other western countries, with varying degrees of nuance. The ‘war on terror’ soon became the face of western and, above all, American foreign policy. Everything was subordinate to this goal. Let there be no doubts: we are dealing with something extremely important, something that remains important years later. However, in interim, several major events have unfolded.

First, now that relative stability has been brought to Iraq (although it remains to be seen for how long), the war on terror continues in Afghanistan. It is being waged on the blursed and porous border with Pakistan. The new president, Obama, knows that much of his country’s international credit is riding on this effort, but he seems wholly willing to take the gamble. Consequently, no one should underestimate what is at stake or the strategic importance of winning the fight against international terrorism.

At the same time, however, irrespective of the new scenario, we are also facing new panoramas, which oblige us to delve deeper into history and geography. For, ultimately, history always repeats itself and geography is always a factor. It is worth remembering that, aside from the joint fight against international terrorism, the world is changing. The new geostrategic balances give rise to an initial, obvious conclusion: the planet’s centre of gravity is shifting quite clearly and, moreover, quite quickly, and it is increasingly far removed from Europe. This notwithstanding, it is not clearly situated in the Pacific, as some would have it.

The future global role of southern Mediterranean countries inevitably depends on looking not only ‘horizontally’, but also ‘vertically’, that is, along the North-South axis.

It would be better defined as lying at some unknown point between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, sufficiently sensitive to ‘the Americas’, but also suitably aware that Europe (the European Union) continues to play a crucial role, due to its economic and commercial, as well as political and cultural, weight. Not to mention, of course, its strategic weight. Should we dare to specify even further, we might situate it at a point near the Strait of Malacca, a natural passageway between the Indian Ocean and the waters of China, equidistant from Europe and America.

All of this, of course, has yet to be defined; however, precisely for that reason, we can all play our cards. For Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean area card is vital.

For I am convinced that the future global role of southern Mediterranean countries, as well as their status as Arab states (with the exception of Israel, which is a separate issue) and their geographical inclusion in Africa, the Middle East and Asia Minor, inevitably depends on looking not only ‘horizontally’, but also and quite clearly, ‘vertically’, that is, along the North-South axis.

This confluence of vital and strategic interests between North (the European Union) and South (the Mediterranean coastal countries that do not belong to the European Union and, thus, include non-member ‘north-
ern’ countries, primarily the Balkans) will be critical in the new global geostrategic situation.

The deepening, above all in the current global and unusually deep economic crisis, of the shared Euro-Mediterranean space is more urgent than ever.

For all of these reasons, the deepening, above all in the current global and unusually deep economic crisis, of the shared Euro-Mediterranean space is more urgent than ever.

First, because this gradual integration may help us tackle the challenges posed by the crisis, allowing us to enlarge markets and increase trade flows, investments and joint projects.

Second, because the progressive creation of a common space will further allow us to play a likewise common role and will strengthen the capacity of all countries from the space for dialogue within the new balance and scheme of global powers.

Third, because all of the foregoing will contribute to a regional scenario of peace and stability, which is especially important for the world at large, not to mention its specific impact on the secular conflict in the Middle East.

In short, the Euro-Mediterranean space can and must be vital to the South. However, Europeans must understand that it is likewise vital for them. Moreover, we must act in keeping with that understanding.

The commitment to strengthening the Barcelona Process, through the Union for the Mediterranean, must be more than an essentially voluntary political statement. For the evolution of the southern Mediterranean – whether economic, social, political, cultural or in terms of energy – is inextricably linked to the evolution of the countries in the North.

The European Union must accept this responsibility unwaveringly, not for reasons of timely political opportunism, but rather as a strategic and, therefore, medium- and long-term commitment. A commitment unmarred by short-sightedness. We will all be more important in the world if we move together. And together we can.
Economic Crisis: Effects on the Mediterranean

The Role of the Euro-Mediterranean Relations Facing the Economic Crisis

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Year 2008: Two Turning Points

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, founded in 1995, proceeded at a slow pace for a decade, with little real integrative efforts. The year 2008 will be marked as a turning point. With the intensification of efforts from the European Union, the Partnership was re-launched as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean in July 2008, with a new network of relations endorsed at the Marseille meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs in November. The renewed initiative is larger and more pragmatic.

The Partnership now includes all 27 Member States of the European Union, along with 11+1 partners on the southern shore of the Mediterranean: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Syria, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Turkey and Libya (Libya as an observer of the Partnership), as well as five new coastal states of the northern Mediterranean (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Monaco).

The increased number of partner countries adds more scope for the free trade zone project. But also the new approach gives new vitality to the partnership and raises the political level of the strategic relationship between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours.

The major innovation includes the new institutional architecture that contributes to increasing the sense of ownership and empowerment, with two rotating co-presidencies and a permanent Secretariat based in Barcelona that is responsible for identifying and promoting projects of regional and trans-national value across different sectors. While maintaining the acquis of the Barcelona Process, the UfM offers more balanced governance, increased visibility to its citizens and a commitment to tangible and trans-national projects.

However, the most important innovation is in the new functionalist approach in the field of social and economic development. The initiatives are more concentrated on joint projects that require specific investments rather than political goals.

A few months later, the American financial crisis grew into a business crisis and led to a loss of confidence that crashed the stock markets worldwide. A considerable number of banks and insurance companies failed in the following weeks. This was the second turning point of the year.

The Impact of the Global Crisis

In front of the positive efforts of the EU, the economic and financial crisis brought negative consequences to the region.

The impact of the crisis has taken the form of:

- A slowdown in global economic growth and a reduction of inflationary pressure, including a decline in the price of many commodities.
- A decline in energy demand and lower oil and gas prices globally.
- A decline in foreign direct investment inflows.
- A decline of worker remittances, in particular from the Gulf.

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1 Mauritania has been included in the Union for the Mediterranean although having its coast on the Atlantic and not on the Mediterranean because of its membership to the Maghreb Union.
A decline in total expenditure that has affected the financing of investments.
A decline in export demand and tourism in the region.
A sharp decline in financial markets.

For the Euro-Mediterranean region, the stakes are high, and in dealing with the global financial crisis, the national governments took initiatives and measures to mitigate the negative consequences. A first assessment of the current policy responses includes the adoption of national short-term measures to stimulate domestic demand, step up investment, ensure deposits in banking institutions and cut interest rates to stimulate the local markets. One can say that the policy responses have, for the most part, concentrated on domestic policy issues to the detriment of the specific international cooperation such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Although the global crisis has left no country unaffected, its duration and intensity cannot be predetermined. Compared with other regions, the south Mediterranean economies continued to show more sustainable growth in the face of rapidly changing external macroeconomic conditions (IMF, 2009). Only at the end of 2008 did the output contract in line with the global slowdown, while Morocco and Lebanon experienced an acceleration of growth. Overall, GDP growth in southern Mediterranean countries is expected to decline sharply from 5.0% in 2008 to about 3.2% in 2009, when the contraction is expected to be similar in the region. The projections are moderately positive and recovery is expected in 2010, led by Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, largely because of the anti-cyclical policies in support of the domestic demand.

The resilience of the south Mediterranean economies is due to the same factors that limited their economic expansion during the past decade.

From the forecast of the international institutions, it appears that two factors have impacted the economy of the MED partners: their reliance on external flows, in particular, their trade linkages to the European countries and other deeply affected high-income countries, and the degree of participation of foreign banks in the domestic financial sector.

To a certain extent, one can see that the resilience of the south Mediterranean economies is due to the same factors that limited their economic expansion during the past decade. Excluding Morocco and Tunisia, exports or trade openness of these economies generally have low value added in terms of contribution to GDP. Hence, the share of Euro-Mediterranean exports to the EU (European imports) remained broadly stable between 4% and 5%, while import continued to increase near to 6%, expanding the trade deficit. On large measure, weak and unbalanced trade
integration simply reflects the weak performance of the preferential agreements.

Adding the role of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in the region, their contribution has not been a source of economic growth to the same degree as Central Europe or Southeast Asia.

Moving to the domestic front, the most optimistic indicator is assured by total private investment, which continued the positive performance of the past decade. This clearly indicates that there is little room for further deterioration. Therefore the realistic situation of the Euro-Mediterranean region points to a resilient economy that resisted well the adverse external shocks.

**Structural Problems**

As analysed in a recent Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report, although in the last decade investment activities have transformed production structures in the construction, manufacturing, telecommunications, financial and service sectors, their impact is limited and fragile (ESCWA, 2009). Indeed, reform measures taken by the central banks increased the efficiency of the banking sector, and the proof is that they remained isolated from the banking problems occurring in international markets. However, the rest of the economy of the southern partners is not immune to crisis; undoubtedly, their persistent structural weaknesses may lead to negative consequences on jobs in the manufacturing sectors and on export activities that will face a stronger competition.

One can see that part of the job redundancies have been absorbed by the informal sector, which is closely connected to the formal sector in various ways through markets for goods and factors, but this does not help the chronic employment pressure and the vulnerability of labour markets.

Hence, the question is: how can the Mediterranean governments maintain growth and avoid job losses? How could the regional partnership support it?

The issue is how the UfM can address the transformation of their economic model and modify the structural weaknesses behind it. Diversification of domestic production and export remains the priority issue, as envisaged by several documents and recommendations. The quality of growth is the main concern. In the past decades, economic growth has relied more on consumption growth than physical investment in the composition of domestic demand. This particular characteristic has to be redressed in the next expansion, since worker remittances and capital inflows, in
the form of portfolio and FDIs, are factors that are external to the region and are expected to become more uncertain over the near term. External support should place more focus on domestic investments and diversification to non-oil exports, which progressed slowly and unevenly, depending upon the sector and the country. Then, in the present context, the export-led strategies may be prevented from facing the negative impact of contracting European demand.

Structural employment gap is the second problem of the region. In 2008, the employment-to-population ratio in the Middle East was 46.6% and in North Africa 45.7%, compared to the average 65% of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and these indicators have only increased by around 2% in the past ten years. This low employment-to-population ratio is usually associated with low participation of women and youth in work and a policy response is needed to avoid increasing differences and further deterioration (International Labour Organization - ILO, 2009).

In the present context, the export-led strategies may be prevented from facing the negative impact of contracting European demand.

The position of youth in labour markets still suffers disproportionately from a deficit of work opportunities. The Forum of Euro-Mediterranean Economic Institutes (FEMISE) report urged for a more positive strategic view (Institut de la Méditerranée, 2007). Economic growth has not created jobs for the growing number of entrants into the labour market (Chaaban, 2008). Typically, governments in the region resorted to public employment as a mean of absorbing the new entrants, while passively encouraging migration. The economic slowdown is certainly not helping the region and it may accelerate demands for economic and social progress within the region.

Finally, the high level of unemployment is the third characteristic of the region. Especially in North Africa, progress has been made in reducing the unemployment rate in recent years, from a peak of 14.2% in 2000 to 10.3% in 2008, in line with robust GDP growth rates in the range of 4.5%-6.5%. Nevertheless, the unemployment rates in many Middle Eastern and North African economies continue to resist as the highest levels in the world.

Facing these structural problems, the hardships posed by the crisis are not entirely negative. Typically, major reforms take place in times of crisis and therefore the economic slowdown gives the opportunity to rethink the existing development paradigms and to accelerate the pace of economic and institutional modernisation.

The Mediterranean Response to the Global Economic Crisis

The European response is the Union for the Mediterranean that calls for increased economic coordination between regions and countries. The UfM emphasizes the need for close coordination between the two shores of the Mediterranean, giving greater flexibility in assisting southern Mediterranean countries to support the sectors at risk and in need of support. Pragmatically, the UfM has identified five priority projects which are at the heart of the of Partnership’s efforts, some of them already under execution in the framework of the Barcelona Process:

- The de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea.
- The establishment of maritime and land highways.
- Civil protection initiatives to combat natural and man-made disasters.
- A Mediterranean solar energy plan.
- The Mediterranean Business Development Initiative focusing on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The mechanisms to reduce the negative effects of the global economic crisis are stated in the priority projects agreed by the Heads of State and Government in the Paris Declaration. Through the Euro-Mediterranean relations, the implementation of these projects will support, in principle, the expansion in demand among the partner countries, making the development process not only more sustainable but also more inclusive across the southern shore. The common interests and problems would make it easiest to reach and maintain agreements through the cooperative approach. The economic slowdown provides the opportunity to promote the needed technological and human resources development.

Other strategic aims have been identified and can be easily reached in the context of regional cooper-
ation, in particular concerning water, energy, environment, agriculture, communication and educational resources. Not by chance, Jordanian Prince Hassan bin Talal has suggested “a cross-country social pact with value of legal accord for an equitable distribution of resources and the investments to pass from consumption to production, integrating jobs and wealth with human development.”

In this context, the original objective to create a free trade zone between the 10 Mediterranean countries and the EU needs to be preserved as a strategic goal. From this regional perspective, economists and policy makers have stepped up proposals of strengthening and enhancing the multilateral arrangements set up under the Paris Declaration, proposing that “a common Euro-Mediterranean economic area requires, in the medium term, the integration of the southern economies in the Lisbon Strategy, by extending certain sectoral policies, related to research, development, economy and knowledge, to the Mediterranean countries.”

Leaving apart the shallow or deep integration concepts that have confronted researchers since the start of the Barcelona Process, there is now an urgent need for measures that will boost investment in public infrastructure with a trans-national character and pull the regional integration processes out of their current stagnation.

For these reasons, the UfM continues to stress the importance of the “Invest in the Mediterranean” concept with the purpose of boosting the size and quality of the Euro-Mediterranean investment and trade, building sustainable businesses, and contributing to the sustainable economic development of the region. It also urged the development of a marketing plan for available investment opportunities, with the active and positive contribution of private and public businesses. The focus is on efficiency-seeking industrial restructuring investment especially through export promotion and stronger human capabilities, in order to build supply capacities across the countries in the region. The resilience of trade flows suggests that trade facilitation infrastructure along with physical infrastructural connectivity should be supported. Public investments or public-private partnerships (PPPs) are also intended to address the needs in particular for waste recycling, water treatment, water efficiency, energy and investment in alternative energy sources.

The commitment to the priority projects may also assist in supporting greater trade and economic cooperation between southern states after the slow start of the Agadir Agreement. Options to strengthen south-south trade include increasing financing from regional development banks – or Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) – to compensate for losses of FDI inflows and contraction of export to Europe.

**The Growth Drivers**

It is evident that the UfM supports the domestic growth drivers. To this end, the renewed goals of the regional trade agreement should be focused on the internal demand as a key source of development. One of the ways to increase the domestic demand is to enhance the purchasing power of the poor sections of society, which include poor and small farmers; micro, small and medium enterprises and those belonging to the informal sector, through provisions of adequate developmental incentives. The need for clean water, affordable and safe food and housing are among the main challenges facing these countries. Of course, these are medium-term objectives, while the economic slowdown requires immediate anti-cyclical reactions. The response to the crisis, as it has been suggested, should be made generating domestic

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4 Recommendation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), by Mr. Mohammed M. Abou El Enein, Chairman of the EMPA Economic Committee and member of the People’s Assembly of Egypt, Brussels, 16 March 2009.


7 “Arab economic integration can be achieved only by strengthening economic agreements and updating them in line with changing global and regional conditions,” comment by the UAE Minister of Economy, Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, at the Arab Economic Council summit in Doha on 29-30 March 2009, UAE Interact, 26 march 2009.
demand with massive investments in social infrastructure, like health and education and in transport infrastructure by targeting in the labour-intensive activities (Handoussa, 2009). This option is particularly important in light of the fact that the problems of unemployment and working poor are expected to deteriorate further due to the present crisis.

In the same vein, reality obliges the southern economies to ensure the achievement of an effective governance that can improve the implementation capacity and increase efforts to increase the funding of productive investments, including Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The pragmatic approach of the UfM gives more focus on the four basic concerns of the southern partners: SMEs, high unemployment, increasing environmental strains and inefficient transport infrastructures.

In order to contrast the limited results obtained until now through the Barcelona Process, the mechanism needed to achieve post-crisis takeoff and to encourage trans-national investments in the Mediterranean is the rapid implementation of the above infrastructure projects.

In the short term, it is a sort of Keynesian measure to support the domestic demand, but the outcome that really matters is the long-term socio-economic development. With this in mind, the pragmatic approach of the UfM gives more focus on the four basic concerns of the southern partners: SMEs, high unemployment, increasing environmental strains and inefficient transport infrastructures. The priority is to support the economic and social infrastructures, which are a crucial factor in modernizing the region and boosting employment and, ultimately, increasing productivity. Joining their efforts, south Mediterranean governments should increase in the short-term their investment expenditure, especially in infrastructure, to compensate for the shortage of efficient private investment, the temporary contraction of FDI inflows and the job losses, which are the immediate effects of the present global crisis. Since foreign investors, from Europe and the Gulf, have become more selective and more demanding in terms of returns, the region could be a significant opportunity since the growth rate expectations are much higher than in Europe. For the region, providing access to basic infrastructure will support SMEs and potentially support all infrastructure-related activities, which is the most important priority.

Hence, in setting the agenda for 2009, the UfM should stress the need for legislation coordination in the partner countries, especially in the priority sectors for investment. In addition, it is necessary to continue to follow up on the progress made in implementing the projects on local development and in supporting the institutions that reach the real economy. Therefore the main objective of FEMIP, the financial arm of the European Investment Bank (EIB) to assist the economic development of the Mediterranean partner countries, is to become the key player in supporting the private sector with loans and equity participation to fill the shortfalls capability of partner countries.

As for the funding, having decided to rule out any increase of the EU budget, the financial resources available are the previous commitments of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) resources for the new coastal states. In total, the EU Commission aid funds amount to 3.2 billion euros for the 2007-2010 period. The credit interventions of the EIB (channelled through FEMIP) have registered a further increase, with 10.7 billion euros allocated for the period of 2007-2013, against six billion invested between 2002 and 2006. It is evident that the magnitude of the funding is not adequate to the development needs of the partners (Martín, 2009). So the proposal had to convey the vision to the PPP model to mobilise additional funding and in particular increase private financial resources for regional projects.

The second driver is the tourism sector. Among the merits of the Barcelona Process is the encouragement of travel and tourism, which compensate the structural deficit in trade flows registered by the region.

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8 The first equity capital was launched in Alexandria on 30 April 2009. InfraMed Fund aims to raise more than one billion euro in equity capital and it is led by France’s Caisse de Depot, Italy’s Cassa depositi e prestiti, Morocco’s Caisse de Depot et de Gestion and Cairo-based investment bank EFG-Hermes. The four institutions have already committed 400 million euro. The purpose of InfraMed is to be an equity investor in primarily greenfield projects to build urban, energy and transport infrastructures.
with the EU. Revenues from tourists visiting Mediterranean countries have risen by a factor of 2.4 over the last decade and increased by a factor of 1.8 between 2000 and 2006. At the end of the period, tourism accounts for almost 50% of total revenue from services from the EU countries (EUROSTAT, 2008). Tourism is an export industry that represents between 8% and 25% of the GDP depending on the country; therefore, it requires the proper incentives. The economic impact in the Mediterranean region is visible and tangible and can be seen in terms of its contribution to the GDP with the effect of increasing the development of Mediterranean economies and contributing to social stability, not least by providing more job opportunities and better prospects for the growing and young labour force.

Tourism is currently going through a difficult phase due to the economic recession, with the result that governments need to take immediate action to forestall short-term negative effects without resorting to palliative measures that could have negative effects on the region’s delicate environment. The action plans of the UfM consider several initiatives supporting the sectors, including the initiative envisaging the de-pollution of the Mediterranean, as well as the initiatives of the maritime and land highways. The Mediterranean Solar Plan is also a means to increase access to efficient energy. So all these initiatives may be greatly beneficial for the tourist industry in the region. In term of organisation, following the same path of the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Investments Promotion Agencies (ANIMA), a sort of platform joining the investment promotion agencies across the Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), has also called to set up a body that would promote sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean region and also act as a forum that brings stakeholders together to discuss common problems and exchange the best practices and ideas. Ultimately it will serve to coordinate the marketing of the region as a whole, especially in new markets.

The third driver is the SME sector, which has been recognised by the Paris Summit. SMEs represent the vast majority of productive activities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and its competitiveness and ability to respond to the globalization, as well as the current crisis, depends on the capacity of these companies to expand and innovate. The crisis has changed the political priorities and SMEs are finally recognised for their relevant contribution in the economy, as a source of growth and sustainable jobs. The Mediterranean Business Development Initiative is clearly centred on the economic and trade aspects that will answer these needs. In this context, setting up suitable financial instruments in connection with the local financial systems is one of the ways to take up the challenge of growth in the Mediterranean. The ad hoc initiative will assist the existing entities in partner countries operating in support of SMEs by assessing the needs of these enterprises, defining policy solutions and providing these entities with resources in the form of technical assistance and financial instruments. The initiative is based on the contributions by countries from both sides of the Mediterranean that will be made on a voluntary basis. For this reason it is difficult to identify clearly the amount of financial resources that will be mobilised.

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The year 2008 was a troubled one for all aspects of political reform in the Arab countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Democratic reform was nowhere to be seen and, in certain cases, the political arena was stifled even further. On one hand, the European Union avoided exerting any type of pressure or making any significant efforts to rekindle the flame of the drive to reform. On the other, the Union for the Mediterranean played a pivotal role in downplaying the importance of the political dimension of the EU’s relations with the southern and eastern Mediterranean in 2008.

Political trends in 2008 were disappointing in most southern Mediterranean countries. Egypt saw heightened restrictions on political rights. In Algeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika further centralised power and prepared to begin an unconstitutional third term. In Syria, Libya and Tunisia, few political forums emerged. Setbacks even occurred in the reform dynamics of the region’s most reform-minded countries. Following the September 2007 elections, the Moroccan regime strengthened its hold on power over the next year. The country’s modernisation process did not lead to greater democratisation. Although several human rights provisions were strengthened, the palace and makhzen (governing elite) remained the gatekeepers of the reform process.

The regime adopted a more confrontational stance toward the Justice and Development Party (PJD, from the French), the moderate Islamist opposition party. Similarly, whilst certain civil liberties improved in Jordan, restrictions on parliamentary powers, political parties, the courts and NGOs increased. The electoral law passed to benefit the regime was not reformed, the government grew less accepting of the Muslim Brotherhood opposition and Jordan increasingly seemed to be a ‘security state’. Overall, political and civil rights in the southern Mediterranean did not improve, but rather deteriorated over the year.

Formally speaking, certain European commitments to democracy support were strengthened in 2008. The first set of update reports on the European Neighbourhood Policy, released by the Commission in April 2008, was critical of democratic progress in all countries and identified this aspect as an area requiring higher-priority efforts in future. Morocco and the EU held talks on democracy issues within the framework of strengthened political dialogue and a subcommittee on human rights, democracy and governance. Likewise, the EU also focused on more systematic reform issues in Jordan via a subcommittee on human rights. Moreover, through the development assistance strategy paper drafted for the country by the EU for the 2007-2013 period, the Commission undertook to increase its support for the full array of Jordanian commitments to reform.

In practice, however, European efforts to support democratic reform in the southern Mediterranean were received even more warily in 2008 than before. Only 4% of the funds from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) were allocated to democracy and human rights in Morocco for the 2008-2013 period. In Jordan, the EU has shifted its aid toward economic and poverty-alleviation goals, cutting back on projects for public administration reform, although it has undertaken to increase the percentage of ENPI funds allocated to political reform in general in the country. Individual Member States have responded better than the Commission in terms of providing timely support for civil society organisations in Jordan, although the budgets for these projects are still quite modest.

In 2008, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) generally provided support
for only a small handful of projects in each country. In each case, only a few member state governments offered non-negligible sums for democracy and human rights assistance, usually preferring to address these projects through the Commission. Moreover, the overall trend was toward increasing the share of aid allocated to direct budget support (i.e., flowing directly to government coffers) rather than making substantial investments in democracy support. A particularly small share of overall aid was provided for democracy and human rights goals within Spanish and French bilateral official development assistance (ODA) in Morocco. The United Kingdom continues to provide mostly security cooperation in Jordan.

The use of conditionality, whether negative (sanctions) or positive (incentives), has become negligible. In 2008, overall funding for Morocco rose sharply. Like the Ukraine, Morocco was rewarded with 28 million euros from the Commission’s governance facility and the country began to negotiate an ‘advanced status’ agreement with the EU. France, Germany, Italy and Spain offered Morocco substantial increases in aid at the bilateral level. However, whilst the Moroccan regime improved certain outcomes relating to human rights and governance, it made no such improvements with regard to the overall democratic process. How to split the governance facility between Morocco and the Ukraine was negotiated by Member States as an old-fashioned division of East-South resources, without taking into account objective and meaningful democratic criteria in the different partner countries. The EU sought strategic reasons to reward the most reform-minded of the Arab states (most of which are not reformist at all). Consequently, Morocco received more funds from the governance facility than the Ukraine, even though the latter has made substantially more progress with regard to democratic quality. Spain, France and Italy strove to regain control of the facility in order to stop the Commission from continuing to divert funds from southern Mediterranean countries with ‘poor democracy scores’.

Additionally, other increases in the aid allocated to the Middle East wound up in decidedly non-reformist countries, such as Syria, Egypt and Tunisia. European criticism of the repressive post-2005 campaign undertaken by the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, against figures from the opposition and the Muslim Brotherhood was notoriously feeble, and cooperation with Egypt continued uninterrupted, with the notable exception of Denmark, which shut down its aid programme. The Commission substantially boosted aid to Jordan and provided a debt-relief package to cover the impact of the Iraq invasion just as the Jordanian government was backtracking on several reforms intended to increase political freedom and good governance.

Cooperation on counter-terrorism issues was increased between European and Middle Eastern security and intelligence services

One of the main new developments in 2008 was the progress made by the EU on its quest for a new partnership with Libya, despite the fact that this country continues to have one of the world’s most hermetic political systems. France and Spain signed a series of bilateral agreements with different North African governments on energy, security cooperation and business ties.

In 2008, the concept of partnership was underscored, such that partner governments became responsible for assessing their own progress on political reform under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Cooperation on counter-terrorism issues was increased between European and Middle Eastern security and intelligence services. In fact, this dimension of the policy was strengthened more immediately and specifically than the policies targeting the underlying political causes of terrorism and instability, despite the fact that instability is often cited as Europe’s priority issue. As for policy toward Iran, Syria and Libya, priority was indisputably given to containing the development of weapons of mass destruction. Pressure for political reform was abandoned in favour of progress on what is considered to be the more urgent objective of securing formal guarantees regarding these weapons. In late 2008, a new effort was launched by the EU to maintain active relations with Syria, as it was believed that Damascus could play an important role as a mediator with Iran.

In the southern Mediterranean, the EU made progress on exporting certain parts of its acquis concerning governance, as it has in the thirteen years that have passed since the founding of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In more reform-minded countries, such as Jordan, work continued on strengthening the rule of law, whilst the Jordanian regime blocked a large
portion of the support provided by the EU for civil society, the media and electoral reform. Attention was focused on supporting administrative reform and regulatory harmonisation, even in certain ‘prickly’ cases, such as Syria. In Lebanon, a programme for the transfer of governance standards with a reasonably broad scope was being run, even as the country experienced difficulties throughout the year.

In the southern Mediterranean, increasing attention was paid to cultural cooperation as a means for generating momentum for reform. The cultural dimension is one aspect of European policy that has been strengthened, above all in recent years. ‘Reform’ projects increasingly seek to take a two-fold approach, consisting of ‘de-radicalisation’ within Europe and bridge building with the Arab world. This was the aim of the German government’s Special Group for Dialogue with the Islamic World, the British government’s Fund for Relations with the Islamic World, the latest Middle Eastern initiatives undertaken by Sweden and Denmark and the Alliance of Civilisations headed up by Spain. In countries like Jordan, Syria and Egypt, programmes on conflict mediation and cultural awareness-raising have been enhanced, whilst progress on governance reform has been lacklustre at best.

**In the southern Mediterranean, increasing attention was paid to cultural cooperation as a means for generating momentum for reform**

Another main focus of European initiatives in the Middle East in 2008 was social development and economic liberalisation. Specifically, policy toward Syria and Libya included stepped-up efforts to support economic reform. Part of this renewed attention takes the form of exporting internal market standards; however, an increasingly large share of the strategy is devoted to more general capacity building. In most of the neighbouring states, one of the fastest-growing areas of support is that for small- and medium-sized enterprises. Civil servants tend to argue that traditional capacity building in this sector helps players who might one day become independent power centres. They moreover claim that one of the fastest-growing areas of funding that offers possibilities to disseminate democratic standards is that of educational ties. These have been intensified, for example, through increased financing for the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Programme.

In short, European efforts to foster democracy and good governance in Arab states include a wide range of activities with varying political impacts, which, according to policy-makers, involve a soft or indirect use of the governance method of creating networks to promote political change. In 2008, it became even clearer that this soft approach has been applied in a relatively unthreatening way for autocratic regimes. Even in Morocco, theoretically the poster child for reform, closer examination shows that most of the ‘reform’ projects carried out under the heading of support for EU-style modernisation of regulations and governance actually consist of funding for equipment, new computers and buildings and the exchange of experiences on how to make decision-taking more efficient, although not necessarily more responsible. At a more political level, one noteworthy project from 2007 provided support for the first electoral commission of Moroccan NGOs, offering training on election monitoring and the submission of reports. However, this did not lead to a more critical stance toward the outcome of election rigging in 2008. Likewise, in Jordan, the programmes conducted under the heading of support for legal reforms to increase judicial independence were actually limited to financing the government’s own strategy to simplify judicial processes and improve the system’s capacity to handle the volume of cases. In Syria, the EU’s administrative reform projects have contributed even more clearly to increasing the state’s capacity without promoting a simultaneous increase in accountability. And in Libya, the support for governance that has been provided for some time now has done little to encourage the country’s different factions to create a more balanced confessional political system. Throughout the Middle East, ever-growing projects on border control, migration and drug enforcement have been presented as ‘promotion of democracy’, a tenuous connection in most cases.

In the southern Mediterranean, the lack of accession prospects continued to weaken the EU’s negotiating position. The EU has sought a ‘depressurising’ liberalisation of Middle Eastern regimes that would contribute to stabilising the governments, rather than the type of short-term systematic political change that might usher Islamic parties into power. Middle Eastern governments that have resisted democratic standards
have continued to benefit from several aspects of European cooperation. The pre-eminence of ‘de-radicalisation’ goals can be seen in the importance given to relatively soft cultural, educational and economic initiatives.

The Jordanian monarchy received support as a moderator and mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (the opposition Islamic Action Front opposes the peace treaty with Israel and has close ties to Hamas in Palestine), as well as on counter-terrorism and ‘de-radicalisation’ policies. The Moroccan government is viewed as a stabilising ally in the region and a partner in the fight against terrorism. Both factors became more evident in 2008, with the worsening of the Arab-Israeli conflict at the end of the year. The Palestinians continue to reject the EU’s approach to relations in the Mediterranean and reform-related issues, as they believe that they lessen pressure on Israel. Policy-makers prioritised the goal of stemming illegal immigration from and through Morocco, considering it more important than democracy support, although invariably without a clear notion of why a less authoritarian system would run contrary to this goal.

Given the structure of the national policies of the Arab states, strategic reasons for concern have caused the EU to promote ‘political reform with exceptions’. States such as Morocco, Algeria and Jordan have received aid for the government-controlled incorporation of moderate Islamist parties that are friendly toward the regime. In all of these areas, it is difficult to find genuinely liberalising intentions behind the reforms undertaken by the Arab elites. Taking a generous view, one might say that the EU has been too lenient in granting these regimes the benefit of the doubt. For example, the EU has been ambiguous toward the moderate Islamist PJD in Morocco. When the authoritarian Moroccan regime manipulated the elections of September 2007 to prevent the PJD from occupying the position many thought it would hold in the government, the EU did not offer any support for the party’s democratic rights, which were increasingly weakened over the course of 2008. Nor has it questioned the role of the palace, the influence of the shadowy makhzen or the basic balance of powers in Morocco.

With the Union for the Mediterranean, the EU is once again shifting toward a more traditional form of international relations, one much more strongly grounded in political cooperation, and away from the supposedly ‘new’ approach of ‘shaping the political environment’. The Union for the Mediterranean will also bring more flexibility, as there is a core group of southern states that head up projects. The vacuum left by the waning influence of the United States in the Mediterranean over 2008 was not filled by a strengthening of the role of Europe, but rather by an increase in the influence of Arab players themselves within regional diplomacy. This was one of the most pronounced trends of 2008 and has major implications for the political dimensions of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

In 2008, diplomats spoke of ‘tempering ambitions’ in the sphere of Arab reform. One exhaustive study conducted in Morocco in 2008 concluded that Moroccan reformers (in the administration, parliament, judiciary and civil society) believe that pressure from the EU in favour of reform was too weak rather than too strong, that demand had surpassed supply (Khakee, 2008). To date, no influence has been exerted on Morocco in the negotiations for its advanced status agreement. The new Union for the Mediterranean, created last year by French initiative, is marginalising political issues. Southern countries already feel that they hold a stronger stake in the Union for the Mediterranean. All Arab leaders were present at its creation in Paris, whilst they had boycotted the tenth anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 2005. This is largely due to the fact that the new initiative excludes all mention of democracy and human rights.

By late 2008, the political dimensions of Euro-Mediterranean relations increasingly seemed to have taken a back seat to the economic crisis, security concerns and the renewed violence in Gaza. In sum, over 2008, progress on the political reform facet of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was quite disappointing.

References

The Arab Middle East is today awash in *electoralism* and what I call *election fetishism*. Indeed, it is apt to talk about “election fever” in the Arab Middle East (AME). More than a decade ago, elections were noted for their infrequency. Today they take place with frequent regularity. In fact, not a year passes without at least half a dozen elections. They happen in Arab monarchies and republics, in secular and religious states, in oil-rich and less well-to-do countries, and in political realms with and without rigid ideologies. In 2009 alone, four major polls have already taken place: parliamentary elections in Lebanon and Kuwait, and two sets of provincial elections in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Iraqis will vote again later in the year or in early 2010 to choose parliamentary representatives. Yemen’s parliamentary elections scheduled for this year have been postponed for 2011. Closer to the Mediterranean, Algeria’s April 2009 presidential elections gave Abdelaziz Bouteflika a third term after the National Assembly removed in November 2008 a constitutional provision limiting tenure to two terms. In October 2009 Tunisians will go to the polls to elect a new Parliament. The Maghreb country’s presidential elections will be held concomitantly.

This electoralism, however, insistently begs the question: elections to what end? This very question must be broken down into a series of questions that facilitate a coherent and clear inquiry into a very complex issue. For, the inquiry must account for “specificity.” The Arab Middle East is not a monolith. Diversity of time and space points to a diverse tapestry of electoral experiences. With a vast political landscape from Mauritania on the Atlantic coast to Yemen on the Red Sea, the risk of generalization about Arab electoralism may be unavoidable. This is one reason why the aim in this article is to highlight diversity through stress on the local contexts of electoralism. Whilst there are no neat constructs of how to analyze elections in 22 different settings, investigation of the local experiences may yield some generalizable value as to the “ills” of election “fever” in the Arab Middle East. One notable caveat is that as a student of Arab transitions, in my own investigative style I subscribe to an approach that treats and conceives of “democratic transition” as historically situated, flexible, contingent, fragmented, nuanced, non-linear, and variable. At this current historical juncture, “democratic transition” within an Arab setting can only mean “electoralism.” Elections are an important democratic institution, but democracy cannot be reduced into a merely periodic electoral exercise. Elections are a positive step in the right direction. They have the potential to “habituate” voters into the art of participatory politics, peaceful contest of power, the ethic of dialogue and consensus-building, and the affirmation of civil and political rights to representation and accountability through elected deputies. Hence, do Arab elections further democracy? In other words, do elections produce a “demonstration effect,” multiplying the deepening and widening of democratic ethics, skills and values of citizenship? Or are they simply “demonstration events” –PR exercises aimed at external consumption? Do Arab elections break political monopolies of dominant ruling parties, ruling houses, and sectarian and ethnic dogmas? Do they produce future political societies and leaders? Last but not least, do they weaken narrow loyalties to tribe, sect, family, and ideology and do they enhance democratic value-sharing and democracy-learning? These queries form a...
research agenda that will require investigation across geographies and electoral periods in the entire Arab Middle East to unlock tentative answers about the substance of Arab electoralism. Tentatively, however, one can venture a number of observations by looking at the latest elections held this year in Algeria, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco. They do reflect specific locales. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the presence of shared problems with other Arab electoral experiments.

At this current historical juncture, “democratic transition” within an Arab setting can only mean “electoralism.” Elections are an important democratic institution, but democracy cannot be reduced into a merely periodic electoral exercise. Elections are a positive step in the right direction.

Algeria

The country’s 2007 elections were marked by a downward trend in voter turnout from 69% in 1997 down to 35.6% ten years later. In the span of one decade voters have become visibly disillusioned with elections. The country is amidst an ongoing war against terror. The other war that the electorate want their politicians to win is that against corruption. Disillusionment is to a large extent due to failure on this front. The so-called patronat (business/mercantile class with a “Mafiosi” tendency), whose members come from both the security establishment and the power apparatus, seem to be taking advantage of their positions to make money whilst living standards are hardy improving for the rest of the electorate – unemployment is high and strategic commodities are expensive. Corruption is a hot “political potato” in Algeria. A majority of the country’s “people’s parliamentarians” opposed a law in 2006 that required state officials and high public servants to declare their wealth. The opposition startled Algerians and the 2007 low voter turnout communicated their disaffection. Close to one million ballots were spoilt or recorded a “donkey vote,” again in protest at corrupt officialdom that places itself above the law. Yet Algerian electoralism is a good example of how election fetishism can easily deflect from the social and political realities. Thus far about 13 elections have been held since the cancellation of the 1991 vote in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) looked certain to win. Except that the army moved first to cancel the second round of the vote. The country has 24 legalized political parties. Beyond the figures there are the political realities of a Presidential Coalition that runs the parliamentary “cavalcade” on behalf of the executive branch. But in this executive system, the President suggests and approves 80% of all laws. Yet elections are held to vote a Parliament whose legislative powers are downsized by the president – who is backed by the army. Plus, there are no robust checks and balances empowering Parliament. Bouteflika, as expected, amended the constitution in November 2008 to run for a third term. Thus he took a leaf from the book of such presidents as Bashar al-Assad of Syria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and neighbouring Tunisia. This is despite his ill health. He won the presidential election in April 2009 decisively. He received nearly 13 million votes, more than 90% of the valid votes. One notes that the over one million invalid votes (more than 7% of the total vote) outweighed those gained by the second-ranked presidential candidate, Louisa Hanoune of the Labour Party, who received 604,000 votes (4.2% of the valid votes). Indeed, presidential elections take place throughout the region. But like ruling parties, incumbent presidents have an advantage against rival candidates. The incumbent being in charge of state resources, informational, financial, logistical, and political, render presidential elections not by any standards contests amongst equals. There is some generalizable value of relevance to other Arab polities where these kinds of elections have become fashionable.

Kuwait

This is a country that has gone longest in building parliamentary capacity. Moreover, Kuwait’s electoral record is deeply rooted, originating in the 1960s when the new Arab socialist republics were dismantling their parliaments. This is on the positive side. The flaws are systemic, however. Elections have historically and paradoxically made the system prone to “reverses.” One might mistakenly accuse the Kuwaitis
of “too much democracy.” They hold elections with regularity. But they dismantle or dissolve them as regularly. The key structural problem is that Parliament is disallowed to be turned effectively into the “people’s chamber.” Although largely a providential and benign royal house, the Al-Sabahs remain “guardians” and “possessors” of the state. Largely, there have been three deficits: a gender deficit, a badun (stateless Arab) deficit, and a party-system deficit (although the competing blocs function very well and the diwaniyyahs, or the politico-cultural traditional forums, can be vibrant as barometers and formulators of public opinion). In the rest of the Arab world, elections produce political “monotony,” routine and stability. In Kuwait, elections produce political fervour, polemic, and deliberative atmospherics.

The 16 May 2009 parliamentary election is perhaps the most “democratic” in the country’s history. It is the third election in three years: 2006, 2008 and 2009. Since 1992 Kuwaiti voters have gone to the polls seven times: in 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2009. That is a record of elections on par with the consolidated democracies of Southern Europe such as Greece, Portugal and Spain. The 2009 election has been a triumph for female candidates and the country’s vociferous women’s movement, which has been at the forefront of the struggle for the franchise. To an extent, the election somewhat lessened the gender deficit—at least in Parliament. This is a first but stunning victory for women, but only future elections will test whether they are a passing “fad” within the electorate or a durable political step-change. For a long time a majority of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the Islamist “bloc” and other independents with strong tribal and religious sensibilities have blocked legislation to enfranchise women. The franchise came in 2005. Four years later, four out of 16 women won parliamentary seats. In 2008, 27 contested the elections without success. Four seats out of 50 is a political milestone. Indeed, four women in a sea of male parliament may not tip the balance of power in any direction. But this feat could modify political behaviour in the long run. In a country where elections happen frequently, this particular gain has to be the most qualitative in the last three elections. What is noteworthy in this election is the fact that women snatched victories in the heart of a strongly conservative—tribal, religious and traditional—electorate across five districts. To win their seats these candidates had to rank amongst the top ten—i.e. secure one of the highest ten shares of the total vote. Ma’suma Mubarak, the first female to be appointed to Cabinet in the monarchy in 2005, topped her district’s list with 14,000 votes. The other three women, in order of ranking in their respective districts, are ‘Asil al-‘Awadhi (second—she missed election in 2008 by about 700 votes), economist Rula Dashty (seventh) and Salwa al-Jassar (tenth). Kuwait’s empowerment of women is different from the quota system—affirmative action—employed in other Arab states such as Tunisia. Positive aspects aside, neither the 2009 election nor those to follow it can be expected to address the “structural” or “systemic” flaw in Kuwait’s electoral democracy. Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah’s royal prerogative to disband Parliament and call for elections gives a strong sense of déjà vu. The crisis begins with the deadlock over another prerogative: the right of the elected parliamentarians to question or impeach the Prime Minister, also a member of the ruling house, very often over allegations of economic mismanagement and corruption. In the latest crisis, instead of allowing his Prime Minister, Shaykh Nasser al-Sabah, to be subjected to further questioning and allowing a vote on impeachment to go ahead, the Emir dissolved Parliament. Only in December 2008 did the Emir reappoint his nephew, Shaykh Nasser, to the premiership after a similar round of questioning in Parliament. The Cabinet reshuffle is one mechanism for managing the deadlock between Parliament and the royal family. However, as frequent as they may be, Cabinet reshuffles are no panacea for these kinds of deadlocks. Nor for that matter are frequent elections. In a system where a royal house controls the economy, interior, information, oil, security, defence and cabinet, elected parliaments may not facilitate functional government, much less democratization in the long term. Ruling houses rely on tribal and sanguine solidarity as the prime source of political and social protection. Thus two possible solutions out of the deadlock are unthinkable: The Emir appoints a “people’s Cabinet,” a deliverance of government by the people and for the people. This means no questioning of royal members who would never be impeached. That would weaken the Emir himself and perhaps the entire royal house. A blemish against one member may be taken as a blemish against all (“one for all, and all for one”). The second solution is for the premiership to be assigned to the Crown Prince, Shaykh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah. Advocates of this line of action view it as one preventive mechanism against parliamentarians’ “grilling” tactics, for the deference
paid to the Emir and the Crown Prince is not extended to other royalty. However, that is a risk that thus far has not been taken. The stakes are too high for the Emir to test this option. His preference is probably, at least for now, for the heir apparent to remain above the political fray.

Kuwaiti electoralism is robust and unique in the Arab Gulf, in particular, and the Arab region, in general. Democratic learning is piece-meal; so is the pluralization of civil society. The entry of women into official politics, a trend begun with the appointment of a female minister in 2005, is likely to embolden the electorate in endorsing female candidates in future elections, and the government in pursuing its inclusive policies and de-gendering of polity. What makes Kuwaiti electoralism particularly healthy is the fact that vociferous, namely, Islamist MPs, stands against corruption by royalty are not punished or ostracised. The country’s media boasts some of the most liberal dailies in the Arab world—which is well suited to long-term genuine democratic transition. Human rights fare better than in neighbouring states—although a qualification is that there are stateless “denizens” with no rights, and the electorate is determined by rules of ethnic ancestry. The anomaly is that electoralism poses limitations when there are two systems: royalty and ordinary citizenry. This trait reflects the pitfalls of electoralism in other Arab monarchies, including, to a lesser extent, those of Morocco and Jordan.

**Morocco**

Like Kuwait, Morocco is the other Arab monarchy that has been a trailblazer in electoral politics. As such, its electoral record is amongst the most consolidated in the Arab Euromed region. Also like Kuwait, its elections have known “reverses.” This was prevalent during the reign of the late King Hassan II. Under King Mohamed VI, electoralism is steady. However, in spite of wider space being occupied by a plural and a dynamic civil society—trade unions; political parties, secular and Islamist; and a vibrant cultural scene—the king reigns high and above the “institutional” trappings of electoral politics.

One recent development attests to the powers that Mohamed VI amasses. The Authenticity and Modernity Party that won the June 2009 municipal elections mirrors not only “ideational” affinity with the young monarch, but also reveals how kingly “blessing” wins seats and votes. The party is a neophyte to Moroccan politics, having been founded by a confidante of the king, Fouad al-Himmah, formerly a Deputy Interior Minister. Al-Himmah’s party swept the board with nearly 22% of the seats and about 18% of the total vote. By contrast, the established Istiqlal or Independence Party, itself a “loyal” party, led by the Prime Minister, came second with 19% of the seats. Despite the hype by the media and political pundits about the country’s main legalized Islamist party’s “certain” victory, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) could collect only about one quarter of the seats won by the Authenticity and Modernity Party—5.5% of the seats. The Islamists, however, seem to outperform other parties in the big cities, collecting an average of 15% of the urban vote. The PJD’s “door-knocking” policies between elections and during the hustings account for a large share of city voters. In this respect, the PJD resembles in political strategies its Islamist counterpart in Turkey, the AKP. Tentatively, the Authenticity and Modernity Party may be labelled the “palace’s party,” a new force that gives the monarch more control over “popularized” partyism and parliaments. Al-Himmah, too, should his party repeat the same political feat in the 2012 parliamentary elections, could find himself with an unexpected promotion (from the Interior Ministry) to the premiership.
There are positive aspects. Women won close to 3,000 seats, and Moroccans gained additional skills in registering their votes at the local level, considered to be more important in the Arab world than Parliament. It is at this level that expectations are raised, in terms of services in towns and villages and of popular liaison with local governors. However, Morocco’s elections are regular but not without irregularities. Dozens, for instance, were linked to a major fraud related to the September 2006 parliamentary elections. What is startling, but not unique to Morocco, is the alleged culprits included individuals from the upper and lower houses (Assembly of Councillors; Assembly of Representatives). Despite regularity, voter turnout, most likely owing to disillusionment with a system where elections reproduce the same power elites, tends to be following a downward trend. The figure of the country’s total registered voters seems to be subject to “elasticity.” It can vary between 13 and 15 million. It is a “secret” only the powerful Interior Ministry knows. Naturally, it can, theoretically at least, be understated, for instance if power calculus requires evidence of higher voter turnout. Interior Ministries in the Arab world can operate like a “feral abacus.” Moreover, votes fetch up to 20 US dollars. Where candidates acquire large amounts of cash to pay thousands remains another “secret” of Moroccan electoralism. Corruption and bribery are rampant, and sadly, this is how a career as an “honourable” representative of the people is launched. This is not specific to Morocco. Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait have gone down this slippery slope of vote-buying.

**Iraq & Lebanon**

Methodologically, it makes sense to pair Iraq and Lebanon. These are two polities that share several traits that call for close comparative scrutiny. The previous set of case studies represents countries where extraneous factors are totally absent. There is no meddling in the elections of Algeria, Kuwait or Morocco. There is a Shiite “bloc” in Kuwait and no doubt pan-Shiite forces in the region keep an eye on the performance of this bloc. But there is little or no evidence that either the Iranians or the Iraqis next door meddle in Kuwait’s elections. By contrast, both Lebanon and Iraq are two polities where politics are “cooked” within and without. Iraq is under occupation, making it a natural theatre for outside meddling. The whole “democracy bandwagon” is driven by the occupying power, the US. The Iranians have acquired a new theatre on which they maximize their power ratio at the expense of Sunni rivals such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Iraq has been a total disaster from a Sunni perspective but not from a Shiite perspective. Khomeini’s revolution triumphed in penetrating the Arab world the day the Americans sacked Baghdad. It is oversimplistic to reduce politics in Iraq into a Sunni-Shiite polarity. Nonetheless, Sunnism and Shiism remain rigid templates that motivate and condition the political behaviour of neighbouring states, especially regional powers. How the Sunnis fare in the “new Iraq” is inevitably the business of Saudis, Jordanians (who share borders with Iraq) and Egyptians. Turkey, Syria and Iran have lots at stake in what polity eventually unfolds in Kurdistan. So elections in the Kurdish provinces loom large on their political radars.

How Lebanese and Iraqis vote is coloured by the “layers” of identity. In fact, politics is very much the sphere of identity politics

Like Iraq, Lebanon is a fragmented polity. Sectarianism competes with nationalism; at times, it precedes nationalism as the main template of identity. How Lebanese and Iraqis vote is coloured by the “layers” of identity. In fact, politics is very much the sphere of identity politics. In both countries, the biggest challenge facing the “rationalization” of statehood and nationalism is inextricably linked to how to relegate sectarian identity to a secondary status. However, these are polities that have gained from their sectarian diversities. Yes, deadlocks occur and recur; bloodshed taints the march of nationalism and statehood in both countries. Yet on the bright side Iraq and Lebanon have the most pluralized civil societies in the Arab region. The media scene is plural; political parties are numerous; political ideas and ideologies abound; coalition-making, positive and negative, is a fact of political life; and there is never a shortage of leaders to communicate political difference. Of course, the only problem is that when it comes to the “civic” cake there are no shared values. The only value that seems to stitch the sub-polities and multi-layered identities together is the quest for co-existence. This is a *sine qua non* of any genuine democracy.
There is one similarity and dissimilarity in both countries: there has not been an official census for at least 50 years or more. This is vital for knowing the human resources and demographic make-up of a democracy. For Iraq, census or no census, the political “tsunami” that followed the 2003 invasion placed the Shiite majority in the seat of power. It would require a similar "tsunami" for the Shiite demographic majority, yet a political minority under outdated existing power-sharing arrangements, to be empowered. Note how the Shiites in Iraq continue to make full use of their new powers to claim their rightful place in the political system, at the local and federal levels. The Shiites in Lebanon, for now at least, propose what I call a “normative trade-off”: the right to keep their arms and muqawamah or resistance in return for not upping the ante, that is, insisting on a new census, new constitution and new electoral laws that do away with the country’s blatant gerrymandering. This, I expect, will be the Shiite quest in Lebanon whenever they lay down their arms and a peace agreement is concluded with Israel. Yet this scenario is still a long way off. Hezbollah, in particular, is not interested in the “democratic game” of seat-grabbing. For them, 11 seats are all they need, in coalition with their allies, including the Christians, to project their single normative agenda: sustaining resistance. They partake in elections to “protect” resistance. This is a thesis I advance with full clarity and conviction. In return for deference for the “democratic” disadvantage the current political system dishes out to them, Hezbollah seeks deference to its arms and resistance. The two Shiite parties that contest elections, Amal and Hezbollah, can only gain less that one-sixth of the seats in the 128-member unicameral Parliament. This is not commensurate with the demographic size of the Shiites –conservatively estimated to approximate 35 to 40%. If one adds the number of the Sunnis, which is estimated to be a bit more than 30%, then Lebanon’s Muslims should in a truly majoritarian democracy have about 70% representation. But far from focusing on “religious” democracy and its many imperfections, the key question today in Lebanon is that allocation of seats demands the overhauling of the electoral system. Under a proportional system, the results of the elections held on 7 June 2009 give a different reading. The Hariri-led March 14 Alliance won 57 seats. The opposition, led by Hezbollah and the Maronite Michel Aoun’s Free Movement or March 8 Alliance, won 57 seats. There is no simple victory in Lebanon’s political dictionary, for, in terms of numbers, political weight, leadership, and elites, the latest parliamentary elections have changed nothing in Lebanon. Hezbollah has not been downsized politically. Nor have its rivals, including the Maronite Lebanese Forces of Samir Ja’Ja’. Yet the losing side —by count of seats—are in effect the winners by percentage of popular vote. The March 14 Alliance received 10% less than its rival, the March 8 Alliance, which won 55% of the popular vote. The election was largely peaceful. It was one where Saudi money—hundreds of millions—was spent to ensure that Hezbollah, the putative “client” of rival Iran, does not change the political equation. It is a question of “once bitten, twice shy” —the Saudis consider themselves to have “lost” in Iraq, where Iran pulls many strings. It is beyond the scope of this article to get into the details of the recent provincial Iraqi elections. By way of summary, however, the provincial elections of January 2009 and those in the Kurdistan provinces in July 2009 display positive and negative manifestations. There are problems of demography, identity, ethno-nationalism and religious politics. There are many imperfections of assassination, fraud, and contest over who gets what or who owns what or who is who, such as in Kirkuk, where Kurds, Turkmen and Arabs have competing claims over the city. Tension is such that elections cannot be expected to resolve this huge problem and blood-letting may be inevitable. The ballot could cede to the bullet. Religion largely determines voters’ behaviour. According to a liberal-secular politician who contested the elections, most major political parties lured voters through the popular edict that a vote for the variety of Islamist, Sunni and Shiite parties is a “religious duty.” Basically, there is no “Caesar’s” votes are for “God.” Al-Hakim, whose party is backed by Iran, has not performed solidly. Nor did the former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. The current Prime Minister seems to have made gains owing to a modification of his political rhetoric, recruiting voters on the basis of a “nationalist” and moderate platform, reducing the tone of sectarianism that dominated the 2005 elections. But his gains are also determined by his “possession” of the state. He who runs the state gets a larger share of the electoral “booty.” The Sunnis did not boycott the elections, waking up to the fact that political wilderness does not serve their future in a new sys-

tem dominated by Shiites and Kurds. All of the groups, political, sectarian, ethnic, or religious, are divided. There is not a single shared platform of values in the new Iraq. The country’s future hangs in the balance. Animosity is such between the federal centre and the Kurdistan government led by Barazani, for instance. In fact, Barazani and Nour Al-Maliki are not on talking terms. Lots have to be settled, including the constitution, electoral laws, final boundaries, oil, Kirkuk, demographics, and security, before a modicum of normalcy can be expected. It will take so many elections and imperfections to master politics as the art of the possible through the ballot and not the bullet.

Final Observations

Only a form of “minimalist democratic transition” seems to be in the offing throughout the Arab Middle East. This democratic minimalism is for now being “manufactured” via electoralism. This democratic minimalism is sufficient for the region to be slotted in the so-called global “march of democracy.” It happens in diverse polities for different reasons and according to various political rules and rationales. Perhaps for the populous and impoverished states electoralism is calculated to qualify them for the “affection” of the global donor community—European Union, United States, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, etc. For countries with petro-dollar largesse, which increasingly find themselves under a US security umbrella, elections are minimum concessionary mechanisms aimed at managing vulnerability to American patronage and tutelage (democracy promotion). For others, the age of material providence has long passed. Neither state coffers nor the entrenchment of the “Washington consensus” permit subsidies. Thus the state’s distributive function has changed: from a distributor of bread to a distributor of democracy. But this shift in distribution does not mean regulation is democratic. Regulation remains largely coercive—but with some improvement in juridical regulation in some parts of the Arab world. Electoralism is one means also by which EU Arab “clients” could secure “sponsorship” or good will by political benefactors—for instance, France, Germany and Spain for Arab states with Euromed associations.

For students of democratic transition, electoral data can be one method of verifying the occurrence of democratization. The figures and the numbers that are produced with every election in the AME dazzle researchers. However, elections are still imperfect, new, and partly cosmetic. Like all numbers they lend themselves to manipulation. These are elections where there is no logic that ensures that one plus one equals two. Two elections are equated in the “transitology” of the “prophets” of democracy like Huntington to signal transcendence of a democratic threshold. Kuwait has had three elections in the past two years. Egypt has had a dozen since the late 1970s. Iraq has had four, with a fifth in the offing. For now, the only number that comes to mind when adding elections to democracy is cipher (the Arabic word for zero).
Dossier: From the Barcelona Process to the Union for the Mediterranean
The Mediterranean before Barcelona

The declaration signed by twenty-seven European and Mediterranean countries in Barcelona, on 28 November 1995, laid out a new, conceptually and politically ambitious paradigm for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. This came after more than twenty years of European policy toward the Mediterranean that was almost exclusively economic and extraordinarily limited. As early as 1972, the European Economic Community (EEC) had launched the so-called Global Mediterranean Policy. However, despite its sweeping name, the policy was not conceptually ambitious or sufficiently well funded and it did not yield the desired economic results. In 1985, the Economic and Social Committee concluded (ESC 92/85) that not only had third-party Mediterranean countries’ trade deficits with the EEC not narrowed, but they had actually grown.

The idea of a Renewed Mediterranean Policy, put forward by the then-European Commissioner Abel Matutes in November 1989, shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall, offered a change of course with regard to prior policy. According to the European Commission, a new regional policy was required, able to address in depth the economic and political challenges of southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. Moreover, it addressed Mediterranean member states’ concerns that the Community would devote more attention to the new democracies emerging in Eastern Europe than to third-party Mediterranean countries.

Rethinking the Mediterranean after the Cold War

Following the end of the Cold War, the concepts of security and development were broadened with major consequences for the future of Mediterranean relations and cooperation. First, the nature of the threat went from being purely and exclusively military (hard security) to non-military (soft security). In the Mediterranean region, the new concept of security included, in addition to the conflicts between states or defined national groups in the Middle East, the Western Sahara, the conflict in Cyprus and the volatile instability in the Balkans following the implosion of the former Yugoslavia, as well as a wide range of new threats, such as: Islamic, ultra-nationalist and other forms of terrorism and fundamentalism, human rights violations, competition for scarce resources, environmental degradation, transnational organised crime, arms stockpiling and trafficking, the demographic explosion and economic and political instability.

As for development, the concept went from referring solely to economic development to encompassing an entire economic, political, social, cultural and environmental process. Moreover, the purpose of development now lay in individuals’ rights to pursue their own welfare and the responsibility of States to create conditions conducive to it.

These new perceptions of security and development led to an about-face in the international and Mediterranean policy of the European Union and its Member States. Development cooperation became part of a broader political, economic and security cooperation strategy. Indeed, throughout the nineties, a plethora of dialogue and cooperation initiatives emerged throughout the Mare Nostrum: the 5+5 Dialogue (1990), the Mediterranean Forum (1994), NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (1994), etc. These
would culminate in the Barcelona Process or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.


However, three additional events were required for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to emerge. First, it depended on the progressive construction of the EU and, in particular, of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Under this new system of international cooperation, which began with the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993, EU policy included the power to hold conferences and summits with third-party countries. Second, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was made possible through a broad pact between Germany and the northern EU countries on the one hand and the southern European countries (Spain, France, Italy and Portugal) on the other. The former, more interested in integrating and drawing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe closer following the fall of the Berlin Wall, agreed to equip the European Community with a cooperation policy for the Mediterranean. Finally, the 1993 Oslo Accords set the stage for an enduring peace in the Middle East, which then seemed viable, and this fostered an atmosphere of trust and optimism that today is, unfortunately, hard to imagine.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership represented an unprecedented qualitative leap in the EU’s Mediterranean policy: it was grounded in a set of shared values and principles (dialogue, democracy, peace, shared prosperity, respect for human rights, etc.), rather than purely economic and trade-related criteria; it was based on ‘partnership’, i.e., on all members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership having the same status and participating on equal footing in all the core functions of the new framework of multilateral cooperation; and it had the added value of being the only forum for dialogue shared by Israel and Arab and European countries. Also new was the participation of civil society through the Euromed Civil Forum, which meets every two years and encompasses associations, networks and local authorities. Sponsored by the Catalan Institute of the Mediterranean (today, IEMed) of Barcelona, the Euromed Civil Forum was held right after the first Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona and was intended to enrich the process with the recommendations of civil society agents from both shores of the Mediterranean. Subsequently, this participation was institutionalised through the creation of the Euromed Civil Platform in 2005.

The purpose of the Barcelona Process was eminently political, in the loftiest sense of the word; however, its engine was to be primarily economic. Indeed, the process drew its inspiration from the model of European construction, as the progressive establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free-Trade Area, made possible by the growing demand and powerful draw of the large European market, was to give rise to a virtuous cycle of prosperity that would lead to increased trade, investment and job creation in Mediterranean partner countries. All of this was to happen without neglecting the accompanying social measures required to avoid falling into a neoliberal growth model based on excessive deregulation and privatisation of privileges. To this end, the Mediterranean partner countries were offered the MEDA programme,
a funding system that would enable macroeconomic stabilisation in conjunction with international financial organisations, as well as the implementation of institutional and legislative reforms, the modernisation of judicial systems, higher-quality education, etc. Thus, during this initial, ‘classic’ period of the Barcelona Process or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (from 1995 to 2005), the groundwork was laid to fulfil the objectives of peace, shared prosperity and mutual understanding. First, Association Agreements were negotiated and adopted between the EU and each Mediterranean partner country. Of course, the entry into force of these agreements was not immediate, as first a long ratification process had to be completed (the Association Agreements had to be ratified by the European Parliament, the Parliament of each Mediterranean partner country and the Parliaments of all Member States of the EU). At the same time, it is also worth noting that not all Mediterranean partner countries quickly leapt at the chance to sign an association agreement. Egypt, Algeria and Lebanon signed their agreements in June 2001, April 2002 and June 2002, respectively. Syria, despite having initiated talks to conclude an agreement in March 1998, still has not signed an agreement today, more than ten years later. Notwithstanding the above, those countries that did not hesitate to implement the stipulated reforms with European political and financial support and technical assistance are the ones that have made most and strongest economic progress.

Changes in institutions and mind sets and social transformations are not measured in years but generations

The road toward Euro-Mediterranean regional integration is not an easy one. However, whilst there have and continue to be many significant obstacles, the path, i.e., the chosen course, is the right one. We remain ‘convinced that the general objective of turning the Mediterranean Basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity requires a strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights, sustainable and balanced economic and social development, measures to combat poverty and promotion of greater understanding between cultures, which are all essential aspects of partnership’ (First Euromed Ministerial Conference, Barcelona, 27-28 November 1995). This process, however, requires perseverance and time. Changes in institutions and mind sets and social transformations are not measured in years but generations. Nevertheless, the situation in the Mediterranean has grown much more complicated since 1995. The winds have turned against it since the eruption of the Second Intifada in 2000, although the values cemented in Barcelona have kept the Partnership afloat. Against all odds, the Barcelona Process has withstood an international and regional context that has had a profound impact on Euro-Mediterranean relations. This context includes the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the growth of international terrorism, the Mohammed cartoon crisis, the Israeli attack on Lebanon (2006), the destruction of Gaza (2007-2008) and the international economic and financial crisis.

Under the Spanish Presidency of the EU in 2002, the Barcelona Process managed to lay the first bricks of the institutional architecture of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, beyond ministerial or sectoral conferences and meetings of senior officials. Indeed, the Declaration from the 5th Euromed Conference in 2002 provided for the creation of three institutions: in the political sphere, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly; in the cultural sphere, the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures; and, finally, in the economic sphere, the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP), which, whilst not an institution per se, must be considered as such, as we continue to believe that it should ultimately be transformed into a genuine Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank.

2005-2008: Consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Beginning in 2005, the Barcelona Process was reinforced by two new initiatives: the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2003 by the then-President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), promoted by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, building on his speech in Toulon in February 2007. These two new initiatives reinforced the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership both bilaterally (the ENP) and multilaterally (the UfM).
**Bilateral Reinforcement**

Although conceived of between 2003 and 2004, the ENP was not implemented until 2005-2007. This new initiative, which drew its inspiration from the successes of the EU enlargement, emerged as a response to the largest enlargement process in the EU’s history, that of 2004. With the accession of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the EU’s borders were pushed eastward and the European Commission decided to establish a policy based on a pre-accession strategy with some of its new neighbours. The ENP offers Mediterranean partners ‘everything but the institutions’, that is, access to the Community market and participation in European agencies, but not in the EU institutions (although the possibility that a neighbour country meeting the provisions of the Treaty might work out a different type of relation with the EU has not been ruled out). According to the strategy document *A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, dated 5 December 2007, ‘The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership remains a cornerstone for the EU’s interaction with its southern neighbours. The ENP and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are mutually reinforcing: the bilateral frameworks of the ENP are better suited to promoting internal reforms, while the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework provides the regional context.’

One of the contributions of the ENP to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), a financial instrument that replaced the MEDA and TACIS Programmes on 1 January 2007. In contrast to the MEDA I (1995-2000) and MEDA II (2000-2006) programmes, the ENPI offers a single instrument for partner countries from the east and south and improvements in the management and disbursement of funds, as it is intended to be more flexible. As under the former MEDA programme, the new funds are allocated above all to the bilateral modernisation programme agreed with each country under its respective Action Plan and likewise aim to improve cross-border cooperation (CBC) (cooperation across the EU’s land and sea borders) with a view to assembling a ‘ring of friends’ from the EU and its neighbours and thereby turning the dividing lines between them into lines for regional cooperation. What makes CBC unique is that third-party Mediterranean countries can access CBC programmes that are not only funded under the ENPI but also, potentially, through the EU’s structural funds. These funds have proven to be particularly effective for the development of the EU’s newest Member States.

In addition to the ENPI funds, the Commission offers partner countries the pre-accession technical assistance previously offered solely and exclusively to EU candidate countries to help them adopt the Community acquis. This is the case of the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument and twinnings between the local, regional or national governments of EU Member States and those of third-party Mediterranean countries.

**Multilateral Reinforcement**

At the Paris Summit on 13 July 2008, the Mediterranean Union launched by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy in February 2007 became the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. At the Marseilles Ministerial Conference, held on 4 November of the same year, it became, simply, the Union for the Mediterranean. What should have been a new Mediterranean policy to replace a Barcelona Process considered anaemic by some due to its lack of results ended up pushing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership far past the classic period of the Barcelona Process. The result could not have been otherwise. The considerable involvement of the European Commission and EU member states in the Barcelona Process was motivated by reasons that went beyond cooperation and solidarity with Southern Europe. Indeed, countries such as Germany and those of Northern Europe had become deeply convinced of their direct interest in maintaining a region of peace and shared prosperity in the Mediterranean. Over the course of the decade, issues such as terrorism, migratory flows, intercultural dialogue (as a result of the Mohammed cartoons) and the trade interests of third-party Mediterranean countries had fostered interest and concern for Mediterranean stability in Northern Europe. Therefore, no new framework for cooperation could be created that would exclude northern countries from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In a word, the French plan for the Mediterranean Union could not ignore non-Mediterranean Europe simply because of its lack of coastlines on the Mare Nostrum. The launching of the Union for the Mediterranean, an evolution in all senses of the Barcelona Process, gave (and will continue to give) Euro-Mediterranean relations a new boost with regard to regional devel-
opment. The French initiative sparked a major debate among the Euro-Mediterranean countries, which proved critical to merging the French initiative with the long-term path that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has always been. Moreover, the Union for the Mediterranean breathed new life into a regional and even international interest that lent the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership greater visibility. To this end, attention should be called to the inclusion in the UfM of new countries, namely, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Monaco.

Visibility, co-responsibility, a certain dose of pragmatism and realism and the involvement of the private sector emerged as the UfM’s main contributions to the Barcelona Process. The final result is a Barcelona Process that has been reinforced and enriched. The UfM provides for greater co-responsibility through the development of a Euro-Mediterranean institutional architecture in which both European and Mediterranean countries will be jointly responsible for successes and failures. This new institutional structure will deepen the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’s commitment to partnership as such. The permanent Secretariat of the UfM in Barcelona, which will commence operations at the end of the year, is a true international organisation, of which all Euro-Mediterranean countries form a part, in addition to the Arab League and the European Commission. It will provide initiative, drive and the necessary synergies to promote not only the UfM’s projects, but also Euro-Mediterranean relations as a whole.

Visibility, co-responsibility, a certain dose of pragmatism and realism and the involvement of the private sector emerged as the UfM’s main contributions to the Barcelona Process

The UfM likewise brings a commitment to greater pragmatism, realism and visibility, for starters, with regard to the six projects launched at the Paris Summit: De-pollution of the Mediterranean; Maritime and Land Highways; Alternative Energies: Mediterranean Solar Plan; the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, Civil Protection; and Higher Education and Research. Progress on specific projects will give the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership greater visibility among the population, civil society and the private sector. In other words, it will make it more effective and at the same time imbue it with greater political drive.

The private sector’s involvement in the funding of projects can only accelerate the process of regional integration. However, it must be acknowledged that, today, as the multilateral side of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean’s Achilles’ heel is, without a doubt, the paucity of funds allocated to a truly titanic endeavour. The private sector has been called upon to play a decisive role in providing new funds for investment in major projects intended to structure the Euro-Mediterranean region. To this end, investment in sectors such as infrastructure, energy and water management may lead to improvements in the business environment, the creation of jobs and improved living conditions for the peoples on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. However, once again, it must be underscored that the Euro-Mediterranean process is a long-term project, in which bilateral cooperation for the internal improvement of countries will continue to play a major role, but in which the reinforced regional cooperation through the Union for the Mediterranean can also yield significant results. It will undeniably require an enormous effort with regard to funding, technical cooperation and political cooperation in the broadest sense of the term; however, the reward will be decisive progress on the lofty goals that no longer belong solely to Barcelona in 1995: the gradual creation in the Mediterranean of an area of peace and stability, of shared economic progress and of mutual understanding and intercultural and social dialogue among the different peoples that share this ideal.
From Barcelona to the UfM: Ideological and Political Evolution of the EU’s Vision for the Mediterranean Region

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Europe’s Mediterranean policy is based on, and often dictated by, the evolution of the Middle East crisis. It is also paced by the vicissitudes of transatlantic dialogue.

Barcelona was but a euphoric stage in a long, progressive process originating with the enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC) to nine members (1st January 1972). In fact, it must be recalled that during the negotiations for the first EU enlargement, the issue of ‘political cooperation’ in spheres not covered by the Treaty of Rome was the focal point of debates. Managing the Middle East crisis, preparing a common energy policy, overcoming the monetary crisis, preparing the Helsinki Conferences and other matters called for a mechanism for reaching in-depth consensus, if not taking up joint action, that the Treaty of Rome did not allow. The Israeli-Arab War of 1967 had, in fact, divided the EEC: France and Italy backed Arab arguments and the Netherlands were aligned with Israel, while the Federal Republic of Germany took up an uncomfortable position of neutrality. This division pushed Europe away from the conflict arena, the role of mediator being occupied exclusively by the USA and the USSR.

The Davignon Report (1969), which proposed an ambitious approach of “political cooperation” within the future EEC-9, was particularly endorsed by Great Britain, then a candidate for accession. The latter declared a strong will to see the EEC play a major role on the international arena, and thus backed the Franco-Italian positions on the Middle East. The idea that Europe’s ‘soft power’ was to contribute to the emergence of a new world order had made the birth of the EEC-9 a major event that elicited considerable interest and a great deal of hope, in the Arab world in particular. The preliminary work for the Helsinki Conference and the wish to demonstrate a position of political independence vis-à-vis the USA caused a sensation. It was during the course of that year (1972) that the European Commission drew up the First Report to the Council advocating the adoption of a balanced, Global Mediterranean Policy. It was to contribute to peace and stability in the region and promote preferential cooperation with Mediterranean Non-Member Countries (MNCs).

The deterioration of transatlantic relations, the strategic USA-USSR rapprochement, the disappointment of the Arab world in the face of European passiveness and Israel’s mistrust of the behaviour of certain Member States had the EEC up against the wall. The October War of 1973 was considered the ultimate test to measure the strength of the economic construction devised by the Treaty of Rome, the credibility of Europe as a political entity and its capacity to free itself from the influence of the Atlantic Alliance. Until the Copenhagen Summit in mid-December 1973, the EEC remained silent and totally paralyzed in the face of the Arab-Israeli military confrontation. The oil embargo decreed by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) against the Netherlands and the reduction of the supply to Europe (which was dependent on the Middle East for 75% of its oil), the convening of the Washington Oil Summit (February 1974) to create a consumer coalition, the curtailment of common energy policy and so forth revealed that the EEC did not have the means to match its ambitions: the Copenhagen Summit finally reached a minimal consensus on the Israeli-Arab conflict and buried its vague illusions of becoming a major actor in the international arena.

It is in this context that the Global Mediterranean Policy emerged. It was the result of a French initiative put forth by President Pompidou and his Foreign Affairs Minister, Michel Jobert. It followed American dictates on the evolution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organ-
ization (NATO), the Middle East and the unilateral trade concessions envisaged for the Mediterranean Non-Member Countries (MNCs) and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). [Recall that the Nixon Round of negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was underway: the Americans were questioning the legality of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the unilateral trade preferences].

Thanks to the support of Germany and then Great Britain, France strategically fell back on its geographical neighbourhood with a view to tip the EEC balance towards the south, fostering the Latin world by encouraging Spain’s accession, maintaining preferential ties with the Maghreb and keeping a minor role for Europe in the Middle East. In order to round out the project, France had had a document adopted on European identity that was intended to be “Europe’s rejoinder to America”.

In this look back on history, you will have observed that Europe’s Mediterranean policy is based on a doctrine prioritising energy security and the maintenance of economic ties with former colonies. This doctrine has evolved according to external threats and the internal balance between the Atlanticists and the Europhiles. The changes in direction experienced (Barcelona was one of them) were the result of external developments or merely hiccups of History.

By way of example, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the debt crisis and illegal immigration led Europe to adopt a Renovated Mediterranean Policy (RMP). This stage of development of the Mediterranean Dialogue, prompted by Abel Matutes, coincided with the era of structural adjustments, the Washington Consensus and threats of social instability in the South Mediterranean Region. It was also the period when the European Parliament was created to defend human rights, universal liberties and democracy. The inclusion of political dialogue on the RMP agenda was motivated by the concern expressed by the European legislator. The progression of multilateral trade negotiations in the Uruguay Round likewise put pressure on the EU to review the restrictions imposed on textiles and agricultural produce imported from the MNCs.

The need to make Mediterranean Policy evolve towards a more ambitious partnership system was increasingly being felt both in the North and the South. Morocco and Spain were the spearheads of this movement. The European Parliament’s rejection of Morocco-EEC and Syria-EEC financial protocols due to purported human rights abuses was to accelerate the regional dynamic. The freezing by Morocco of fishery negotiations with Spain at a time when the Felipe González regime was gearing up for elections and Aznar’s party looked like the front-runner increased the Spanish desire to advance in the Mediterranean sphere.

Terrorist attacks committed in Paris in this same period made a revision of Europe’s Mediterranean options urgent. The conclusion of the Oslo Accords and the imminent election of President Chirac created conditions favourable to such an exercise. After the threat of an interruption in Arab oil delivery in 1973 and the threat of political and social instability following the debt crisis, it was the Islamist terrorist menace that would lend the European extreme right arguments to redouble its attacks against European societal values, threatening the balance of the European political landscape. It was becoming urgent to act by dealing with pockets of poverty and exclusion that could constitute a source of destabilisation of political regimes and swell the ranks of the terrorists having chosen to live in Europe in order to then swarm to Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. This approach, certainly not devoid of naiveté, was to deeply mark the genesis of the Barcelona Process.

It is thus with these threats in the background that Abel Matutes took a stance (March-April 1992), not stopping until he obtained from the Commission, the Council and the Parliament the authorisations necessary for relaunching the Mediterranean project on a basis of an acquis of extensive consultation and dialogue maintained with the main actors concerned. These consultations began in Rabat at a meeting between Mr. Matutes and Abdellatif Filali during the course of which the foundations of the Barcelona Process were outlined. Indeed, the political dressing needed to be found that would allow the European Parliament to revise its negative vote on the financial protocol and allow Morocco to resume fisheries negotiations with Spain. It was, moreover, on this occasion that Morocco again proposed the start of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The first time this idea was mentioned was in October 1983, during preliminary negotiations for adopting the 1976 Cooperation Agreements relative to the accession of Spain and Portugal to the EEC.

And we all know the rest: the European Council at Corfu, the Lisbon Summit, Manuel Marin’s entry into office, the Cannes Summit, and so forth, until the Barcelona Declaration.

This glance back on Euro-Mediterranean history allows us to glean precious information with which to dis-
sect the genesis of Mediterranean Policy and understand, in particular, the stage that brought us from Barcelona in 1995 to Paris in 2008:

- The centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It paces the terms of the Mediterranean dialogue, sets the tone for negotiations and serves as an alibi for slowing down the dynamic of reforms, a pretext to stall for time, and often, a legitimate reason for questioning the aims of the peace and security dialogue.
- The role of non-Mediterranean actors in exerting positive or negative influence on the course of affairs: yesterday, the USA and USSR; today, China and Iran as well.
- Energy as a major imperative, although often implicit, in the positions of the different stakeholders in the Mediterranean dialogue: Arab solidarity, whether real or fictional, does not allow what goes on between the EU and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCG) on the one hand, and the South Mediterranean Countries on the other, to remain airtight.
- Europe’s difficulty in declaring a common position vis-à-vis its neighbours to the south, not only on the Middle East conflict, but also on other conflicts that threaten regional stability and on commercial issues, such as agriculture, oil tax policies and services, or on migratory policies, and so on.
- The heterogeneity of the Arab World as measured by differentiated options regarding political, economic and social governance, alliances and strategic obeisance (positions with regard to the USA), positions on regional integration, etc. This factor explains the near impossibility of finding a joint South Shore approach vis-à-vis the EU for a credible project to establish collective, strategic ties with Europe.
- The Euro-Mediterranean project is therefore having a hard time making its transition to a multilateral approach and setting a deadline for the hegemony of the bilateral approach. The reminders of the colonial era, the misunderstandings with regard to Islam and the sensitivity of bilateral contentions between neighbours in the South relegate Europe to defensive positions or ones of formal neutrality in the name of the sacrosanct principles of equidistance and the status quo.
- The absence of cross-compliance in implementing economic aspects of the Mediterranean Partnership and the difficulties of enforcing it in the name of the principle of non-interference, much to the annoyance of the European Left in Parliament.
- Europe’s power of negotiation is significant wherever it can demonstrate common policies. This is the case for the commercial facet of the Association Agreements, for development funding. In all other spheres, Europe has a hard time translating its status of economic power into a power of tried influence. Whether regarding migration policies, commitments in the name of regional security, counterterrorism or sustainable development, Europe’s voice carries less weight than others. The tragedy of Gaza, Israel’s destruction of Palestinian infrastructures funded by the EU, illustrate this situation well.
- The initiative has always come from Europe in all phases of the Process. The South Mediterranean shore has often remained on the defensive, limiting itself to reacting and acceding in order to test the ground. The rare Arab initiatives (Algeria’s proposal for a long-term energy agreement in 1974, Arab League peace plans and the like) did not have the desired repercussion. The same situation prevailed at the time of the UfM’s genesis.
- Non-governmental actors were purportedly only involved sporadically in the chancelleries’ initiatives. The private sector, civil society actors and elected party leaders observed Mediterranean Policy from afar. This democratic and popular deficit was to have a significant effect on the policy’s evolution, its contents and the level of its ambitions.

These lessons and remarks shed light on the ideological foundations of European approaches from their origins to the present. They are based on relatively simple principles:

1. Global Mediterranean Policy was based on the idea that Europe’s energy dependence is so great that it cannot neglect to concern itself with the political stability of traditional sources of energy supply as a priority issue. Maintaining the trade dependence of certain member states of the Arab League, ensuring the trade links inherited from the colonial period while preserving the acquired economic rent were essential. The ideal instrument to do so was obvious: unilateral trade preferences. These preferences would not be extended to the
agricultural sector beyond what Protocol 1/7 (annex to the Treaty of Rome) authorised. The vote of the agricultural lobby was and remains so strong that the producing Member States’ margins for manoeuvring were symbolic. Moreover, unilateral preferences were a sign of the times. The theory put forth by Singer and Prebish (the founder of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development - UNCTAD) on the deterioration of the terms of exchange between the North (the centre) and the South (the periphery) largely inspired the Eurocracy of the European Commission’s Directorate General on Development (DG VIII) at this time. Commitments relating to development aid were materialised in financial protocols unilaterally decided by Europe. This aid was associated with the purchase of European Community goods and services – that went without saying.

2. The RMP acknowledged the limits of this North-South model of relations, dominated by a Third-Worldist vision encouraged by the consequences of the Cold War. The emergence of the Washington Consensus, the progression of negotiations at the Uruguay Round and so forth had thus motivated Europe to lend a new dimension to its vision of the partnership with the South. Upon taking a closer look, it becomes clear that the paradigms have not evolved to any significant degree. Europe has limited itself to anticipating the results of multilateral trade negotiations to relax restrictions imposed on trade with preferential Partners of the South Shore. It has moreover been riding the wave of cross-compliances imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) when financing structural adjustment programmes, thus starting to get involved in the process of formulating economic and financial policies for its southern Partners. This is why it increased its financial aid to come to the rescue of payment balances for Partners experiencing difficulties (Turkey, Morocco, Algeria) following successive oil price shocks. Prevailing public opinion in Europe did not allow it to go any further. The unemployment resulting from the economic crisis and its corollary, the reduction of migratory flows, did not allow Member States to meet the South’s demands. At the very most, it expanded the spectrum of development cooperation to cover new sectors (environment, urban development, energy projects, etc.). On either side of the Mediterranean, however, it was quite clear that the heritage of the post-colonial era needed to be put away in the cupboard of History.

3. The Barcelona Process, demonstrating remarkable ideological continuity, attempted to cross the bilateral Rubicon and foster a new dynamic in the Mediterranean project. Europe had slightly departed from its concern of not frontally offending the sensitive sovereign nations. In the name of the struggle against violent Islam and the preparation of the era of peace in the Mediterranean, it had the audacity to insert clear political commitments to democratic governance respecting human rights, fundamental liberties and so forth into the Barcelona Declaration. Although not equipped with any particular sanctions or cross-compliances, this new line represented remarkable progress for the Mediterranean set. It namely corresponds to the demands that were expressed at the Civil Forum held in Barcelona before the Summit of Heads of State and Government. Although the theories of Wallenstein, Chomsky and all the ideologues of alter-globalisation predominated in these demands, yet no-one could be impervious to the strong demands for modernity and reforms expressed by the civil society representatives of the Mediterranean community, with women at their head. It is also true that the post-Oslo euphoria licensed all utopias and allowed boundless speculation on the dividends of peace. The offer for free trade in exchange for commitment to political liberalisation, along with the appropriate financial aid, most definitely constitutes the foundation of the Barcelona Process.

The breakdown of the peace process froze political dialogue on regional peace and security. The economic basket created some positive acquis: the macro-economic situation has improved significantly on the South Shore. These acquis, however, remain insufficient as regards the human development gap between the two shores and the employment challenges to be met: 40 million jobs need to be created over the next two decades. The question then arises of whether the foundation of the Barcelona Process is pertinent. In other words, is the reciprocal opening of markets sufficient to bring about virtuous postures on economic and political governance in the South? Does it allow the level of competitiveness of its economies to increase and trigger internal energies in relative hibernation that will accelerate the pace of growth?
The following subsidiary question remains: has the EU actually completed its institutional construction before attempting to metamorphose into a global actor in a multi-polar world? Will the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty be enough for Europe to play a new score in the concert of nations and provide its economy, ill treated by an unparalleled crisis, with the required therapies (demographic crisis effects, financing for the social model...)?

The replies to these questions and many others will determine the UfM’s capacity to rise to a Mediterranean filled with challenges.

The Union for the Mediterranean, as conceived by President Sarkozy in his October 2007 speech in Tangiers, probably constituted the first ideological rupture in the long trajectory of Europe’s Mediterranean policies. This rupture was all the more audacious, as it intervened in a historical context where the consequences of 9/11 had not yet faded. To paraphrase Mr. Arkoun, “Islam and the West have polarised the task of building the imaginary of the Other. The Islamic and Arab-Islamic demonization of the West is answered, in a dialectic of conflict, by the construction of the enemy Islam in the [Western] imaginary.”

The predominant European discourse on migration issues still bears the stigma of the Arab and Ottoman invasions, and tends to accredit the idea that Muslim populations cannot be assimilated by Europe. President Sarkozy thus addressed two communities that have different cultural referents and interpret concepts such as security or shared prosperity in different manners.

For Europe, which has nevertheless turned the pages of the Crusades and colonisation and has separated Religion and State, attaining the objective of security in the Mediterranean Region involves a cooperative approach based on shared responsibility.

In the South, as Georges Corm indicates, “the models of the collective imaginary remain fixed on a past of glory and suffering, idealised or made legendary; there is no future except in a return to lost grandeur... The Middle East has retreated into a model of regressive temporality.” The historic confrontational tendency remains the referent allowing interpretation of the Gulf Wars, the creation of Israel, the fear of a globalisation dominated by American cultural imperialism, and so forth.

Thus, Europe, in the eyes of the South, should turn into a political power, depart from its “tendency to have double standards” and get more involved in the Middle East in order to restore international lawful-ness. It should also demonstrate regret for its errors committed during the colonial era.

Aware of these misunderstandings and reciprocal mistrust, Sarkozy had proposed not to build the Union for the Mediterranean “on the premise that sons atone for the sins of their fathers. We won’t build the Mediterranean Union on the premise of repentance [...]. We will build the Mediterranean Union, as Europe’s union was built, on the basis of a political determination stronger than the memory of the suffering, on the basis of the conviction that the future counts for more than the past. [...] Wanting the Mediterranean Union doesn’t mean wanting to erase history [...].

This vision in and of itself constituted a psychological rupture “with attitudes, ways of thinking, playing safe, a state of mind opposed to audacity and courage.” This rupture was needed in order for a new project to emerge that would be structured on the following premises:

- A geographic area of action that would transcend the Mare Nostrum to engender Eurafica.
- A pragmatic Union whose geometry would vary according to the different projects.
- The Union would begin with sustainable development, energy, transport and water.
- Its priorities would be culture, education, health, human capital, justice and the struggle against inequality to become the largest laboratory in the world on co-development.

Upon analysis, it is clear that this vision constituted a methodological rupture and a change in the manner of institutional decision-making in the EU. Conflicts were to be set aside and the realisation of joint projects undertaken, with the accession of countries considering they had an interest in the project. In sum, the political status quo was lauded, work was to be done in collaboration with the regimes in power and there were no risks taken that would destabilise the balances attained: they constituted the only effective ramparts against the extremisms and excesses of political Islam. Moreover, the UfM is open to accession by the countries along the Mediterranean coast. The other members, that is, the non-coastal EU Member States, shall have observer status only. The European Commission is also to be involved in this initiative.

Developments between October 2007, the 13 July 2008 Summit in Paris and the present reveal the limits of strategies of rupture, the resistance existing to reform, and the persistence of misunderstandings.
The return to the ideology dominating the Mediterranean Process since the 1967 War was nearly automatic in the Union for the Mediterranean. The tragic events of Gaza remind us once more that words and concepts do not always have the same meaning or the same emotional charge on one shore as on the other.

The ideological development work carried out by Europe continues to run up against a wall made of suspicion and mistrust. One cannot associate with a demonised Westerner without certain preliminaries that make it ‘respectable’ to the eyes of certain sections of public opinion in the South. Perhaps placing priority on the economic and commercial basket and improving sectoral dialogue is a subconscious attempt to give things time. Time for the South Shore to mature culturally and ideologically, to pacify its internal relations and begin undertaking the process of regional integration.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appears as an urgent issue, a prerequisite and the ideal path towards putting into practice Sarkozy’s audacious, courageous vision, which is not devoid of a necessary utopian ideal.

At the point when the UfM institutions are to be established, one can only hope that the EU and its partners to the south will lend these structures (the Secretariat) the political mandate and the human and material means for them to start breaking the wall of suspicion separating the two shores. Organising the Mediterranean catharsis in a context of a worldwide economic crisis, a crisis of values, political doubts and the decline of the Nation-State is more salutary than ever. It is in this context that a number of independent spirits have called for a Mediterranean Conference along the lines of the one held in Helsinki to manage our reciprocal misunderstandings and foster peace. Operating in parallel with the UfM’s economic project, it would facilitate the UfM’s realisation and would launch the popular dynamic that has been so lacking to European initiatives in the Mediterranean Region to date.

THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) was instituted in Naples on 3 December 2003 by decision of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference. Its predecessor was the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, which was established in 1997 by the Members of European Parliament (EP) in order to develop inter-institutional relations on the parliamentary level. The first three Forums were convened in Brussels, Belgium, and the fourth in Bari, Italy (June 2002), where the objective was to prepare the ground for the establishment of a genuine Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and for the drafting of the Assembly’s rules of procedure. The conversion of the Forum into the Assembly was proposed in an EP resolution and approved in Valencia at the 5th Euro-Mediterranean Conference. After it was instituted, the EMPA opened its proceedings in Vouliagmeni (Greece) on 22-23 March 2004.

Organised into national delegations and EP delegations, the EMPA meets once a year for an ordinary plenary session. It is comprised by a total of 280 members, the majority parliamentarians from the EU, whether from the EP or the national parliaments of the EU Member States and the founding Mediterranean Partner Countries. The EMPA’s Bureau has four members, two of whom are appointed by the national parliaments of the Mediterranean Partner Countries, one by the national EU parliaments and one by the EP. They serve a four-year term in office and assume the Assembly Presidency on a year-long, rotational basis in order to guarantee parity between the North and South components. The three other members exercise the role of Vice-Presidents. From 2008 to 2012, the Bureau shall be comprised of the Parliaments of Germany, Jordan, Italy and Morocco. From March 2008 to March 2009, the Presidency shall be held by Hans-Gert Pöttering, of Germany, with Jordan, Italy and Morocco holding the Vice-Presidencies, these positions rotating on the subsequent year, and so forth.

Structurally, it is comprised of four standing committees and one ad hoc committee: the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights; the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education; the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture; the Committee on Women’s Rights; and the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy and Environment. Playing a consultative role, the EMPA provided parliamentary impetus, input and support for the consolidation and development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in its first stage. In its second stage, it expresses its views on all issues relating to the Partnership, including the implementation of Association Agreements. In addition, it adopts non-binding resolutions or recommendations addressed to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference.

Indeed, many entities can secure permanent observer status for meetings: representatives of national parliaments of Mediterranean countries that are not part of the EU nor the Barcelona Process; representatives of national parliaments of non-Mediterranean countries that are not applying for accession to the EU, provided negotiations or discussions with a view to accession have been officially opened; the consultative and financial bodies of the Barcelona Process; and parliamentary and intergovernmental organisations of a regional nature who apply for such status. Permanent observers have the right to the floor.

According to the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008, the EMPA shall be the legitimate parliamentary expression of the Union for the Mediterranean. Heads of State and Government strongly support strengthening the role of the EMPA in its relations with Mediterranean partners.

Further information at:
www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa/
Meeting at the last Euromed Civil Forum in Marseille (30 October-2 November 2008) to discuss the ‘mobility of actors’ and ‘living together in the Euromed region’, 250 representatives of civil society organisations from both the northern and southern shores of the *Mare Nostrum* strongly reassured their ‘commitment to the Euromed Partnership (EMP)’. They did not fail, however, to indicate their “questions”, “perplexity” and “concerns” with regard to the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the latest embodiment of this process, at the Paris Summit on 13 July 2008. These “questions”, “perplexity” and “concerns” had to do with the objectives and forms of governance of this new framework for the partnership, as well as the risks it could generate. According to them, the main risk would be the fact that “the participation of civil society representatives in the institutions of the Partnership is now questioned,” especially in South Mediterranean Countries (SMCs), where autonomous, independent civil society is “subject to an unacceptable mistrust” and their members to “an intolerable suppression.”

Apart from the growing marginalisation of civil society in the governing bodies of the Partnership, the participants in the Marseille Forum also emphasised a large number of other difficulties that hamper the development of the Barcelona Process and the attainment of its initial objective, that of creating “a zone of peace and shared prosperity.” They particularly underlined the following concerns:

- The persistence in the area of “inequality between women and men” and “discrimination based on origin, religion, absence of religion, or sexual orientation”.
- The difficulties encountered by civil society actors in the South and by the South Mediterranean population in general to obtain short-term visas and enter Europe; which difficulties impede family ties and human exchanges, and endanger artistic, scientific and educational exchanges between the northern and southern shores.
- The attitude of certain governments in the South that prevent independent civil society actors from participating in meetings organised within the framework of the Euromed Process.
- And, last but not least, the multiplication, in particular on the part of political decision-makers in both the North and the South, of discourse and speeches that are “expressly xenophobic and even racist, in the name of an identity devoid of any external enrichment.”

In the eyes of civil society actors, the EMP is far from having kept its promises. Considering all of their grievances, it could even be considered as departing dangerously from such commitments, at least in certain aspects relating to governance, human rights and human mobility.

The assessment to be made of this Partnership 14 years after its launch deserves, however, to be more detailed. For one should not underestimate the acquis of civil society in terms of appropriation of the Euromed Process and active contribution to a certain number of its programmes. Moreover, for this assessment to be fair and balanced, it would be best to go over the genesis and evolution of the Barcelona Process, identify the progress made, indicate as well the difficulties, shortcomings and dysfunctions and finally, examine means of relaunching it to allow greater involvement of the civil society within a global, well-balanced partnership.
From Barcelona to Paris: Hope and Disillusionment

It was thus in Barcelona on 28 November 1995 that 27 countries of the EU and the Mediterranean Region launched the EMP with a formal declaration. It was an original initiative for regional cooperation and integration. Based on recognition of special ties between Europe and the Mediterranean, “links forged by neighbourhood and history”, this Partnership had the general objective of “turning the Mediterranean Basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and co-operation.” To make this ambitious goal a reality, the 27 signatories of the Barcelona Declaration drew up a joint programme filled with promises.

In the Declaration’s political and security basket, designed to promote the creation of a “common area of peace and stability,” the signatory countries committed to act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, Mediterranean Non-member Countries (MNCs) would have to develop political systems in keeping with established international norms on human rights and democracy, introduce the necessary reforms and take specific measures for the effective application of fundamental liberties and for respecting diversity and pluralism.

The economic basket of the Partnership prescribed the substitution of the bilateral trade agreements extant in the region until then by a new, global and multilateral approach. The aim was to establish a free trade area between the EU and South and East Mediterranean countries by 2010, one that would foster economic and social development and aid these countries to become integrated into the world economy. The Partnership’s third basket lent it the mission of promoting greater “understanding between cultures” and improving mutual knowledge by bringing the populations in both northern and southern Mediterranean countries closer. Apart from matters relating to education, the media, cultural exchanges, dialogue and the mobility of individuals—a problem that the signatories undertook to resolve in particular “by improving administrative procedures” and was to become, over the course of the years, a real bone of contention—the 27 had emphasised the role of civil society, whose contribution, it was thus affirmed for the first time, was an essential element for rapprochement among the peoples of the Mediterranean.

Emerging in a favourable context at the end of the Cold War, marked by agreement on the major principles of democracy, peace and dialogue among cultures, and above all, with a perspective for peace between the Israelis and Arabs opened by the Oslo Accords, the EMP nourished many hopes in both the northern and southern Mediterranean Basin. Yet its implementation soon proved difficult and fraught with pitfalls. Among the numerous obstacles encountered, we could generally mention:

- The stalemate in the Middle East peace process after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and its consequences: the pursuance of Israeli colonisation of Palestinian Territories and the Israeli wars, first against Lebanon (2006), and then against Gaza (2008).
- Political opposition to change in the SMCs, where democratic transitions are delayed by the persistence of authoritarian systems and the chronic weakness of opposition parties and civil society organisations, which are controlled or simply prohibited.
- The rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements, threatening the rare progress made in issues of democracy and respect for human liberties and rights, in particular those of women.
- The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and their consequences: the onset of the war against terrorism, the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, the exacerbation of ethnic or nationalist sentiment.
- The turbulence caused by the acceleration of globalisation: economic and social crises, increasing pauperisation of populations in the South, the widening of the gap between the northern and southern Mediterranean countries.
- And finally, the arrival in the region of other powers wishing to extend their influence as well (USA and China).

In addition to these objective difficulties born of unfavourable international and regional situations and that have often justified restrictions to civil liberties, there are also subjective difficulties associated with the scepticism that has gradually gained ground in countries in the North, increasingly preoccupied with EU enlargement or the Balkans crises; and the disillusionment of the countries in the South, which, while indefinitely deferring the implementation of the structural reforms they had committed to undertake, demanded more financing and less administrative procedures and captious controls from the EU.
The mutual frustration was aggravated, for that matter, when the EU, enlarged to include 27 countries, seemed to be more concerned with its eastern neighbours than its southern ones. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2004 to revitalise the Euromed Process, did not seem to have reassured the MNCs. On the contrary: by enlarging the Partnership to the ensemble of EU ‘neighbours,’ namely the candidate countries for EU accession and the 16 ‘neighbours,’ among them the nine MNCs, it did away with the geographical specificity of the Partnership and blurred the vision of its identity and cohesion (allocation of budget and resources, Turkey’s position, external political orientations and so forth). The implementation of this new policy based on action plans negotiated and adapted to the needs (and priorities) of each country did not fail to heighten concerns among SMCs regarding the displacement of the EU’s interest towards its ‘neighbours’ in the East and North of the European continent and a reduction, to the benefit of the latter, of the financial means allocated by the EU through the Partnership.

Some voices are being heard today, both in the North and the South, that censure what they consider an attempt at giving a regional process in crisis a facelift

The UfM, launched at the Paris Summit of 13 July 2008, sought to infuse Euro-Mediterranean relations with renewed political dynamism, in particular “by upgrading their relations, incorporating more co-ownership in their multilateral cooperation framework and delivering concrete benefits for the citizens of the region.” Yet, focussing too much on structuring and federative projects in particular domains, such as water, ‘Motorways of the Sea,’ the environment, solar energy, transport and education and training, this new Partnership approach does not seem to have dissipated the concerns and suspicions of the South Mediterranean population. Quite on the contrary: some voices are being heard today, both in the North and the South, that censure what they consider an attempt at giving a regional process in crisis a facelift. In this regard, we can cite Hassan Abouyoub, Ambassador-at-Large to Morocco, appointed by King Mohammed VI, who qualified the measures initiated by the UfM as “inadequate.” At a recent conference at the Law, Economic and Social Sciences Faculty of Casablanca, the Moroccan diplomat stated that, “When they speak of union, who are they trying to fool? There is no common institution with a common budget. It is not the financial crisis that is behind the UfM’s failure, but the numerous inequalities among the countries along the northern and southern shores, as well as the status of Arab countries. The fact that no country in the South has put forth a UfM project is proof of this.” He then went on to condemn “the absence of political will within EU Member States that would allow sanctions against countries in the South that do not respect democracy, the Rule of Law or elementary human rights” (www.yabiladi.com, 20 April 2009).

Hédi Djilani, President of UTICA (Tunisian employers’ organisation), also displayed a good deal of skepticism when he declared before the French Prime Minister, François Fillon, at the Tunisian-French Economic Forum on 24 April 2009 that he believed much more in bilateral cooperation and the 5+5 Dialogue (the Arab Maghreb Union plus France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Malta) than in the UfM. At least “until the UfM finds a place in the sun.”

Government Suspicion towards Civil Society

Returning to the third basket of the Partnership, that of intercultural dialogue—which concentrates the essential actions carried out by civil society actors in both the North and South—, there is no denying that, though there was some progress, the overall results remain quite limited.

This basket is supposed to improve mutual knowledge by bringing the populations in both northern and southern Mediterranean countries closer and fostering ties and the establishment of a civil society network. Numerous programmes have been launched in this sphere, as we will see below, particularly dedicated to cultural heritage, audiovisuals, youth, media or the situation of women, but their impact remains quite limited, in particular because of the dearth of means for their implementation and, in many SMCs, the authorities’ sentiment of suspicion towards civil society, which is supposed to participate in implementing these programmes and thus serve as a bridge for democratic ideas.
It should be noted, however, that despite these shortcomings that lead to disillusionment and frustration on both southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean, the number of associations and NGOs have grown significantly over the past fourteen years in the majority of the MNCs: nearly 30,000 associations in Morocco, 16,000 in Egypt, 9,000 in Tunisia and 4,000 in Jordan.

Associations, civil society organisations and other local groups have in fact managed to enter all fields of activity, carry out projects, launch dialogues, organise symposia and build networks, with or without the recognition or intervention of States or the reception of funds allotted to the Partnership.

Thanks to this dynamic, in which the Euromed Process has certainly played some role, a certain degree of progress has also been made. Associations, civil society organisations and other local groups have in fact managed to enter all fields of activity, carry out projects, launch dialogues, organise symposia and build networks, with or without the recognition or intervention of States or the reception of funds allotted to the Partnership.

Among the success stories are, for instance, the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF). Inaugurated in April of 2005 in Alexandria, this intergovernmental organisation is financed by the EMP Member States and the European Commission (EC). Guided by the values of the Barcelona Process, it was established in particular for the “rapprochement between peoples through a social, cultural and human partnership.” Serving as a network of national networks, it currently connects over 1,500 member organisations from all civil society domains, all of them dedicated to fostering mutual knowledge and respect in the region.

Another important vector for energising civil society in the Mediterranean Basin is the Barcelona-based European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), which is a think tank specialising in Euro-Mediterranean relations. Through research and study activities, organisation of colloquia and seminars, publication of books and periodicals, and planning of exhibits and cultural festivals, the IEMed functions as both a centre for reflection and debate on Mediterranean societies and a Mediterranean lobby before institutions and public opinion in the region.

The EuroMeSCo (Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission) is a network of non-governmental research institutions, universities and experts. Created in 1996 with the financial support of the EC, its mission consists of fostering political and security dialogue among civil society stakeholders. Bringing together foreign policy institutes from 39 EMP Member States, this network currently has 58 member institutes, 30 observer institutes and two international associate members. Another network to be mentioned is the Forum of Euro-Mediterranean Economic Institutes (FEMISE). In charge of the economic analysis of the Barcelona Process and the study of topics considered priorities for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean Region, it currently has over 70 member institutes representing the 27 Partner Countries of the Barcelona Process. Numerous programmes have also been launched within the framework of the Partnership’s third basket that have allowed intercommunication and shared analyses, such as MEDSTAT, whose mission is to make statistical information that could be useful for monitoring the progress of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation available. After MEDSTAT I, implemented from 1996 and 2003, with a budget of 20 million euros, MEDSTAT II was launched in 2006 and slated to last three years, with a budget of 30 million euros. Launched in 1999, the EUMEDIS project was endowed with a budget of 65 million euros for a duration of eight years (1999-2007). Dedicated to developing the information society in the MNCs by means of fostering information and communication technology, EUMEDIS has allowed the implementation of 20 regional pilot projects applying information technology in diverse sectors ranging from education to healthcare, including research, industry, tourism and cultural heritage. A new programme, EUMEDIS II, with a budget of 5 million euros, is to be launched during the course of 2009.

The Euromed Audiovisual Programme, with a budget of 18 million euros, has the mission of strengthening the audiovisual and cinema sectors within the MNCs, as these sectors are considered excellent vehicles for cooperation and mutual comprehension among Mediterranean countries. This programme began in 2000 with an initial series of six projects that concluded in 2005, among them the
of 26 animation films and documentaries on legendary figures having contributed to the history of the Mediterranean (“Viva Carthago,” whose EU funding amounted to 3.98 million euros). Euromed Audiovisual II, launched in 2005 with a budget of 15 million euros, came to a close in December 2008. It financed 12 additional projects involving the widest range of professionals in the audiovisual industry and covering all the processes of development, distribution, promotion and exhibition of the films.

To contribute to mutual understanding and dialogue among the cultures of the Mediterranean through the promotion of cultural heritage, the Euromed Heritage Programme has allocated a budget of 57 million euros to funding partnerships among heritage institutions in the Mediterranean Region as well as experts in heritage conservation. Nearly 400 partners in the EU Member States and the MNCs have benefited from the programme over its three preceding phases, between 1998 and 2004, 2002 and 2007 and 2004-2008, respectively. Euromed Heritage IV, which covers the 2008-2012 period, offers the region’s inhabitants renewed opportunities to increase their knowledge and develop a sentiment of appropriation of their cultural heritage.

Other initiatives, programmes and action can also be enumerated, both in the North and the South Mediterranean, under diverse forms and with the different actors of the two shores in various domains such as human rights, the struggle for liberties and the struggle against torture (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, EMHRN), the promotion of women’s status and rights (Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, Istanbul, November 2006) or the protection of children, as well as initiatives to achieve the reform of judicial institutions (EuroMed Justice Programme), to name but a few examples.

There is the same diversity and abundance of initiatives associated with the economic sphere, whether they be, for instance: business clubs bridging the northern and southern Mediterranean shores (such as the French-Egyptian business club, Club d’Affaires Franco-Egyptien, CAFE); enterprise unions (such as the Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises, UMCE); or businesswomen associations (such as the Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen, AFAEMME).

Ties are likewise being forged among trade union organisations within the framework of the Euromed Trade Union Forum (ETUF); handicraft organisations and SMEs are networking to undertake joint initiatives, training, seminars and annual conferences; permanent dialogue has been established among economic operators through the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME), as well as among official professional associations, chambers of agriculture or other professional organisations, bar associations, orders or associations of jurists or liberal professionals, not to mention the social economy and the Euro-Mediterranean Social Economy Network (ESMed Network).

Local and regional authorities demonstrate the same vitality in the Partnership, either encouraging local associations or undertaking projects themselves. Twinning of cities and regions on both sides of the Mediterranean, the implementation of MEDA programmes (EUROCITIES, a pilot programme for cooperation among municipalities launched by the European Commission in 2003, Euromed regional authority forums, etc) and other initiatives emerge one after another, all of them different. They sometimes give rise to healthy competition among Euro-Mediterranean regions or cities: Marseille, Barcelona and Alexandria, for instance, each striving to become the Euro-Mediterranean capital.

Civil society has been particularly active in the youth sector. Classical programmes oriented towards education and professional training have mobilised significant credit (over 700 million euros). They have been complemented by NGO initiatives, against illiteracy, for instance, or fostering schooling and professional training for girls. Those initiatives working with universities and students of the MNCs, the European Tempus and Erasmus Programmes, as well as those that have contributed to exchanges among youth on both sides of the Mediterranean (Euromed Youth, Salto Euromed, or the launching of the Euromed Youth Platform in 2003) are often only the visible part of efforts on both shores attempting to make the Mediterranean a real community built on its children and youth.

To complete this panorama, we should also mention the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), whose creation in 2004 constituted a turning point in the consolidation and development of the EMP. Consisting of 280 parliamentarians, of which 140 are members of MNC parliaments, this institution has consultative power. The Presidency is held by either an MNC or an EU parliamentarian on a rotational basis. The Assembly expresses its views on all issues relating to the Partnership, including the implementation of association agreements, and adopts resolutions or
recommendations, which are not legally binding, addressed to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference. With three permanent committees dealing with the Partnership’s three baskets, it constitutes an excellent framework for promoting dialogue and represents an opportunity to contribute towards a peaceful, fair and lasting solution in the Middle East. Considered to foster the Partnership’s credibility and therefore help meet the people’s needs for democratic legitimacy, the EMPA manages more or less to transmit the Partnership’s concerns on the parliamentary level, but it cannot be said to express the points of view of the region’s inhabitants with sufficient force. The reason? Its southern members are not very representative because they are often appointed and/or poorly chosen.

The Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) should also be mentioned. They have also taken on the habit of meeting at Euro-Mediterranean summits since 1995. At these summits, organised by initiative of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and financed by MEDA funds to the amount of 50,000 euros per year, socio-economic actors discuss different topics that they have jointly worked on and issue recommendations. The last summit was held in Rabat (Morocco) on 14-16 October 2008. Since the year 2000, the Mediterranean ESCs have been the beneficiaries of a specific programme called TRESMED, likewise financed by MEDA funds and designed to lend trade unions, employers’ organisations and other economic and social actors of the Euro-Mediterranean Region a framework for institutional dialogue aiming to improve governance and foster the democratisation of the region. TRESMED III, launched in 2008, has a budget of 907,000 euros.

In contrast to these last two examples, the Euromed Civil Forum is a non-institutional initiative for coordination and debate among Mediterranean civil society organisations. It has given rise to the Euromed Non-Governmental Platform, the Euromed Civil Forum or the Mediterranean Social Forum and the Maghreb Social Forum, born of the former two platforms with the aim of regrouping organisations and movements involved in the struggle against neoliberalism, these spaces for dialogue, each in their own fashion, attempt to bring together civil society actors in order to make their voices heard and organise their contributions to the different States and to the EU. Platforms for protest as well as proposals, they attempt to come up with collective responses to the challenges and threats hanging over the future of the region. Their founders, however, are frustrated to see that their voices are not truly taken into consideration by political decision makers. The reason for this, in some cases, is the consideration and place assigned to these voices that is at issue. In other cases, it is the very definition of civil society that is either too vague or too restrictive; for it is often limited to social movements, NGOs or trade unions.

Difficulties to Overcome on the Road to an Egalitarian Partnership

In terms of assessment, there is a first observation to be made: the EMP implied the equal development of the three baskets — political, economic and socio-cultural —, if not at the same pace. However, the primacy of the second basket over the first and much more so over the third has emerged over the years as the structuring principle of the Partnership. Though the social, cultural and human basket is considered important, it is quite clear that in the eyes of the Euro-Mediterranean Partners, both northern and southern, economic development remains a priority. The economic dimension having been given priority, it has thus naturally been employers’ organisations, industrial federations, chambers of commerce and the like that have often been privileged when drawing up or implementing EMP programmes. Civil society, for its part, has greater difficulty benefiting from programmes whose access has been rendered difficult by highly complex procedures, if not by lack of governmental will, in particular in the South.
Another difficulty identified: the diversity that characterises civil society does nothing to facilitate the perception of it by funding agencies that are already inclined by the very nature of the Partnership to first address themselves to clearly identified socio-economic sectors and the representative structures constituted by parliaments, ESCs and similar institutions. In this regard, it suffices to study the distribution of funds allocated by MEDA, the main financial framework for EU cooperation with MNCs, then those of its successor, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), as well as the loans granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB), to realize the marked concentration of these allocations under the economic basket and, to a lesser degree, the political one. Initiatives carried out to foster "support to civil society" (including NGOs) still represent a very weak percentage. One of the reasons is that the smallest organisations in civil society are often excluded from Partnership funding because they are not very organised amongst themselves and generally have neither the means of filing applications nor the time to wait for results. Which explains the obvious frustration often expressed by their members at Mediterranean Civil Forums.

These meetings, which are sometimes lacking in organisation, have never had the recognition or the weight necessary to project their proposals. Also, they never cease to place particular emphasis on the need to have civil society participate, not only in preliminary consultations and debates organised within the framework of the Partnership, but also in the decision-making process, which remains essentially inter-governmental.

Moreover, the Partnership involves democratic European States clearly engaged in a decentralisation process, while their South Mediterranean partners remain, for the most part, anxious to validate their legitimacy and thus adopt rather cautious attitudes towards any initiatives for decentralised cooperation that might be proposed, particularly those involving independent NGOs. Hence the difficulties experienced by the latter in playing a more central role in society and its evolution in the Mediterranean Region.

How can greater importance be given to civil society actors from all the MNCs and thus allow the Partnership to take on its full meaning for all countries concerned, lending it the visibility it has lost over the years?

The answer lies in the solutions that could be brought to bear against the series of problems, often pointed out by civil society agents, that concern:

- The monopolisation of the EMP by the States, making it progressively lose credibility and readability to those for whom the process was launched: the individuals living on both sides of the Mediterranean.
- The major discrepancy between the States’ commitments and the effective implementation of reforms in society, between discourse and reality, above all with regard to political governance.
- The assertion of cultural relativism via 'respect for specificities' often claimed by SMCs opens the way for discourse stating the impossibility of transposing certain values based on respect for liberties and rights that should be non-negotiable everywhere.
- The lack of official recognition in the South Mediterranean of certain trade unions, associations and NGOs does not favour the development of a dynamic associative fabric able to effectively contribute to bilateral and multilateral Partnership action among civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean.
- The questioning by certain MNCs of the very principle of the participation of civil society representatives in the Partnership institutions.
- The fact that, in these same countries, legal associations are prohibited from receiving foreign funding, whether or not it is granted through the EuroMed Partnership.
- The weakness of financial aid dedicated to measures in favour of the development and revitalisation of civil society, considering the needs in this sphere.
- The lack of awareness that South Mediterranean civil society organisations, often of limited size, have of these aids, when available.
- The technical and financial constraints of the programmes and the importance of the budgets allocated to them often limits them to specialist milieus, with no tangible or visible results on societies.
- Access to these programmes is often an ordeal due to excessively complex and restrictive administrative procedures (forms, deadlines, legal status of applicants, and so on).
- The quasi-monopolisation of Euromed programme organisation by operators from the North; their MNC partners, who are rarely granted the status of co-organisers, must often settle for the role of ‘associate partners’ if not of that of the foil necessary for the execution of the programmes.
- The conception of the programmes within a European logic and not from a Partnership per-
During the Euromed Civil Forum in Valencia (2002) in the context of considering the participation of civil society in the Barcelona Process, networks and actors of the Euro-Mediterranean civil society decided to launch the Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform in 2003. It was established with the main task of reforming the Civil Forum, an annual meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean civil society designed to influence the Barcelona Process through the contributions of civil society. Indeed, since the first Euromed Civil Forum was held in 1995, the idea of actively involving civil society in the Barcelona Process and fostering the recognition of members of civil society as key interlocutors in the different countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) has been the order of the day. The Platform lends Mediterranean civil society a more permanent interface with the authorities and guarantees the continuity, efficiency and legitimacy of the Civil Forum. It is comprised of 120 independent civil society organisations working on the international, Euro-Mediterranean, national and local levels. Based in Paris, it has an operative team directed by a General Coordinator that carries out the Platform work. Its members include regional, subregional and local networks working in the fields of human rights advocacy, democracy, peace and migrant conflict prevention, environmental protection, gender equality, sustainable development, economic and social rights advocacy, cultural dialogue and the like.

Wishing to build on an internal democratic dynamic, the Platform decided to establish itself as an association according to French law (Law of 1901). Hence, the General Assembly makes the fundamental decisions, such as those relating to strategy, articles of association and financial matters, as well as the election of the Board, whose current Chair was elected at the second General Assembly held on 10-11 November 2007 in Madrid. At the latter, all the decisions were taken relative to the Platform’s tasks and operation between general assemblies. The Board is comprised of 16 organisations (local, regional and thematic networks): International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), Euromed Trade Union Forum (ETUF), the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Cultures (FEMEC), Arab NGO Network for Development, Association des Femmes de l’Europe Méridionale (AFEM), the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) and so forth. The Platform’s Executive Committee has been chaired by Abdelmak-soud Rachdi since his appointment on 13 January 2008 in Casablanca. With a charter of values and principles adopted in Limassol/Lemesos (Cyprus) on 25-26 June 2004, the members of the Platform work towards the same objectives (the democratisation of societies and States, the struggle against political, financial and administrative corruption, the promotion of social dialogue as an essential factor in development and social justice, etc.) Their joint action consists in working towards balancing and renewing exchanges among societies of the Euro-Mediterranean Region, strengthening civil society and its active involvement in the Barcelona Process, renovated within the framework of the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy, all the while respecting the principles of human rights and democracy. Any association wishing to join must first sign the Charter.

The Civil Platform’s ultimate function is to organise Civil Forums. It prepares them via local consultation (in 2008, the Civil Forum’s theme was Move and Live Together in the Euromed Space). From the start, the Platform has had the intention of organising a Civil Forum in a country of the South. The opportunity arose in Morocco, thanks to the proposal of the the Euromed Platform’s Moroccan Committee. In order to begin preparing this Civil Forum, the Platform’s Board met in June of 2006 in Rabat. It designated a Steering Committee and drew up a plan for the forum, and approved the idea of organising a Civil Forum in Morocco, in close cooperation with the Euromed Platform’s Moroccan Committee. The Platform thus contributes to ensuring the smooth operation and organisation of debates and to choosing themes and participants, but above all, it is a powerhouse for strengthening the role of civil society actors as key interlocutors in their respective countries and in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

For further information:
www.euromedplatform.org/spip/spip.php?rubrique=45
www.euromedplatform.org/spip/spip.php?article13

**THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL PLATFORM**

spective, relegating South Mediterranean Countries to a subordinate position rather than being on an equal level.

- The domination of trade flow between the two shores by products from the North in all domains, including that of research or creation.
- The difficult situations and discrimination experienced by migrant populations, as well as the strict policies regulating migratory flows, often understood by the MNCs as proof of a lack of European countries’ will to make the Partnership function in all its facets, including the one relative to the circulation of people.
- The maintenance of visa regimes, particularly required of all citizens from SMCs upon entry into Europe, which is in flagrant contradiction to the spirit of the Barcelona Declaration and which very often prevents SMC actors from crossing borders, even when travel has to do with Euro-Mediterranean cooperation projects.

In general, it would be necessary to clearly indicate, and more strongly than has been done to date, the link between the shared values as they were affirmed in the Barcelona Declaration and the economic and social development programmes drawn up with each MNC, in particular with regard to democracy and human rights, good governance and the consolidation of the Rule of Law. By thus establishing a strong link between democratic aspects, good governance, economic and social progress and market liberalisation, greater perspectives for civil society participation in the Euromed Process are created.
With the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), 2008 became the year of the great debate on the Mediterranean, on its centrality and on the complexity characterising relations among shoreline countries. Indeed, the Mediterranean project had not been so euphoric since 1995, the usual atmosphere being rather dismal, particularly after the summit 10 years into the Partnership, a summit nearly marking the end of a process that had, according to its detractors, long suffered from numerous shortcomings.

From the start, the launching of the idea of a ‘Union’ has been a source of mistrust and concern relative to the future of the Barcelona Process. However, its evolution over the course of different reactions, its transformation and its final adaptation to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) will, in the end, be why it will be considered a lifeline for the said Process. With the Union for the Mediterranean, 2008 will be considered the year when the Mediterranean was finally offered an improved EMP framework. Is it really though? Will there be a greater chance for the different dialogues, in particular the political and security dialogue, to gain better perspectives, knowing that we are still part of the EMP, with its priorities and constraints? Did the latter provide the proper content for the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue, and did it lend this content the best treatment?

The establishment of the Barcelona Process in 1995, instituting the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between the European Union and the countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Region, brought great hope with it for several reasons. Finally, the Mediterranean Sea, long considered a border between two worlds, was aspiring to become a common space for peace, stability and shared prosperity, a space for dialogue through which one hoped to settle all conflicts. Hence, the launching of this process was accompanied by a great wave of enthusiasm relative to the oldest conflict known to the Mediterranean in the modern era, namely, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Madrid Peace Process had just begun to blossom, allowing for all sorts of hopes; the European Union could already see itself playing a major role in this conflict and in the region in general. It felt strong and powerful, and launched its political and security policies at the same time, thus attempting to distance itself from its powerful American ally. The proposed Partnership was conceived, according to several experts, as a mechanism for conflict prevention through dialogue, understanding and the exchange of wealth and values.

To a large extent, this vision, too optimist and nearly utopian, did not work. The EMP did not manage to resolve nor prevent any of the conflicts that the region has undergone or is undergoing; nor has it managed to create grounds for understanding on the basis of common values relative to democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, and issues such as those relating to terrorism or immigration remain points of discord.

In the case of conflicts on the south shore of the Mediterranean, the EU, and the EMP in particular, have no influence, nor did they play any role in the bloody crisis that Algeria experienced for a decade, nor in the Western Sahara conflict, nor even in the minor conflict of Leila/Perejil Island between Morocco and Spain. Whenever the mechanism for handling conflicts established within the framework of the Partnership should have come into play, it always failed. Concerning the Middle East conflict, even before the second Intifada and the doubts about the Oslo peace
process, European engagement has often been judged insufficient and lacking resolve by Arab Partners. After the said Intifada, all European efforts died out. Indeed, Israel and the United States did everything they could to make sure that the EU would play no role, or at least only a minimal one. This is essentially due to the weakness of the European position, which, in turn, is due to the division of its members on the attitude to take towards certain international matters and its incapacity to establish a common, homogenous foreign policy.

The Arab South Mediterranean Countries certainly realise the importance and need for change and reforms. Nonetheless, they insist that the process should emerge from within, with no external intervention, hence rejecting the concept of conditionality. This fragility, already extant in the time of the Europe of the 15 (the Balkan conflict, for instance, was not an arena of success for the EU either, and only the intervention of NATO put an end to the conflict in 1999), became manifest after the enlargement of the EU and the admission of new Member States, some of which were also new NATO members. At that point, the division appeared between the “Europeanists” and the “pro-NATO” faction, leaning towards American positions. The Iraq War showed the extent of the divergence between the “old” and the “new” Europe, and above all showed the dimension of the US role in a region that Europe, or at least certain European powers, consider their own.

Insofar as structural political problems associated with democratisation, at the time the EMP was launched, the enthusiasm filling the future partners was on a level with the ambitions of the process engaged. Despite not necessarily matching agendas, the stakeholders of the process believed they were in a position to each attain their separate objectives. For the European Union, the hope was to manage, through the concept of free trade, to convince the South Mediterranean Countries to share its values, in other words, to coax Arab Mediterranean Partners down the path of democratisation and reform of political and legal systems. At that point, the Association Agreements made their appearance as the underlying instruments for applying the Barcelona Partnership, with the famous Article 2, which introduced the principle of conditionality. The latter has been considered negative and ineffective.

With the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU proposed a new form of conditionality, this time qualified as positive because it is based on incentives and encouragement rather than sanctions; action plans have been adopted with certain Mediterranean Partner Countries that consider this policy rather favourable, since, in addition, they have been promised greater access to European markets and freer borders.

The South Mediterranean Countries, however, have never really espoused the project of change; reforms have been of unequal importance, different according to each sphere and country. The Arab South Mediterranean Countries certainly realise the importance and need for change and reforms. Nonetheless, they insist that the process should emerge from within, with no external intervention, hence rejecting the concept of conditionality, whether positive or negative. Wishing to take the initiative, or at least seem as if they had, the Arab Heads of State and Government who were to meet in Tunis at the Summit of the League of Arab States in March 2004 had planned to launch a reform initiative in the Arab world, though this did not occur at the time. The host country, Tunisia, had decided to postpone the summit due to lack of convergence on the topic of reform, certain propositions concerning the need to introduce political and social transformations into Arab countries not eliciting the enthusiasm of all participants. At a second attempt, also in Tunis but this time in May 2004, the Summit’s final declaration finally indicated the will of the Arab Heads of State and Government to initiate reforms, allow greater participation for all in political and public life and open up to all elements of civil society. The Algiers Summit in April 2005 confirmed this trend, as have all other summits thereafter. The fact remains, however, that in the eyes of all observers, nothing has really changed in the Arab world: certain superficial alterations have been effected but no profound transformation has taken place.

It is therefore clear that conditionality, neither as stipulated in the initial version of the EMP nor in the ENP, is not working. It has not incited Mediterranean...
Partner Countries to become more democratic. Yet
despite the limitations, there is no denying that the
EMP has not spared efforts to improve the situation
regarding Rule of Law in the region. Hence, thanks
to the EMP, a good number of Arab Mediterranean
Countries have made commitments in spheres they
had been very reticent to touch on. For instance, within
the framework of the National Indicative Programmes,
a sum on the budget was allocated to governance
quality improvement, the goal being to foster the Rule
of Law, in particular by proceeding to modernise the
justice system and develop the media, domains that
are terribly backward and that these countries had
refused to put on the agenda. Today, they are under-
going major reform.

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The consolidation of civil society has always been
an important objective within the EMP. This has
encouraged certain Arab countries to take the step
and accept the principle of support to the civil
society proposed by the EU, whether for those ele-
ments of civil society intervening on the local level
on issues such as gender, the environment, forests
or reproductive health, or those of a more general
nature intervening in the sphere of the development
and consolidation of human rights and democracy,
the aim being to contribute to supporting and
strengthening the civil society network operating in
the domain of consolidating Rule of Law and pro-
viding support to underprivileged social groups. Thus
many projects relative to these issues have been
carried out or are underway. But much remains to
be done if –after the fashion of Morocco, often cited
as an example of the success of European policy
on the matter– other countries aspire to attain what
is today called, with great enthusiasm, ‘advanced
status.’

In any case, whether within the framework of the
EMP in its original format or within the framework
of the ENP, structural problems persist, which accord-
ing to certain experts are due to the vagueness of the
Euro-Mediterranean political dialogue, often
biased by irrational considerations associated with
exaggeratedly negative perceptions, elicited both in
the North and the South by fundamentalism and ter-
rorism of an Islamic tint, as well as by immigration;
these two phenomena disorient dialogue and make it ineffective.

On both the northern and southern shores of the
Mediterranean, Islamic fundamentalism has long
been considered a major source of threat to secu-
rity and stability in the region. A factor of internal
political destabilisation, fundamentalism has been
combated by South Mediterranean regimes, under
the encouragement of the West, with Europe in the
forefront.

In this regard, the attitude of the European Union
has been rather ambivalent, at first encouraging “vig-
ilance” and measures of prevention against terror-
ism, measures that necessarily entail infringement
of the rights and liberties of individuals, and more
particularly, those of Islamists or at times people who
simply display signs of religiosity. Then, realising that
this anti-Islamist strategy of exclusion represents an
obstacle to any efforts towards reform, the EU adopt-
ed a new position, pressing the governments involved
to accept dialogue with the so-called ‘moderate’
Islamists and to open the way for their political par-
ticipation. This new position is based not only on the
will to end conflicts through inclusion, but also,
and perhaps above all, on a certain conviction that
these ‘moderate Islamists’ show a great deal of inter-
est in reforms concerning Rule of Law and good
governance. EU demands relative to constitutional
reform, electoral laws, anti-corruption laws and eco-
nomic reform converge more with Islamists’ demands
than those of the current governing elites. This
European policy reversal irritates the Southern
Mediterranean regimes, which continue to reject this
logic, the more so since, to the argument that the
Islamists will have different positions on women’s
rights and the application of Sharia in the sphere of
criminal law as well as in that of personal status
and other spheres, the Europeans reply that they
should not be judged on their hidden, presumed
intentions but rather on their public positions and
The projects relevant to this sector are grouped together under the categories of Justice, Liberty and Security; Migration; and Education and Training, designed for diplomats. Among the countries participating in the seven programmes are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and, in a few of them, Turkey.

- **Euromed Justice I (2005-2007)** – 2 million euros supplied by MEDA; and **Euromed Justice II (2008-2011)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): Contributes to the implementation of an open, modern judiciary system by strengthening institutional and administrative capacities in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) and establishing an inter-professional community in order to attain a Euro-Mediterranean space for judiciary cooperation.
  
  www.euromed-justice.eu

- **Euromed Police II (2007-2010)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): Step up cooperation among police forces in the EU and in the MPCs in the struggle against organised crime. Numerous specialised informative and training sessions on police cooperation are to be organised in all partner countries.
  

- **Euromed Migration I (2004-2007)** – 2 million euros (MEDA funds); and **Euromed Migration II (2008-2011)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): This programme focuses on the entire migration process, from countries of origin to destination countries (statistics concerning migratory flows, production and publication of thematic studies on migration and the like) in order to create a space for European cooperation on migratory issues. The aim is to combat illegal migration and make legal migration a tool for economic, social and cultural development between the EU and MEDA countries.
  
  www.euromed-migration.eu

- **EuroMeSCo, Euro-Mediterranean Study and Dialogue on Political Cooperation and Security network (2005-2009)** – 4.9 million euros: Functions as a dialogue manager between the EU and Mediterranean foreign policy institutes via seminars, workshops, conferences, newsletters and a website. In addition, it offers a platform for discussion allowing dialogue on sensitive topics and increasingly strengthening the political cooperation and security process.
  
  www.euromesco.net

- **Middle East Peace Process (2005-2010)** – 20 million euros (MEDA funds): Supports the Middle East Peace Process and cooperation between Israel and Arab countries on cross-border and legal issues, among others, working towards having both parties regain confidence. The project only concerns Israel, Jordan and Occupied Palestinian Territories. Specifically, its primary initiative consists of establishing the EU Partnership for Peace Programme, with a view to providing support for civil society organisations involved in fostering peace, tolerance and non-violence in the Middle East. It also funds regional and national initiatives with the same end.
  
  www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu/

- **Malta Seminars for Diplomats, (2004-2008)** – 940,000 euros (MEDA funds): The Malta Seminars are training sessions for European and Mediterranean diplomats on key aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (political, economic and social cooperation), as well as on European institutions.
  
  www.euromed-seminars.org.mt

For further information:

www.enpi-info.eu

Current approaches. In this dialogue of the deaf, a solution seems none too imminent.

In any case, though positions concerning the participation of Islamists in politics diverge, in the struggle against terrorism, there is perfect agreement, or nearly. In late 2005, the partners agreed on a Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism that would simultaneously guarantee the effectiveness of anti-terrorist measures and respect for human rights. The Code of Conduct above all shows the determination of members of the EMP to employ all means to counter terrorism in the region. The final declaration of the Paris Summit in July 2008 establishing the Union for the Mediterranean and that of the Marseille Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in November 2008 both reiterated the need for applying this Code, which means that this point remains one of the top priorities of the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue.

Insofar as immigration, for at least two decades now, many experts have attempted to establish a direct association between security issues and immigration. Few analysts, on the other hand, have attempted to differentiate between a realistic view of the potential threat inherent to immigration and the subjective perception of what this could be.

**Whether within the framework of the EMP in its original format or within the framework of the ENP, structural problems persist, which are due to the vagueness of the Euro-Mediterranean political dialogue**

In the Euro-Mediterranean context, it is clear that in the Barcelona Declaration, the aim of limiting immigration from southern countries was well established. The perception of immigration as a threat governed European policy, which dealt with this issue solely
from a security angle. It may well be that with 5 million foreign nationals from South Mediterranean Countries (primarily Turks and Maghrebi), Europe could justify a certain degree of concern. The state of poverty in which the great majority of these immigrants live could induce them to embrace violence (as with the case of the inhabitants of French suburbs, for instance, whose movement expresses their discontent), and social exclusion could also foster a type of communitarianism that could easily serve as a breeding ground for supporters of terrorism.

Europe seems more preoccupied by the struggle against illegal immigration and human trafficking rings, such that it prioritises only aspects closely linked to security issues.

This fear, however, should not be allowed to turn into systematic xenophobia and total negligence of immigrants’ rights, the very same immigrants that Europe has needed and will always need, for both economic and demographic reasons. Indeed, European labour force needs will necessarily generate new waves of immigration that will serve to palliate the demographic deficit and the ageing of the population. Certain European countries such as Italy, Germany, Portugal and Spain have opted to eliminate the policy of ‘zero immigration’ launched in the early 1990s, adopting the quota system instead. In this regard, South Mediterranean Countries have always insisted on the importance of creating a Charter of Immigrant Rights, which would be a sort of codification of these rights; the 11 September and 11 March events, however, have not allowed progress in this direction.

The situation is certainly not very favourable for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on immigration, and much less on the worrisome transformation of the region of North Africa into a transit area for Sub-Saharan candidates for immigration to Europe; migratory flows are currently characterised by great mobility, and the South Mediterranean Region, in particular the Maghreb, is becoming a hub for different human movements from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. This entails an increase in illegal immigration as a result of the intense activity of migration rings operating in countries such as Morocco or Algeria. Such a phenomenon changes the content of North-South negotiations on this issue to a certain degree. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should have served as a framework for solving these problems. The cultural basket of the Barcelona Process prescribes a certain degree of cooperation in the sphere of the circulation and settlement of people in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, yet the EU’s attention to this issue has been considered insufficient by the South Mediterranean Countries. Europe seems more preoccupied by the struggle against illegal immigration and human trafficking rings, such that it prioritises only aspects closely linked to security issues.

Europe seems to have wanted to push its borders back all the way to the territory of its neighbours to the south, requesting them to play the role of border guards, not only to counter attempts by their own citizens to cross these borders illegally, but also and particularly to stem Sub-Saharan migratory flows. A number of Euro-Mediterranean Conferences, particularly those of Naples (2003) and Dublin (2004), have insisted on the need to adopt a global approach to immigration. With the new EU Neighbourhood Policy, however, the EMP seems to have taken up a new attitude towards the issue, offering, among other liberties, possible access to free circulation of people, even if this perspective apparently contradicts the will to reduce migratory flows established in European policy. Which leaves the entire problem between both parties unresolved.

The UfM is doomed to paralysis from the start and is currently on the back burner. As in the initial version of the Barcelona Process, it is bogged down by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, becoming its collateral victim.

Clearly, the issue of immigration is of capital importance for the Partners on both shores. It is unquestionably political and must necessarily be treated as such; it should be discussed within the framework of political dialogue (though it is often placed under the category of social, human and cultural cooperation, as, for instance, in the Final Declaration of the
Marseille Meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 3-4 November 2008) so that solutions of a global nature can be adopted.

Will the near future see a better approach to all of the issues discussed above? Will the Union for the Mediterranean, considered a new chance, truly offer better perspectives for Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue, for all that? It is difficult to say for certain. The Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers have reaffirmed that the political and security dialogue within the framework of the Union will continue to put the main emphasis on the political situation in the Middle East, the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism, the further development of dialogue on the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and security issues, and the strengthening of democracy and political pluralism through the development of participation in politics and respect for the ensemble of human rights and fundamental liberties, classical elements of dialogue, in addition to stepping up regional dialogue on joint cooperation, good practices and exchange of experiences in the field of elections (on a voluntary basis upon request by any of the partners) and finally, the prevention, reduction and management of natural and man-made disasters. This, of course, is very positive, but it would seem that the UfM is doomed to paralysis from the start and is currently on the back burner. As in the initial version of the Barcelona Process, it is bogged down by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, becoming its collateral victim, as some like to call it. The war waged by Israel in Gaza against the Palestinian Hamas aroused different reactions in the Arab Mediterranean Countries; both on the level of public opinion and that of leaders, the tone was rather one of condemnation than comprehension of a lax European attitude, which was even considered one of complicity, too close to Israeli positions, as per the declarations of the European Presidency at the time of the war. All of this has demonstrated how illusory it is to get one’s hopes up. The co-presidency found nothing better to say than to announce that “all meetings planned for the Union for the Mediterranean shall be deferred until further notice,” and it was Egypt, forming part of the co-presidency, that formally requested the suspension of the Union for the Mediterranean, assuming the refusal of the Arab States forming part of the Union to return to the negotiations table if it had to be shared with Israel. What will be the outcome? The weeks or months to come may provide an answer. Until then, the Process is at a halt, and all dialogue along with it.

Bibliography


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At a time when regional integration was on the rise, the Mediterranean Region was like an orphan until the Barcelona Process appeared in 1995. The agreement was signed to create a balance between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean by creating a zone of peace and security. Yet in the space of a decade, the project, so welcomed at the start, had demonstrated its limits.

In 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy took note of this and proposed an ambitious Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) project. In the face of objections expressed by certain EU Member States, the French initiative was ‘Europeanised’ and maintained continuity with the Barcelona Process. The aim of this new project has thus become rather opaque, all the more so since the obstacles that led to the failure of the latter have not disappeared, indeed, quite to the contrary. What remains of the French project? Should it be considered a short-lived utopian idea or a real challenge to be met insofar as the imperatives to be handled in this region are important?

The Need to Go Beyond the Barcelona Process

Evoking the need to go beyond the agreement signed in 1995 in the Catalan capital does not imply denying its strong points or its contributions. In any case, conceived of in the context of the 1990s and after the Oslo Accords (1993), the evolution of the project was to reveal imbalances that were to grow ever greater, first among the Process’ three baskets, and secondly, between the partners on either side of the Mediterranean. Decisions were made in Europe and had the value of norms for the ensemble of signatories.

This lack of symmetry became visible in the first decade of the new millennium, following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA. The greater visibility can be attributed to three essential factors: increasing US presence in the region; the implementation of a neighbourhood policy often detrimental to the Southern countries; and the lack of progress in finding solutions to regional conflicts, the most significant being the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The project thus seemed to be at variance with both its initial intention and the expectations of the different populations, in particular those of the South.

Considering the obvious disappointment arising therefrom, the project proposed by Nicolas Sarkozy, which aimed at “breathing new life into the Barcelona Process” thus seemed opportune insofar as substance, though maladroit with regard to method.

This new project could indeed find its raison d’être in the need to reduce the enormous gap in development between the countries on either shore. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe turned towards the East, neglecting its Southern neighbours. The French project at first intended to correct this imbalance and prevent a conflict between Islam and the West, in particular on the definition of universal values.

In order to attain these two objectives, those having conceived of the French project, the advisors to the Head of State, with Henri Guaino in the fore, thought their plan would succeed in avoiding the major obstacles that the 1995 Process had run up against: absence of commitment to searching for a solution to regional conflicts (Israeli-Palestinian, Western Saharan, Turkish and Lebanese-Syrian conflicts); political governance problems in nearly all of the South Shore Countries; difficulty in containing terrorism; poor circulation of people and products, in particu-
lar agricultural ones, within the region; and lack of involvement of the civil society in the project. Yet beyond these factors, well-known and often put forth, there are others, less often admitted, but which obstructed the Barcelona Process just as much. First of all, the Southern Countries were not willing to modify their form of governance. For the elite in place, there was no connection between the economic development expected from this project and their political practices. Moreover, very few countries truly conceived a development project. And finally, for the South Mediterranean Countries, the Barcelona Process did not constitute the appropriate framework for finding solutions to regional conflicts.

It is a fact that the EU has always failed to build a truly common policy with regard to its neighbours to the south, despite the geographical proximity, historical and cultural ties and the presence of a large immigrant community on EU territory.

By the same token, it is a fact that the EU has always failed to build a truly common policy with regard to its neighbours to the south, despite the geographical proximity, historical and cultural ties and the presence of a large immigrant community on EU territory. For the EU Member States, closing the southern borders would necessarily protect the northern Mediterranean shore from the arrival of illegal migrants and terrorism. This political position takes no account whatsoever of the antiquity and intensity of relations that have created networks of solidarity criss-crossing borders.\(^1\)

Above and beyond the grievances that one could impute to the countries in the North or South, there is also the fact that, in both cases, the political elite were unable to cease bilateral relations to the benefit of the multilateral relations advocated by the Barcelona Process. In this regard, it is not the Process that was to blame, but its application. On both sides of the Mediterranean, the political elite lacked political audacity in applying the clauses. They feared that a drastic change might upset their relations. In any case, these underlying causes of the Process’ stalemate have been carefully concealed. For the sake of political and intellectual convenience, the regularly expressed argument to explain the stalemate was the worsening of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the impossibility of reinitiating talks between Israelis and Arabs.\(^2\)

For all of these reasons, whether real or declared, ten years after it was launched, the Barcelona project no longer met the expectations of the Member States. On 27-28 November 2005, the summit that was to mark the Process’ 10th anniversary was boycotted by the majority of Heads of State and Government from the South Mediterranean Countries. Only the Turkish Head of State and the President of the Palestinian Authority attended, along with the EU members.

France and its Neighbours to the South

It is in the context of this crisis in North-South Mediterranean relations that Nicolas Sarkozy proposed a new project, which he generally described at Tangier on his visit to Morocco in the autumn of 2007. In its initial version, the project undeniably expressed a certain number of specifically French concerns. It is true that, even more so than other European countries, France cannot ignore its southern neighbours due to their geographical proximity, a common past involving colonialism and the presence of a significant Maghrebi community that has been living in France for many years, and nearly half of which has French nationality today (approximately 3 million). Add to this links of a cultural order which bring the Maghreb even closer to France, as well as highly significant economic connections. These diverse factors have created very strong, particular ties between the two.

France felt it needed to redefine its relation with the countries of this region in order to turn over a new leaf after colonialism, while retaining an influence in an area coveted, in particular, by the United States. Paris thus had to rethink its ambitions and policy while

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considering how to protect its interests in a globalised system that allowed the emergence of new actors such as China or Japan. However, at the start of the 21st century, despite the intensity of historical ties, relations between Paris and the Maghreb have been marked by crises with Algiers and a sort of ‘paternalism’ vis-à-vis the Moroccan royal family, hardly conceivable from a perspective of international relations. The climate thus needs to be stabilised and these relations set within a more neutral framework with regard to the two major Maghreb countries. This neutrality is all the more difficult, since any diplomatic action judged as benevolent towards one of the two countries is interpreted as an aggression towards the other. This ‘political paranoia,’ whose roots lie in decolonisation, complicates political relations. The tensions that have recurrently appeared over the past few years between France and Algeria essentially go back to historical reasons and divergences existing on the conception of the friendship project proposed by Jacques Chirac in 2003, which was never followed up. This episode reveals the inability of both parties to come to an agreement and join forces to write a common past dispassionately. The historians who undertook this task have been interrupted, the political leaders believing they could stand in their stead. According to the official version, the French textbooks on the colonial period lend no space to the colonised peoples. Attesting to this is France’s 23 February 2005 law on the positive nature of colonisation, perceived as a glorification of a terribly dark, difficult period for Algeria. In reality, this law was but a pretext revealing the state to which relations between the two countries had fallen. These longstanding poor relations were fuelled by the issue of visas, considered of the utmost importance, since it prevents the circulation of peoples, whereas the circulation of ideas and, above all, products, is highly encouraged.

Without yielding to repentance or apologising to Algiers, Paris had to redefine relations, and the regional framework seemed ideal for overcoming the French-Algerian standoff. The initial version of the project was at once strong and ambitious. Strong, because it took into consideration history, the area of primary concern and the shortcomings of the existing Process. Ambitious, because its aim was to balance two neighbouring regions that are interdependent in many respects. Moreover, it was perceived as a project embodying the French desire to correct the Atlantic-oriented image attributed to Nicolas Sarkozy, and as a signal sent by France to the Arabic world –beyond the Maghreb– to indicate that France’s friendliness towards Israel did not at all imply a lack of commitment towards it, whether the issue be the Syrian-Lebanese crisis or Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And finally, many saw this project as a political framework for Ankara, should Turkey not accede to the EU.

New North-South Relations

Beyond France’s specific reasons for redefining relations between the two geographical and cultural areas, there are also factors concerning the ensemble of EU countries that were certainly taken into account in establishing this new project. Indeed, the Mediterranean is the only area in the world where the gap between two shores is so wide. In terms of GDP, the difference is on a scale of one to ten, with an average of 30,000 dollars per inhabitant in the north shore countries as compared to only 3,000 on average in the south shore countries. According to the analysts of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), some 40 million jobs would have to be created by the year 2020, on the other side of the Mediterranean, for the current unemployment rate not to rise, considering the demographic growth in these countries. Naturally, these figures, which show the imbalance between the two shores, are well known and various policies have been adopted and institutions created to mitigate this: the Euro-Arab Dialogue (European Economic Community and the Arab League) up until 1980, the 5+5 Dialogue launched in 1990 for multilateral cooperation on Western Mediterranean security issues, then the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean was held in 1991, the Mediterranean Forum in 1994 on the initiative of France and Egypt, the Barcelona Process in 1995, and finally, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), created in 2002 to accelerate the integration of Eastern European countries, before being expanded to include the Mediterranean countries in order to strengthen bilateral cooperation initiatives. For Nicolas Sarkozy, these institutions were useful in the past but are insufficient today; hence the idea of changing the method to go further and bring the Mediterranean as a whole back to the heart of
European geopolitics, relying on the coastal countries, which are the ones with the greatest interest in balancing the two shores. Considered in its initial format, the project seemed all the more attractive because it intended to associate the countries of the South with the definition of a content that was left deliberately vague. But despite its allure, the project’s application revealed two factors that seemed to have been neglected by Paris. On the one hand, France broke away from the EU countries, with which it had been engaged in the Barcelona Process, and on the other hand, the project did not sufficiently take into account the capacity of the Southern countries to act as real partners.

The ‘Europeanisation’ of the French Project

How can a regional Euro-Mediterranean project be conceived of without consulting the EU countries? Whatever the force of its project, by acting alone, France was implicitly imposing its leadership on the whole of the area concerned. The absence of consensus with Madrid or even Berlin was considered a will to marginalise the actors of the Barcelona Process and keep Germany away from the Mediterranean Region in order to launch a competing project directed by Paris. In order to prevent accusations and indictments, Spain quickly proposed turning the French initiative into a continuation of the Barcelona Process by considering it as ‘Barcelona Plus’. Instead of the difference of nature imagined and sought by the Élysée Palace, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratínos counter-proposed a difference of degree. But it was the German position that was the determining factor for the project’s future.

For Germany and other countries such as Denmark, if the project is European, it must concern all EU countries.

Berlin opposed the project for two essential reasons: because the latter excluded the European countries not bordering the Mediterranean, and because it could contribute to dividing the EU. For Germany and other countries such as Denmark, if the project is European, it must concern all EU countries. France, which could not turn its back on the EU countries on the eve of its term in the EU Presidency, thus had to reach a compromise.

During a meeting in Hanover in March 2008, a jointly developed text was submitted to the European Council. This document, which allowed 27 EU Member States and the European Commission to join the project, proposed the creation of a Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), conceived according to the German Chancellor as “an EU project with the South Mediterranean Countries.” It therefore consisted of extending the Barcelona Process by lending it new impulse. The only thing remaining of the French project is the ambition of organising the Euro-Mediterranean space in another way. The main change between the two projects resides in a greater symmetry between the North and South Mediterranean partners. The latter were invited to define the content and two new bodies were created to materialise their participation: the Presidency and the Secretariat of the UfM. This Secretariat, which was in principle to be hosted by a country in the South and piloted by a significant individual from the South, was to play a very important role in the new organisation. It is indeed in charge of supervising cooperation projects and the replacement of the Euromed Committee by a meeting of high government officials and a joint Standing Committee. It shall deal with ‘concrete projects’ instead of defining general spheres of cooperation. These projects are relative to the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, the development of maritime and land highways and the establishment of a Mediterranean energy market, activities already underway as part of the EMP, such as the Horizon 2020 programme. By the same token, the intention of making a clean sweep of all existing programmes was replaced by the continuation of activities already underway as part of the Barcelona Process, but henceforth gathered together under a single programme. Though the projects are not wholly new, and the spheres covered are more or less the same, the institutional framework is not. The conclusions of the past few Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences already anticipated them and the co-presidency system is a French wish dating back several years now.³

³ See the conclusions and recommendations of the fourth, seventh and eighth Euro-Mediterranean Conferences, held respectively in Marseille (15-16 November 2000), Luxembourg (30 May 2005) and Tampere (27-28 November 2006).
In this case, to what extent are we really dealing with a new project? The continuation of a project, upon whose ruins the French project was to rise, creates a real problem of readability. On the pedagogical level, how can one explain to the civil society of the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean that one wishes to unite that this project is not fundamentally different from the one repudiated to justify the launching of the French project? What measures does the new project plan to undertake in order to overcome the obstacles encountered by the Barcelona Process?

Avoiding the Pitfalls of the Barcelona Process

To overcome the stalemate and create an area of peace and prosperity, a number of conditions seem requisite. Whatever the nature of the issues to be handled (de-pollution of the sea, education and so on), they should be pursued with a political will and debated on a popular level on both sides of the sea, which was never the case within the framework of the Barcelona Process.

On the economic level, we know how great the challenge is, given the difference in development levels between the countries along the north and south shores. To reduce the gap in standard of living, the EU has granted aid to substantial development, whether within the framework of EC policy or through bilateral relations, yet disregarding the matter of good governance in the States concerned. Though the clauses exist regarding cross-compliance, they have never been applied.

In any case, development assistance in the sphere of good governance cannot be limited to financial aid. In the South Mediterranean countries, the problem is not necessarily nor in all cases a lack of resources, but much more so poor governance (unequal distribution of wealth, machine politics, corruption and the like). On this fundamental issue, the UfM has included no particular clause.

These matters of governance complicate the symmetry between the two shores. The countries in the South experience numerous difficulties in being treated as full partners qualified to hold sway in decisions and define the content of a regional project together with the Europeans. This role as partners implies that they are at once co-financers and producers of ideas or counter-proposals. Apart from one or two countries, the south shore is in a highly precarious situation: changing economies, populations primarily composed of youth struggling to find their place within a globalised world and at times in their home countries. These countries, moreover, are experiencing new forms of insecurity with the consolidation of radical Islam, which has allied itself to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

There is also weak social mobility, an absence of Rule of Law and a supremacy of nationalist ideals that prevents them from perceiving the advantages of building an integrated region. As long as Rule of Law is deficient, the business community will continue to sanction the poor governance of these countries by refusing to invest in markets where there is no security for economic transactions. These difficulties are also related to the poor quality of both legal systems and policies for attracting and following up on investment.

Other factors render the implementation of this Union likewise difficult. They relate to an absence of trust among the countries on either shore. For the political elite of the South, the EU countries are concerned about nothing but their own interests. The projects accepted by the European Commission on 20 May 2008 go to prove this, as they did not correspond to any of the immediate priorities, whether they be de-pollution of the sea, the development of solar energy or cooperation on issues of protection against natural disaster. For the South, the Europeans wish first and foremost to sell off their products and consolidate their market shares in South Mediterranean countries, while curbing immigration and terrorism. Yet a climate of trust is also terribly lacking among the countries of the South, divergences and conflicts continuing to weigh upon diplomatic relations.

Though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often cited, it is not the only one. The issue of Cyprus has not been settled, and the political conflict between Damascus and Beirut, the problem of Western Sahara and, more generally, relations between Algiers and Rabat are some of the dissensions that could jam up the UfM.

Despite all of these obstacles, it must be kept in mind that this regional dynamic is absolutely necessary for both shores. The South has no other project for entering the globalised world and catching up with other regions. With regard to Europe, it must also be concerned with the countries bordering it to the South, as Germany has been with Eastern Europe and the United States with Latin America.
The Evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Trade Framework

The year 2008 was an important one for Euro-Mediterranean trade relations. Tariffs were completely dismantled in the first southern Mediterranean country, Tunisia, within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area, and the direst scenarios regarding the potential economic impact did not come to pass (nor, it must be said, did the rosiest ones). At the same time, significant advances were made on certain points of the negotiations on trade in services and agricultural products with several countries from the southern shore, although, overall, progress continues to be slow and uneven. This is a constant of the Euro-Mediterranean trade liberalisation process, which, albeit at great pains and with considerable delays, nevertheless does progress.

At the institutional level, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was approved, whose Secretariat is headquartered in Barcelona in a nod to the origins of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to the continuity of its founding principles. Among them, free trade plays a pre-eminent role, indeed, to such an extent that the Barcelona Process is often blamed for having given rise to excessive polarisation with regard to trade issues and, within them, to trade policy measures. Finally, in October, Morocco was granted advanced status as the next step in the Neighbourhood Policy and eventual successor to the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. It thus seems appropriate to examine the recent evolution of Euro-Mediterranean trade relations, which, in light of the latest developments, are a key facet of the geo-economic interests on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Broadly speaking, Euro-Mediterranean trade integration is evolving along three main policy lines: efforts to widen the integration, efforts to deepen it and efforts to make it more complete. The first line refers to the inclusion of more Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) and to the broadening of the different lists of products included in the tariff reduction timetable for each one. Deepening the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) is the latest Community mantra, which, as explained below, does not necessarily have any of the linear effects implicitly contained in the Commission's discourse. In the following pages, it will be argued that the evolution in both these spheres has been positive, although progress has undeniably been quite gradual and efforts should ideally be intensified, especially with regard to the institutional aspects of trade. Finally, the most complex process is that of completing the current agreements through the full inclusion of trade in agricultural products and services. This article will examine each of these lines, and the ensuing additional challenges, in the respective sections.

The Widening and Implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area

The criticism received by the Euro-Mediterranean trade liberalisation process as a result of the Barcelona Process stems from the fact that the process has not achieved its objectives, in part due to the greater weight given to free trade over the other Euro-Mediterranean Partnership baskets. However, the latter point can be qualified in that, whilst tangible progress has indeed largely been confined to the conclusion of FTAs with the MPCs, this should not be understood as owing to any fault on the part of the economic basket, but rather to foot-dragging on the other dimensions set out in Barcelona. Thus qualified, there exists a broad consensus on this aspect, too, although it is worth wondering what...
SIGNIFICANT EUROMED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS: ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP

This is the pillar that has the greatest number of initiatives, grouped under the categories of: Economy; Energy; Environment; Information Society; and Transport. It aims to foster economic conditions favourable to growth, the reform of key sectors, and above all, the establishment of a Free Trade Area by 2010. In order to attain these objectives, the regional programme is currently funding a total of 27 different projects. Under the category of Economy, the regional programme funds some ten projects that foster opportunities for investment, the establishment of priorities and good statistics-keeping in or among Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and Turkey.

- **Agadir Agreement – EU Support Project (2004-2008) – 4 million euros (MEDA funds):** This is an EU project to support the efforts of four Mediterranean Partner Countries – Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – to develop a Free Trade Area. The Agadir 2 Project should start in 2009, with a budget of 4 million euros.
  [www.agadiragreement.org](http://www.agadiragreement.org)

- **ANIMA Investment Network – Investment Promotion (2002-2007) – 3.95 million euros (MEDA funds):** This multinational platform encourages investment in the Euromed Region by increasing the efficiency of Mediterranean Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) via international conferences, studies and travelling events.

- **INVEST in MED (2008-2011) – 9 million euros (funds from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, ENPI, for the South Mediterranean):** The programme organises Business to Business (B2B) meetings to develop long-term partnerships among the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) on both the South and North shores of the Mediterranean, as well as workshops to consolidate institutional ties among business organisations with a view to fostering investment and facilitating trade between the EU and the Euromed Region.
  [www.invest-in-med.eu](http://www.invest-in-med.eu)

- **Euromed Quality (2004-2008) – 7.26 million euros (MEDA funds):** This awareness-raising programme trains experts in the Mediterranean Region on the different stages of quality control in order to facilitate the development and commercialisation of quality products, that is, products competitive on the export market.
  [www.euromedquality.org](http://www.euromedquality.org)

- **Euromed Market (2002-2008) – 9.2 million euros (MEDA funds):** Fosters improved comprehension of the regulatory framework necessary for implementing the Association Agreement between the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries and strengthens economic cooperation.
  [www.euromedmarket.org](http://www.euromedmarket.org)

- **FEMISE – Socioeconomic Research (2005-2009) – 4.9 million euros (MEDA funds):** Funds a network of research institutes with a view to assisting MPCs to undertake economic and social reform. The aim is to begin economic transition towards a Free Trade Area and to make progress in social policy matters.
  [www.femise.org](http://www.femise.org)

- **Support to FEMIP (2007-2013) – 32 million euros:** It contributes to the FEMIP (Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership) effort. FEMIP was set up in 2002 by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to foster the sustainable economic development of the MPCs via investment in infrastructures, particularly fostering the development of the private.

- **ADR MEDA – Alternative Commercial Arbitration (2005-2008) – 1.1 million euros (MEDA funds):** Strengthens methods for settling commercial disputes, with particular attention to the SMEs, in order to facilitate international South-South trade and foreign investment.
  [www.adrmeda.org](http://www.adrmeda.org)

- **Meditbikar – Innovation and Technology (2006-2009) – 7.25 million euros (MEDA funds):** Offers MPCs new instruments to stimulate innovation in public and private enterprise and to encourage the establishment of networks.
  [www.meditbikar.net](http://www.meditbikar.net)

- **MEDSTAT II – Statistics Cooperation (2006-2009) – 30 million euros:** Steps up the capacity of the pertinent authorities of the MPCs to collect updated, appropriate and relevant statistics, guaranteeing reliability and coherence.

- **EAMGM - Euro-Arab Mashreq Gas Market Project, (2005-2008) – 6 million euros (MEDA funds):** Supports the development of an integrated gas market in four countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) in view of creating a regional gas market as a preliminary step to integrating with the EU Internal Gas Market.
  [www.eamgcc.org](http://www.eamgcc.org)

- **Integrated Electricity Market Development (2007-2010) – 4.9 million euros (MEDA funds):** Supports the development of an integrated electricity market in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and between these three Maghreb countries and the EU by harmonising their legal and regulatory frameworks.
  [www.med-emp.eu](http://www.med-emp.eu)

  [www.med-emp.eu](http://www.med-emp.eu)

  [www.med-ene.com](http://www.med-ene.com)

- **MED-REG – Energy Regulators (2008-2009) – 300,000 euros (MEDA funds):** Supports the development of a modern, efficient regulatory framework on energy matters in MPCs and strengthens their cooperation with energy regulators of the EU.
  [www.remepl.org/medreg](http://www.remepl.org/medreg)

- **EMVIS – Cooperation in the Water Sector (2004-2008) – 3.3 million euros (MEDA funds, Spain, Italy, France):** A tool for the exchange of information and implementation of cooperation programmes in the water sector, both within each MPC and among them.
  [www.emvis.net](http://www.emvis.net)

- **MEDA Water – Resource Management (2003-2008) – 40 million euros (MEDA funds):** Encourages regional cooperation and develops proposals for water management by increasing skills, training, information and exchange of experiences.
  [www.medawater-rmsu.org](http://www.medawater-rmsu.org)

  [www.smaponline.net](http://www.smaponline.net)

(Continue)
would have become of Euro-Mediterranean relations in such a rocky period as the one experienced in the region since 1995 had the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership not existed.

It is true that the FTAs concluded, many of which have not yet reached the stage of substantial liberalisation, have not galvanised the economies of the MPCs or sparked an overall process of economic and institutional reform, let alone led to the region’s democratisation. However, free trade in and of itself cannot be expected to solve such a complex issue as the development and democratisation of the MPCs. At most, free trade can contribute to the economic development and modernisation of certain institutions directly involved in trade activity, especially given that the FTAs are glaringly incomplete due to their failure to fully include trade in agricultural goods and services.

Upon closer inspection, it is clear that, despite the shortcomings and delays in the trade liberalisation process, the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean have indeed made progress in this area. Tariffs have gradually been reduced in accordance with the FTAs that have entered into force each day, and Libya, which is not a formal member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, do not have FTAs. Moreover, so far, the MPCs have not resorted to safeguard measures to stall or block the process.
Slowly but surely, and with significant lags between their signing and actual implementation, these agreements have been broadened to include most of the southern Mediterranean. The FTA with Tunisia was completed in January 2008 without the need for safeguard measures of any kind. Morocco has likewise progressed according to the timetable set out under its FTA and is currently in the final, and most costly, stage of the process, dismantling the tariffs on locally manufactured goods. It thus seems likely that the FTA will have been completed by 2012. Other countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, have also made progress, albeit more slowly, on trade liberalisation with the EU. Even the Algerian government, one of the last to implement its FTA and only in the early stages of the tariff reduction process, has expressed satisfaction with the results of its implementation to date. Syria, although a latecomer to the trade liberalisation process as the only member country of the Barcelona Process that, at the time of the writing of this article, has not ratified its Association Agreement, has likewise taken major steps, including signing the Association Agreement (December 2008) amending the draft agreed in 2004, which is slated to be ratified in 2009.

Finally, a key issue is the lack of economic integration among the countries on the southern shore. The inability of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to promote greater sub-regional integration on the southern shore has been one of the strongest criticisms levied against it. Increased integration of the MPCs’ production systems is certainly desirable, although perhaps more for political reasons than economic ones. As the potential for trade among small economies such as those of the MPCs is minor in comparison to the powerful draw of the much larger EU market, significant intensification of intraregional trade flows should not be expected and would moreover have to overcome serious political obstacles. Gravitational models show that the greatest economic potential lies between Algeria and Morocco on the one hand and Israel and its neighbours on the other. The history of southern Mediterranean integration is not encouraging, and the Agadir initiative promoted by the EU is but the latest to highlight the limits of a strategy based on simply widening and adding new trade agreements. Unlike the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, whose objectives do include (if somewhat optimistically) intraregional integration, the Neighbourhood Policy is silent on the issue, and this absence of the southern dimension of the integration has spawned some of the harshest criticism received from economists. The UfM, in contrast, addresses the issue differently, following a physical integration approach based on the construction of regional energy and transport infrastructure. Most likely, the solution will hinge on surmounting the obstacle entailed by the rules of origin and technical standards; however, this aspect will be discussed at greater length in the following section.

The Deepening of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area

In addition to the issue of tariff reductions by the MPCs, recent years have seen a growing emphasis on the institutional component of trade liberalisation. The most important aspects are the handling of the rules of origin, industrial standards and dispute settlement mechanisms. Although these highly technical issues are hardly riveting at first glance, they are critical due to their bearing on the argument of institutional development as a key factor in the economic development of the MPCs. More specifically, they are critical to the European vision of promoting the MPCs’ institutional modernisation through selective convergence with the EU acquis on the internal market (Escribano, 2005).

In addition to the issue of tariff reductions by the MPCs, recent years have seen a growing emphasis on the institutional component of trade liberalisation

Cumulation of origin allows the parties to an FTA to use inputs from another member in the production of goods that will ultimately be considered as originating in the country where the final processing is performed. Cumulation is based on a network of preferential agreements, whose origin protocols must include identical rules. The Pan-Euro-Mediterranean cumulation of origin project was launched at the Euromed Trade Ministers’ Meeting held in Toledo in March 2002, during the Spanish Presidency of the EU, and includes the expansion of Pan-European diagonal cumulation to include all Mediterranean partners. To this end, it was necessary to adopt a Pan-
Euro-Mediterranean Protocol on Rules of Origin (2003) and to change all the origin protocols of the FTAs, a process that has gradually been completed. The European Commission is currently working on the design of a single ‘regional convention’ to replace the complicated network of protocols, which would considerably reduce transaction costs for Euro-Mediterranean trade.

Another key factor in deepening the FTA lies in the negotiation of bilateral agreements on conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products. Some MPCs have shown interest in bringing their technical regulations into line with the conformity assessment standards and procedures applied in the EU; however, it is quite a costly process, even for countries with more institutional resources, such as Turkey (Togan and Dogan, 2009). A large share of the institutional argument in favour of deepening the FTA is based precisely on regulatory convergence. At present, only Israel appears to be in a position to undertake such a commitment more or less immediately, although Israeli regulations are geared more toward the US model than the Community one (Sadeh, 2004). In other words, it is not the differences in the regulations that must be overcome, but rather the lack of institutional and infrastructure capacity to successfully implement them. By way of example, the conclusion of Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance (ACAAs) in certain sectors has no effect where there is not also a network of suitable laboratories, personnel and resources.

The third factor related to deepening consists of establishing a common dispute settlement mechanism. The European Commission tabled a proposal to this end in January 2006 and, following its approval by the Council, began bilateral negotiations with Algeria and, subsequently, Morocco. It is expected to begin similar talks with Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority shortly. In very simplified terms, these negotiations pose two problems and have one limitation. First, by definition, trade defence and anti-dumping measures are not covered by such mechanisms. Second, in keeping with the principle of transparency, the procedures must include public hearings, which tends to provoke resistance on the part of less transparent countries, which in turn, are the ones most in need of these mechanisms.

Finally, the serious limitation of these mechanisms is that they only affect bilateral disputes, that is, a European company’s business may be afforded stronger protection in an MPC than a company from that country itself. This aspect is crucial as it runs counter to the modernisation argument: the property rights of the citizens of the MPCs are not better protected and this curtails their impact as a factor in institutional modernisation. In short, the different aspects of the deepening of the Free Trade Area address only the trade dimension of the challenge of institutional modernisation, which is logical; however, they do not do so in an operational manner, as the improvement of institutional capacities, which requires its own financing facility, is not explicitly contemplated.

Completing the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by Including Agriculture and Services

In any event, progress on free trade in manufactured goods is the most advanced aspect of the process, especially in terms of the widening and application of tariff reductions to new countries and groups of industrial products. In contrast, progress on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products and services has been even slower than on the institutional deepening of international trade activity. The following pages offer a brief overview of current trends with regard to both issues.

The Association Agreements include revision clauses concerning the provisions on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural, processed agricultural and fishery products. In November 2005, the EU Council adopted a negotiating mandate to continue with the liberalisation of trade in these types of agricultural products. In theory, the Rabat Road Map of the same year provides for reciprocal and asymmetric trade liberalisation for these products, except for those sensitive products included on a negative list, which were determined based on overlapping production calendars, local and regional impact, and development and competitiveness levels by sector. This new focus is promising insofar as it includes the concepts of reciprocity, gradualism and asymmetry (Lorca et al., 2006); however, it has proven to be slow and quite costly politically. Talks were initiated at the Marrakech Conference of Trade Ministers (March 2006) and, at the time of the writing of this article, the EU had reached new agricultural agreements with Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

The negotiations with Jordan were completed in 2005, prior to the Marrakech Conference. They
entered into force in 2006 and are slated to be taken up again in 2009 with a view to making further progress on liberalisation. With regard to the EU, the European market has been completely open to Jordanian agricultural products since 2006, except for seven sensitive products (cut flowers, new potatoes, garlic, cucumbers, lemons, strawberries and virgin olive oil), for which it has been only partially liberalised and is regulated by means of quotas. These quotas will be gradually increased through 2010, when the products will have unfettered access to the EU (except for cut flowers and olive oil). Entry prices will be kept in place, but will be reduced for certain products at certain times of year. As for Jordan, the opening of its markets under the agreement will be more gradual (asymmetry); however, most agricultural trade, except for 12 products, will be liberalised by 2013.

The revised agricultural protocol for the Agreement with Israel was signed in July 2008 and entails a greater liberalisation of trade in agricultural and processed agricultural products between the parties. Under the protocol, stock will be taken of the situation three years from the protocol’s entry into force with a view to increasing concessions. It includes a limited list of sensitive products for both parties, which will nevertheless receive preferential treatment, which, in the case of the EU, shall be implemented by means of duty-free tariff quotas, entry calendars and entry prices. The revision of the agricultural protocol with Egypt was signed in June 2008 and entails progress on bilateral concessions on agricultural, processed agricultural and fishery products. The revision establishes certain sensitive products for both parties (for the EU, tomatoes, garlic, courgettes, cucumbers, artichokes, grapes and strawberries; for Egypt, processed agricultural products), maintains the entry price system in the EU for all products and provides for a meeting two years from its entry into force to further the liberalisation.

The Commission hopes to reach similar agreements with the other MPCs as soon as possible. The negotiations with Morocco are fairly advanced, and talks have begun with Tunisia. The case of Algeria is different, since the recent entry into force of the FTA (2005) already includes major concessions and a status review with a view to making further commitments in five years. With Morocco, the starting positions reflect the differing views of what constitutes ‘completing’ the FTA through the inclusion of agriculture. Thus, the EU’s offer specifies six sensitive products (courgettes, garlic, strawberries, cucumbers, clementines and, above all, tomatoes) for which access conditions to the EU market are improved, through both increased quotas and greater flexibility thereof, whilst entry prices are maintained. Morocco, in contrast, has made the revision of the agricultural agreement contingent on broadening its advanced status to include agriculture based on the Green Morocco Plan and seeks to join the Common Market Organisation for fruit and vegetables.

This notwithstanding, the differences appear to lie in the degree of reciprocity that Morocco is willing to grant the EU, deemed insufficient by the European Commission. At present, virtually all Moroccan agricultural exports receive preferential treatment (96%) and the EU believes that Morocco should open its market more (62% of Community agricultural exports receive preferential treatment in Morocco), in particular with regard to continental products, such as grains and dairy products. Morocco also disagrees with the liberalisation timetable, offering periods of five to ten years, which the European Commission considers too long.

Regardless of how quickly or slowly tariff barriers are reduced, the Commission seems to be aware of the importance of technical barriers, especially the regulations on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, which once again raises the issue of the MPCs’ institutional capacity, not so much to adopt the regulations as to enforce them. As noted by Lorca et al. (2006), mere trade measures cannot comprehensively address issues as complex as Mediterranean agriculture, whose development in the MPCs requires a political commitment between both shores and within the EU itself, in order to encompass measures for rural development and agricultural modernisation that require a more global approach and significant support measures for the sector.

The second factor required to complete the FTAs is the liberalisation of trade in services, which, in keeping with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), includes the right of establishment. Talks began in 2006 at the Marrakech Conference based on the principles of the GATS, respect for the economic development of the MPCs and trade in services between the MPCs themselves. By November 2005, the EU Council had already adopted a mandate establishing the guidelines to be followed by the European Commission. The Commission is pursuing a two-track approach: at the regional level, it aims to agree to a common template with elements acceptable to all par-
ties; subsequently, and based on this template, it aims to negotiate bilateral agreements including lists of specific commitments with each MPC. The Association Agreements would thus be completed with additional protocols on trade in services. Since then, bilateral talks have been undertaken with Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Israel, and the Commission is expecting to complete the bilateral phase by late 2009. This differentiated approach would make it possible to reflect the preferences of each MPC with a view to ensuring that the economic development of each country is not hindered by the opening of those services in which it is not currently competitive but could be in the future.

With regard to promoting the sub-regional dimension (liberalisation of services among MPCs themselves), two mechanisms are used. First, the negotiations provide for the application of the most-favoured nation (MFN) clause at the sub-regional level, whereby concessions granted between the EU and an MPC are automatically extended to the other MPCs. Second, the regional MFN clause allows MPCs to make additional concessions amongst themselves without the obligation to extend them to the EU (Aparici and Betés, 2009).

The MPCs are wary of irreversibly damaging the national capacities of a service sector that is hard-pressed to compete with the EU

In July 2008, in Marseille, the Ministers of Trade agreed to continue holding regional meetings and to prepare those MPCs that had not yet begun these meetings for them. Despite the Commission’s intentions, the perspectives for liberalisation are limited. The EU’s controversial experience with the Bolkestein directive, which did not prosper in the EU itself, underscores the difficulties in liberalising services in the Euro-Mediterranean sphere. On the one hand, the MPCs are wary of irreversibly damaging the national capacities of a service sector that is hard-pressed to compete with the EU, especially with regard to advanced services, such as telecommunications, financial services, etc. On the other hand, the MPCs insist on including labour mobility under Mode 4 of the GATS, which would consolidate the liberalisation of the provision of services by citizens from the MPCs who have migrated to the EU. This would allow professionals from the MPCs to benefit from their comparative advantages vis-à-vis EU citizens. For now, the EU has been quite reluctant to accept this demand and, especially, to broaden it to include not only the high value-added professional services that the EU might sanction but also less qualified, albeit no less necessary, services, such as seasonal agricultural or hospitality-industry workers. A step of this kind would be a major qualitative change and a very strong incentive for one of the groups that has least benefited to date from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, namely, immigrants from rural areas. Even if it did not affect seasonal workers, a mechanism that contributed to legalising labour flows would have a considerable impact. Indeed, the search for legal channels for labour flows is one of the factors to be promoted in the emerging European immigration policy, although the economic difficulties make it more politically costly at present, as seen in the lack of definition in the handling of this issue in the advanced status granted to Morocco.

Conclusions

This overview of the recent evolution of Euro-Mediterranean FTAs highlights the transition from a debate based on the static effects of free trade, understood as the mere dismantling of tariffs, to a debate on the best way to accompany free trade with other types of measures. In other words, as far as policy formulation is concerned, the debate consists of determining which additional measures are required for free trade and market integration to have a more positive impact on the lives of the citizens of the MPCs and, in particular, on the most disadvantaged among them. On the one hand lies the transition from a trade liberalisation process based on tariff measures to one based on the convergence of standards and institutional improvements, with a view to allowing participants to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by free trade. On the other lies the question of how to make the liberalisation process inclusive, in the sense of improving living conditions for the most disadvantaged.

It is important to understand the dual dimension, convergence of rules and institutional improvement, of the MPCs’ trade framework. Merely adopting rules will not lead to their immediate implementation if the
institutions responsible for enforcing them are not up to the task. Regulatory convergence toward the EU acquis on the single market calls for a major effort to provide the necessary institutional resources for implementation and enforcement. These shortcomings require more technical cooperation, but also budgetary support when the appropriate conditions are met. In a sense, the time has come for a second transition from an emerging model based on regulatory deepening to a new model offering the necessary resources to ensure that this deepening can be implemented and that it has the effects that regulation alone cannot set into motion.

The debate consists of determining which additional measures are required for free trade and market integration to have a more positive impact on the lives of the citizens of the MPCs

As for how to improve the quality of life of the most impoverished segments of the populations of the MPCs, completing the FTAs by including agriculture and, in the medium-term, services would seem to be the most cogent policy. Again, the full inclusion of agriculture in the FTA requires technical and financial cooperation to modernise the agricultural structures of the MPCs. To date, trade liberalisation measures have largely tended to benefit the economic elites of the MPCs. As a result, large segments of the MPCs' populations are completely indifferent to the Barcelona Process and trade liberalisation as a whole (to speak of disaffection would be to imply the existence of a significant impact on their lives). In this context, one must ask whether the three main lines of EU trade policy toward the MPCs should be given the same priority. If the guiding principle were to be inclusiveness, these lines might be better summed up as completing, completing and completing.

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Economic Convergence and Divergence of Southern Mediterranean Countries with the European Union

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One of the main objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is to enhance economic and financial cooperation between member countries and to create an area of shared prosperity through sustainable socioeconomic development. Therefore, one of the Partnership’s strategies is to promote economic conditions that foster growth.

In this article, we will examine the economic transformation processes that have taken place since 1995 in member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in order to determine whether these processes have contributed to the convergence of the southern Mediterranean economies with the economies of the European Union.

To do so, we must determine the extent to which the southern Mediterranean economies have closed the gap with the economies of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and whether there is a trend toward homogenisation.

We will likewise look at whether the incorporation of new countries in 2004 and 2007, giving rise to the present-day EU-27, has had any effect on the economic convergence or divergence between the countries on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Real Convergence

Economic convergence refers to the tendency of economies to draw even over a given period of time, i.e., it occurs when per capita income growth has been faster in those countries that began with a lower per capita income than in those countries that were initially better off.

To analyse the real convergence of the economies on both shores of the Mediterranean since the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was launched, we will first look at the evolution of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of the southern economies compared to that of the countries of the European Union, understood first as the 15 Member States that made up the Union in 1995 and then as the current group of 27 Member States.

Chart 3 compares GDP per capita (PPP) between 1995 and 2007 in the southern Mediterranean countries participating in the Barcelona Process with the mean for the EU-15. In other words, if we assume that the standard mean per capita income in the 15 Member States of the EU is 100, the chart shows the income for each southern Mediterranean country as an equivalent percentage thereof.

The most noticeable finding is the large gap in GDP per capita between the EU-15 and the southern Mediterranean countries (except for Israel). None of the southern countries have income equal to even just 40% of the EU-15 GDP throughout the entire period.

1 In 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was comprised of the member countries of the European Union (Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Sweden), 10 southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) and two countries that joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus and Malta).

2 Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita on a purchasing-power parity (PPP) basis, expressed in current international dollars. Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook database, 22 April 2009.

3 The Palestinian Authority has not been included due to the lack of comparable data.
Additionally, over the thirteen-year period, the shares remain virtually unchanged, indicating that there has been virtually no trend toward economic convergence. The poorest economies continue to equal only a fraction of the EU-15 economies and have narrowed the gap by only two or three percentage points.

Three distinct groups emerge:

- The first consists only of Israel, which ranged from 85% to 75% over the period. This notwithstanding, it should be noted that, whilst there have been no major changes, neither has Israeli income tended to approach 100% of the mean European income, but rather the gap has widened.
- The second group includes Turkey and Lebanon. These two economies ranged, with minor fluctuations, between 30% and 40% of the European GDP per capita over the years studied.
- Finally, the third group consists of the remaining countries, including Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Syria. This group oscillates within a band of 10% to 20% (in Tunisia’s case, reaching 22%-23% in recent years), but likewise shows no significant changes.

Let us now examine the behaviour of the economies of two groups of countries:

1. First, the southern Mediterranean countries that were part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995, but are not members of the European Union.
2. Second, a group of southern countries (excluding Israel and Palestine), including two countries that, whilst not members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership over the period studied, must be taken into account when looking at the economic behaviour of the southern Mediterranean region as a whole: Libya and Mauritania.\(^4\)

Both groups register incomes slightly above 20%, but these levels remain virtually unchanged throughout the 1995-2007 period. The group of non-EU countries from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership averages one to two percent-

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\(^4\) Although not a member, Libya has been invited to the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs Conferences since Stuttgart in 1999 and currently holds observer status in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Mauritania, which is currently a member of the UfM, has also been invited to Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences in its capacity as a member of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), which was invited along with the League of Arab States.
age points more than the ‘Southern Mediterranean’ group. This is due to the impact of Israel, the country with the highest GDP per capita in the group, whose income is considerably higher than the rest. The second group has a lower average since, despite including Libya, which has a GDP per capita equal to approximately 40% of the EU-15’s, it also includes the lowest-income country: Mauritania. Mauritania significantly trails (by 4-5 percentage points) the second-to-last country on the list, Morocco.

It may still be too early to see a clear narrowing of the gap in GDP per capita between southern countries and the Member States of the European Union

The enlargement of the European Union did not take place until 2004 or 2007; however, we will now look at what happens if we use the standard mean for the EU-27 since 1995. As seen in Chart 5, the southern economies still show no clear trend toward convergence with the new European mean, although the overall gap is somewhat smaller. Although nearly half the countries of the EU-27 did not become members until 2004 or 2007, the differences in income trends between southern Mediterranean and European countries are similar to those in the comparison with the average for the EU-15 above. The behaviour is fairly stable throughout the period, although following the entry of the new countries into the European Union, southern incomes did move a few percentage points closer to the EU standard mean. The gap between the economies remains significant. Turkey and Lebanon are the only two countries (other than Israel) to reach 40% of the EU mean. Of the rest, only Tunisia and Algeria register incomes in excess of 20%. Thus, it may still be too early to see a clear narrowing of the gap in GDP per capita between southern countries and the Member States of the European Union. This notwithstanding, it must be remembered that these trends do not offer information on whether per capita income has grown significantly or negligibly over the period. What they do tell us is that the behaviour of GDP per capita growth has been similar, with a slight tendency toward greater growth among those countries that had the lowest incomes to start with. Another interesting way to look at economic trends on both shores of the Mediterranean is to consider the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean

CHART 4 Evolution of the Relationship between GDP per capita (PPP) in Two Groups of Southern Mediterranean Countries and the EU-15 between 1995 and 2007

![Chart 4](image-url)
Partnership as a group. Chart 6 shows the percentage of the group mean reached by each southern country and the trends toward narrowing the gap over the period spanning from 1995 to 2007.

5 Although the European Union enlargement countries were not part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership until their accession to the EU (except for Malta and Cyprus, which were members from the start), for this comparison we will look at all 27 members of the EU-27 since 1995.
As seen in the comparison with EU countries, Lebanon and Turkey have the highest per capita incomes among the non-EU Barcelona Process countries. Both countries experienced fluctuations over the period, with a sharp drop in 2001, from which they later recovered to reach GDPs per capita of about 53% and 57%, respectively, of the Euro-Mediterranean mean. The rest of the Barcelona Process countries—Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia—had a relatively stable evolution within the group as a whole, without major changes. Algeria and Tunisia have the highest incomes in the group. Indeed Tunisian income has topped 30% since the turn of the century. Syria is the only country to show the opposite trend, as its GDP per capita at the end of the period is farther from the mean than it was at the start. Finally, special attention should be called to Morocco, which is the only Euro-Mediterranean Partnership country that, despite climbing a few percentage points over the period, by 2007 still had not reached 20% of the mean GDP per capita of the group as a whole.

Separately, the chart also shows the behaviour of Libya and Mauritania, as well as the mean income for the southern Mediterranean as a whole (excluding Israel and Palestine), which remained above 30% almost every year, except for the drop registered between 1998 and 2001.

As for Libya (the only country with observer status in the recently created Union for the Mediterranean), attention should be called to its GDP per capita. In 1995, this figure stood at nearly 70% of the Euro-Mediterranean mean. In contrast, by the end of the period, after moments in which it had fallen to barely more than 40%, it stood at 60% of the mean GDP per capita for the group.

Mauritania is clearly the country that is farthest behind, with a per capita income that does not reach 10% of the Euro-Mediterranean average and that showed no signs of increasing between 1995 and 2007.

Finally, the chart also shows the evolution of a EU candidate country: Croatia. Unlike the other countries, which saw only minor increases, Croatia has shown a clear trend toward convergence with the mean for the Euro-Mediterranean as a whole, narrowing the gap by almost 20 percentage points over the period in question. By 2007, it had climbed to almost 80% of the mean. As for convergence with the standard mean for the EU-27, by 2007 Croatia’s income stood at nearly 60% (unlike the southern Mediterranean countries, whose incomes did not reach 50%). By way of comparison, Spain’s GDP per capita climbed from 70% to 80% of the EU-15’s GDP per capita between the late 1980s and 1995.

Rate of Convergence and Dispersion

As seen in Chart 6, the Mediterranean economies show no significant trend toward real convergence with the Member States of the European Union. To determine the extent to which per capita income has grown faster in the initially lower-income countries than in the initially higher-income ones, we will now look at the rate of this convergence (beta-convergence).

The higher the rate of convergence, the faster the lower-income countries are narrowing the gap with the higher-income ones. The narrower the gap in per capita income between the different countries, the slower this rate will be.

Additionally, we will look at the evolution of the dispersion (sigma-convergence) and disparities in GDP per capita between the different groups of countries. Chart 7 shows the relationship between annual per-capita growth from 1995 to 2007 and GDP per capita at the start of the period (1995) for the Member States of the EU-15, the southern Mediterranean countries that are not members of the EU but have been part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since 1995 and Libya and Mauritania.

The relationship between the variables (i.e., between annual GDP per capita growth and the initial GDP value) yields a correlation coefficient of nearly zero. Regardless, the almost negligible positive trend that can be seen shows that there was no real economic convergence. In other words, those countries that, from the outset, had lower GDP per capita (the southern Mediterranean countries) have not experienced higher growth rates than those that began with higher GDP per capita (the Member States of the EU-15). Consequently, according to this chart, there is no trend toward narrowing the per capita income gaps within this group of countries, but rather the gaps have tended to remain constant.

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6 Except for Israel, which is not included on the chart, since its GDP per capita is higher than the mean for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership countries.

7 Beta-convergence and sigma-convergence were proposed by Xavier Sala i Martin in 1990.
If we consider all current members of the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries, the following relationship between growth and initial GDP can be seen in Chart 8.

Here, in contrast, an inverse relationship can be seen between per capita income growth and each country’s position at the outset. Consequently, in this group, beta convergence between the countries can be seen. However, the rate at which the different countries are converging is quite low. Therefore, as seen in the percentage comparison of southern countries’ incomes to the Euro-Mediterranean mean, the countries are only very gradually closing the gap.

The fact that no convergence was found in the first group of Euro-Mediterranean countries (which included only the Member States of the EU-15),
while convergence could be seen in the second group (which included all members of the EU-27) is mainly due to the strong GDP per capita growth experienced in recent years by the economies of certain new members of the European Union. Specifically, of the eight countries registering the highest annual per capita income growth between 1995 and 2007, seven are part of the EU enlargement (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia and Hungary) and one belonged to the first group of EU countries (Ireland). The first southern Mediterranean country to make the list is Tunisia, which ranks ninth.

The rate at which the different countries are converging is quite low

Notwithstanding the above, the fact that there has been beta convergence does not necessarily mean that the dispersion of GDP per capita has decreased. To determine that, we must see whether there has also been sigma convergence. In other words, we must determine whether the gap between the economies was narrowed over the period in question. Obviously, if the first condition is not true (i.e., if the poorest economies did not grow faster than the richest ones), the dispersion will not have been reduced.

The following charts (Chart 9 and 10) show the dispersion of GDP per capita between 1995 and 2007. Chart 9 includes the group of Euro-Mediterranean countries consisting of the EU-15 and the southern Mediterranean countries, while Chart 10 also includes the newest Member States of the enlarged European Union. Chart 9 (which does not include the newest members of the enlarged EU) shows that dispersion
increased over the second half of the 1990s, then began to drop off, although it never returned to the original 1995 levels. As seen in Chart 7 (beta-convergence), the lowest-income countries did not grow faster than the highest-income ones. Consequently, the evolution of the dispersion over the period cannot be negative. The dispersion within the group increased somewhat over the thirteen-year period and, therefore, no sigma convergence can be seen. In contrast, the chart for the group of Barcelona Process countries (the EU-27 and non-European countries) shows that the strong growth of the newest members of the EU favoured convergence in per capita income (Chart 8). The economies that began with the lowest GDP per capita have grown faster than those that, in 1995, had the highest GDP per capita. Chart 10 moreover shows that the dispersion between them likewise decreased.

The initial dispersion in this second group was already lower than that of the first group, as it includes the economies of the EU enlargement, which, in general, began with a GDP per capita that was higher than the GDP of the southern Mediterranean countries but lower than that of the EU-15. Although here, too, the dispersion increased in the late 1990s, it later fell off sharply until reaching a level somewhat lower than that registered in 1995. Consequently, real GDP per capita is converging.

Unemployment Rate

To assess the real convergence of a group of countries, other variables in addition to GDP per capita must be taken into account. Some of these variables include unemployment, national disposable income per capita, human and technological capital, social welfare expenditures, etc. In Chart 11, we will look at the evolution of unemployment rates in the Euro-Mediterranean countries in order to determine whether these rates are tending to converge or whether, in contrast, the gaps between them have grown larger.

For many of the southern Mediterranean countries, data are not available for all the years under consideration. Regardless, we have taken the data for some of them for 1997 to 2003 in order to compare them to the mean for the 15 Member States of the European Union over the same period. As seen in Chart 11, the data for the southern shore are completely heterogeneous and vary considerably over the seven-year period in question.

Countries such as Morocco, Jordan or Tunisia registered unemployment rates well above the EU mean throughout the period. At some points in the late 1990s, Morocco’s rates even doubled that of the EU-15, although it is likewise true that these rates fell sharply at the turn of the century.
Egypt, Israel and Turkey behaved differently. Their unemployment rates remained below the European average until 2000. In contrast, from 2001 on, they surpassed the European rate, showing a tendency to widen the gap between them.

Chart 12 shows the evolution between 2004 and 2006, this time including the newest members of the EU in 2004 (the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta):

As seen in Chart 12, despite the inclusion of ten new countries in the European Union, the southern Mediterranean countries continued to register high and heterogeneous unemployment rates. No clear trend can be seen toward a narrowing of the gap between the rates on both sides of the Mediterranean, although, as noted, the lack of available data for the south makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions regarding the convergence or divergence thereof.

Nominal Convergence

Another way to assess convergence between countries is nominal convergence, which refers to basic macroeconomic concepts, mainly of a monetary nature. To determine whether there has been nominal convergence between the countries on both shores of the Mediterranean since 1995, the convergence criteria established under the Treaty on European Union for entry in the Economic and Monetary Union are usually used, namely: inflation, long-term interest rates, public deficit, public debt and exchange rates. Chart 13 shows the evolution of inflation in the different countries, bearing in mind the following criterion under the Treaty on European Union, whereby each ‘…Member State [must have] a price performance that is sustainable and an average rate of inflation, observed over a period of one year before the examination, that does not exceed by more than 1.5 percentage points that of, at most, the three best performing Member States in terms of price stability’.

As seen in Chart 13, the gap between inflation rates narrowed over the period observed. The inflation rates in the Member States of the EU-15 always adhere to the criteria for joining the Monetary Union. When we add the rest of the EU-27 countries to this group, we see that they begin to converge at the turn of the century and that they meet the TEU criteria as of 2006.

It is worth noting that inflation rates in Mediterranean countries have been quite heterogeneous throughout the period and that, therefore, the specific rates in some of the countries included in that group may differ significantly from the average for the southern Mediterranean region as a whole. However, the evolution of both groups of countries from outside the European Union, that is, of the group of Mediterranean states that were part of the Barcelona Process in 1995 and the group of southern Mediterranean states including Libya and Mauritania (except for Israel and Palestine), is virtually identical.

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8 Sources: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook database, 22 April 2009; World Bank.
As seen in Chart 13, the southern Mediterranean countries started off with very high unemployment rates, primarily due to the high unemployment rate in Turkey (the second most populous country after Egypt), which did not recover until the mid-2000s. As of 2004, the gap began to narrow, eventually settling at approximately 4.5 percentage points above the criterion for inclusion in the Monetary Union, that is, 1.5 percentage points higher than the average of the three lowest inflation rates in the Euro Area.

Conclusions

When considering only the first 15 countries to form part of the European Union, real convergence between the southern Mediterranean economies and the Member States of the EU over the period was non-existent. Per capita income in the south did not grow faster than in the EU-15 over the years in question and, thus, income dispersion between the two groups increased. In contrast, if we consider all member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including all 27 current members of the European Union, gradual per-capita economic convergence can be seen. This is due to the strong growth undergone by many of the EU’s newest members in recent years.

As for inflation, one of the main variables for measuring nominal convergence, the gap between southern Mediterranean and EU countries has narrowed, although in 2007 it was nevertheless considerable. In light of the foregoing, it remains to be seen whether the economic and financial cooperation strategies of the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will yield results and, thus, whether there will be a clear trend toward economic convergence.

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The Euromed Trade Union Forum (ETUF) groups together trade union organisations that are members of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and trade unions from partner countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Founded in 1999 in Stuttgart during a ministerial conference that was part of the Barcelona Process, the Forum was established as an exchange and cooperation platform, with no intention of laying the foundations for a new trade union organisation. The Forum is an initiative of ETUC in conjunction with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) and the Trade Union Confederation of Arab Maghreb Workers (USTMA). The Forum activities and its positioning vis-à-vis the UfM are established by the coordination committee, composed by an equal number of European and Arab trade unions. The working languages are French and Arabic.

**Difficult Beginnings before Reaching the Point of Mutual Trust**

Before 1999, in-depth cooperation between European trade unions and the equivalent organisations from Arab regions did not exist. Apart from certain, rather ‘diplomatic’ contacts and rituals that were part of activities sponsored by international organisations or within the framework of the International Labour Organization, or on the level of certain, somewhat rare bilateral projects, there was an enormous void. The great obstacle at the start was a ‘political’ factor: the fact that the Israeli Histadrut (the central Israeli labour organisation) was also participating in the Forum caused quite strong reactions by Arab trade unions, despite the fact that the majority of them (from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine) had long been part of the same international labour union organisation—the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, or ICFTU (now ITUC)—as the Histadrut. Nonetheless, the Forum was finally established on the basis of consensus and has held three general assemblies since then with broad participation, including the Histadrut, except in Marseille in 2001, where the Arab delegations were present but boycotted the assembly, which moreover issued a clear declaration on the situation in the Middle East. This declaration was revised at the ETUF General Assembly in Barcelona in 2005 and unanimously adopted (including by the Israeli delegation).

**Excerpt on the Middle East Conflict from the Final Declaration of the Euromed Trade Union Forum (3rd General Assembly, Barcelona, 2005)**

“The trade union organizations condemn all the forms of xenophobia and racism, of extremism and fundamentalism, of terrorism and authoritarianism, and of military occupation. The overcoming of these problems demands (...) for the reconstruction of a supportive social project, democracy, respect for the international law and the intercultural dialogue between the peoples (...). The trade union organizations request the governments to solve the existing conflicts in their region (...) according to international law and to the United Nations resolutions (...). Within this spirit, the resolution of the Middle East conflicts can only be carried out through the respect for the international law, through the unconditional application of the resolutions of the UN, the withdrawal of the occupational forces from all terri-
tories occupied since 1967, and the recognition of the Palestinian people’s right to establish an independent State, next to the State of Israel. The trade union organizations emphasize the need for a prompt end of the occupation of Iraq, as well as on the fundamental role that the UN must have in the process of recovery of the sovereignty, the reconstruction and the guarantee of unity of this country. Also, they support the efforts made by CISL, WCL and CISA to help in the reconstruction and unity of the trade union forces in Iraq, on the basis of democracy and independence, so that they can fully have a decisive role in the defence of the workers’ interests and participate effectively in the reconstruction of a free, sovereign and democratic Iraq.”

Once these clarifications had been made, the Forum managed to establish a cooperation framework for a strict trade union agenda.

The Coordination Committee of the Euromed Trade Union Forum decided to leave the Euromed non-governmental platform after an in-depth evaluation of its activity and the role of the ETUF therein. Realising the interest of cooperation among civil society organisations within the framework of Euromed networks, however, the Committee has declared that its leaving the platform by no means indicates that it does not wish to enter into cooperation with non-governmental networks and organisations on issues of joint interest. The Committee emphasises the need for the ETUF to focus its efforts and means on its social partnership positioning and on economic and social matters.

Moving towards ‘Realpolitik’ with Regard to the Situation of Trade Unions in Arab Regions and away from ‘European Paternalism’

Trade unions are not NGOs. They are mass organisations with considerable power in society. Their capacity for action and for exerting an influence on economic and social matters depends, to a large extent, on their independence and autonomy. In economies primarily dependent on the State machine, they may well be relegated to the role of a cog in the wheel of the ruling political system, as is the case in Syria or in Sudan. In ‘liberal’ economies and in an authoritarian environment such as in Egypt, the capacity for trade unions to carry out their primary function—defending the interests of employees and the unemployed—are quite limited due to the existing political control. But even in this case, trade unions under these specific conditions enjoy a certain leeway due to their quantitative force and occasionally obtain positive results.

Trade union pluralism exists within a legal framework in certain Arab countries, namely Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Mauritania. In others, there are nearly insurmountable legal obstacles and in the best of cases, pluralism of opinion exists in a visible fashion within the only central trade union organisation, as in Tunisia’s UGTT. In Algeria, alongside the ‘historical’ central trade union organisation, the UGTA, there are sectoral, representative trade union organisations, above all in the education and healthcare sectors. Where pluralism exists on a legal basis, in nearly all cases this pluralism is observed to be a ‘partisan’ one, created by political parties or political movements to equip themselves with an instrument which could eventually turn into ‘unionism at the service of politics.’ This phenomenon is highly evident in Morocco, with a good dozen trade union federations that are attached to political structures in one way or another, with the exception of the ‘historical’ central trade union organisation, the UMT. An extreme example is Mauritania, with six trade union centres operating for the most part under minimalist material conditions but that have been finding more and more grounds for entente since the military putsch on 8 August 2008. The result is a considerable segmentation of trade unions, which is more an element of weakness than a sign of democratic expression. A culture of cooperation can nevertheless be observed to be steadily developing, within a context of considerable social tension, above all on the level of businesses and political institutions.
The trade union situation generally reflects the current state of a society. Trade unions hardly have a choice. They must adapt to come within the ‘extant logic’ in order to obtain results. Yet it is clear that they have potential for change, even if dormant, for they exist within the contradiction between authoritarianism and state control on the one hand, and the need for democratisation, the only factor that will allow trade unions to freely express the social and economic interests of their members, on the other. It is precisely this potential that encourages certain powers that be to exercise systematic intervention in the internal affairs of certain trade union organisations. This trend could grow in the context of the global financial and economic crisis, which will accentuate social crisis and poverty. This does not rule out another scenario, i.e. a weakening of authoritarianism and the development of democracy.

European trade unions should do away with a certain ‘lesson-giving’ tone and paternalistic attitude in their approach to and relations with South Mediterranean partners

In both cases, trade unions will remain ‘the targets.’ Certain powers will attempt to exploit trade unionism in order to keep the upper hand in explosive social situations, while opposition structures will seek the protection of trade unions as well as contact with the masses.

European trade unions should do away with a certain ‘lesson-giving’ tone and paternalistic attitude in their approach to and relations with South Mediterranean partners. All too often, cooperation projects –nearly always financed with public funds– are still impregnated with a Eurocentric spirit and are based on a philosophy of transferring the ‘European model’ to southern countries. The term ‘donor’ is revealing in this sense and ludicrously describes the inequality of relations. Public subsidies for cooperation projects are never absolutely ‘pure’. First and foremost, they reflect the interests of the ‘donors’, though not always those of the parties on the receiving end. It is therefore essential to strike a balance between the interests of both parties and base the approach on the local reality and not on a transfer of a ‘model.’

Trade Union Reform and Adaptation

In this spirit, and not without difficulties, the Euromed Trade Union Forum, using funds from the European Commission and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), has drawn up a two-year project on trade union reform (2008-2009) in conjunction with the Forum’s Arab trade unions. The project was to be directed by the Trade Union Confederation of Arab Maghreb Workers (USTMA), and the working team was composed of Arab trade union members and experts, with a single exception. One of the project’s goals consisted of doing without European guidance by mobilising the skilled actors and experts from the South Mediterranean Region and limiting the role of the ETUC to that of agent for logistics assistance.

The subjects dealt with concerned the ‘backbone’ of trade union organisation: the articles governing internal affairs and establishing rights and obligations, collective bargaining and industrial relations that comprise the trade union’s ‘raison d’être’, financial administration and internal management, public relations, the matter of trade union pluralism and the role of women in trade union organisations. The conference of women unionists –this time accompanied by a ‘quota of men’– held in Tunis in February as part of the trade union reform project and prepared in complete autonomy and with no European guidance by a working group in Casablanca, Amman and Tunis, demonstrates the dynamic potential existing in the Arab trade union movement. The conclusion of the conference, addressed to the trade union leadership of the Arab region contains an emphatic analysis and clear, pragmatic positions (See Box).

Union for the Mediterranean: ‘The Big Blue’ or ‘The Big Bluff’?

The ‘Sarkozy method’ of handling political issues by making sudden moves, at times unexpected, surprising his partners, is often irritating but also laudable.

The Union for the Mediterranean project is a good example. The Barcelona Process, launched in 1995 with the aim of creating peace and stability in the Mediterranean area, had reached a deadlock: a highly bureaucratised structure in its last throes, a sort of ‘Pullman’ of cooperation between the EU and South Mediterranean Countries.
The initial ambition of the French initiative was enormous: the creation of a ‘Mediterranean Union’ piloted by southern European Union Member States under the leadership of France. France’s European partners, above all Germany but also the European Commission, were consulted sparingly, if at all. At that point, France –also serving its EU presidency at the time– found it had to adjust its tactics and water down the proposal somewhat. ‘Going it alone’ was now out of the question, as it challenged the principle of a European community policy within the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The results of internal EU negotiations are perfectly reflected in the initiative’s official designation, or ‘controlled designation of origin’, that is, the ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean’. Even if France had to make one compromise after another, it did manage to save the essential aspect: the perspective of being able to breathe renewed spirit and dynamism into a rather dismal, inefficient policy. The country entered a circumstantial alliance with Spain, which will host the offices of the Secretariat in Barcelona, and it will share a two-year term as co-president of the Union with Egypt. This system will prevent the Union’s management from falling under the ‘rotational’ regime of the EU presidency, a system that is more the result of a compromise based on weakness than of political rationale.

In fact, management by the southern EU Member States in partnership with South Mediterranean Countries is simply common sense due to their geographical and cultural proximity. The same logic is at the basis of an initiative recently revived by the Czech EU Presidency: the creation of an ‘Eastern Partnership,’ the UfM’s ‘eastern’ counterpart. Essentially, this means that the EU’s external relations of ‘proximity’ are becoming regionalised. This trend entails the risk of negative diversification and the possibility of more precise articulation of EU foreign policy.

On the ‘south shore’, things are not so simple either. In the absence of a common state framework, rivalries among South Mediterranean Countries insofar
as their positions vis-à-vis managing the UfM are considerable. The fact that the Arab League has finally found its place has attenuated oppositions. The quid pro quo is a compromise by which Israel will appoint one of the Deputy Secretary Generals. This point still elicits criticism and encounters resistance that could be accentuated by the rise to power of the nationalist right wing in the Hebrew state. The unresolved and even accentuated conflict between Morocco and Algeria remains another factor of destabilisation for the project. And finally, the UfM will not be able to dissociate itself from the Middle East conflict and will pay the price for the EU’s rather negligible and not very cohesive role.

The Arab League Summit in Doha (late March 2009), which took place under considerable internal tension, has brought no progress. For the time being, the UfM is stalled and the prescribed mechanisms, including the ministerial summit and the diverse working groups, are apparently at a standstill.

Yet another factor could act as an impediment in addition to the internal divergences among Arab states, namely: the inclusion of Balkan states that are candidates to EU accession –Croatia, for instance– or that have Association Agreement status. Even if we consider the Adriatic part of the Mediterranean, any added value arising from this ‘enlargement’ is difficult to detect.

The Euromed Parliamentary Assembly (Brussels, March 2009), in which neither Syria nor Lebanon participated, met with the intransigent (and wholly justified) opposition of the Arab delegations on the Assembly Presidency’s proposal to reduce representation of Arab countries to the benefit of Balkan countries. Even if a compromise was finally reached, this incident clearly demonstrates that institutional gesticulations and interests of a protocol order still prevent a true dynamic from being established.

Nonetheless, the conception of the UfM is simple and highly plausible: focussing on common, visible and serious problems, fusing economic and ecological aspects. The catchphrases: infrastructure and sustainable development (de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land motorways, civil protection, solar plan, education and research, development of enterprise). The ‘philosophy’ is clear: ‘depoliticising’ the project by avoiding delicate subjects, and in carrying out projects, applying a concept of opening to the civil society, in the sense of allowing participation and sharing. Hence –and this is a first–, the Euromed Trade Union Forum’s proposals and demands are being taken up by the Presidency of the UfM, making up for one of the Barcelona Process’s glaring shortcomings: recognition of social partners, not to be confused with the conventional concept of NGO, as organisations to be consulted on matters concerning them and the consideration of the social dimension of cooperation. This naturally includes issues relating to workers’ rights and associations’ rights.

In conclusion, it should be noted that:

- It was high time to breathe new life into Euro-Mediterranean cooperation by applying the method of ‘Realpolitik’.
- The French initiative was introduced a bit ‘roughly’, bypassing certain preliminary consultation needs and producing irritation on both northern and southern Mediterranean shores. But this method may have been the only way to avoid the routine of bureaucracy.
- The battle has not yet been won. This will depend to a large extent on the geopolitical environment. Without a positive evolution, the projects envisaged could remain at the station because the locomotive will have broken down.
- The European Union should demonstrate greater commitment and support to the UfM. Without the inclusion of the European Commission, the UfM will be a failure. It is urgent to join forces and act, burying sterile rivalries.
- The UfM is not just an intergovernmental structure; it provides interesting potential for real participation by civil society in projects designed to foster sustainable development and, above and beyond this, the advancement of society in general.

**Social Dialogue?**

**What Kind of Social Dialogue?**

The UfM Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Marseille in early November 2008 established the political foundation for taking into account the social dimension in implementing the UfM:

**Developing a Genuine Social Dimension**

“The 2007 workshop on employment policy helped to enhance the understanding of the challenges facing labour markets and employment
policies in the context of globalisation, technological evolution and demographic change. The first Conference of Employment and Labour Ministers (Marrakesh, 9-10 November 2008) will provide a unique opportunity to develop a genuine social dimension in the partnership, based on an integrated approach combining economic growth, employment and social cohesion. Ministers will review socio-economic developments in the region and examine concrete initiatives and proposals to promote employment creation, modernisation of labour markets and decent work. Ministers should approve a framework of action setting out key objectives in the fields of employment policy, employability and decent employment opportunities. This framework will also address important cross-cutting issues such as strengthening the participation of women in the labour market, non-discrimination, the integration of young people within the labour market, the transformation of informal into formal employment and labour migration. Employment and Labour Ministers should also approve an effective follow-up mechanism, with reporting on national progress and exchange of practices. Successful social and employment policies require the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, namely the social partners. In this connection, the cooperation of social partners across the Euro-Mediterranean region should be further developed.

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Labour Ministers held in Marrakesh a week after the ministerial meeting in Marseille was the first of its type in the history of the Barcelona Process. On the eve of the conference, representatives of the ‘social partners’ were invited to take part in an in-depth consultation, also a first in this context. The ETUF was represented by a delegation of six individuals, three of them representatives of Arab trade unions. As for employers’ associations, a single representative of Business Europe participated, whereas the employers’ organisation of the South, BusinessMed, was absent. This demonstrates the employers’ limited interest in social matters and a lack of coordination between the European and South Mediterranean employers’ organisations.

‘Social dialogue’ at all levels among the partners is illusory because this ‘dialogue’ exists but little on the national level in Southern Mediterranean Countries, and because there is nothing ‘on the plate’

In its final declaration, the Ministerial Conference first adopted a principle put forth by the ETUF to set up a formal structure of contact among social partners, a ‘Social Dialogue Forum’. The ETUF’s proposal was to create a ‘consultative space’ for social partners. It is clear that ‘social dialogue’ at all levels among the partners is illusory because this ‘dialogue’ exists but little on the national level in Southern Mediterranean Countries, and because there is nothing ‘on the plate’. The ‘negotiation table’ will remain virtual for the time being. On the other hand, bilateral consultations between UfM governmental structures and social partners and their involvement in major UfM projects on sustainable development through the Social Dialogue Forum will be useful. In any case, trade union organisations have a vital interest in passing on their message, i.e. considering the social basket and decent work as an important factor for coherent, productive co-development.

In the long term, such a step could create conditions for establishing social dialogue that would be worthy of its name. All of this depends on the ‘operativity’ of the Union for the Mediterranean, which for the time being, could remain prisoner of political instability in the region and the absence of real peace in the Middle East.
Some 20 States border the Mediterranean or are surrounded by it, totalling some 400 million inhabitants. Four of them belong to the EU (France, Italy, Spain and Greece), with an average income ten times higher than their neighbours to the South. By 2025, the populations of these four European States will hardly have grown, whereas those of the other States will have risen by 70%. The Mediterranean serves as a sort of geopolitical dividing line between Africa and Europe. The closing of borders combined with the absence of real alternatives to migration renders the Euro-Mediterranean regional integration project launched in 2008 ambiguous.

Today, the Mediterranean is crossed by migrations. These begin at the borders of the European Union: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey, the Ukraine, the Maghreb and Albania are at once countries of migrant origin, transit and destination. Despite the globalisation of migrant flows, the historical, geographical and cultural proximity (language particularly conveyed by the media) account for migrants’ yearning for and choice of Europe. This is the case, for instance, with Spain, where Moroccan migrants constitute the second largest immigrant population; Italy, where the most numerous are Romanians, Albanians and Moroccans; Greece, where Albanians predominate; and France with Maghrebi immigrants. Border cities are growing in importance and are seeing their destinies change dramatically. Melilla, a Spanish enclave on the coast of Morocco, partially lives off smuggling, potential migrants and street children attempting to cross the Straits of Gibraltar. A thriving border-crossing economy has developed over the course of twenty years, all the more prosperous since crossing has been rendered more difficult by institutional barriers that make prices rise, becoming the source of modern forms of slavery and prostitution.

Countries located along the fringes of Europe have become countries of transit (Turkey, Morocco) and EU policy tends to assign them a control function. Despite the closure of borders, the Southern Mediterranean Basin constitutes a region of considerable emigration: Morocco (3.1 million émigrés), Turkey (3.3 million), Egypt (2.7 million) and Algeria (1 million). In Morocco, emigration has doubled in eleven years. This can be ascribed to a significant demographic gap in terms of age pyramids, massive unemployment and underemployment, even for the most qualified, the existence of emigration policies focussing on remittances and designed to alleviate not only the pressure on the job market but at times also political and social dissent. There are chain migrations in Turkey, which has become a migration and transit zone for migrants from the nearby countries of Iraq, Moldavia, Iran and Afghanistan, as well as in the Maghreb, which has become a region of emigration for the local population and one of immigration and transit for Sub-Saharan migrants. The closing of borders carried out by Maghreb countries in application of European border externalisation plans has led illegal migrants to change their routes, now departing from African coasts to reach the Canary Islands by sea rather than crossing towards Gibraltar, or crossing the desert and attempting to reach Sicilian islands rather than Brindisi, rendering the crossings more dangerous and leading to many thousands of deaths on the outskirts of the EU since 2000.

But Europe attracts only half of the migrants from South Mediterranean Countries (SMCs), because they also leave for Arabic countries such as Libya and the Gulf States, as well as for the US and Canada (10%, of which 60% has a university degree). Certain
SMCs are also countries of immigration: 3.6 million inhabitants were born abroad. This is the case for Israel, Turkey, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan. Add to that an unknown number of illegal migrants who are either immigrants or in transit, approximately 100,000 of which are Sub-Saharan migrants in the Maghreb and Sudanese in Egypt. The majority of South Mediterranean Countries that have emigration policies do not have immigration policies – except for penalising illegal immigration (Morocco: law passed in 2003, Tunisia: law passed in 2004) –, much less policies for integration. Immigrants are sometimes regarded as competitors and not future citizens. Whereas in the Gulf States, the appearance of unemployment among the national population is beginning to change the statistics, Morocco remains, along with Egypt, one of the main countries of emigration of the region. Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Yemen have also become countries of transit for entering Europe. Emigration is bound to continue as long as the gap between oil-producing and non oil-producing countries continues and the immigration pressure will endure due to the amount of unemployed youth in the Maghreb, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and Palestine. Yet the majority of Arab countries are experiencing a rapid fall in birth rate, meaning younger generations having few children and there is thus a lighter family load on the parents, as they themselves belong to large families. They are therefore highly available in the short-term to carry out their life projects abroad. Countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen encourage their populations to emigrate while fostering the maintenance of ties by facilitating remittances of funds, supporting associations focussing on development and strengthening jus sanguinis policies such that émigrés keep their original nationalities. Algeria – due to its colonial past – and Lebanon – due to the strain on the fragile equilibrium of its communities – hold more ambiguous positions.

Certain profiles predominate among these new types of migrants: young men with a higher education from the urban middle class with vague aspirations to Western modernity; isolated women with a school education attempting to gain economic and personal independence, but also at times seeking freedom of expression; minors, often the victims of exploitation of all sorts; highly qualified elite seeking professional fulfilment on a par with their skills or talents; individuals willing to give up an arm and a leg to improve their condition; and groups that are always mobile, such as the Roma. Apart from refugees and marriage-based immigration, many of these new migrants aspire more to mobility than to definitive settlement. They often consider their stay as a passage towards other, more desirable destinations (USA, Canada) or as a temporary stay before returning to their countries of origin.

In the countries where these migrants settle, two migration profiles predominate: ‘origin-host country pairs’ and ‘quasi-diasporas.’ An origin-host country pair can be defined as one nationality predominantly settling in a single host country, a situation often inherited from a colonial past. For instance, 95% of Algerians in Europe are living in France, along with 70% of Tunisians in Europe, while 80% of Greek migrants, 72% of Turkish migrants, 68% of Polish migrants and migrants from the former Yugoslavia in Europe live in Germany, and the majority of migrants from Commonwealth countries are in the United Kingdom. Albanian migrants in the EU are almost exclusively living in Italy and Greece, and the same is true of Brazilians in Portugal. The other configuration is that of ‘quasi-diasporas’: a nationality present in numerous European countries and creating powerful transnational economic, cultural, religious, familial and marriage networks among its different groups. The most emblematic example is that of the Turks – nearly 3 million in Europe –, who form an origin-host country pair with Germany, but who are also present in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Northern Europe as a quasi-diaspora. They are followed by the Moroccans, another quasi-diaspora, who number half a million in France but who also comprise one of the largest foreign populations in Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium. In the past, Italians fit this profile, as did former Yugoslavians, though to a lesser degree.
ean is the most inconsistent border in the world; the often disparate implementation of European border control schemes; the accelerated ageing of the population; the demand for labour in sectors that cannot be delocalised (tourism, the catering and hotel sector, fishing, agriculture, caring for the elderly, home services for nationals as well as for European elderly and retirees); the existence of an informal labour market; and frequent recourse to ‘mass’ regularisation in order to absorb part of the illegal immigrant population. Public opinion is still wary of the idea of long-term immigration, though the immigrant population is a stakeholder in their societies.

Italy

Today, the legal immigrant population has surpassed 2.6 million, of which 556,000 are Romanians (15.1%), 387,000 Moroccans, 381,000 Albanians, 195,000 Ukrainians and 186,000 Chinese. With a net legal migrant inflow of 222,400 individuals in 2006 (entries less exits), Italy was the first European country to adopt an active policy of admission and to experiment with what would be incorrectly qualified as a quota system (with a ceiling of 350,000 non-EU immigrants in 2006), which did not produce the anticipated results. The possibilities for professional placement in niches in a highly segmented labour market have attracted numerous illegal immigrants, legalised over the course of vast, mass regularisation operations (called ‘sanatorie’). The drastic fall in birth rate in just one generation and the entry of women onto the labour market have created new professions associated with ‘care’ (home care, paraprofessional medical care, not well covered by the hospital system or by institutions). The response of the authorities was case-by-case adaptation, responding to suggestions by employers (who are also voters) despite the populism of certain anti-immigrant political parties. The last major regularisation took place in 2005 under Silvio Berlusconi. Another form of flexibility emerged from the transition in Italy of the Swiss system of bilateral labour agreements, often with neighbouring countries such as Albania, in order to struggle against irregular immigration and meet the seasonal needs of agriculture and construction. To limit the effects of attraction, it came with readmission agreements with buffer countries such as Libya. Social and cultural policies of associative and religious initiative have assisted vulnerable populations and entered into constructive dialogue with Islam (Community of Sant'Egidio).

Though Italy’s nationality rights continue to be governed essentially by the concept of *jus sanguinis*, this allows it, on the other hand, to maintain close ties with Italians abroad, present in many European countries (France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium), as well as in major immigration countries (USA, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Australia), being a population that also votes in legislative elections.

Spain

With 4,192 million legal foreign nationals in 2008, Spain is the EU country to have experienced the most rapid growth of its foreign population over the past ten years. It is also the country with the greatest number of EU nationals (1.9 million, or 46.8%), many of them retirees. Among the 2.2 million non-EU nationals (53.19%), ten nationalities comprise 80% of these citizens: Moroccans (675,900), Ecuadorians (500,000), Romanians (380,000), Colombians (270,000), Bolivians (135,000), Dominicans, Peruvians and Argentines (the Latin Americans all told numbering 1.2 million), Chinese (126,000) and Ukrainians (65,000). The regions with the highest presence of foreign nationals are the eastern seaboard and the capital: Catalonia (907,000), Madrid (759,000), the Community of Valencia (543,000) and Andalusia (530,000).

It is in this country where the immigration process has been the fastest (there were 1.3 million legal foreign nationals in 2002), Spain being the European country to have taken in the greatest number of foreign nationals in ten years, ahead of Germany. Immigration policy has consisted in a series of mass regularisations (the last two being in 2001 and 2005). The epicentres of tensions associated with the arrival of illegal immigrants on cayucos and other *pateras*—fragile open boats— are Gibraltar, Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish enclaves in Morocco), the Canary Islands, Western Sahara and, farther away, Mauritania and Senegal: between 1 January and 30 September 2006, some 27,000 individuals landed on the Canary Islands—five times the number in 2005 and triple the record in 2002—, not to mention the 3,000 or so who drowned along the 1,400 kilometres separating Senegal from the Canary Islands. In 2007, 20,000 arrivals on 800 boats were recorded. The quota system, established to supply sectors requiring a labour force (agriculture, tourism) has been modified. Illegal immigration is estimated at some 800,000 individuals in 2006. In 2005, 600,000 illegal immigrants were legalised, of whom 40% were Latin Americans (out of 692,000...
petitions). This was the fourth regularisation scheme: since 1990, some 1,145,000 irregular immigrants have been regularised.

The arrival of three million foreign nationals over the past five years has been the source of half of the country’s rise in GDP. In November 2006, a law granting the same rights to Spaniards residing abroad as to Spaniards in Spain was passed, fostering ties with the diaspora and allowing descendants of Republicans having gone into political exile the opportunity of taking on Spanish nationality. In Spain, the fifth foreign nationality consists of British, who are the sixth in Portugal. This phenomenon can also be observed in France, where it is often referred to as ‘Britishland.’

Portugal

Of the 432,000 foreign nationals living in Portugal in 2005, half were from their former colonies (Brazil and the PALOP, African countries where Portuguese is the official language), namely Brazil (30%), Cape Verde (12%), Angola and Mozambique. Chronically short of manpower due to its ageing population, a significant amount of emigration (10% of the total population), the role of agriculture, tourism and retirees from other European countries having settled there, Portugal has concluded labour agreements with countries of Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania) and has proceeded to carry out successive regularisation operations. Its policy of ‘living together,’ based on multiculturalism, is now being refocused towards more inclusive integration.

Greece

Among the 553,000 foreign nationals living in the country in 2005 (7% of the total population), the majority are from neighbouring countries (Bulgaria and Albania alone accounting for 60% of the foreign population). So-called ‘Pontic Greeks,’ returning after 1989 from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia and the Ukraine, have been allowed to acquire Greek nationality. Two regularisation operations took place in 2005 and 2007. In this country afflicted by demographic ageing, the immigrant population has experienced rapid growth through various migratory waves: Albanians in the early 1990s, migrants from the Balkans, India and Pakistan after 1995, and Bulgarians, Sub-Saharan Africans, Romanians and Asians after 2001. Greece employs its migrants in agriculture, fishery, construction and tourism. In the year 2000, 500,000 migrants were seasonal workers, and Greece is experiencing an increase in illegal immigration. The latest migrants are from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia. In rural Greece, characterised by great immigrant diversity, migrants contribute to the development of local economic activity. 70% of immigrants have been living in Greece for more than ten years.

In the South: Several Migratory Areas

There are several migratory areas in the South: the west (Maghreb/Europe), the Balkans, and the east (Mashreq/Near East). There are also exchanges from east to west (Romania, Moldavia and Ukraine/Portugal, Spain and Italy) and south-south (Algeria/Libya, Egypt/Gulf States).

Maghreb-Europe

It is the contrast between Europe and the Maghreb that is the greatest dividing line: whereas the countries along the northern shore of the Mediterranean have experienced a population growth of approximately a third from 1950 to 2000, going from 158 million to 212 million inhabitants, the countries along the southern coast of the Mediterranean have tripled their populations, going from 73 million in 1950 to 244 million in 2000. The natural growth rate of the population in north shore countries during the 1990s was 1.5%, as opposed to 20.2% in south shore countries, despite the demographic decline observed in Eastern and Southern Mediterranean Countries during that time. Due to its economic and demographic context, the SMCs offer conditions conducive to intense migratory circulation in the Euro-Mediterranean area. 50% of today’s population is under twenty years of age, whereas the North is experiencing either stagnation or decline in population, depending on the country. An increase in urban population has ensued in the South: in 2000, with the exception of Albania, Bosnia and Egypt, the urban population surpasses 50% and megalopolises often serve as the anterooms of illegal migration. By 2025, the population of the Maghreb is expected to have grown by 48%, in contrast to 3% for that of the EU.

Employment constitutes another dividing line: the GDP per EU inhabitant is 14 times higher than in the Maghreb. It is 20 times higher in Germany than in the Maghreb, 19 times higher in France, and 12
times higher in Spain. Fund remittances associated with emigration represent 6.3% of the GDP in Morocco, 2.3% in Algeria and 4.1% in Tunisia. Foreigners do not only migrate in order to work, but also in search of a new lifestyle. Illegal migrants are sometimes caught in the vicinity of the Sicilian and Greek islands. With over 2,500 deaths per year, this traditional zone of passage, exchange, confrontation and dialogue has become a hotbed of human trafficking due to the semi-militarised borders warding off non-EU citizens. SMCs, while remaining countries of emigration, have also become countries of immigration and transit for a Sub-Saharan population. The latter then find themselves in a sort of airlock if they do not manage to cross the Mediterranean. All SMCs hope for the relaxation of the visa regimes imposed by Europe in 1986 and aspire to have their economies meet the labour needs of their northern neighbours. For them, migration is an economic resource (fund remittances), a social resource (exportation of unemployment), and a factor of (political and cultural) modernisation. The discourse on brain drain is beginning to shift because the countries are realising the benefits they can gain from exporting their skilled workers, as well as their incapacity to employ them all.

*Mashreq: South-South Migration*

Migration to the Arabian Peninsula forms part of a regional logic dominated, on the one hand by the oil income and, on the other by a young, underemployed population. But oil-producing countries do not exclusively employ Arab or Muslim immigrants (Asians are often more numerous) and the latter do not only migrate to those countries: whereas Mashreq migration moves to the Gulf States, Maghrebi migration (with the exception of Libya, which is a country of immigration) is more oriented towards Europe, Canada and the United States.

For several decades now, East Mediterranean Countries (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Israel, Egypt and, by extension, Jordan) have faced numerous conflicts causing many to go into exile. The Palestinian diaspora, 4-5 million strong, has essentially settled in neighbouring Arabic countries, the Gulf States and Europe and the USA. Since 2000, some 100,000 Palestinians are estimated to have left the West Bank for Jordan and the West. In one of the most densely populated areas of the world, 1.5 million individuals live in the Gaza Strip. Whereas Egypt continues to limit the presence of Palestinians on its territory, Jordan, on the other hand, is the only Arabic country granting Palestinians its nationality. A large influx of Jews from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) between 1990 and 2000 (1.4 million) has modified the cultural balances between the different components of the Israeli population. Moreover, Israel has become a host country to labour immigrants from the world over, whose percentage has now surpassed that of Palestinian workers from the occupied territories in the agriculture and construction sectors, with a status of ‘long-term temporary residents.’

Historically, Egypt is traditionally more of a country of immigration, offering political asylum to people belonging to minority confessions and Ottoman protégés. However, Egypt has experienced a tardy migratory mobilisation since the 1970s. The Gulf States have constituted the favoured destination, due to the relative cultural and linguistic continuity and because the oil shocks of the 1970s created a high labour demand. Nevertheless, this model of temporary emigration towards the Gulf States is fragile. The Gulf War in 1991 entailed a significant wave of ‘repatriates from Iraq.’ At the same time as this crisis, the Egyptians began doubting the State’s capacity to guarantee employment – upward social mobility seemed to have been suspended. The West, and primarily France and Italy, now constitutes a new destination for Egyptian migration.

Candidates for emigration to Europe are essentially city dwellers, with higher education and often from Coptic Christian communities. Even if this second migratory generation has the benefit of the experience of the migrants to the Gulf States and uses family, village and confessional networks to succeed in their migrations, community groups cannot be observed in the host countries, but rather on the contrary, there is a rupture vis-à-vis their environment of origin. Moreover, in contrast to migrations to the Gulf States, settlement in the West often assumes a long-term character.

In Syria, Iraqi refugees, settled in Damascus. In Jordan, they joined a large population of Palestinians. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2007, of two million Iraqis fleeing the country, one million went to Syria, more than 750,000 to Jordan, over 150,000 to Egypt, and at least 40,000 to Lebanon. In 2006, 1.9 million were displaced within the country and 5,000 were
admitted to the United States, and the same number again in 2007.

Turkey

Turkey first became a country of emigration in the 1960s, with migrants primarily moving to Europe, but also to the Arabian Peninsula as of the 1970s (3 million first-generation immigrants were living in these two regions in 2006, not to mention the generations born of immigrants in Europe). It is estimated that the decrease in birth rate of the mid-1980s will not manage to reduce migrations until 2010 or 2020. But Turkey has also become a region of transit for migrants from the Middle East or Central Asia, and consequently, a country of immigration (1.3 million) for migrants waiting to move on to a second destination.

Irregular foreign workers numbered some 1.5 million in 2008, employed informally particularly in domestic work, construction and agriculture. Iran’s Islamic revolution of 1979 and repression against the Kurds in Iraq, particularly in 1988, caused a massive influx of Iranians and Iraqi Kurds. Since then, Turkey has experienced an explosion of incoming forced migration (Bosnians in 1992, Kosovars in 1999, Albanians in 2001). In addition, there are a great deal of cross-border labour migrants commuting from countries of the former Soviet Union, immigration of ethnic Turks returning from Bulgaria since 1990 (half a million) and migrants in transit who do not plan on remaining in Turkey. In 2001, the number of entries per year was estimated at 300,000.

Turkey offers certain advantages that make it attractive to migrants. First of all, it is near countries of emigration and constitutes a bridge to Europe. Secondly, border controls are weak and circulation within the country is easy. However, these flows are often illegal and therefore difficult to quantify. Hence, Turkey has never considered itself a country of immigration. Concerned about its national homogeneity and the preservation of its sovereignty, it shows a preference for the return of immigrants to their countries of origin and escorts rejected asylum seekers to the borders. At the heart of an unstable region, the country, moreover, tries to limit the flows. For populations of Turkish origin, a real policy of integration is implemented. Turkey has been reproached for this discriminatory policy, and has experienced a great deal of international pressure, in particular from the EU. Its status as a candidate for accession to the EU implies cooperation and progressive integration of the EU acquis. In addition, the majority of official initiatives concerning immigration are much more the result of external pressure than of a real national immigration policy.

And finally, Turkey is the leading country of extra-European migration to Europe for the number of its émigrés (3 million), distributed among numerous European countries (Germany, with whom Turkey forms an origin-host country pair, Austria, Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Switzerland), where they serve as a source of remittances for their country of origin. Turkish expatriates build transnational economic, religious, matrimonial and cultural networks thanks to associative community life. Access to dual nationality in many countries hitherto reticent (such as Germany) has allowed second generations to be present both ‘here’ and ‘there’, and to become voters in both countries, allowing Turkey to exercise a sort of ‘diplomacy of migration’ thanks to its diaspora and its associative networks.

European Reactions

The struggle against illegal migration is a declared EU priority in the Mediterranean Region. Common regulations are being defined on an EU-wide scale to struggle against illegal immigration since 1990. The stepping up of border controls is also symbolised by the radar-assisted SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior, i.e. Spain’s border surveillance system) between Spain and the African coast. In Seville in June 2002, EU Member States decided to accelerate the process of migratory policy harmonisation towards greater ‘equilibrium,’ but they focussed on the struggle against illegal immigration and abuse of asylum requests: readmission clauses, joint management of migratory flows (Operation Ulysses, coordinated by Spain and designed to combat illegal immigration arriving by sea). This security trend was consolidated at the Thessalonica Summit in 2003. Readmission agreements between the EU and SMCs have tended to turn many buffer States into the ‘border guards’ of the EU area, other States (in particular African ones) already being bound by an obligatory readmission clause. Immigration and asylum liaison officers to the Frontex Programme (EU Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at External Borders, 2005), formalized into a specialised agency based in Warsaw, carry out stepped-up controls of external EU borders. EU repatriation (that is, repatri-
ication carried out by several EU countries as a joint effort) is considered a strong factor of dissuasion.
In 1995, the Barcelona Process placed migration within the category of co-development, implemented through bilateral and multilateral agreements. The MEDA I (1995-1999) and MEDA II (2000-2006) Programmes sought to create decentralised forms of co-development in southern countries based on partner development associations. Hopes were soon dashed, however, due to several factors: the implementation of the EU security plan for border control and combating terrorism; the asymmetry of trade (55% of SMC exports and 50% of their imports are to/from the EU, whereas the SMCs represent but 7% of foreign trade for the latter); the absence of democratisation of political regimes; the instability of the region; the weak appropriation of the Partnership by the SMCs; and the unequal interest of North Mediterranean Countries in the latter.
In 2005, the EU Green Paper proposed creating an overall framework stipulating the conditions of entry for non-EU workers as well as the adoption of sectoral regulations applicable to certain categories. Yet the commission recommended respecting preferential employment for the EU nationals.
In 2006, the foreign ministers of 57 European and African countries met in Rabat with a view to adopting an action plan against illegal migration combining security measures with the implementation of development projects. This was the first time that the struggle against illegal immigration and co-development policies were considered together. The aim was above all to have African countries accept repatriation of their nationals. The Rabat Conference was followed by a 5+5 Conference on Malta in the autumn of 2006.
A conference on border control was held in Tripoli in November 2006 to create placement agencies in countries of departure and establish quotas for seasonal workers. In February 2007, the European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, Mr. Frattini, in charge of migration and asylum matters, Mr. Frattini, in charge of migration and asylum matters, put forth the idea of a Blue Card allowing mobility for highly qualified non-EU nationals with the EU, while reasserting the importance of the struggle against illegal immigration. Many of these initiatives are conducted by Spain, the leading destination country for undocumented migrants and having reached a population of 4.5 million foreigners at a pace of 200,000 new immigrants per year for the past five years. For its part, Libya seems to have been attempting to play the role of border guard to Europe for several years now.
In 2008, the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, launched under the French EU Presidency (July-December 2008) makes five commitments: organisation of legal immigration according to each Member State’s capacity for taking migrants in, joint control of external borders, organisation of the effective removal of undocumented foreigners, common asylum policy, promotion of co-development and aid to development. However, it has no legal force, as it is not a treaty but rather a commitment undertaken by the 27 Member States to foster a future policy. Some months earlier, in June 2008, the European Parliament passed a ‘return’ directive extending the time of detention in centres to up to 18 months before illegal immigrants are escorted to the border.
The launching by France of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in July of 2008 mobilised all of the Mediterranean coastal countries around major common causes such as depollution of the Mediterranean and the matters of water and energy. Yet the project has not taken any position concerning the circulation of migrants between the northern and southern shores. The UfM has progressively removed migration from its agenda. It is, however, difficult to imagine a real union if the circulation of people is highly restricted and if the ‘middle sea’ becomes a major cemetery for illegal migrants.

References

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

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

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

The cultural agenda within the Barcelona Process, like the process itself, has not only been affected by the constant changes in international policy, but has also felt the full impact of the political instability and conflicts in the region, primarily, the conflict in the Middle East. The priorities for Euro-Mediterranean relations have been adapted over the years to world priorities: security, the environment, the dialogue between cultures, trade liberalisation, democratisation, etc.

Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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

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

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

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

2 The 15 member states of the European Union (Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Austria), the Palestinian Authority, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.
tions grounded in a shared vision of the future. Moreover, and thanks to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the action plans signed with our partners, we have effective tools to turn our projects into reality.

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

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

History of the Process

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

Ministerial Meetings: Genuine Commitments or Declarations of Intention?

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

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

Let us now look at the results of the meetings of the region’s Culture Ministers:

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

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

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

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

The Anna Lindh Foundation is an organisation supported and funded, at present, by the 43 member
countries of the Union for the Mediterranean\(^3\) to promote dialogue between cultures and respect for diversity. The European Commission funds half of its budget.

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

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

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

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

4. The third Euromed conference of Culture Ministers was held in Athens in May 2008 during the ‘2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue’ within the specific context of the ‘2008, Euro-Mediterranean Year of Dialogue between Cultures’. The meeting marked a turning point in the approach taken to date by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the cultural field. For the first time, the Culture Ministers decided to establish a long-term Euro-Mediterranean cultural strategy and asked a group of experts to draw one up to be formally adopted over 2010 at the next ministerial meeting.

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

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

a. With regard to the dialogue between cultures, the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (www.euromedalex.org) was to serve as the core for this part of the strategy in accordance with the Foundation’s role in the process and the decision of the Heads of State and Government in July 2008, in which they stated that the Foundation must effectively contribute to the cultural dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean.

b. With regard to cultural policy, the European Commission considers the following to be of utmost importance:

- To adhere to the principles set forth in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- To encourage Euro-Mediterranean partners to further develop national cultural policies, taking into account the needs of the cultural sector.
- To give particular attention to strengthening the capacity of partner countries in the field of cultural expression and to promoting access to culture and to aim at establishing more balanced cultural exchanges between partner countries (public administrations and civil society).
- To stress the importance of cultural industries in our economic sectors.
- To include priorities such as human resource development, the transfer of technical know-how, the establishment of joint information and communication systems, the use of new technologies and the promotion of sustainable economic development through culture.

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\(^3\) All Euro-Mediterranean Partnership member countries, plus Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monaco and Montenegro.
The 5th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, in Valencia (2002), launched the initiative and approved the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF). The Foundation functions as a network of national networks connecting over 2000 civil society organisations (NGOs, universities, associations, public and private institutions and the like) among 43 Euro-Mediterranean countries that have reached a political agreement. These consist, among others, of the EU countries and their ten partner countries on the South Mediterranean shore: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Turkey. The President André Azoulay, the Executive Director and the Board of Governors work in collaboration with the Heads of the National Network of each country. The original 35 countries forming part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) established the ALF in 2005, basing it in Alexandria, with the aim of fostering dialogue among cultures on both the northern and southern Mediterranean shores and rising to the challenge of peaceful inter-cultural coexistence, that is, bridging the gap existing insofar as perceptions and mutual comprehension among the populations on both shores. ALF functions were expanded in 2008 by virtue of its founding role in the Union for the Mediterranean, an initiative put forth by French President Nicolas Sarkozy to relaunch the EMP. Since then, it has been considered a key actor in Mediterranean cooperation and is responsible for developing the social, human and cultural dimensions of the partnership.

In order to shape “an area of co-operation, exchange, mobility, mutual understanding and peace,” the national networks cover different fields of action: intercultural relations, heritage, religion, research, human rights, democracy and social development, the arts, education and youth, gender, the environment and sustainable development, and finally the media. The first three-year programme (2005-2007) launched six major strategic areas, each involving different projects. The Our Common Future strategic area aimed to involve youth in cooperation without borders thanks to projects such as Traditional Euro-Mediterranean Music and Euro-Mediterranean School Magazines. This latter project aimed to twin schools in countries on either shore of the Mediterranean having school magazines or annual reports. The programme Avenues of Multiple Perspectives aimed at producing educational content by studying educational manuals and programmes relative to universal values such as non-discrimination. Our Creative Diversity, inspired by UNESCO’s Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development and the Human Development Report (HDR), focuses on cultural diversity and aims to introduce a Euro-Mediterranean component into a number of projects underway. The programme Science without Borders, insofar as a synergistic mechanism, works on high-speed digital data exchange in southern Mediterranean partners. The Euro-Mediterranean Information Society encourages civil society to modernise educational, cultural, scientific and information technology policies. Finally, the Women and Gender Equality programme was launched representing an integral element of the entire Foundation programme.

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

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

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

For further information:
www.euromedalex.org

The Programmes: Concrete Steps or Grains of Sand?

Cooperation in the field of culture is a mainstay of Euro-Mediterranean relations. From the start, programmes in the sector have emerged with a view to enabling the exchange of ideas, bringing citizens closer together and allowing us to get to know each other better. In general, the programmes have included many aspects relating to technical assistance, capacity building and personal exchanges. Indeed, one could argue that the thousands of people who have directly benefited from the programmes, whether by attending training courses, drawing up specific projects, participating in exchanges or volunteer programmes, etc., are but a grain of sand in the universe of our interregional relations. However, the impact of these programmes should not be assessed in terms of the costs and benefits in relation to the number of people directly involved, but rather, and above all, in relation to the multiplier effect that these people may have had on their environments, by reinforcing organisations, enhancing perceptions in their respective population and in the opening generated in the participants. All of this is difficult to quantify.

One testament to the success of these programmes is that they have generated networks that currently operate independently from the programmes them-
selves. They have set into motion a dynamic of contacts and relations that continues to nourish the work of many of their participants.

The Euromed Programmes

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

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

Euromed Audiovisual (www.euromedaudiovisuel.net)
The first phase of the programme was launched in 2000 with a view to working jointly to preserve and distribute documentaries and to present films that showcased the life and culture of the region’s peoples. Its actions included the exchange of experiences and knowledge; training in script writing and co-productions between independent companies; the scanning of 5,000 documentaries to ensure their conservation; and the participation of 60,000 people in the ‘Caravan of Euro-Arab Cinema’ festival, which travelled to 7 European cities and Amman (Jordan). Additionally, 86 documentaries were made following the training courses in script writing, project development, marketing and distribution. Euromed Audiovisual II focused on training, development, promotion, distribution and exhibition of Mediterranean cinema, paying special attention to the pre-production and post-production processes. The programme owes its success to its training and development-oriented projects, which have enabled the completion of works by 478 young professionals. It likewise boosted the presence of southern Mediterranean films in European cinemas and vice versa. The programme’s main new feature was the inclusion of support for public authorities to develop the sector.

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

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

Euro-Mediterranean Regional Information and Communication Programme
(www.journalismnetwork.eu and www.EuromedInfo.eu)
When considering intercultural dialogue, one must not underestimate the considerable influence of the media. In accordance with the ‘Euro-Mediterranean Regional Information and Communication Programme’,
SIGNIFICANT EUROMED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS: SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HUMAN PARTNERSHIP

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

- **Audiovisual – Euro-Mediterranean Audiovisual Cooperation – (2005-2008)** – 15 million euros (MEDA funds): Aims to reinforce the audiovisual and cinema sectors in MPCs as a way of promoting cooperation and mutual understanding between these countries and the European Union.
  [www.euromedaudiovisuel.net](http://www.euromedaudiovisuel.net)

- **Regional Information and Communication (2004-2007 and 2008-2011)** – 10 million euros (MEDA funds) and 12 million euros (ENPI funds), respectively: Aims to make the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) better known and understood and sensitise public opinion, essentially through activities targeting the media, civil society and youth.
  [www.euromedinfo.eu](http://www.euromedinfo.eu)

  [www.euromedheritage.net](http://www.euromedheritage.net)

- **Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (2005-2008)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): Brings people and organisations on North and South Mediterranean shores closer and fosters dialogue through the implementation of joint projects.
  [www.euromedalex.org](http://www.euromedalex.org)

- **Training of Public Administrations (2004-2008)** – 6 million euros (MEDA funds): Provides information to civil servants in the MPCs on matters relating to the EU and supports their efforts to implement Association Agreements.

  [www.meda-ete.net](http://www.meda-ete.net)

- **TEMPUS III (2000-2007)** – 98.5 million euros (MEDA funds): Offers faculty and administrative staff at universities in the MPCs the opportunity to collaborate with universities in the EU countries.

- **Erasmus Mundus – Foreign Cooperation Component (2007-2008)** – 13 million euros: Encourages cooperation between institutions of higher education in the EU and in the MPCs through partnerships and student, researcher and faculty exchanges.

- **Role of Women in Economic Life (2006-2008)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): Encourages government institutions and NGOs to invest greater efforts towards improving women’s perspectives for participating in economic life in the MPCs.
  [www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net/intro.html](http://www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net/intro.html)

  [www.euromedyoung.net](http://www.euromedyoung.net)

- **Euromed Civil Forum (since 1995)** – budget established by each successive EU Presidency (MEDA funds): Offers civil society associations a platform allowing them to network and establish ties, discuss their role and make recommendations to government institutions.
  [www.euromedplatform.org](http://www.euromedplatform.org)

- **Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils (since 1995)** – 50,000 euros per year (MEDA funds): This annual forum discusses social and economic issues of interest to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

  [www.ces.es/TRESMED/tresmed_en.html](http://www.ces.es/TRESMED/tresmed_en.html)

- **MED-PACT – Local Authorities (2006-2009)** – 5 million euros (MEDA funds): Fosters dialogue and cooperation among local government and civil society organisations on both sides of the Mediterranean with a view to improving mutual understanding and establishing social and cultural ties between EU countries and the MPCs.
  [www.med-pact.com](http://www.med-pact.com)

For further information:
[www.enpi-info.eu](http://www.enpi-info.eu)

Several activities have been launched to further knowledge of how the European Union works, its institutions, policies and programmes and its relations with other Mediterranean countries. The programme has made it possible to convey information through 170 hours of television programming, 80 radio programmes on international radio stations and press supplements in Mediterranean newspapers. Major activities include journalist training programmes, the creation of a network of professionals known as the Euromed Media Task Force and the establishment of the Euromed Info Centre, which collects and disseminates information, produces informational material and maintains a website in English, French and Arabic.

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

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

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

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

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

The last 13 years of cultural partnership have led to the establishment of several successfully completed and current initiatives and the ground has been laid to forge deeper relations in the field of culture. The dialogue between cultures begun in the context of individual and sectoral projects has been broadened to include new, often neglected voices, including those of civil society, women, young people and the media. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has likewise enabled extensive cooperation among civil society agents, giving rise to several networks of human rights organisations, research institutions, universities, environmental organisations, etc., which have now been operating for years.

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

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

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

The re-launching of the Partnership under the name of the Union for the Mediterranean and the new focus on co-ownership and specific, visible projects must serve to further strengthen the trust between partners and, with it, the efforts to promote development, peace and prosperity in the region. These objectives of the Barcelona Process remain strikingly valid today.
Aicha Ait Mhand
Vice-President
Association Démocratique de Femmes de Maroc (ADFM),
Casablanca
Deputy Director
Euromed Non-Governmental Platform

Gender equality constitutes one of the major concerns of civil society actors in the Mediterranean Basin and of certain government decision-makers who are conveyors of the values of democracy and respect for human rights as universally recognised. However, the degree of commitment of these stakeholders is not the same from one country to another and progress achieved is on a par with this commitment. Such an analysis is even more delicate due to the complexity of the Mediterranean Region, the area of study of this article.

The Mediterranean Region, surrounding an ‘inland sea’ with a rich history, forms quite a particular area, not only in terms of diversity, pluralism, interculturality and exchange, but also in terms of conflicts, of multiple and continuous confrontations. All of this naturally contributes to complicating initiatives on gender equality and relegating them to the background.

The presence of three monotheistic religions in the region and with different levels of practice oscillating from secularism for certain States to the adoption of a religion as a system of governance for others, complicates the task of human rights and women’s rights activists even more.

Moreover, the evolution of North-South relations replaces levels of responsibility regarding these issues on different State and supra-State levels; hence, evaluating the measures undertaken becomes even more complicated.

From the Barcelona Process to the Union for the Mediterranean

Gender Equality in the Mediterranean: Continuity and Rupture

Thirteen Years into Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: What Place Does the Issue of Gender Equality Occupy?

The countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Region have attempted to group together into a more homogeneous region for different reasons over the course of history, beginning with the geostrategic position of the Mediterranean Region and security issues. The aim of this article is not to go over the history of the relations among Mediterranean Basin States, but it is interesting to recall the recent events that led to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and that now profoundly influence the issue of fostering and protecting human rights as well as women’s rights. In fact, since its accession to the EC in 1986, Spain has oriented its concerns in terms of European foreign policy towards the Mediterranean Region. As of that time, France and Spain have been the main instigators of European Policy in the Mediterranean (primarily in the Maghreb). But nothing concrete was registered until December of 1995, when 12 Mediterranean countries and the 15 EU Member States met in Barcelona to sign the Barcelona Declaration. The declaration has three baskets that are considered priorities: an economic and financial basket, the main goal of which is to establish a free trade area; a political and security basket aiming to establish a common area of peace and stability; and finally, a social, cultural and human basket on issues of democracy and the protection of human rights.

This declaration, which currently constitutes the basis of cooperation between the countries of the European Union and their neighbours to the south (27 + 12), aims to turn the region into a joint area of peace and stability. The signatory States have committed to respect the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration...
of Human Rights, as well as developing constitutional, democratic States under the Rule of Law.

Subsequently, bilateral agreements gradually began substituting the multilateral negotiations of the Barcelona Declaration, first under the form of Association Agreements and then within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in the form of action plans. The goal of these plans is to grant ‘Advanced Status’ to countries that best keep their commitments.

Though the issue of gender equality is mentioned at all Euro-Mediterranean meetings, it should be noted that, insofar as results obtained, it seems evident that these debates come closer to rhetoric than any concrete commitment. Indeed, a simple count of the number of activities organised since 1995 in comparison to the results obtained demonstrates that the strategy for attaining gender equality in the region is not yet coherent or clear in comparison to the ambitions declared. The year 2008 was no exception in this sphere in terms of significant quantity of activities and the weakness of their impact on the status of women in the region.

The activities that have marked 2008 focussed on different subjects, both on national and international levels. On the international level, activities are pursued through UN structures and the action undertaken by their local offices in the Euromed Region.

What Progress Has Been Made towards Gender Equality through the Strong Presence of International Organisations in the Mediterranean?

The global United Nations theme of International Women’s Day 2008 was “Investing in Women and Girls.” On that day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasised that investing in women and girls “has a multiplier effect on productivity and sustained economic growth.”

For its part, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women used the lemma “Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women” as the priority theme of its meetings in 2008. In Barcelona on 8 March 2008, the local governments of a significant number of States commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, which was ratified by hundreds of local governments in 1998 and forms the basis of United Cities and Local Governments’ work to ensure the advancement of women and the mainstreaming of gender issues.

Moreover, the pilot initiative in cooperation among UN Agencies launched in 2008 thanks to the UNDP-Spanish MDG Achievement Fund has benefited a series of States of the Mediterranean Region, in
particular Morocco and Palestine, under the ‘thematic window’ of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. The seven other ‘thematic windows’ of this programme also integrate gender equality,\(^1\) mainstreaming the issue.

These international activities cannot but improve the life of women in countries where programmes against poverty and exclusion are being carried out, but it would be interesting to emphasise in this regard that, although the link between the status of women and economic growth is very strong, the Rights approach to improving the status of women of all social classes should not be eclipsed. This approach considers that women’s rights are an integral and indivisible part of human rights and advocates gender equality’s being considered independently of women’s economic status or the degree of development of the target countries, as well as independently of the economic repercussions of measures undertaken to foster gender equality. It is understood that even in developed countries, the gender gap remains quite significant and that women there continue to suffer numerous forms of discrimination (see Table 1).

On the level of the Euro-Mediterranean Region, UN Agencies, and particularly UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), act primarily in the South Mediterranean Countries to improve women’s status. This agency, with its various regional offices, cooperates closely with States in the region and, in particular, EU institutions to free up the funds necessary for financing projects fostering gender equality in the region. Note in this regard that the UNIFEM saw a budget increase of 16% in 2008 over the previous year.

Initiatives by international organisations can be added to those organised by actors in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. These regional initiatives are varied insofar as both content and impact.

Regional Dynamics towards Gender Equality: A Roadmap for the European Union and a Non-Binding Action Plan for the Euro-Mediterranean Region

The Euro-Mediterranean Region registers a significant gender gap and in this respect, the outcome of efforts during the year 2008 is hardly satisfying. On the basis of reports produced by NGOs, regional and sub-regional NGO networks operating in the region as well as by statistics organisms, a gulf can be observed between declarations of intent and actual implementation.\(^2\)

Indeed, the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, the statement and Five-Year Work Programme adopted at the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration (Barcelona+10), as well as all Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meeting reports, the Development Cooperation Instrument, ENP Action Plans and certain reports by the European Commission insist on the need to guarantee respect for women’s rights within the Euro-Mediterranean Region and the need to develop the gender approach throughout all baskets of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and in all facets of bilateral cooperation.

This led to the adoption of an action framework entitled Istanbul Action Plan at the EMP Ministerial Conference of November 2006 on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society”. This plan is designed to advance the role of women in the political, civil, social, economic and cultural spheres, as well as to combat discrimination.

Although it did not fulfil the aspirations of the civil society stakeholders having participated in the debate preceding its adoption, this action plan constituted a glimmer of hope in 2006 for movements working towards gender equality. However, the absence of a specific implementation scheme and the weaknesses of the monitoring mechanism for the Istanbul Action Plan have hampered its implementation and monitoring to this day.

In fact, monitoring is limited to meetings of experts designated by the Euro-Mediterranean Partner States, in which a single representative of the civil society participates, on behalf of the Euromed NGO Platform. This representative is a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network.

A part from these experts’ meetings –which have not, by the way, led to the publication of a follow-up report nor proposed concrete measures to further the implementation of the Istanbul Action Plan–, no regional activities, in the proper sense of the word, have been dedicated to the issue of gender equality in 2008. This demonstrates that

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\(^1\) For further details, see the website: [www.undp.org/mdgf](http://www.undp.org/mdgf)

\(^2\) See the contents of the Partnership Agreements as compared to figures and statistics on Table 1 and Charts 15 and 16 published in this article.
female-male equality is not yet a core concern, neither for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership nor the ENP. Moreover, only a limited number of public, governmental and non-governmental organisations is aware of the existence of the Istanbul Action Plan or the ENP Action Plans. Consequently, a limited number of them is involved and will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by these plans to improve human rights and the status of women.

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<tr>
<th>Rank in the Euromed Region</th>
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In sum, the added value of this plan is highly limited due to the facts that it has no budget within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and that there is an absence of results indicators, implementation timetable and any form of monitoring or making Partner States accountable. In the face of these deficiencies of the EMP, we emphasise that the different types of progress made in the sphere of gender equality in this region have been due to the European Commission’s gender equality roadmap for people in the EU and the dynamism of the civil society on both northern and southern Mediterranean shores, but above all in the South.

In the North:
A Coherent Strategy under Construction

The Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men in the European Union was adopted on 1 March 2006. It aims to reassert a dual approach to equality consisting of taking the genre dimension into account in all political domains and activities and of adopting specific measures. The roadmap represents the European Commission’s commitment to advancing the programme on equality between women and men and strengthening partnerships with Member States and other actors. It outlines six priority areas for EU action:

- Equal economic independence for women and men.
- Reconciliation of private and professional life.
- Equal representation in decision-making.
- Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence.
- Elimination of gender stereotypes.
- Promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.

In any case, the decision to eliminate the EU Commission on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality after the review of the operation of the EU Parliament casts a shadow on the picture of EU action to foster gender equality. The Commission, the main interlocutor for the European feminist movement, has played an important role in the adoption of a series of measures fostering gender equality in Europe, in particular the directive that led to the creation of the stated Roadmap in 2006.

On the level of the EU Presidency, on 13-14 November 2008 France organised a European Summit on the Equality of Women and Men in Working Life following the Commission’s announcement, on 3 October 2008, of proposals to allow women to be entitled to a longer maternity leave under better conditions.

Moreover, the Commission, acting in its capacity as ‘guardian of treaties’, continually examines the legislation of all Member States to ensure it properly reflects the requirements of the directive relative to gender equality. If this is not the case, the Commission initiates infringement proceedings against the Member State or States concerned.

In this regard, on 26 June 2008, the European Commission delivered reasoned opinions to the Czech Republic, Greece and Poland for flawed transposition of the EU regulation prohibiting discrimination in access to and supply of goods and services (Directive 2004/113/EC). These Member States had
two months to respond under penalty of having their case brought before the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

All EU action is taken within the framework of the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men, the second work programme of which was adopted on 12 March 2008. In any case, the facts show that in Europe, women are still victims of violence and discrimination, and that parity/equality is limited by numerous difficulties and shortcomings.

Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, declared in his speech at the 6th Council of Europe Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men that: “Violations of women’s human rights are still common and have actually increased in some regions of Europe in recent years. Women are often exposed to practices which could be classed as torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. These include domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour killings, genital mutilation and trafficking in human beings.”

The facts show that in Europe, women are still victims of violence and discrimination, and that parity/equality is limited by numerous difficulties and shortcomings

Moreover, women are largely underrepresented in decision-making. The ‘glass ceiling’ continues to prevent women from accessing positions of power. The women’s rights movement is strongly mobilised on this issue with a view to the 2009 European elections. The issue of equal remuneration for men and women remains another of the major concerns of women’s rights movements in Europe. Indeed, according to Eurostat’s latest report, women continue to earn an average salary of 15% less than men. In addition, they are underrepresented in decision-making positions in enterprise, only 10% of women being on the executive boards of companies. Yet these shortcomings are even more accentuated in the SMCs.

In the South: Embryonic Strategies at Different Stages of Development

In South Mediterranean Countries, the progress made on gender equality issues differs from one country to another. Cultural aspects and religious movements substantially hamper advancement towards equality. The majority of SMCs are characterised by their insufficient, even non-existent, application of the principles of Rule of Law and this does not make intervention on gender equality issues easy.

In 2008, the main activities organised were done so at the initiative of the civil society in partnership with funding agencies operating in the region, namely the European Commission, UN agencies, diplomatic missions of Western countries and certain large international NGOs.

These activities come in the form of development projects and local action aiming to improve women’s living conditions, but also in the form of advocacy action to incite governments to adopt legal reforms and integrate gender mainstreaming into public policy. The main subjects of reform are family statutes, access to decision-making positions and integrating the gender issue into public budgets.

In any case, the 2008 acquis is not very significant and concerns but a few countries, in particular Tunisia and Morocco. In Tunisia, the government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but without withdrawing its reservations to the Convention.

In Morocco, following the regional civil society campaign for the withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW, the intention to withdraw these reservations was announced by the King on 10 December 2008, the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the withdrawal procedures have not yet begun and are the object of virulent debate between conservative groups and pro-democracy movements.

In sum, the status of women in the South Mediterranean Region remains a matter for serious concern in all respects. Timid progress has been made on the issues of personal status and access to decision-making positions, but illiteracy, violence, poverty and marginalisation are just so many evils undermining the human dignity of women in the region.

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3 See the 50/50 Campaign coordinated by the European Women’s Lobby.
4 See the Equality without Reservation Coalition website at: http://cedaw.wordpress.com
Civil Society: A Powerful Vector for Reform in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

Though the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has certain limits insofar as the implementation of Partner State commitments in the sphere of democracy, human rights protection and gender equality, it remains one of the means to which civil society turns to attain its objectives. In addition, aware that goals of an economic and security order predominate in North-South negotiations, and being a conveyor of democratic values active in the sphere of human rights protection, civil society is constantly working to have its concerns integrated into the Partnership framework.

For this reason, civil society in countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Region has accompanied the establishment of the partnership between the EU and the SMCs since the start of preparations for the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 to this day.

The lack of democracy and the constraints regarding freedom of association in the SMCs, accentuated by the wish of Northern governments to see their Southern counterparts strengthen their systems of struggle against terrorism and immigration, considerably limits the field of action of Southern civil society. For instance, feminist movements consider that the issue of gender equality is often treated as a bargaining chip in negotiations between the EU and the SMCs. In any case, this highly dynamic movement, structured as independent NGOs both in subregional and regional networks, continues to accompany the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership through participation in

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5 See the report on freedom of association published by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (www.euromedrights.net)

6 See, in particular, the different reports and declarations of the Euromed Civil Forums.
**CHART 15**

The Gender Gap in the Euro-Mediterranean Region


**CHART 16**

Presence of Women and Men in Upper Parliamentary Chambers or Senates of Countries in the Euromed Region with a Bicameral System

Source: Website of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
civil forums and evaluation of ENP Action Plans (in the case of Morocco). Moreover, it receives financial support from the European Commission and European funding agencies for development projects and initiatives advocating the improvement of women’s living conditions.

It is interesting to note, however, that progress made in gender equality in the South Mediterranean Region, in contrast to what occurs in the EU, is primarily initiated by women’s rights and human rights movements.

Thanks to the dynamism of civil society, gender equality remains a highly relevant issue in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

In addition, in order to foster gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, resorting to networking both on the national and the regional levels (whether the South Mediterranean or the Euro-Mediterranean Regions) remains the best means open to civil society actors for fostering gender equality in sensitive areas such as changing the personal status of women, but also for inciting governments to integrate gender mainstreaming in their public policies and promote women’s access to decision-making positions.

In the North, civil society has fewer constraints to acting in favour of gender equality because it acts in an environment where freedom of association is guaranteed. However, other difficulties prevent it from attaining its goals; namely, the fact that the culture of volunteer work is increasingly weakening in the North in comparison with the South Mediterranean Region; added to the resistance of conservative movements in Europe.

By way of conclusion, let us emphasise that, thanks to the dynamism of civil society, gender equality remains a highly relevant issue in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. However, though the objectives sought are easily defined –i.e. promoting equality–, the creation of public policies displays certain contradictions, in both the North and the South, and entails difficulties that are not always easy to overcome, above all in a context where States are generally demonstrating reticence to commit to democratic reforms.
Panorama: The Mediterranean Year
The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The Morocco/EU Advanced Status: What Value Does it Add to the European Neighbourhood Policy?

Introduction

In a joint document adopted during the seventh meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council in October 2008, the European Union (EU) and Morocco announced their decision to notably strengthen their relationship under the advanced status requested by Morocco within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The granting of advanced status ratified a range of proposals presented and discussed in regular meetings held by an ad hoc working group formed at the sixth meeting of the Association Council entrusted with making the “advanced status” a reality.

The partnership ties between Morocco and the EU have been actively forged in an attempt to provide a better perspective of the growth of the European Union through its successive expansions yet remain attentive to the geostrategic developments that have characterised the region. The two partners decided to reexamine the contractual framework that linked them and to map out the future of their partnership and open up new opportunities to promote, within the ENP, values such as openness, progress and prosperity and to move towards a “privileged partnership” capable of genuinely contributing towards the emergence of a renewed Euro-Mediterranean order.

Morocco’s request for advanced status was not an attempt to stand out from the rest or to gain exclusive rights, but rather to contribute to the new form of governance that is required in the Euro-Mediterranean space. In a context shaped by a newly emerging geoeconomy, growing security challenges, and an increasing interweaving of strategic interests, Morocco and the EU have renewed efforts within the Euro-Mediterranean space to develop a renewed approach to forging neighbourhood ties to effectively address the challenges of globalisation, to capitalise on assets, and to overcome collective security challenges and threats.

Morocco’s Advanced Status: A Road Map Rooted in the EU/Morocco Action Plan

The mutual commitments outlined in the joint document represent a road map for the progressive, sustained development of bilateral relationships in the political, economic, financial, and human fields and for facilitating Morocco’s involvement in certain community programmes and agencies. The partners consider that the advanced status should strengthen political cooperation between Morocco and the EU, thereby allowing each of the partners to focus more closely on their respective strategic priorities, and facilitate the gradual integration of the Moroccan economy into the EU interior market through the provision of adequate financial support.

This status will give a new impetus to cooperation between the EU and both Morocco and other ENP countries in the near future, notably in terms of reinforcing political dialogue and joint decision-making mechanisms and lending greater visibility to the partnership. In brief, the actions contemplated represent a road map for the progressive construction and strengthening of bilateral relations between the EU and Morocco. One may, however, question the added value offered by the advanced status in terms of the commitments undertaken within the framework of the ENP and the corresponding action plan.
Political and Strategic Dialogue:
One Potential Area of Added Value

The political dimension of the commitments undertaken by Morocco and the EU in the joint document provides added value to the political dialogue channels already in place. Morocco and the EU have also envisaged a series of concertation processes and actions such as an EU-Morocco Summit, meetings in New York between the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and the EU High Representative for Common Foreign Security and Policy (CFSP), meetings between the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and his European counterparts, sector-specific ministerial meetings, and the participation of the Ambassador and/or high-ranking officials of the Kingdom of Morocco in certain EU Council committee and working group meetings.

Nonetheless, such proposals form part of an agreement in principle to hold meetings on an ad hoc basis, outside the framework of regular EU Council ministerial meetings or multilateral activities held by the United Nations and other international organisations. The objective is to enhance bilateral coordination but specific concertation processes— to be established by mutual consent and on a case by case basis—have yet to be defined.

Morocco considers that terrorism should not divert attention from the real challenges facing the region, namely the establishment of lasting peace, social and economic development, democratic consolidation, and the fostering of cultural and human approximation.

Within the context of these reinforced relations, parliamentary institutions have been called on to create a European Parliament-Moroccan Parliament joint interparliamentary committee, whereby the Moroccan Parliament would be allowed to attend the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of European as an observer. Another commitment announced was the organisation of regular reinforced political dialogue meetings. Thematic meetings will also be organised between Morocco and the EU (Secretary General of the Council/Commission). While the nature of these meetings has not been decided, they will probably deal with the issues of democracy, human rights, and collective security.

A framework agreement for Morocco’s participation in civil and military crisis management operations has also been negotiated with a view to strengthening Morocco-EU dialogue in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Within this agreement, Morocco would support CFSP statements on a case-by-case basis. In the area of security, the EU and Morocco have decided to strengthen cooperation in the fight against international terrorism. Nonetheless Morocco considers that terrorism should not divert attention from the real challenges facing the region, namely the establishment of lasting peace, social and economic development, democratic consolidation, and the fostering of cultural and human approximation. In the area of judicial cooperation and the promotion of human rights, the joint document contemplates the creation of an agenda for the updating and harmonisation of the conventional framework and the establishment of specific institutes and border control mechanisms.

A Comprehensive and Deeper Free-trade Agreement: Everything but Job Mobility

The road map for advanced status reflects the wish to create a common economic space characterised by a greater integration of the Moroccan economy into the EU market. This goal is to be realised through the development of joint actions in four key cross-cutting areas: the alignment of Morocco’s legal system with the EU acquis, the conclusion of a comprehensive and deeper free trade agreement, cooperation in economic and social development, and participation by Morocco in Trans-European Networks and sector-specific cooperation schemes.

Adapting Morocco’s legal system to the EU’s acquis will, in all likelihood, be a long and costly process, requiring considerable investment in the environment, health, job safety, and public health and the modernisation of many sectors. Efficient administrative structures and trained staff will be required to adopt community regulations in areas such as consumer protection, phytosanitary and veterinary regulations, and border control. The sheer scale of the work required in the area of legislation, administration, and financ-
ing and the political hurdles that need to be overcome explain why Morocco has called for technical cooperation and transition periods.

The joint document mentions the need to finalise a deeper free trade agreement that will allow for the free movement of goods (via tariff and non-tariff measures), services, capital, and the temporary movement of people for professional purposes. The trade negotiations underway (liberalisation of trade in agricultural products and services, right of establishment, etc.) fall within this framework and should address the need for the progressive implementation of commitments that are asymmetrical in nature.

During the negotiations between Morocco and the EU on the liberalisation of agricultural trade, Morocco reiterated its commitment to progressing towards a genuine partnership based on a gradual and controlled opening up of markets that is in tune with Morocco’s socioeconomic situation. One cannot fail to notice, however, that these negotiations have essentially addressed issues such as the speed and means by which agricultural markets should be opened up, with little attention paid to the challenges and limits that would be caused by an abrupt opening of these markets. For Morocco, the issues at stake are of an economic, social, and environmental nature, while for the EU, they are linked to competition from Mediterranean countries, which can be resolved through effective market-based regulation and management.

The liberalisation of services looks likely to be more complex than that of goods as services are generally not cross-border in nature but characterised by proximity between suppliers and clients and the movement of persons. The market has many shortcomings in this respect and the implementation of competition rules is also a major challenge. The heterogeneous nature of services makes it difficult to establish a common framework, meaning that the opening up of this market will need to be adapted to the particularities of each subsector if the changes envisaged are to be successfully brought about.

According to the joint document, among the areas to be developed in order to make the deeper free trade agreement a reality from an operational perspective are access to public markets, the facilitation of market access for industrial products, the movement of capital and payments, health and phytosanitary measures, intellectual and industrial property rights, competition policy, and consumer protection. The list is not exhaustive and it will be supported by an alert or rapid consultation mechanism for measures that have an impact on trade and investment.

Cooperation in the implementation of the global approach to migration is most certainly the least developed part of the road map. While the EU recognises the importance of cooperation in this area, it has stated that it will only move forward when the negotiations on the readmission agreement have been successfully concluded. Morocco has called for the readmission agreement “package” to include a visa facilitation agreement, reinsertion actions devoted to readmission, a mechanism to promote legal migration, and technical and financial support for the implementation of the agreement. The EU has not yet given indications on the content of this readmission package. Given this context, Morocco considers that it cannot make any more concessions at this stage of the negotiations. In view of the fact that there are currently no legal voids as Morocco has bilateral agreements with EU Member States with the largest Moroccan communities, a wait-and-see approach seems to be the policy adopted by both parties on this issue.

EU Programmes and Agencies: Selective Participation Subject to Conditions

In June 2007, the Council of Europe authorised the European Commission to officially initiate negotiations with a pioneer group of countries (Israel, Morocco, and Moldavia) regarding their participation in community agency activities and programmes. Within this context, Morocco suggested a phased approach that would allow it to secure balanced participation in three areas: interior market/justice, freedom and security/CFSP. It also proposed the establishment of new funding mechanisms which could, for example, form part of the thematic cooperation platform implemented with the ENP.

Specifically, Morocco wishes to participate in the following agencies: the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Eurojust, and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). There are also plans for the country’s gradual integration into the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and for the development of cooperative ties with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Four community programmes seem to have drawn the particular attention of Morocco: the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), Customs 2013 (2008-
2013), the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) Programme, and the Marco Polo Programme. Morocco would like to receive financial support from the EU to participate in the above agencies and programmes. The EU could cover part of the costs required, subject to arrangements that have yet to be agreed on. On a more fundamental note, Morocco’s participation in EU agencies and programmes depends on the country’s implementation of policies and laws that are compatible with the aims of these agencies and programmes. Within this context, the negotiations on the EU-Morocco Association Agreement will be intensified in order to define a framework agreement that will allow Morocco to participate in community programmes.

The road map reflects the priorities outlined in the EU/Morocco Action Plan and its content is coherent with the goals and principles of the ENP. The ENP opened up new partnership opportunities, particularly in terms of advancing towards a significant degree of integration and providing Morocco with the opportunity to participate in the EU market and to play an increasing role in key EU policy events and programmes against a background of renewed political cooperation achieved through reinforced political dialogue. During the seventh meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council, an ad hoc group was formed to develop this matter further and prepare proposals for the next meeting. While it was specified that these proposals should be feasible to implement in the short term no deadlines were set. The Association Council simply instructed different sub-committees and work groups to ensure that the different technical measures outlined in the joint document were followed up. The consideration that will be given to these proposals by both parties starting at the beginning of 2009 will shape the nature and form of the instrument set to take over from the EU’s neighbourhood action plan and possibly, the Association Agreement: today’s Morocco.

**Advanced Status: a Course to be Adapted at Will?**

Advanced status should be seen as a means of extending cooperation to the EU’s southern and eastern neighbours and to other countries involved in the ENP. Numerous initiatives undertaken in 2008 seem to confirm this view.

**Jordan and Tunisia Follow in Morocco’s Footsteps**

Jordan and the EU signed an Association Agreement in 2002. Six years later, in November 2008, Jordan submitted a request for advanced status in order to speed up its cooperation with the EU. Jordan is following in Morocco’s footsteps in its pursuit of becoming more “euro-compatible” in sectors such as transport, energy and the environment, for which Amman hopes to receive EU funding.

Tunisia has also expressed interest in strengthening its partnership with the EU in the same spirit as the advanced status that has been granted to Morocco. Tunisia is the country that has made the greatest progress in the implementation of the free trade area by eliminating all tariffs for industrial products on January 1st, 2008, two years before the anticipated date. Bilateral negotiations with the EU regarding the progressive opening up of services and the right of establishment were launched in March 2008, and negotiations have also taken place regarding the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, and fishery products. While dialogue on the issues of democracy and human rights was pursued and strengthened by sub-committees entrusted with this task, the objectives established in this area, particularly those relating to freedom of association and expression, were not achieved. During the seventh meeting of the EU-Tunisia Association Council held in November 2008, Tunisia and the EU decided to form an ad hoc committee to define a framework and objectives for a reinforced partnership that would confer Tunisia advanced status in its relations with the EU.

Discussions were initiated in 2008 to draw up a road map for the granting of this status within the framework of the ENP. This objective should be approached in the same spirit as that which led to the reinforcement of the partnership between the EU and Morocco. Tunisia is also preparing to join the Venice Commission (the Council of Europe’s advisory body on constitutional matters) as a preliminary step to the implemen-
tation of greater status in the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

The Case of Israel: The Confirmation of the Strategic Dimension

At the end of 2007, the Israeli government, in an unofficial document delivered to the EU, requested the granting of special status within the framework of the ENP. The State of Israel wished to become involved in numerous community policies and programmes as well as in Council meetings dealing with the economy, the environment, energy, and security. The request was viewed favorably during the 8th Association Council meeting between the EU and Israel on June 16th, 2008. The position adopted by the Association Council drew severe criticism from the members of the European Parliament, not only because of the content of the proposal but also because of the way in which it had been dealt with and the lack of transparency surrounding it. Political groups from all sides agreed on the inappropriateness of opening negotiations in this area in view of the worsening situation and Israel’s non-compliance with its commitments under the Annapolis peace process. For the same reasons, on December 3rd, 2008, the European Parliament postponed the vote on widening Israel’s participation in community programmes.

Yet, against all expectations, the proposal made by the EU-Israel Association Council was examined by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on December 8th, 2008, which concluded that the Council was determined to upgrade the level and intensity of its relations with Israel with a view to adopting a new instrument to take over from the current ENP action plan. Despite this statement, however, the proposed enhancement of bilateral relations was frozen at the end of April 2009, although this has not prevented the parties from closely cooperating in economic and commercial areas and at a political and even strategic level.

The annex of the conclusions issued by the council contained guidelines on how to strengthen the structures required to continue political dialogue with Israel. The measures consist of initiating negotiations at a ministerial level, giving Israel greater access to the EU Political and Security Committee, systematising and extending informal strategic consultations, deepening thematic exchanges, encouraging Israel to meet CFSP requirements, implementing practical cooperation mechanisms relating to the European Security and Defence Policy, facilitating the integration and involvement of Israel in multilateral scenarios, and strengthening interparliamentary dialogue. Indeed, Israel had requested the strengthening of political partnership relations on a scale that has not been achieved by any country to date within the framework of the ENP. This reinforced cooperation would involve three annual meetings between EU and Israeli foreign affairs ministers and allow the EU to invite a senior Israeli diplomat to a meeting of EU ambassadors on security issues during each EU rotating presidency. The EU has stated that it is ready to consider the possibility of inviting Israel to participate in civil missions conducted within the framework of the ESDP at least once a year and to hold informal dialogue sessions on key strategic matters.

As far as international and community laws are concerned, it would be deplorable if the State of Israel was awarded practically the same status as that enjoyed by EU Member States while continuing with the stepped-up construction of colonies, the maintenance of blockades in Palestinian areas, notably in the Gaza Strip, and the violation of human rights on numerous fronts.

The Eastern Partnership: The Most Advanced Status of All?

EU partners in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus are also seeking to intensify their relations with the EU. On June 19 and 20, 2008, the EU Council invited the European Commission to prepare a proposal for an Eastern Partnership ( EaP), emphasizing the need for a differentiated approach respecting the character of the ENP as a single and coherent policy framework.

The communication outlined proposals focusing on the implementation of an EaP based on a deep and unfailing political commitment from EU Member States. Association Agreements, negotiated with partners, would provide a new contractual frame superseding existing partnership and cooperation agreements. Three areas in particular provide these negotiations with a deeper dimension than the relations between Morocco and the EU within the framework of Morocco’s advanced status. First of all, the EU would offer its eastern partners mobility and security pacts. In other words, once visa facilitation and readmission agreements were effectively implemented, the EU would commit itself to initiating dialogue on visa-free travel. The EU would pursue a targeted opening
of the EU job market to citizens of partner countries, as well as measures to facilitate circular migration, within the framework of mobility partnerships.

Secondly, the EU would support regional development within the EaP based on a memoranda of understanding on regional policy with partners proposed by the Commission. This cooperation platform, which would receive additional funding, would form part of a framework of pilot regional development programmes modelled on EU cohesion policy addressing local needs in terms of infrastructure, human capital, and small and medium-sized enterprises. The Commission also proposed direct cooperation between EU regions and partner countries in addition to the extension of cross-border cooperation to borders between partners financed by the ENP instrument.

Finally, the EU would establish a multilateral EaP framework at four levels, with biennial meetings of EaP heads of state or government, annual spring meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the EU and EaP countries, sector-specific ministerial conferences, and the establishment of four thematic platforms based on the following key cooperation areas: democracy, good governance, and security; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; mutual support and energy security mechanisms; and contacts between people. Each platform would adopt a set of realistic, periodically updated, core objectives—with a corresponding work programme—and review progress.

Conclusions

Will there be just one form of advanced status for all or will the EU take an approach that will lead to an increasing differentiation between ENP partners that might threaten the coherence of this policy? Will this coherence not be further threatened by an increasingly individualised treatment of ENP partners? To a certain extent, each partner seeks to acquire a personalised ad hoc status that will reinforce its relations with the EU, but to the detriment of the regional cooperation that the ENP is designed to help achieve.

Each partner seeks to acquire a personalised ad hoc status that will reinforce its relations with the EU, but to the detriment of the regional cooperation that the ENP is designed to help achieve.

The granting of an increasing number of ad hoc statuses is a potential problem. Should the EU encourage this approach and create à-la-carte agreements? And if so, would there still be a need for the ENP? Would it still be a source of substantial added value? Encouraging the granting of differentiated, individualised advanced statuses could undermine the solidarity that already exists between neighbouring countries and ultimately defeat the objective of regional cooperation. Indeed, regional cooperation may be an invaluable tool for fostering development and autonomy within the EU’s neighbouring countries and it could also help to resolve frozen conflicts. In brief, while the fact that the ENP is adaptable to individual situations, such a differentiation between countries might also cause the rupture of the ENP, which is at risk at increasingly resembling a mosaic of agreements and instruments and also a reflection of a neighbourhood that is advancing at different speeds. This will inevitably lead to an eventual trade off between differentiation and an ENP that is characterised by a single, coherent framework.
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At the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, held in Lisbon on 5-6 November 2007, it was decided to accept requests from Mauritania and Albania to become full members of the Barcelona Process (BP). 2008 was therefore witness to Albania’s progressive and complete integration and participation as a Member State of the BP, as well as its participation in transforming the BP into the Union for the Mediterranean. The country’s candidature and participation undoubtedly had a regional effect, encouraging others to present themselves and opening a process of reflection on the development of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (BP: UfM). This led to an extension towards the Mediterranean States of the Western Balkans, reflected in the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government in the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Paris (13 July 2008) to accept Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Monaco as members. Aside from the regional effects or implications, Albania’s integration into the Euro-Mediterranean process raises questions not only of what and how but also why and what for; what does it mean and what are the potential effects for Albania and the Mediterranean? Spain has played a decisive role in this participation and development, a priority on its agenda in the initial stages of fostering Spanish-Albanian relations, to which we will focus particular attention.

Albania’s Candidature, Early Days and First Experiences in the BP: UfM

Albania’s initial involvement in the Euro-Mediterranean family took place at the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government held in November, 2005 in Barcelona. The occasion marked the tenth anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, also held in Barcelona and which gave birth to the Barcelona Process. Having presented a request to this effect, Albania was invited as a guest. Given the extraordinary nature of the Summit, Albania’s presence did not imply a decision on the part of either Albania or the Member States of the BP to formalise any kind of structural relationship. It did, however, certainly constitute a show of interest and initiated the process that would eventually lead to Albania’s integration. The process began, as was necessarily the case, with developments in the heart of Albania, and in particularly Albanian diplomacy. In fact, Albania’s reflection and definition of its candidature to the BP and the development of the Mediterranean dimension of its external projection slotted into the wider framework of defining priorities regarding its international insertion. Following the fall of the communist regime, defining these priorities represented the necessary external corollary of the internal transition towards democracy and a market economy, and was characterised by the definition of Euro-Atlantic integration as one of the nation’s fundamental objectives, reflected in both external and internal policies. This was the embodiment of Albania’s arrival and a guarantee that there would be no return from the transition/foundation in process. Debate surrounding the situation arose between two camps: those who considered the development of the Mediterranean dimension as an unnecessary distraction from focusing energy on the fundamental Euro-Atlantic objective, or even as a deviation that replaces this objective; and those who considered it as a complement and a forerunner to this. The outcome was settled by Besnik Mustafaj,
Having attained status as a Member State of the BP, 2008 was a year in which Albania would learn about and begin participating in the BP’s different institutions and forums. Thus at the beginning of 2007, Albania’s candidature found itself on the agenda of the different committees of the EU and the BP, which determines the latter’s institutional life and the decisions it takes. The ball began to roll, paving the way to a possible decision in the following Euro-Mediterranean Conference to either accept Albania’s candidature or reject it, or keep it on the agenda in order to study it further. Talks held on different levels with Albania led Spain to strongly support the candidature from within the committees. The Commission’s non-paper (17 September 2007) proposed the participation of Albania and Mauritania as regional members of the BP. This would allow them to maintain, respectively, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) or the European Development Fund (EDF) for their bilateral relations and at the same time participate in all the institutional mechanisms of the BP and in its regional programmes. Spain’s support together with the non-paper set the scene in the autumn for a favourable decision. Consequently, Albanian diplomacy was set in motion, driven by Prime Minister (PM) Sali Berisha, whose efforts, together with those of Spain, the EU’s Portuguese presidency and other favourable actors, gave Albania’s admission ‘fumata bianca’ at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on 5-6 November in Lisbon.

The new Foreign Affairs Minister, Lulzim Basha, who had attended the conference, returned triumphant to Tirana. Together with traditional diplomacy, it should be noted that public diplomacy made a significant contribution through the international seminar, *Albania and the Barcelona Process: Challenges and Opportunities*. The seminar was organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), the Spanish Embassy in Tirana and Albania’s Foreign Affairs Minister, and was funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID). It took place on 21 October, just before the preparatory Euromed Committee for the Ministerial Conference, and brought together experts and actors from the BP. Speeches from PM Berisha, the President of the Parliament, Topalli, and Minister Basha, before ambassadors of the Member States of the BP in Tirana and the media, served to demonstrate Albania’s utmost interest and commitment before the acceptance of its candidature in Lisbon.

Having attained status as a Member State of the BP, 2008 was a year in which Albania would learn about and begin participating in the BP’s different institutions and forums. Numerous landmark events marked Albania’s arrival: the appointment of Ambassador Ferit Hoxha, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Euromed Coordinator, and his participation, along with that of Albania’s Permanent Representation to the EU, in the institutional life of the Process; the election of former Foreign Affairs Minister, Mustafaj, as member of the Advisory Council of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation; the creation of an inter-ministerial coordination group to facilitate the participation of the relevant ministers and authorities; the participation of PM Berisha in the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Paris and of the different members of the government in the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences; the appointment of the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, Jozefina Topalli, and members of parliament Illy Bufi and Ilir Rusmajli as Albanian members of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliament, and their participation in the conference held in Amman in October; and the celebration on 17-19 September in Tirana of the 2nd international seminar, *Albania and the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean: Challenges and Opportunities*, run by the same organisers as the first. Many international experts from all areas of the Euro-Mediterranean process participated in the seminar, which aimed to provide information and training for the relevant actors of the Albanian State and society, in order to facilitate their participation and allow
them to take advantage of the opportunities and mechanisms that this process offers. PM Berisha’s inaugural speech for the occasion made Albania the first Member State of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to publicly support Barcelona’s candidature to host the seat of the organisation’s permanent Secretariat. Spanish diplomacy subsequently led an intensive campaign to this end, which came to fruition with a decision in favour of Barcelona at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Marseille in November.

Albania’s External Transformation and the Development of the Mediterranean Dimension of its Foreign Policy

Strewn with almost a million bunkers, Albania under Enver Hoxha was a bunkerized society, isolated physically, socially and historically. Time had a different rhythm. Recovering lost time was not a question of returning to times passed and once abandoned, but of beginning right from the start in the rhythm of our times. The political, social and financial system had to be constructed from its foundations. The process experienced by Albania since the fall of the communist regime has been more like that of founding a country than a transition, conditioned by a legacy of isolation, inertia and tradition. This legacy has hindered Albania’s external foundation and transformation, which necessarily accompanies and to a large extent allows the possibility of internal change. Inertia and tradition are faced with the immediate environment of an Albania surrounded by powerful regional forces, by a major foreign ally seen as guarantor of their sovereignty and international insertion; yesterday the USSR, then China and today the United States. Albania feels particular devotion to the latter, assuming the role of the most faithful of the faithful, as demonstrated by the collective delirium in response to President Bush’s visit on 10 May 2007. This calling finds support in the well-established Albanian Diaspora in the USA, organized around the National Albanian American Council, a powerful lobby whose capability of influencing US interest in Albania was demonstrated by the US involvement in Kosovo, considered by Albanians from both sides as saviour and guarantor of the collective identity. In April 2008 Albania was invited to join NATO at the Bucharest Summit, an act which was made effective in the Strasbourg-Kiehl Summit.

The signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement on 12 June 2006 was a major step towards joining the European Union, constituting the culmination of the ratification process and forerunner to Albania’s upcoming request for candidate status. With respect to Albania’s foundation these events have formed the country’s backbone and main national strategic objectives, organising general consensus and channelling the country’s efforts. The external and internal dimensions are an option for a united future to overcome a traumatic and isolated past; a collective project on the long road to Europe and a denied Europeaness.

To some extent, this situation is similar to that experienced by Spain. European integration for Spain was an external dimension of its own internal transition, which preceded and came above its external foundation and transition. In turn, this external dimension was part of the essence of not only what we wanted to be in the world, but what we wanted to be to ourselves.

This is why the issue of developing the Mediterranean dimension of Albania’s foreign policy challenges the country’s maturity; its choice of external policy at the same time implies a choice for its internal one. The choice is to look outward and influence what is happening outside, and not only manage how those outside influence what is happening inside; to opt to cross the Rubicon and change the paradigm, or, to be more precise, construct a new one.

The debate is infused with double-meaning and double-transcendence. Does this development and choosing to join the Barcelona Process constitute an alternative or a replacement to Euro-Atlantic integration? Does it mean Albania will be considered or will consider itself as part of the South or simply that efforts towards the fundamental aim of Euro-Atlantic integration will be diffused and distorted?

Foreign Affairs Minister Mustafaj and PM Berisha have decided to develop the Mediterranean dimension by joining the BP, considering this to be complementary and enriching for the fundamental Euro-Atlantic option, and believing it possible that the two can develop simultaneously and not one after the other.

On the one hand, it implies the assumption that Mediterraneaness is a defining component of the collective Albanian identity, which should come through in its external projection and international insertion, and the assumption and affirmation of Albania as a country on a level with both Europe and
the Mediterranean. It also implies Albania’s will to relate with and contribute to the construction of international order in the Mediterranean.

Albania’s interest is not to integrate and participate in any kind of European Union, but in one which makes the Mediterranean the object of its interest and its priority.

On the other hand, Albania’s foreign policy can and must go beyond its Euro-Atlantic integration. This means assuming the EU’s external policies and projections, thereby offering the opportunity and need to participate, with its own heritage of relations and knowledge, in defining the EU’s global interests and international priorities. And within these international priorities what area could be more immediate, be of greater interest and have greater capacity to contribute for Albania than the Mediterranean area? To accept, in short, that Albania’s interest is not to integrate and participate in any kind of European Union, but in one which makes the Mediterranean the object of its interest and its priority, and to contribute effectively to the definition of EU policy towards the Mediterranean and to the construction of international order there. Integration does not just mean complying with standards set by others, but also, once all necessary requirements have been fulfilled, participating in their definition. Thus Albania becomes both policymaker and the object of those policies.

Here there is a strategic option for Albania’s foreign policy, another Rubicon to cross. Until now, its founding process has been characterised by international players dictating the standards to be reached -economic recommendations from the International Monetary Fund, OSCE electoral observations, NATO’s Membership Action Plan, the European Commission’s Progress Report, etc.- and Albania manages its policies and actions to align itself with these. Recently, however, along with political and socio-economical elements, the emergence of identity and culture has become the structuring axis of the international system. While with respect to the former, Albania may find itself walking the path that separates it from the established paradigm, in terms of identity and culture it may be a country that represents the paradigm: a model of interreligious coexistence in a secular state; a demonstration, among other things, of the compatibility of Islam with democracy and the separation of religion and politics. Albania may become an international example, a model to follow. Its opportunity and strategic option, therefore, is to use this situation as an international asset, to help construct an international order in the Mediterranean and beyond, for which the Alliance of Civilizations constitutes a particularly suitable forum.

Finally, Albania’s participation in the Euro-Mediterranean, far from being an alternative or substitute to joining the EU, may constitute a useful forerunner to this. A way to prepare for its future EU participation through its participation in the Euro-Mediterranean institutional mechanisms. An opportunity for Albania to acquire credibility, recognition and familiarity through dealing on a daily basis with its future European partners. Furthermore, for a country who, aside from in Turkey, only has embassies in Tel Aviv and Cairo, this presents a unique opportunity to develop relations with the Southern States of the Mediterranean.

Reality and Potential of Albania’s Contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean Construction

The Euro-Mediterranean construction is undergoing a period of transformation, a qualitative leap in its evolution from process to union. This implies reflection not only on its essence and content, but also its borders, or, moreover, the crossing of these borders. Few countries better embody this ‘crossing’ than Albania, with its unique characteristics; the reflection of Mediterraneaness and of the possibilities that this offers. Albania is secular, Islamic and Christian, Sunni and Bektashi, Catholic and Orthodox, the only state that has been constitutionally atheist in its recent history, European, Balkan, Mediterranean, for five centuries part of the Ottoman Empire and able to preserve its language and a collective identity which looks towards Europe. The administrative borders of the European Commission itself were the first to be extended -the Western Balkans are territory of the DG Enlargement, while the DG Relex oversees the BP- in order to make membership of the BP and prospects of joining the EU, which was
dealt with by unconnected departments, simultaneous and compatible.

The Euro-Mediterranean candidature and integration of Albania, as has already been mentioned, provoked reflection regarding the participation of the Western Balkans in the Euro-Mediterranean construction and the integration of the Mediterranean states in the UfM at the Paris Summit. This in turn forms part of the necessary normalisation of the region’s international insertion in its peace consolidation. This implies not only being the focus of attention for this and for conflict resolution, the affirmation of Albania’s perspective of European integration as an essential element in those prospects and the definition of fundamental projects for a shared future both internally and externally; but also, and at the same time, being part of a Mediterranean in whose construction it wants to, can and does participate.

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Spain and the Implementation of Albania’s Mediterranean Role

So, in light of what has been said, it would have been difficult without the pen and Spain’s decided commitment to write the pages of Albania’s Euro-Mediterranean integration. Commitment in the form of political dialogue, support and drive, diplomatic action, information and technical training and assistance. These were elements of a process that started with a visit from the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, in Tirana on 5-6 February 2006—the first by a Spanish minister. The occasion marked the beginning of a foundational stage in the development of a deeper level of Spanish-Albanian relations, through the announcement of the opening of the Spanish Embassy in Tirana, which took place in July 2006, while the Spanish Cooperation, having defined Albania as a country of special attention, opened an AECID Antenna in Tirana. This decisive move of relations on all levels, both on a bilateral plane and a multilateral one, makes Albania’s development of the Mediterranean dimension of its external projection and its integration into the BP the prime objective and preferred area of the relations. So although Spain can and does make a special contribution to realizing Albania’s Euro-Atlantic prospects, thanks to its own experience of integration and its political support, it does this to a process that is already underway. Its contribution, however, to the definition and development of the new Mediterranean priority of Albania is done on uncharted territory, to set a process in motion that must be the founding stage for Albania’s contemporary international relations. This process is associated with the founding stage of contemporary relations with Spain, linking both and making this, literally and symbolically, an especially close and irreplaceable area of our global relations. So in one way or another, Albania is born in the Mediterranean at the hands of Spain; and Spain is born in Albania.
–and Albania in Spain– at the hands of the Mediterranean. And let us not forget that this also constitutes the stage for carrying out other shared priorities on the global agenda, such as the Alliance of Civilizations or the “One UN” process for United Nations reform—for which Albania is one of eight pilot countries.

Spain, therefore, is not only acting in its own interests and with its own vision of driving and developing the Euro-Mediterranean process, but also performs an act of coherence with its own history and with that of its Albanian relations.

With its own history, because although Spain’s triple European, American and Mediterranean aims have been in place since the transition period, it is only after European integration, both the country’s external and internal objective, that Spain began to construct the architecture of its global relations with Latin America, through the Ibero-American summits and EU-Latin American relations, and an international order for the Mediterranean, which paved the way, during the Spanish Presidency of the EU in 1995, to the birth of the Barcelona Process. So, it is not so strange that, having been invited to join NATO and aiming the process towards European integration, we share our own experience and accompany Albania in achieving this and its Mediterranean calling.

In terms of our relations with Albania, although contemporary relations are in the process of being formed, there was a time in the 15th century, when the Albanians were of vital importance for us, and us for the Albanians. A mythical and landmark moment in Albania’s history was when national hero Gjer Kastriot “Skanderbeg” put up the last resistance against the Ottoman dominion in the Balkans and, in search of aid from Christian powers, found Alfonso the Magnanimous, king of Aragon and Naples, with whom he signed the Gaeta Treaty in 1451. From this point onwards Alfonso’s troops, with Ramon d’Ortafà as Viceroy of Albania, fought alongside Skanderbeg. ‘We’ in the Mediterranean at that time essentially meant the Crown of Aragon, and for that ‘We’ the commitment with Albania constituted a fundamental element in oriental politics, and for Magnanimous it was the last attempt, in the perspectives of the time, for the Mare Nostrum to continue to be ours. So it is not so unusual that, as laid down in the Gaeta Treaty, the descendents of Magnanimous, after being definitively beaten in 1479, gave refuge to twenty thousand Albanians in Calabria and Sicily, whose descendents are known today as Arbëreshë and speak 15th century Albanian. The history is not without its parallels with that of the Sephardis, who, expelled by the same Ferdinand the Catholic that gave shelter to the Arbëreshë in Sicily, would end up in Albania as part of the Ottoman Empire.

This is why Albania’s Mediterranean integration, with our support, constitutes both a step forward and a step back. We are coming home. Albania is coming home and Spain with it.
The European Commission
The French Presidency of the EU and the Union for the Mediterranean: Forced Europeanisation?

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France assumed the Presidency of the EU in the second semester of 2008, promising to galvanise Euro-Mediterranean relations. Within the framework of a presidency that made energy, the environment, immigration, agriculture, security and defence its top concerns, three priorities were set in the sphere of the Mediterranean: the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the advanced status of Morocco and the strengthening of relations with Israel, taking into account the evolution of the conflict in the Middle East.

Of all of these points, the one to generate most attention was the launching of the UfM. The previous year, in 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy had proposed the creation of a Mediterranean Union, which stirred both interest and unease in different capitals on both shores of the Mediterranean. One of the main criticisms levied against Sarkozy’s initial proposal was that it strayed from the idea of a common European approach, encouraging the renationalisation of Mediterranean policy instead. This was particularly worrisome coming from a country that would soon assume the rotating Presidency of the EU Council. Would Mediterranean policy be a harbinger of a weakened commitment by France to the need for the EU to act with a single voice on the international stage? Euro-Mediterranean relations were not the only sphere where France, in its role as President, faced the challenge of staking out a common position for the EU-27. For instance, its presidency began with one crisis in the neighbourhood of the EU (the Russian-Georgian war) and ended with another (the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip). In the search for consensus, alliances with the EU’s largest countries play an especially important role.

This article will examine France’s return to the forefront of Mediterranean policy and will argue that the ‘forced Europeanisation’ of the French initiative must be understood in the context of Franco-German tensions. It will then highlight the outcome of the two major Mediterranean events that took place during the French Presidency: the Paris summit in July and the Marseilles ministerial meeting in November. Finally, and by way of conclusion, it will seek to define the legacy of the French Presidency and identify which aspects will continue to shape the course of Euro-Mediterranean relations in years to come.

Rediscovering the Mediterranean

France is unquestionably a major power in the Mediterranean. Geographical proximity, history—in some cases, such as Algeria, painful—, population flows and all manner of economic interests make France a key actor in the region and, in particular, in the Western Basin. This notwithstanding, as Hayète Cherigui has noted in his work on France’s Mediterranean policy, the formulation of a Mediterranean policy worthy of the name, one that goes beyond traditional Arab policy and stresses the creation of initiatives for regional cooperation, is relatively recent and can be traced back to the nineties.

Since then, France has been a member of the ‘Mediterranean lobby’ within the EU, calling for more attention to the region, with special emphasis on the need to strengthen political dialogue, preserve the Partnership logic and engage in ambitious cooperation in the spheres of justice and home affairs. Of course, it has had to share its leadership with other Mediterranean countries (in particular, Spain), with non-Mediterranean countries that are increasingly interested in what is going on in the region (above all, Germany, but also Nordic countries, such as Sweden...
and Finland) and with the European Commission (which has played a dominant role in driving and developing the Barcelona Process). Its inability to impose its hegemony, as well as the disappointment stemming from the poor results of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Marseilles in 2000, have, until recently, prevented France from becoming more involved in the Mediterranean agenda.

In full campaign mode, the then-candidate Nicolas Sarkozy gave his famous Toulon speech in February 2007. Three months later he repeated his pledge to implement what was then called the Mediterranean Union in his speech celebrating the results of the elections. This renewed interest in Mediterranean issues was not a mere pet project of Sarkozy’s. Among his closest advisors (such as Henri Guaino), but also in several French academic and economic circles, there was a consensus, on the one hand, that neither France nor Europe could afford to ignore their neighbours to the south and, on the other, that France should be leading the effort.

The French rediscovery of the Mediterranean awoke interest and expectations, as well as a certain apprehension, among its European and Mediterranean partners. For actors such as Spain or the Commission, this was due to the extent to which the initiative was seen as an attack on the Barcelona Process and as undermining their leadership in the field. For many central and northern European countries, it was because the initial proposal excluded them from the new design. For Turkey, it was because the proposal was presented as an alternative to accession. Finally, for some Arab countries, it was because they viewed France’s return to the Mediterranean as an attempt to re-establish its hegemony.

The Mediterranean and the Franco-German Axis

The concerns that surfaced on both sides of the Mediterranean soon became varying degrees of pressure to modify the French proposal to make it acceptable. In 2007, Spain and Italy ensured that what would henceforth be known as the Union for the Mediterranean would not contradict but rather would complement the Barcelona Process, that it would not be tied to Turkey’s accession process and that the Commission would be involved. However, it was German pressure that ultimately brought about a more acute restructuring of the proposal in 2008.

As Dorothé Schmid has correctly noted, the hackles raised by Sarkozy’s initial proposal show that France may remain a major player in the Mediterranean, but it can no longer act alone. Indeed, it was precisely this desire to act alone that gave rise to Germany’s misgivings. This apprehension was further compounded by the fact that this lukewarm attitude toward Europe was hardly new and was moreover being projected just prior to France’s assumption of the EU Presidency. Would France choose to use its presidency to benefit its own national interest? How would such an attitude affect the health of the Franco-German axis?

Despite occasionally divergent interests and regardless of the political stripes of their leaders, Berlin and Paris have, for decades, tended to promote major decisions at the European level jointly in what is known as the ‘Franco-German axis’. Sarkozy’s proposal for a Mediterranean Union entailed a break with this tradition: not only was there no coordination with Germany, but that country was moreover excluded from an initiative that seemed to embrace a logic based on spheres of influence. Were the sponsors aware of the effects of this decision? According to Sylvie Goulard, it is troubling whether it was simply a poor calculation or an intentional break.

Whatever the case, the German government, led by Chancellor Merkel, repeatedly expressed its dissatisfaction. After months of increasingly frosty relations between Merkel and Sarkozy, on 3 March 2008, they reached a compromise whereby Germany would support the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean (with the innovations it entailed), but within the framework of the Barcelona Process. The so-called ‘Hannover compromise’ paved the way for the recovery of the Franco-German motor and the re-Europeanisation of a controversial initiative.

The Results of the Paris Summit and Marseilles Ministerial Conference

Seven Euro-Mediterranean meetings were held during the French Presidency. Two of them deserve special attention due to their importance in defining the future of the UfM: the Paris summit and the Foreign Affairs ministerial meeting in Marseilles. In addition to these meetings, ministerial meetings were also held on trade, industry, employment, health and water. In other words, although attention was centred on
defining the structure of the UfM, activities con-
tinued to be conducted under the Barcelona Process. Just a few days after assuming the Presidency of the Council, France hosted the Summit for the Mediterranean. On 13 July, the leaders of the countries of the EU and of the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, as well as observers from several multilateral organisations, met in Paris. The summit served as the starting gun for the UfM and was viewed by analysts and commentators as a major diplomatic success, the result of the intense and ongoing involvement of the French president at the meeting.

This involvement not only translated into a very high level of attendance and representation, but also a series of bilateral encounters facilitated by the summit, such as those held between the Presidents of Lebanon and Syria or between Ehud Olmert and Mahmud Abbas or the talks between Syrians and Israelis mediated by Turkey. Sarkozy himself, in a speech to the European Parliament summarising the French Presidency of the EU, underscored the political dimension, noting that the UfM was ‘the organisation of an ongoing dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean and, therefore, with the Arab countries’, in which the EU would not settle for ‘the role of provider of funds’.

In addition to promoting political dialogue, the Paris summit aimed to shape this new phase in Euro-Mediterranean relations. Although the Foreign Affairs Ministers were tasked with working out the details at their meeting in November, the Heads of State and Government sketched out the main lines. Among the main changes, at the institutional level special attention should be called to the holding of regular summits and the creation of a secretariat, a co-presidency and a joint permanent committee of senior officials. As for content, the Barcelona Declaration was kept as a reference point, but a new type of project was rolled out, based on the idea of variable geometry, with infrastructure, solar energy, maritime depollution, higher education, civil protection and business development as priority areas.

The Paris summit ultimately offered a sense of continuity with regard to the Barcelona Process, but also afforded a larger role to the inter-governmental dimension at the expense of the common Community approach. This notwithstanding, the Paris Declaration contained several ambiguities and it was necessary to wait until the Marseilles meeting to see how the UfM would be defined. One of these ambiguities, the role of the Arab League, prevented further progress in the months between Paris and Marseilles.

The Marseilles Declaration was a veritable balancing act and exercise in ambiguity that substantially affected the issue of the Secretariat

The agenda for the ministerial meeting in Marseilles, held on 3 and 4 November, was packed. A solution had to be sought to the issue of the Arab League’s participation, the headquarters and structure of the new permanent Secretariat had to be chosen and additional details had to be provided on how the UfM would operate. Following complicated talks, a compromise was reached: the Arab League would participate in the meetings and bodies of the UfM, a reference to the Arab Peace Initiative would be included and an Israeli would hold one of the vice-presidencies of the new Secretariat. Once these issues had been settled, Barcelona was chosen as the site of the Secretariat, although the appointment of its executive officers was postponed to a later date, as was the definition of its legal status. The Marseilles ministerial meeting likewise failed to sufficiently clarify how the six selected projects would be carried out, with what funds and how they would fit with the rest of the activities conducted under the traditional Barcelona Process.

In short, in order to ensure that the ministerial meeting ended with agreements and to satisfy as many countries as possible, the Marseilles Declaration was a veritable balancing act and exercise in ambiguity that substantially affected the issue of the Secretariat. It was assumed that a series of meetings would be held beginning in December to clarify the more technical details. What no one foresaw was that the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, at the end of the French Presidency, would block any chances of further progress.

Conclusions:
The Legacy of the French Presidency

Euro-Mediterranean relations were substantially transformed under the French Presidency of the EU. Five
issues deserve special attention as the most important parts of its legacy. First, the French Presidency left such a complex institutional architecture, one in need of such balancing acts and able to cause such blockage, that its implementation is quite likely to monopolise the concerns of those in charge on both sides of the Mediterranean. In other words, as a result of these innovations, greater emphasis will be placed on the how, where and who than on the what and why.

Second, the presidency left six chosen projects, which must be infused with content and tied into similar initiatives that are already underway and for which appropriate sources of funding must be found. As these issues have not been settled, the coming presidencies (both those of the EU and those of the UfM) will be required to make as great an effort, if not greater, to promote what was approved in 2008 as to propose new areas of action.

Moving on to lessons learned, the third component of this presidency’s legacy is the realisation that EU states cannot act manifestly unilaterally. The metamorphosis of Nicolas Sarkozy’s initial proposal makes it clear that not even a country as powerful as France can impose its point of view, even in an area like the Mediterranean, where it wields undeniable influence. The implementation of the Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership initiative, within the framework of the EU, shows that other European countries have learned that the best way to advance their national priorities is through EU channels.

Fourth, despite having embraced the logic of variable geometry, the new institutional structure makes it even more urgent for there to be advances in the Middle East Peace Process for Euro-Mediterranean relations to yield results. The Gaza crisis, the outcome of the Israeli elections in 2009 and the paralysis experienced by the UfM serve as reminders to those who would forget that the construction of the Euro-Mediterranean area is hostage to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Fifth and finally, this presidency left very high expectations: grandiloquent speeches, the attention lavished by the media on the UfM and the attention given to the creation of the Secretariat in Barcelona have sparked growing interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations. However, such high expectations entail a certain risk, namely, they can lead to deep frustration.

**Bibliography**


Western Sahara: A Year of UN Impotence

Toby Shelley
Writer and journalist
Hitchin

The Western Sahara conflict remains a major expression of rivalry between Morocco and Algeria. Simultaneously, it soaks up vast financial and military resources of Morocco and exposes the kingdom to charges of human rights abuse and colonialism, keeping it out of the African Union. It leaves the people of the Western Sahara divided between exile in refugee camps and life under a government they have not sanctioned. Spain and France are intimately involved in the issue, the first as former colonial power in the territory and the latter as former dominant imperial power in the Maghreb. The EU has become more implicated through a legally contentious fisheries agreement with Morocco under which European vessels work in Saharan waters.

The UN Security Council’s settlement route for the Western Sahara conflict proved impassable in 2008, leaving the Polisario Front and Morocco to follow their own paths towards their distinct destinations. The direct negotiations that commenced in 2007 at the behest of the Security Council remained blocked as Morocco promoted its autonomy plan for the territory and Polisario insisted resolution could only be reached through an act of self-determination that included the option of independence for the territory. The Secretary General’s special envoy left in frustration and the time taken to approve a successor to the role, combined with the hiatus caused by the US presidential election, further postponed progress.

Failure in Manhasset

Polisario and Morocco met briefly under UN auspices in Manhasset, near New York, in January and March of 2008. They made no progress towards a consensual settlement of the conflict that began when Moroccan troops and settlers moved into the former Spanish colony in 1975. Morocco insisted it would offer the people of the Western Sahara extensive autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty. Polisario argued that international law, natural justice, and the will of the Sahrawis required a vote in which independence would be an option. By-the-by, the movement said that the local government introduced by Rabat to the territory had amounted to no more than a panel of notables appointed by the crown and the promises in the autonomy package were empty. In moments of frustration, Polisario said it was under pressure from its constituency to return to armed conflict.

The lack of progress at Manhasset meant no further rounds were scheduled for 2008 and at the time of writing no dates had been set for 2009. Mirroring this, only one report to the Security Council was made by the Secretary General where several were customary in previous years. His special envoy departed in the summer but it was January this year before US State Department veteran Christopher Ross was approved as the new appointee.

The departing Peter van Walsum, a former Dutch diplomat, encapsulated the mechanics of the impasse in a document published by Spanish newspaper El País: “I thought the two main ingredients of the impasse were Morocco’s decision of April 2004 not to accept any referendum with independence as an

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1 Toby Shelley is a writer and journalist. His book *Endgame in the Western Sahara* was written after numerous visit to the Western Sahara under Moroccan control, southern Morocco, and the refugee camps in Algeria.
option, and the Security Council’s unwavering view that there must be a consensual solution to the question of the Western Sahara.” International legality supported Polisario’s position but the fact of long-term Moroccan occupation of most of the territory, combined with the consistent refusal of the Security Council to act under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which would permit force to impose a settlement, meant the only conceivable outcome from direct negotiations “would fall short of an independent Western Sahara”, he wrote.

Former senior UN officials sympathetic to the cause of Sahrawi self-determination argue that van Walsum was expressing a truth that all could see but none would state publicly.

Van Walsum’s analysis was excoriated by some in Polisario. The movement had been unenthusiastic about his appointment, saying a relatively unknown, retired Dutch diplomat did not have the weight needed to pressure key international players into actively supporting a just solution. Yet former senior UN officials sympathetic to the cause of Sahrawi self-determination argue that van Walsum was expressing a truth that all could see but none would state publicly. Where they disagreed with him was in his implication that the situation could not change.

The Challenge for the New Envoy

Indeed Polisario shares part of van Walsum’s reading, openly accusing successive French governments of blocking progress towards a solution by protecting Morocco within the Security Council, of which it is one of the five permanent members with veto power. This protection allowed Morocco to reject the second settlement plan put forward by van Walsum’s influential predecessor James Baker, the former US Secretary of State. Baker had proposed a period of autonomy followed by a vote on the long-term future of the Western Sahara. To the surprise of all, Polisario had accepted the plan, only to see it fall by the wayside as Morocco vetoed it. By 2007, the US appeared to have abandoned Baker’s plan, moving closer to the French position so that by April 2007 it drafted an early version of resolution 1754 that expressed even stronger support for Morocco’s proposals. As it was, 1754 welcomed “serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward” while only noting Polisario’s position, albeit with a repetition of the mantra of providing for self-determination of the people of the Western Sahara. By September, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on a visit to Rabat, would indicate US support for Morocco. By December, Morocco’s senior diplomat Taieb Fassi-Fihri was confident enough to state that “negotiation will be on autonomy as the definitive solution of the conflict”.

Mr Ross will find it difficult to roll back the Moroccan advance, yet Polisario has hope that the new appointee will do so. Where van Walsum had no plan of his own and no mandate from the Security Council to threaten the parties with active intervention, Polisario believes Ross will come forward with an initiative. Sahrawi diplomats point to his active engagement with the parties and involvement in the issue prior to his nomination and to his knowledge of the region. However, they also have the nagging fear that Morocco imposed conditions on its approval of his appointment. By April 2009, the mandate of the UN monitor force (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, or MINURSO) will expire and Ross will have to have formulated a position to justify its renewal. The Manhasset negotiations made no progress, but they allowed the Security Council to sideline the Western Sahara. The number of resolutions on the issue dropped to one in each of 2007 and 2008, compared with five in 2003, four in 2004 and two in each of the following two years, and just the one report by the Secretary General, against a more usual two or three. While resolutions extending MINURSO’s mandate are no measure of progress, their number does indicate how often the opportunity to discuss the issue arises.

The change of president in Washington may bring changes in the US approach to the Western Sahara, which, in the Bush years, was driven by the National Security Council with little or no engagement by the White House. But any such change will result from a more general shift in the US approach to foreign affairs rather than any pre-existing sympathy for Polisario on the part of key figures. Indeed, given the strongly pro-Israeli inclinations of some influential members of the Obama administration and...
the support the Israel lobby in the US has afforded to Morocco, there may be an initial suspicion of Polisario. The movement has been disappointed before in its hopes that regime change in another Security Council permanent member—France—would break the deadlock.

**Natural Resources Come to the Fore**

If the direct negotiations between the parties stultified in 2008, that does not mean that the parties did not continue to press their positions on other fronts. Morocco maintained its settlement of the territory and promoted its unelected regional council. For its part, Polisario deepened its relationship with South Africa, reflecting Moroccan claims that the movement is wholly dependent on Algeria for diplomatic and logistical support. It also made a decisive move on the vexed question of Western Saharan natural resources. Shortly after an important clarification of the 2002 UN legal opinion on oil exploration in the territory by its author, former top UN lawyer Hans Corell, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), Polisario’s embryonic state, declared an economic exclusion zone in the waters of the Western Sahara.

Polisario’s response to the exploitation of Saharan resources had been to protest and, indeed, to issue provisional offshore exploration licences in the name of the SADR. Morocco has exploited Western Saharan phosphates since its forces moved into the territory. Since then, as its own marine resources depleted through over-exploitation and shoal migration, its fishing industry has become dependent on Saharan waters that also earn a considerable rent from permits granted to EU and Asian trawlers. The discovery of oil offshore Mauritania led to Morocco issuing exploration licences in 2001. Mr Corell was asked to issue a legal opinion on these licences. His 2002 advice to the Security Council was subjected to various interpretations until December 2008, when he clarified it once and for all. Speaking in Pretoria, Mr Corell stated that exploitation of any natural resources of the Western Sahara without consultation with the people of the territory was illegal. He specifically criticised the EU fishing agreement with Morocco under which European vessels work in Saharan waters.

Polisario’s response to the exploitation of Saharan resources had been to protest and, indeed, to issue provisional offshore exploration licences in the name of the SADR. Meanwhile, the multinational non-governmental organisation Western Sahara Resource Watch forced a number of international companies to cease business activity involving Western Saharan resources. But the declaration of an SADR economic exclusion zone in the territory’s waters in January 2009 took things a step further. Henceforth, companies dealing in Western Saharan resources would have to confront explicitly a claim of sovereignty. Moreover, while the SADR cannot itself take that claim to international courts for confirmation, the way lies open for a supportive state to do so. While a US trade agreement with Morocco excludes produce of the Western Sahara, the EU could be embarrassed by its fishery agreement with Rabat. Indeed, it might allow Sweden, which led a campaign against the agreement, to challenge it when it comes up for renewal.

**Other Areas of Contest**

Another front on which Polisario pushed in 2008 was the monitoring of human rights in the area controlled by Morocco. MINURSO is based in Laayoune, the principal town of the Western Sahara, yet it has no mandate to monitor the conditions under which Sahrawis live under Moroccan rule. So, during long periods of civil unrest when numerous Sahrawis have been detained, with or without trial, and accusations of brutality and injustice have been many, the UN force has not dispatched observers or prepared reports, let alone taken action. From the Sahrawi perspective, the civilian population has been unprotected, while from the Moroccan point of view its security forces have been unable to demonstrate that they act in compliance with the law. The mandate of MINURSO, which, in the absence of a referendum process to supervise, is limited to ceasefire monitoring, has brought the force into disrepute among many Sahrawis. With protests against Morocco continuing, resulting in detentions, Polisario has asked the UN to establish human rights moni-
toring. But the UN’s wider record in ensuring respect for human rights in the Western Sahara was sullied by the continued refusal to publish a 2006 report by its own human rights commission that was critical of Morocco.

The SADR is based in refugee camps in the south of Algeria. But the movement controls a swathe of territory in the east of the Western Sahara. In recent years it has raised its profile there, beginning modest development of the settlement at Tifariti. Some official meetings are held there and foreign delegations taken there. Yet Polisario has not made definitive moves to establish its state inside the Western Sahara. Senior officials cite lack of funds but some observers sense a lack of political will. The limited moves to establish the presence of a Sahrawi state on Sahrawi soil infuriated Rabat and in March last year its military, in a minutel meeting with MINURSO, threatened air strikes to prevent construction work.

Since 2004, there has at least been some deepening of contacts between family members divided between the refugee camps and the area of the territory controlled by Morocco. Under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), thousands of people have visited relatives unseen for a quarter of a century and free telephone calls have been introduced. To a large extent, these developments simply recognised an unofficial trend enabled by the spread of the mobile telephone and the internet and meetings in northern Mauritania. Greater communication among families is precious in its own right, but in this case it has another value. It allows ordinary people to learn from each other about life under Morocco and Polisario, perhaps meaning that if they are ever allowed to decide on their future, their choice will be better informed.

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The year 2008 was marked by Russia’s growing activism in a number of regions where it claims to have “come back” after years of neglect and indifference. The Mediterranean region is certainly one of them. Yet Russia’s alleged “return” raises at least two important questions. First, how does Moscow perceive the region whose importance it claims to rediscover? In particular, does it see the Mediterranean as a region-in-the-making, or as a mere group of different states loosely tied to each other? Second, how do the current Russian policies differ from previous times, and what are the key instruments the Kremlin uses to foster its regional credentials?

It is mainly these two questions that I would like to focus on in this paper. Consequently, two arguments will be developed. Firstly, for Russia, in my view, the Mediterranean does not constitute a more or less coherent region; and secondly, Moscow tries to give an upper hand to economic and cultural tools of influence, yet these are inevitably accompanied by the political resources Russia has to resort to.

The Mediterranean in Russian Foreign Policy Imagery

By and large, Russia views its policies in the Mediterranean region as an extension of its relations with at least four types of actors. Firstly, North Africa and the Middle East are definitely part of Russia’s policies toward the entire Muslim world. Secondly, Moscow pursues a separate agenda while dealing with the southern EU members, in the meantime remaining rather sceptical about the ability of the European Union to speak with a single voice. Thirdly, in some cases the developments in the Mediterranean are viewed as a continuation of the challenges the Kremlin faces in the Black Sea region (from Russia’s search for a possible substitution for the Sebastopol naval base to the intention to “balance” the Ukrainian church in Libya with the construction of a Russian church in this country, as pledged by the ambassador to Tripoli Vladimir Chamov).

Arguably, there is a fourth actor that usually serves as a reference point for Russia, namely the United States. Moscow’s worldwide policies are captured by an idea of redrawing the negative consequences of a US-centred world order. At first glance, the Mediterranean seems to be a good fit for this strategy. Yet in the meantime, there is a sense of oversimplification in Russia’s reasoning: in the traditions of zero-sum-game mentality, the Kremlin tends to anticipate that the ‘dethroning’ of the United States would automatically boost Russia’s position. Even against the background of the presumably weakening US role in world affairs, the number of conceptual problems Russia faces is only growing. Should it, for example, support the region-building projects under the aegis of the EU as a materialization of “multipolarity” strategy, or, perhaps, ought Russia either ignore or even resist these projects?

However, there are some indications that eventually Russia might take the Mediterranean region more seriously. One may recall that Lavrov repeatedly refers to those countries bordering on Russia (in particular, the Caucasus) as having to be able to make major security decisions autonomously and block attempts to impose those decisions from the outside. Of course, unlike in other cases of region-building (such as the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Barents Sea regions), Russia in the Mediterranean is not a region-maker but rather an external power. Yet the progress in “regional development” was mentioned by Putin as one of the most important effects of the South Stream
project implementation. In fact, much praised by the Kremlin, multipolarity can be understood as a form of multiregionality, which makes Russia support the region-building efforts in the areas of Russia's neighbourhood with Europe. Lavrov has favoured “multioptional” strategies and “regionalization of global politics”, rhetorically asking why a single Europe should be formed from one centre, instead of relying upon several platforms simultaneously. In accordance with this logic, the Mediterranean may eventually be viewed as one of the possible regional “platforms” on which the future Europe may rest. The perspective of turning the EU into a less coherent and more diversified type of actor can be welcomed in Moscow, which seems to find more convenience in dealing with a Europe of multiple dimensions than with a unitary bloc. Now, let’s turn to the question of the practical tools that Russia is relying upon in the Mediterranean. Despite the implicit announcement of the “comeback” strategy, the Kremlin ceaselessly reiterates that today’s Russia is different from the Soviet Union in two respects: instead of ideological domination Moscow uses its economic and cultural resources as foreign policy instruments.

**Russia's Economic Tools**

Today’s Russia presents itself as a depoliticized actor whose behaviour is governed by economic and financial arguments and rests upon managerial qualities of the state. Moscow, therefore, rejects and even disavows political connotations of its economic projects. In the Mediterranean, most of Russia’s economic interests are grounded in fostering cooperation with key regional actors in the energy sphere motivated mostly by commercial reasons, though sometimes security also matters. The best example is the South Stream project launched as a joint Russian-Italian venture, which Putin dubbed “a genuine breakthrough” in the energy security of all of Europe. The Italian companies Enel and Eni have succeeded in acquiring shares of some Russian enterprises, while Russian investments in the Italian energy sector have also grown, as was confirmed during the visit of Giorgio Napolitano to Moscow on 16 July 2008. The importance of South Stream, in Russian eyes, was only actualized by the gas transit dispute of December 2008-January 2009 with Ukraine.

In Russia’s relations with Greece in 2008, the key project was the Burgas-Alexandropoulis pipeline, which Putin assessed as the key to the diversification and competitiveness of the energy markets in all of southern and eastern Europe. At his meeting with Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis on 29 April 2008, Putin addressed Greece as a pivotal country on the European energy scene. Parenthetically it can be mentioned that Putin has downplayed the political significance of Greece’s blocking the NATO membership of Macedonia, and restricted his comments to the reiteration of Russia’s negative attitude to the NATO enlargement as such. Relations with France in the economic field seem to be more competitive. Most Russian analysts interpreted the Union for the Mediterranean as an economic project meant to control the vast energy resources of North Africa. In this sense, the “gas OPEC” (OPEC being the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) that was announced in December 2008 may be partly interpreted as a reaction to the French policies. Yet official discourse, of course, omitted explicit references to possible rivalries: according to Lavrov, the Russia-Iran-Qatar negotiations are aimed at avoiding the influence of “incredible fluctuation of oil prices” upon the process of price-making in the still-unformed gas market.

Yet in the case of Algeria, Russia has to admit that its policies to a significant extent are a reaction to the European moves. At negotiations with Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Vladimir Putin mentioned that Russia is aware of the perspectives of forming a free trade area between the EU and Algeria by 2012, which makes Russia readjust its strategy accordingly. In particular, the Russian Railways company has gained a large contract in Algeria (yet only after Moscow agreed to take back the 15 military jets it earlier purchased from Russia). The same goes for Egypt as well: at the meeting with Hosni Mubarak on 25 March 2008, Putin underlined the success of the car producer Lada in this country, as well as that of the Lukoil and Novotek companies working in exploitation of the local energy resources. In the case of Libya, Russia has agreed to write off this country’s 4.5 billion dollar debt in exchange for the lucrative contracts that Muammar Gaddafi offered to Russian energy companies when he visited Moscow on 1 November 2008.

**Politics Looming Large**

Yet the de-politicized model of foreign policy inevitably meets political circumstances, which come in two
versions. Firstly, political arguments are advanced when the purely material considerations are insufficient for describing the plethora of Russian attitudes to the Mediterranean region. Russian diplomats tend to include the Mediterranean in the list of regions where Russia faces the perspective of marginalization and thus has to enact political mechanisms to define its relations with regional actors. Moreover, historical parallels with the Byzantine Empire, much more pronounced in 2008 Kremlin-sponsored discourse than ever before, pointed to the fact that Russian foreign policy imagery includes those parts of the Mediterranean Sea that were under the influence of Orthodoxy. Russia boosts its growing positions and influence in the countries of North Africa by pretending to play the role of a nation that, after a short period of oblivion, is “coming back” to the countries that still keep their best memories of enjoying good relations with the Soviet Union and preserving the sites which have symbolic meaning for Russia (including the Orthodox churches, cemeteries, and other cultural and religious places). The Middle East keeps its particular importance as part of the “Russian world” concept. In particular, the Russian Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society chaired by Sergei Stepashin was instrumental in returning to Russia some Russian religious buildings in Jerusalem. It is in this context that one has to view the issue of Russia’s cultural heritage in Turkey: having met with Babacan in July 2008, Lavrov has expressed his gratitude to the Turkish government for the restoration of the monument to the Russian immigrants in the city of Gelibolu. Secondly, there are situations in which the rules of the game are subject to political choice. Political accents seem to be very strong in Russia’s relations with France and Italy, which remain the chief supporters of Moscow within the EU. Both countries have strengthened—in the Kremlin’s eyes—their reputation of “good” or “loyal” Europeans, as opposed to Poland or the Baltic countries, which were put in a different category of unfriendly states. In the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia War in August 2008, the Russian-French relations achieved momentum, as the Medvedev-Sarkozy talks demonstrated, despite Brussels’ decision to discontinue the negotiations on a new bilateral treaty with Moscow. The crisis in the Caucasus, in Medvedev’s interpretation, was “imposed” upon both Russia and the leading EU countries, which could be translated into an invitation to enhance partnership between Moscow and countries like France and Italy.

The Russian-Spanish relations also contained strong political flavour, since neither country recognized the independence of Kosovo. King Juan Carlos’ visit to Moscow on 16 June 2008 has confirmed a certain degree of political solidarity between the two countries. Yet in the meantime, a number of differences between Russian and Spanish diplomacies may be traced. Firstly, Spain— unlike Russia— maintains some military presence in the Balkans, which makes it take a more pragmatic and less confrontational stance. Secondly, Spain— unlike Russia— is very reluctant to draw any parallels between Kosovo and other regional conflicts, admitting that Kosovo deserves separate treatment. Thirdly, for Russia the Kosovo incident reveals Russia’s distinctive identity mostly oppositional to the West. This is certainly not the case for Spain, which prevents any possible anti-European modalities in its diplomatic position. Of course, Russian media praised the position taken by Madrid while in the meantime interpreting it not as a principled rejection of the violation of international law, but rather as a fear of a “domino effect” inside Spain itself. Some Russian commentators pointed to what they dub Madrid’s “inconsistency”: Spanish troops in Kosovo, according to the Russian point of view, were installed to repress the Serbian minority, and thus they contributed to the establishment of Kosovo as an ethnic state. The fact that Spanish leaders repeatedly insist that the Kosovo conflict has to be tackled by Europeans themselves also provoked hidden resentment among Russians, who are sensitive to any gestures of exclusion against those considered “not fully European.” The political framework of Russia’s relations with Cyprus was also defined by the attempts to draw parallels between this country and Kosovo. At the news conference with his Turkish colleague Babacan, Foreign Minister Lavrov has accused the European governments of a policy of double standards: in the case of Cyprus the EU insists on the implementation of the UN resolutions, while in Kosovo most of these governments act in contradiction to the international law. In the Middle East, Russia tried to maintain its status as a politically important nation capable of exerting due influence in the region. Russia’s relations with Palestine were filled with ostensibly political content, since Hamas recognized both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The political dimension of relations with Israel was reinforced by Tel Aviv’s consent to abolish visas for Russian citizens starting in September 2008—a gesture that ranks very high in Russia’s normative priorities.
Turkey is another political partner for Moscow, mostly in light of “the eroding of the US strategic partnership with Turkey” (Kelashvili 2008, p.2). The ostensibly political format of the Russian-Turkish relations may be explained by the fact that both countries feel disadvantaged within the Euro-Atlantic institutional structures. The Russian Foreign Minister has welcomed the Turkish initiative on the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform after the Russia-Georgia War. Russia praised the intention of Ankara to take advantage of the uniqueness of the situation and normalize relations with Armenia. The effects of the Russian-Turkish rapprochement are ostensibly political: some analysts in Baku “started to talk about a pact between the two powers, similar to one signed between the Bolsheviks and Kemalist Turkey” (Valiyev 2008, p.5). The case of Turkey illustrates that a country’s NATO membership is not an impediment for developing fully-fledged bilateral cooperation, which may suggest that Russia is not against NATO as an institution but resists its enlargement to certain areas that Moscow treats as belonging to its traditional sphere of interests. In the meantime, the Turkish factor plays a politically constraining role in Russia’s attitudes towards the gradual self-assertiveness of the Kurdish provinces in Iraq.

In other cases, political dimensions were only occasional. Thus, having commented on the Burgas-Alexandropolis pipeline, Lavrov referred to the United States as a country attempting “to frighten Greece” and “exert open pressure” on its government. In the case of Tunisia, it was mentioned that both countries support a “world without dividing lines”, which sounded like a political declaration of solidarity.

Conclusion

There are two sources of ambiguity in Russia’s posture in the Mediterranean. Firstly, Russia plays different roles simultaneously, from an interest-oriented actor to a political broker. In the Mediterranean – due to its relative geographical remoteness and the absence of “hot points” like Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea and Crimea in the Black Sea – it is capable of playing the role of a “technocratic” power, yet in the meantime it may not avoid political collisions that inevitably politicize Russia’s stand.

Secondly, Russia’s attitudes to the Mediterranean region remain ambivalent. On the one hand, officially, Russia seems to be far away from accepting the Mediterranean countries as forming a single region. Yet on the other hand, a wider foreign policy discourse in Russia gives some indications that it may take some political advantage(s) of the process of region-making in Europe’s margins.

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The European Security Strategy (ESS) adopted in December 2003 with the title “A Secure Europe in a Better World,” the Solana Document, states that the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. The ESS stresses that “without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East.” The 2008 debate on the implementation of the ESS has confirmed this conclusion. However, at the same time, it is clear that, five years later, the lack of progress in the so-called peace process is affecting the overall Mediterranean policy of the EU.

The Palestinian question has surfaced again as the central question defining the viability and the space of the Euro-Mediterranean multilateral initiatives. The Barcelona Process was born in 1995 of the dynamic that came about with the progress in the peace process from Oslo to Madrid. The final declaration was signed in Barcelona on 27-28 November 1995 by two Nobel Peace laureates, Arafat and Peres. But already in 1995 the peace camp suffered a terrible blow with the murder of Yitzhak Rabin some days before, on 5 November 2005, by an Israeli extremist opposed to Rabin’s signing of the Oslo Accords. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership survived until the Paris Summit of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in July 2008 thanks to European leadership—a good example of European leadership playing a major role in moving forward in policies that deal with issues at the heart of European concerns.

The multilateral dimension of the Barcelona Process, that is to say, the meetings of high-level officials, was not able to deal with any substantive issue or promote any tangible cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy. Their unique merit was to continue meeting even when the Arab-Israeli conflict became more acute. The rotating presidency of the EU took on the leadership of those meetings and was able to maintain their schedule even in the most difficult moments, such as the war in Lebanon during the Finnish Presidency in 2006. But projects as simple as organising a seminar on non-proliferation inevitably faced the opposition of the Arab states to cooperating with Israel on political and security matters. The French proposal of approving a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Security in 2000 failed for exactly the same reason. Those present at those high-level meetings of the Barcelona Process saw how they were paralysed by endless discussions between Israeli and Arab representatives.

However, even if the political consultations did not succeed, the communitarian dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership conducted by the European Commission was able to follow a slow, gradual and long-term path. The Barcelona Summit of 2005 allowed for the introduction of new topics into the Euro-Mediterranean agenda, such as governance facility and women’s rights. These new problems, more links to the goal of democratic inclusion, came into being in particular with the launch in 2004 of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and of its Action Plans.

The communitarian dimension of the Barcelona Process, born out of the experience of European enlargement, also had a multilateral dimension, and decisions on issues related to the first and third pillar of the EU were made in the Euro-Mediterranean Committee, but its dynamic was first and foremost bilateral in nature. It is true that many in the South have rightly considered the Barcelona Process as fundamentally asymmetric, and in a certain sense unilateral, because it was fully led by the EU.
One of the objectives of the UfM was specifically to end that asymmetry and build a Euro-Arab co-leadership of the Partnership of the Barcelona Process. Due to this transformation, the UfM became a classical intergovernmental organisation, and the communitarian dimension of the Barcelona Process was weakened. As a consequence, the Israeli-Arab question became a sticking point. The Egyptian Co-presidency of the UfM is the natural porto-parole of the enormous frustration of Arab public opinion with the lack of process of the so-called peace process. Inevitably this also allows for the instrumentalisation of the peace process for other domestic or international political agendas.

Certainly one day, if there is peace in the Middle East, regional cooperation between Israel and its neighbours will be the best way to consolidate peace and achieve development.

The new institutional framework, coupled with the Middle East situation, has put the UfM in a state of quasi-paralysis. After the Paris Summit, all meetings, with the exception of the Marseille Ministerial, were blocked around the question of the representation of the Arab League. With the Gaza War, the Arab states have refused for many months to sit at the same table with Israel. The only high-level official meeting that has taken place since was simply an occasion for the affirmation of the reasons that were blocking all the processes. Because of the paralysis of the political multilateral framework of the UfM and its multilateral initiatives of economic cooperation, the bilateral dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations has become predominant. This is because the bilateral agreements in the framework of the ENP are more immune to the contamination of Israel-Arab conflict. It is worth noting that it was during this period of paralysis in the UfM meetings that the EU signed an advanced status agreement with Morocco.

Today there is a belief that EU goals in the Mediterranean can only be fostered though bilateral Euro-Mediterranean relations. It is hoped that the advanced status agreement with Morocco, which gives it access to European programmes and to the European single market, will have a knock-on effect on other countries in the region as they try to emulate Morocco. But the multilateral dimension is of paramount importance in building a region of development, democracy and peace. It is the multilateral dimension that can facilitate the relations between neighbour countries of the Maghreb or the Middle East.

And certainly one day, if there is peace in the Middle East, regional cooperation between Israel and its neighbours will be the best way to consolidate peace and achieve development. The same can be said of the Maghreb, where the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict would open the borders between Algeria and Morocco and facilitate the rebirth of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). With the difficulties of the UfM, some might think that the way forward would be to avoid the Israeli-Palestinian issue or go back to a European-led initiative. However, there is no way back. The process being what it is to move forward today with an initiative like the UfM, it is necessary to act on two fronts. One, to build on the communitarian acquis of the Barcelona Process and to forge new initiatives in the fields of civil society, human rights and democracy supported by the European Commission; the other for the EU to define a clear policy for the Palestinian question. The window of opportunity is there after President Obama’s speech in Cairo. This has put the Palestinian question back as a central issue in international politics, and allows for the EU to move forward in support of a “big bang” approach to implement what President Obama has defined as the need to find a solution for the Palestinian people who “have endured the pain of dislocation” and “the daily humiliations… that come with occupation,” a situation that is, in his view, “intolerable.” Such a policy would find strong support in the public opinion of the southern partners of the EU, including in certain sectors of the Israeli population.
After four years of stalemate, new talks since September 2008 have rekindled hopes for settlement of the half-century-old Cyprus problem. Greek and Turkish Cypriots have once again started moving towards a deal that will free both sides from a burden that has held them back for five decades, create new security and prosperity for all in the eastern Mediterranean, and do more than almost anything else to help put Turkey’s convergence with the European Union on a stable track.

There is much in the deal for both sides: normalization with Turkey would allow Cyprus’s sagging tourism industry to benefit from an influx of Turkish tourists, Cyprus could become a genuine financial and service hub in the east Mediterranean, Cypriot businesses could begin to invest in Turkey, and Turkish companies would find a rich new market. A major bi-communal survey predicted in February 2008 that, based on the huge rise in trade and investment between Greece and Turkey since 1999, a settlement would add a minimum of 10 percentage points to the Cypriot economy within seven years. From being a burden and source of tension, Cyprus, with its low taxes, strategic position and relatively efficient government, would become a confident, cosmopolitan society and booming beacon of prosperity in the eastern Mediterranean.

This rosy scenario is of course an ideal outcome, but the alternatives are a good deal less enticing. Many initiatives have failed to stop the deepening divisions of Cyprus since independence from Britain in 1960. The low points are well known: the Greek Cypriot actions that helped drive the Turkish Cypriot community out of the government and into ethnic ghettos in 1963-64; the coup engineered on Cyprus by the junta in Athens to seize the island for Greece in 1974; and the Turkish invasion a few days later, which reversed the coup, but ended in the indefinite Turkish occupation of 37% of the island.

Peace plans have come and gone, burning the fingers of many a UN Secretary General. There have been High-Level Agreements, an Interim Agreement, the Gobbi Initiative, the Proximity Talks, the Draft Framework Agreement, the First and Second Sets of Ideas, and finally the Annan Plan. When one side was ready, the other was not. Other delays were caused by elections, military coups in Turkey and Greece and the Cold War.

In the background, however, another dynamic has been building momentum: the advancing borders of the European Union. As Cyprus moved towards membership in 2004, the UN, the EU, and international communities put together one more effort to bring the Greek and Turkish Cypriots into the EU together, a plan named after the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Turkish Cypriots wanted to enter the EU as part of Cyprus, and 65% of them voted for his Annan Plan. Turkey, which wanted to support its own EU convergence story, reversed decades of policy to back them too. But this Turkish change of heart came too late to win the Greek Cypriots’ hearts. Feeling that they had nothing to lose, and hearing their leader, the late Tassos Papadopoulos, denounce the Annan Plan each day, 76% of Greek Cypriots rejected the plan. The Greek Cypriot hardliners had however only won a tactical victory. Then President Papadopoulos’s underlying idea was that Greek Cypriots only had to...
wait, and the offer of well-paid work, free hospital treatment, EU membership and passports would persuade the majority of Turkish Cypriots to join Greek Cypriot Republic of Cyprus as individuals. The next four years proved that the carrot of such temptations, along with the stick of uncompromising policies rejecting Turkish Cypriot communal rights, only made the Turkish Cypriot state stronger, richer and more accepted in the world. In short, only compromise with the Turkish Cypriots as a community could win what many Greek Cypriots sought: a Turkish troop withdrawal, compensation for property and long-term security. That's why the February 2008 Greek Cypriot presidential election produced a major upset—and why it is a mistake to see the 76% rejection of the 2004 referendum as the Greek Cypriots' last word on a settlement. The late incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos based his re-election campaign on having blocked the Annan Plan and his promise to say “no” to any attempt to resurrect it, and was defeated. The victors of the 1st Round won 66.8% of the vote with promises of a more compromising line with the Turkish Cypriots.

The ultimate winner in the 2nd Round, the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) leader Demetris Christofias, quickly started to reverse the previous government's hard-line approach in both style and substance. The new administration admitted Greek Cypriot errors since the 1960s; accepted that 50,000 immigrants from Turkey would stay on the island; addressed Greek Cypriots on television to prepare for the compromises of a solution, like a rotating presidency; warned that not all Greek Cypriots will be able to return to their old homes; sent a senior official and a presidential wreath to the funeral of a recently exhumed Turkish Cypriot killed in the 1960s; accepted a negotiated settlement to eight court cases trying to block European Commission aid programmes in the north; and invited Turkish journalists to visit the south, even though they had entered the island from the Turkish Cypriot side. All these were previously taboo subjects or actions.

There are other sides of broader Greek Cypriot change. Although continuing a long-standing alliance with Papadopoulos’s party, the Democratic Party (DIKO), the Christofias government gave Cabinet posts only to coalition partners with weak links to the old hard-line regime. The main opposition party, Democratic Rally (DISY), the runner-up in the presidential election, has repeatedly and strongly supported Christofias's efforts to reach a settlement. In September, he braved stinging opposition criticism to start modernizing Greek Cypriot schoolbooks, virtually unchanged since 1950. The new text will aim to build mutual respect, to stress shared values, to talk about the suffering of Turkish Cypriots as well as that of the Greek Cypriots, and to fulfil what one Christofias party spokesman said was “an obligation towards the new generation to give them the truth.”

For sure, Christofias and his AKEL party have given contradictory signals in the past. The party helped defeat peace plans in 1978 and most recently in 2002-2004. In 2004, Christofias presided over a messy political deal that left him a partner in Papadopoulos’s ruling coalition and campaigning against the Annan Plan (the AKEL slogan was an awkward “‘no’ to cement the ‘yes’”, referring to a future Cyprus compromise). Greek Cypriot officials are blocking the opening of the energy chapter in Ankara’s negotiations to join the EU, contradicting the new government’s claim to support Turkey’s EU membership. Christofias has also shown reluctance to reverse the previous government’s policies and allow visiting ministers from Europe to meet the Turkish Cypriot leader in his office in the north, which was, after all, the official residence of the former Turkish Cypriot Vice President according to the system set up for Cypriot independence in 1960.

While it still remains to be seen if Greek and Turkish Cypriots can find enough common ground for compromise, the Greek Cypriots’ change of heart in 2008, matching that of the Turkish Cypriots in 2004, is the result of some deep changes. Until 2004, the 750,000 Greek Cypriots believed their position was too weak and isolated to commit fully to negotiations on a comprehensive settlement. Despite a joint defence doctrine with Greece and Greek military support, Greek Cypriots felt at a great disadvantage to a far stronger Turkish army and 75 million Turks to the north in Turkey. This is still often expressed in the fear that “even if we reach a deal, Turkey will never implement it.” However, full EU membership since 2004 has done much to alleviate their sense of insecurity. The Greek Cypriots have scaled back arms purchases and training exercises. According to Jane’s, the defence publication, the Greek Cypriots view the EU as a “cost-effective defence umbrella.”

In an April 2008 poll, three quarters of Greek Cypriots backed Christofias’s pro-solution approach. When the Ledra Street crossing opened, it was ordinary Greek Cypriots who flocked to the Turkish Cypriot side. The optimistic and carefree atmosphere was
qualitatively different from the opening of the frontline crossings in 2003, when Greek Cypriots focused on visiting lost homes, family villages and religious shrines.

In private, Greek Cypriot intellectuals and business people are increasingly worried that time is working against them. Without a comprehensive settlement, they realise, there will be no Turkish troop withdrawal, no recovery of land, no restoration or compensation of properties and no normalisation with Turkey. Greek Cypriot fears that the Turkish Cypriots might abandon the talks and go it alone with success were increased by significant international recognition for Kosovo’s declaration of independence on 17 February 2008. Even worse was the Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008 and recognition of the “independence” of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

There are thus many reasons that Christofias has joined with Talat to start real work on a settlement. The two men have a long-established dialogue and friendship based on their left-wing parties’ common anti-nationalist cause. Throughout the past eight months, despite altercations in the media, they have held long private discussions after their official meetings. Talat’s commitment to a compromise settlement was already proven in 2004, and now a UN mission to the island has elicited at least a declaration from Christofias that “I want to die with the assurance that new generations will not torture themselves with the Cyprus problem." Turkish Cypriots also remember Christofias’s AKEL for supporting the peacemaking efforts of former Greek Cypriot President George Vasiliiou, and for many actions that protected ordinary people during the 1955-1974 years of communal violence.

Christofias’s and Talat’s more than 25 monthly meetings have built a steady momentum towards a solution. On 3 April 2008, they agreed to re-open Ledra Street, a commercial street in the heart of Nicosia closed since the late 1950s. On 23 May 2008, they defined the overall goal of the negotiations in language that showed real compromise: the Greek Cypriots accepted that there would be “two Constituent States” and the Turkish Cypriot side accepted that the new federal state would have a “single international personality.” This was underlined on 1 July 2008, when the two leaders agreed “in principle” that there would be one citizenship and sovereignty in this new state.

However, optimism over the modest progress of the talks over the past eight months has been largely confined to the two leaders, and not enough has been done to build support for a reunified island in the two communities. Nationalist hardliners in Christofias’s main coalition partner, DIKO, dominated elections for senior party posts in March. And in Turkish Cypriot parliamentary elections on 19 April 2009, victory went to the right-wing nationalist National Unity Party, which won 44% of the vote and 26 of the 50 seats. The ruling left-wing Republican Turkish Party (CTP) won just 29% of the vote and 15 parliamentary seats. The reasons for the nationalists’ victory were mainly domestic and economic, but pressure is clearly on Talat and his Greek Cypriot counterpart Demetris Christofias to show results sooner rather than later. Talat, the former leader of the CTP, faces re-election in April 2010.

Another reason for the rise of the nationalists is that the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot sides have watched with disbelief as the Greek Cypriots have apparently rewarded after they rejected the internationally supported Annan Plan for a settlement. Not only did the Greek Cypriots enter the EU, but they also managed to minimize or eliminate many of the promises made by the EU to reward the Turkish Cypriots for their “yes” vote and end EU embargoes on Turkish Cypriot goods and services.

There are many reasons for EU States to do more to support a settlement and woo the Turkish Cypriots back. If this year’s process breaks down, it will likely be the last attempt at a comprehensive federal settlement for many years. One day, perhaps, the outside world may consider a two-state solution on the island. But nobody is going to be willing to recognize northern Cyprus as a separate state, even after 34 years of division, and all sides should count the costs of waiting indefinitely. The old comfort of an unthreatening status quo is no longer available. Now that the Greek Cypriots are full members of the EU, the stakes and risks are higher. Failure could lead to new insecurity and even military tensions between Cyprus and Turkey. For the Turkish Cypriots, meanwhile, it would mean becoming completely dependent on Turkey. And for Turkey, Cyprus would become a worse problem than before: an economic cost, a diplomatic burden, and, above all, the biggest obstacle between the Turks and their ambition for a full place in the European family of nations.
The recent debate on the “Future of Europe” started around the time of the signature of the Treaty of Lisbon on 13 December 2007. As the Treaty of Lisbon aimed to make the EU more democratic, efficient and transparent, the challenges that the EU would be facing in the future would require a sound set of European values that would stand the test of time. The Treaty also foresees institutional changes that would make the EU a global actor. In this article, I would like to concentrate on the “Future of Europe” as a global economic actor. As the world’s largest trading bloc, the EU27 GDP is now three trillion euros (end of 2008), its total world trade has reached 2.4 trillion euros, and it is a net exporter of high and medium-technology goods and services. The EU’s common external trade policy that aims to open up new markets for EU products and services and to keep a vigilant eye on rising protectionism is indispensable for overcoming internal economic challenges. For example, average EU15 growth rates have been stagnant around 2% compared to 2.3% for the US during 2000-2008 and labour productivity rates (GDP in Purchasing Power Standard/PPS per hour worked) have been below the US rates. Several challenges lie ahead for the EU to make growth sustainable for future generations and an aging society is one of them. Sustainable growth and the creation of quality employment are not only preconditions for the future of Europe as an economic actor but are also necessary for the future of Europe as a global political actor. Although the institutional reform process gained momentum with the Lisbon Treaty, the debate on the “Future of Europe” goes before that process and is in many ways multi-faceted.

Undoubtedly the Lisbon Strategy is one of the milestones in this process of defining “what” kind of future Europe wants and “how” it can get there. Having acknowledged the economic challenges ahead for the EU, the Lisbon Strategy was first agreed in 2000 and then relaunched in 2005 to make the EU the “world’s most dynamic and competitive economy within 10 years.” The Lisbon Strategy has a clear focus and target on growth and jobs: investment of 3% of Europe’s GDP in research and development by 2010 and an employment rate (the proportion of Europe’s working age population in employment) of 70% by the same date. The way the strategy works involves Member States undertaking reforms at the national level based on National Reform Programmes presented in 2006 and based on the policy guidelines (“Integrated Guidelines”) agreed upon collectively by all Member States. These National Reform Programmes cover a three-year period. To reach the specific targets mentioned, the Member States set ambitious research and development (R&D) targets, and employment rates have been increasing so there is progress towards the main targets. Of course, growth and jobs are not the only economic targets that matter: improved education is another crucial factor where the EU requires investment in order to close the skill gap with the US. All these targets and the reform programmes are part of an internal agenda of sustainable growth for Europe. However, in a globalized world, more and more internal factors are determined or affected by external factors or shocks. In a globalized world, where economic integration, both real and financial, is defined by flows of goods and services and investment, policies toward both trade and investment are crucial for sustainable growth. In this respect, the EU is an important player in world trade, promoting free trade and lowering protectionism, and hence an important actor in glob-
Over the last two years of the current Commission’s trade policy, there has been an important turning point. In the remainder of this article I discuss how a “new” trade policy was taken up by the Commission to contribute to the “Future of Europe” to “make EU the world’s most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010.” As the EU elections approach it is also timely to have an assessment of the performance of the current commission on trade policy.

**External Trade Policy’s Contribution to the “Future of Europe”**

Unarguably the most important development in the trade policy of the EU is the paradigm shift from an “embargo” on all new bilateral trade negotiations to a renewed mandate on deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Multilateral trade negotiations and successful completion of the World Trade Organization’s (WTO’s) Doha Round have been the EU’s utmost priority. The negotiations for the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) that started in November 2001 with the mandate given at the fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha were followed by the fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancun in 2003. The then Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy had put an embargo on all new bilateral negotiations in order to show the EU’s commitment to multilateral trade negotiations. When Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson started his term, he also endorsed this policy. However, with the unsatisfactory outcome of the Hong Kong Ministerial in 2005, the Doha negotiations were suspended in July 2006 with Director-General Pascal Lamy’s recommendations.

Soon after the suspension of the Doha Round, there was increased global impetus towards new bilateral and regional free trade agreements. In October 2006, a communication from the Commission to the Council, Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions was made public. This communication, *Global Europe: Competing in the World* (COM 2006, 567), marked the change in EU’s trade policy and ended the longstanding embargo on bilateral trade agreements. The EU decided to pursue a new generation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that are to go beyond what can be achieved at WTO level (WTO+) with utmost attention being paid to the agreements’ WTO compliance. The new generation FTAs were to be “deep” and “comprehensive” and tackle “beyond the border” issues such as regulatory barriers and include services and investment liberalization. In the *Global Europe* communication it was argued that the EU’s trade policy was an “integral part of the EU’s approach to economic reform and competitiveness” and the “renewed Lisbon Strategy that set out the steps to be taken to ensure growth and jobs” was to be complemented with a trade policy that provides market access to EU companies.

Since Mandelson took office in October 2004, the Commission has launched several key trade initiatives and trade negotiations. Table 2 and Table 3 summarize some of the milestones over the last four years:

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Trade Initiatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation period for the Green Paper on the review of the community’s trade defence instruments Jan-07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewed market access strategy consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of the trade defence instruments</td>
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<td>Communication on renewed market access strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Regulation applying generalized system of preferences (GSP) for 2009-2011</td>
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<td>EU-US investment dialogue</td>
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**TABLE 3**

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<tr>
<th>State of Play of Trade Negotiations During the Term of the Current Commission</th>
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<tr>
<td>Doha Sixth Ministerial in Hong Kong Dec-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doha Round suspended</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-South Korea FTA launched 06-May-07</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-India FTA launched 28-Jun-07</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) FTA launched 04-May-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-China Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) launched Jan-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) initialled 16-Dec-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Albania concluded Feb-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA with Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded Dec-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAA with Montenegro concluded Sep-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAA with Serbia concluded Jul-07</td>
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<td>EU-Egypt agriculture negotiations concluded in 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-Israel agriculture negotiations concluded in 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-Jordan agriculture negotiations concluded in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-Libya Association Agreement (AA) negotiating directive Jul-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-Tunisia Agreement on dispute settlement mechanism (DSM) initialled Jul-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-Ukraine FTA launched 18-Feb-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) FTA ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-Mercosur FTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-Canada Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement under discussion in Council</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: DG Trade.

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1 As the EU has a common external trade policy that is conducted by the Directorate-General for Trade (DG Trade) of the EU Commission, the rest of this article will concentrate on trade policy. An external common investment policy is currently also on the agenda.
Below we will discuss some of the most significant trade initiatives that were undertaken during the term of the current commission.

**Global Europe Communication and New Generation FTAs**

The *Global Europe* communication identified a number of potential FTA partners for the EU based on the following criteria:

- Countries or regions with large market potential (market size usually measured by GDP multiplied by the growth rate) and with
- High tariff and non-tariff barriers.

According to these criteria, three FTA partners were identified in Asia: negotiations with South Korea, India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) all started in 2007. Although Asian countries represent large markets with good prospects for growth and an increasing openness to trade, the share of Asia in EU’s trade is relatively small compared to their relative importance for the US and Japan. If the EU is to secure sustained competitiveness for the next generations, deep FTAs that enhance trade with a dynamic region can help achieve this goal.

Among the three FTA partners, negotiations with South Korea are the closest to completion, with some moderate progress with India and slow pace with ASEAN.

In summary, the choice of new generation FTAs is significant, since when these FTAs are concluded it will open up new markets in Asia for the EU. Currently the EU does not have a bilateral preferential agreement with any Asian nation.

Although the Asian “new generation” FTAs have not yet been concluded, the Enhanced Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) that was initialled on 16 December 2007 is seen as the first “new generation” FTA that has been concluded since the *Global Europe* communication. The agreement covers both goods and services liberalization as well as investment and includes such “beyond the border” issues as intellectual property rights, public procurement and competition. One of the most important concessions in the EC-CARIFORUM EPA is the EU’s commitment to open its services market to Caribbean companies and professionals to offer EU work experience in services sectors. In addition to this, the new rules of origin that are offered in the EPA promote integration of Caribbean companies in the vertical production chain.

Undoubtedly the most significant disappointment of the outgoing commission is the failure to conclude the Doha Round. Despite several missed deadlines before, there was considerable consensus that allowed the finalizing of the revised draft modalities on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) and agriculture that were both released in May 2008. After ten days of difficult negotiations in July 2008, the mini-ministerial in Geneva delivered no result and collapsed over disagreement on special safeguard mechanisms. Although the negotiations in the Doha Round include rules and services, as well as agriculture and NAMA liberalization, the overarching theme of the Round has been to deliver “development” to the developing countries. Since agricultural goods tariff liberalization and removal of developed country subsidies is at the heart of development issues, developing and developed countries have found themselves one more time at a conflict. The EU has made a generous offer to cut its farm tariffs by 50%, making sure that the highest tariffs get the largest reduction. In addition to this, the EU offered to cut its subsidies by 70% and eliminate all export subsidies if others agreed to do so as well. For much of the negotiations, agriculture has dominated over industrial goods negotiations and this has been the main reason of the collapse of talks in July 2008. For some, the failure of Doha was to be blamed on the US: while demanding significant concessions from some developing countries (i.e. India, Brazil and China) it was not willing to do so itself. Especially the US refused to cut its trade-distorting subsidies. Although negotiations are continuing, the failure to conclude this round in July was a collective failure. However, since delivering sustainable and development-friendly trade liberalisation was one of the priorities of the commission, it is nevertheless a missed opportunity.

**What Lies Ahead for the Future of EU-Mediterranean Trade Relations**

The political agenda was highly charged over the last year. Sarkozy’s proposal of the Union for the Mediterranean was first aired during his election in May 2007. Although it faced opposition at high levels initially, it reinvigorated the Barcelona Process. At
the Paris Summit of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean in July 2008, which brought Heads of State and Government together, it was agreed to build on and reinforce successful elements of the Barcelona Process. At the ministerial meeting in Marseille, in November 2008, the final touches on the initiative were described in detail: institutional structures of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean were to be governed by the principle of "co-presidency."

It was agreed that senior officials would be responsible for dealing with all initiatives, to take stock and evaluate progress of the project. The senior officials will be aided by a Joint Permanent Committee that will assist and prepare the meetings and deal with the issues dealt with by the Euromed committee, which is to be dissolved. In addition to this, a joint secretariat is charged with gathering "within the project priorities, regional, sub-regional or trans-national project initiatives."

Then at the ministerial meeting in November 2008, a work plan for 2009 was agreed upon. This work plan includes 15 ministerial meetings on several mutually important areas ranging from water, sustainable development, energy, environment, food security, agriculture and development, trade and others.

The summit in 2008 was significant as it reemphasized the goal of creating a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010. At the seventh Euro-Mediterranean Trade Ministerial Meeting held in Marseille in July 2008, the senior officials were given the task of presenting a Euro-Mediterranean Trade Roadmap up to 2010 and beyond. Currently, CEPS is undertaking a study, jointly with the Centre for Social and Economic Research (CASE) in Poland, to provide the commission with recommendations of priority areas for the future “deep” Free Trade Agreements to be negotiated. The results of the study will be presented to the senior officials at the next trade ministerial meeting.

So far the existing research indicates that there has already been considerable progress in 2008 in the area of trade.

- The EU concluded negotiations on agricultural goods, processed food and fisheries with Egypt and Israel last year. EU-Jordan agricultural negotiations were concluded in 2005. Negotiations with Morocco are at an advanced stage and with Tunisia have just been launched.
- An agreement on dispute settlement mechanism (DSM) was initialled with Tunisia in July 2008 and substantial progress made in the bilateral negotiations with Morocco on DSM.
- Bilateral negotiations with Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Israel on the liberalisation of trade in services and the right of establishment, launched in 2008, will continue in 2009.

The "new generation" type FTAs that the Commission is determined to sign with the Mediterranean countries will take current FTAs in the Association Agreements beyond tariff liberalization. The EU’s priorities will be to eliminate non-tariff barriers such as technical standards, certification and testing for industrial products and sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural products. To achieve this, the progress to date has to be complemented with priority attention given to the area of the agreements on conformity assessment and accreditation. Another important aspect of the future trade relations is the level of intra-regional integration in the Mediterranean. For the South Mediterranean countries it is especially important that as a region they are integrated (i.e. to form a common free trade area) to benefit from the pan-Euromed diagonal cumulation of origin. For the EU, intra-regional integration is important for those sectors where consolidation for the industry rather than market access is the issue. For this reason, it is important to promote such initiatives as Agadir among other members of the Mediterranean. In the long-term and under the European Neighbourhood Policy initiative, the Mediterranean partners will be encouraged to harmonize with the acquis in several areas related to trade (e.g. public procurement, competition policy, intellectual property rights/IPR, etc.) to encourage both trade and investment. As the Mediterranean is strategically very important for the EU, all these steps will contribute to the integration of the South Mediterranean countries with the EU and contribute to the Barcelona Process.

- Among the Mediterranean partners, negotiations with Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and Jordan are at an advanced stage.
Germany: A Player in the Mediterranean

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Recent Developments – Germany and the Union for the Mediterranean

Germany took over the EU Presidency for the first six months of 2007. The German Presidency coincided with the launch of the presidential election campaign in France and the infamous speech given by the then presidential candidate Mr. Sarkozy in Toulon in February 2007 in which he argued, for the first time, for the creation of a Union of the Mediterranean (UM). Initially, the German government did not react to the proposal, assuming instead what could be called a “wait-and-see” approach. This attitude was adopted simply because both the Chancellery and the Foreign Ministry preferred to wait for the outcome of the French presidential elections, and because it was also believed that if Mr. Sarkozy was elected, what was then still only a highly vague idea would naturally eventually be placed on the discussion agenda of the Franco-German cooperation scheme, which foresees a regular, bi-monthly consultation process usually attended by the German Chancellor and the French President.

To the surprise of the German governing elite, however, even after his electoral victory, Mr. Sarkozy showed no intention of submitting the issue to the Franco-German consultation framework, despite making repeated, only slightly more nuanced public statements on the UM during his election night press conference in May 2007, as well as during his visits to the Maghreb countries in the second half of 2007. It took the German government until 5 December 2007, when Chancellor Angela Merkel, in anticipation of her meeting with President Sarkozy the following day in Paris and the Franco-Spanish-Italian summit that was to take place on 20 December 2007, finally openly criticised Mr. Sarkozy’s plans to restrict such a union of sorts to the Mediterranean riparian nations, thus potentially excluding Germany and all other EU Member States not bordering the Mediterranean.

That the conclusions of the Rome summit, namely the “Appel de Rome,” adopted the term “Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM) and acknowledged that the Paris summit of July 2008, which would supposedly inaugurate this union, should be attended by all EU Member States and all Mediterranean riparian nations, was considered a success within German foreign policy circles and seen as a direct response to Merkel’s growing criticism and the mounting German fears over potential divisions within the EU. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction continued to exist in Berlin due to the fact that the Appel de Rome spoke only of the alleged need to make the UfM complementary to the already existing Euro-Mediterranean structures, i.e. the Barcelona Process, and did not go so far as to conceive of it as an integral and upgraded part of the latter.

In February 2008, tensions mounted considerably after President Sarkozy cancelled a bilateral meeting with the Chancellor in the German city of Straubing at short notice due to alleged time constraints. Given that this was an opportunity for the two leaders, following long-standing practice, to coordinate their positions before the upcoming Brussels European Council summit and resolve remaining differences, this was perceived by the Chancellery as a major rebuff. Consequently, it was immediately communicated to the French Élysée that Germany would not shy away from opposing Mr. Sarkozy at the European Council summit, and thus publicly damage the French President’s image, unless the UfM was transformed into an EU project based, in turn, on the Barcelona...
As is now well-known, at an informal meeting with Ms Merkel in Hanover in early March 2008, Mr. Sarkozy, in the face of a major foreign policy defeat, the effects of which could have had serious repercussions on the French EU Presidency and Mr. Sarkozy’s own domestic standing, abandoned his exclusionary plans and hence paved the way for what would later become known as the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean” (BP: UfM).

Germany’s strong stance against a French-led UfM and in favour of maintaining, or at most strengthening, the Barcelona Process was widely interpreted as the beginning of a greater German involvement in Euro-Mediterranean politics.

In the months preceding the European Council summit in Brussels in mid-March of 2008, as well as in the weeks thereafter, Germany’s strong stance against a French-led UfM and in favour of maintaining, or at most strengthening, the Barcelona Process was widely interpreted by a large number of actors, especially in the southern Mediterranean, as the beginning of a greater German involvement in Euro-Mediterranean politics, and thus as a reflection of its growing engagement in Europe’s southern neighbourhood. Yet, the question remains as to whether these perceptions are justified. To what extent did Germany’s defence of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 2007 and 2008 reflect a newfound interest in the Mediterranean? Is Germany a player in the Mediterranean, as the title of this chapter seems to suggest?

Germany: A Player in the Mediterranean?

For decades, Germany’s relations with the southern Mediterranean countries stood in the shadow of the Cold War and the corresponding block confrontation, as well as France and Britain’s privileged relations with their former territories. Proactive German engagement was for a long time limited to Israel due to the moral imperative of the past, while other parts of the southern Mediterranean were considered of only secondary importance to Germany’s foreign policy agenda. Undoubtedly, however, the end of the east-west conflict and the numerous terrorist attacks seen in a number of southern Mediterranean cities over recent years, some of which claimed the lives of German citizens, increasingly brought the area within the enlarged focus of German foreign policy. In a way, greater sensitivity among the German foreign policy elite regarding political and economic developments in the southern Mediterranean was a consequence of Germany’s participation in the EMP, as well as its participation in the Schengen Agreement, providing for the removal of border controls between the participating countries, which contributed to what many in Berlin felt to be Germany’s growing proximity to Europe’s southern neighbourhood.

In the early nineties, the German government under the then Chancellor Helmut Kohl participated from the very beginning in the transformation of the short-lived Euro-Maghreb Partnership into the EMP and was actively involved at the December 1994 Essen European Council summit in ensuring that the Mediterranean became declared an area of strategic importance for the EU. However, in contrast to the French and Spanish position at the time, the German government was not interested in bringing the southern Mediterranean partner countries closer to the EU, but rather emphasized the political, economic, and social importance of the region and the need to create a free-trade-based cooperation concept that would rule out any perspective of potential EU membership.

Until today, and in spite of greater awareness of developments in the southern Mediterranean and the learning process that its membership in the EMP and the previous Euro-Mediterranean cooperation frameworks entailed, Germany cannot be said to have a Mediterranean policy. In this vein, it is then hardly surprising that the work programme of the German EU Presidency for the first half of 2007, as well as the more extended joint 18 month work programme of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia, only mentioned the Mediterranean and the EMP’s second and third basket in a superficial fashion.

Given that there appears to be a consensus of sorts among the political elite that the Mediterranean does not form a homogeneous region, Germany has in recent years chosen to instead expand its bilateral relations with the countries of the southern Medit-
erranean, both in scope and depth, and has increasingly adopted a more visible political role, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and regional developments in the Levant. Unsurprisingly, such development was not accidental and, in fact, not limited to the southern Mediterranean alone. It was rather the consequence of Germany’s unification and regaining of full sovereignty in 1990, coupled with subsequent governments’ growing desire to exert greater influence internationally. This must therefore be interpreted as a modern form of revisionism, yet one embedded in multilateralism as well as international consultation and coordination mechanisms. However, especially with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its regional dimension, it has not always been clear whether Germany was acting on its own behalf or on behalf of the EU.

Given that there appears to be a consensus of sorts among the political elite that the Mediterranean does not form a homogeneous region, Germany has in recent years chosen to instead expand its bilateral relations.

Germany, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Regional Dimension

Some critics have argued that German foreign policy under Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer was mainly prestige-oriented Machtpolitik, primarily aimed at elevating the personal status of both politicians and that of Germany. Although this cannot be denied in general, it is recognised that it was the red-green coalition, and especially the personal efforts of Mr Fischer, that granted the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a new importance on the German foreign policy agenda. While this reinforced interest was in line with, and somewhat a consequence of, previous initiatives by Chancellor Kohl—such as the expansion of development aid to the Palestinian Authority and the opening of a Foreign Ministry office in Jericho in 1994—Mr. Fischer was the first German Foreign Minister ever to claim the role of mediator and thus to explicitly engage Germany in the resolution of the conflict. His unrelenting travelling diplomacy, particularly during the Al-Aqsa intifada, not only earned him the respect of both conflicting parties, but more importantly, it contributed to a much more balanced perception of Germany in the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. With the elaboration of both his initial seven-point “Idea Paper” of April 2002 and his second four-page Middle East peace initiative of late 2002, he substantiated this newly-gained confidence, and, although both initiatives proved unsuccessful, Mr Fischer managed to leave a very visible German imprint on the road map for peace, as well as all subsequent efforts of the international Middle East Quartet.

During the period of 2005-2009, Germany’s role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was comparatively less prominent and somewhat less balanced than under the previous administration. The Foreign Ministry is still the major actor in these affairs. Foreign Minister Steinmeier travels to the region frequently and has been instrumental in a number of areas, including the adoption of an EU action plan for the Middle East in the second half of 2007, the launch of the German-Palestinian “Future for Palestine” initiative, and the organisation of the Berlin conference in support of Palestinian civil security and the rule of law in the summer of 2008. Despite these initiatives, the Chancellery has increasingly displayed a more Israel-friendly position. Although it took Ms Merkel only two months after assuming office to visit both the then Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Palestinian President Abbas, over the course of the years, she has increasingly made rather imbalanced statements in favour of Israel, such as in December 2008, when she defended Israel’s actions during the Gaza War. This has undoubtedly been detrimental to previous efforts to establish Germany as an impartial negotiator in the conflict.

In part, these differences in approach between the Foreign Ministry and the Chancellery have also been visible with respect to Syria. While there is consensus among the two bodies with respect to the restoration of state sovereignty and reconstruction in Lebanon after both Syria’s withdrawal in early 2005 and the July War of 2006, Ms Merkel and Mr Steinmeier have regularly been at odds with each other over the way Germany and the international community should deal with Syria. This came to the fore most obviously in January 2008, when Ms Merkel, in response to Mr Steinmeier’s meeting with
his Syrian counterpart Muallim in Berlin, publicly disagreed with the move made by the Foreign Ministry to extend unconditional gestures of cooperation to the Alawite regime.

Germany and North Africa – Between Continuity and Change

Relations between Germany and the Maghreb countries, as well as Egypt, are stable and good, having intensified gradually in the last twenty years. German-Libyan relations improved considerably after the lifting of all remaining UN sanctions against the country in the autumn of 2003 and in the wake of the Libyan regime’s approval in 2004 to pay compensation for the victims of a bomb attack in 1986 on a Berlin-based night club – developments that paved the way for official visits by Chancellor Schröder in late 2004 and Foreign Minister Steinmeier in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Germany is among the four most important trading partners of all North African countries, and unsurprisingly, the promotion of economic development, as well as the reduction of the existing welfare gap – both ideally contributing to a containment of the high migration potential – are among the top cooperation priorities.

Germany’s vocal efforts to safeguard the Barcelona Process do not reflect a newfound interest in Europe’s southern neighbourhood

In the last two decades, German foreign policy vis-à-vis the countries of the region has always been based on an understanding to promote and strengthen human rights, as well as democratic and pluralistic structures. Deficits in the field of human rights and democratic governance in most North African countries were highlighted by all eight human rights reports published so far by the various governments. Grosso modo, they were also the subject of discussion during the numerous bilateral consultations and were even addressed in a number of activities by the locally-represented German political foundations, such as the Friedrich Ebert Foundation or the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Yet a gap still exists between rhetoric and reality; all too often, too strong an insistence on improvements in key areas was either considered by the regime in question as foreign interference in domestic affairs, or was altogether sacrificed by Germany in order not to jeopardize economic interests, as was clearly visible during Ms Merkel’s visit to Algeria in the summer 2008. Moreover, in light of the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa, which has in turn led to growing security concerns, the German political leadership has throughout the years remained close to the incumbent regimes, at times even publicly praising them as major and reliable stability factors. This attitude, in conjunction with a mutual agreement with almost all North African regimes to expand and deepen bilateral cooperation, particularly in areas such as anti-terrorism legislation or immigration, asylum, and border control, has contributed to, and reinforced, the growing securitization trend identified regarding Euro-Mediterranean policies, which has been visible since the events of 9/11 and undoubtedly comes as a blow to alternative, reform-minded actors in the region.

Conclusions

Germany’s opposition to the UM was rooted in a broad belief within German foreign policy circles that Mr Sarkozy’s efforts were, firstly, seriously jeopardizing the long-standing Franco-German alliance, and secondly, potentially undermining the already fragile consensus within the EU over the need to maintain a collective EU policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean region. Hence, Germany’s vocal efforts to safeguard the Barcelona Process do not reflect a newfound interest in Europe’s southern neighbourhood. Nonetheless, the development of the UfM does offer an opportunity, to the extent that a greater German engagement in the admittedly very slowly-evolving structure would indeed bring an end to the decade-old and rather artificial notion that the Mediterranean is the turf of southern European EU Member States only and that non-Mediterranean EU Member States, such as Germany, should instead focus on Central and Eastern Europe, as well as on the existing Baltic Sea State cooperation. This would in turn send a very strong signal that after years of Spanish-Italian-French dominion, Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is finally on the way to
becoming a truly European-Mediterranean issue—a development that could have positive repercussions for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy and even for the emerging European Security and Defence Policy. While most of the southern Mediterranean partners would certainly welcome the involvement of more than just a few EU Member States, the proactive engagement of Germany and others would even appear to be a conditio sine qua non for the UfM to escape the same fate of the EMP, the Renovated Mediterranean Policy, or the approche globale. In light of the fact that so little time after its inauguration the UfM has already been hijacked by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in view of the growing dissatisfaction among the seven non-Arab and non-EU participants of the UfM over unfulfilled promises and unfavourable coordination and consultation mechanisms, and given the institutional imbroglio created when the Czech EU Presidency allowed France to retain the Co-Presidency of the UfM during its presidential term in the first half of 2009, it is clear that tensions are running high and, as such, that this project only stands a chance if the EU manages to speak with one voice. It remains to be seen, however, whether the German government intends to mobilize other Member States in joint efforts in that regard, or whether—against the backdrop of the Franco-German row of 2008—it will not just take a back seat and watch as Mr Sarkozy sweeps up the broken pieces of a French-inspired project that is perhaps doomed to fail anyway.

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The prolongation of US occupation of Iraq has encouraged the development of a Jihadist network in Mediterranean countries by offering them a new cause for mobilisation and increased recruitment opportunities. This is how hardened combatants from Iraq have managed to introduce Fath al-Islam at Palestinian camps in northern Lebanon. And it is as a platform for training and transfer to Iraq that the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) undertook its transformation into the North African branch of al-Qaeda, a transformation that was completed by 2007. Al-Qaeda pursued its terrorist campaign in the Maghreb in 2008 without really managing to go beyond the national boundaries of its Algerian branch.

**The Boundaries of the “Islamic Maghreb”**

The year 2007 was therefore a dark one that revived a traumatized Algeria’s worst nightmares from the preceding decade, with its civil war and blind terrorism. Ten years earlier, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) multiplied its massacres of civilians. This spiral of violence sparked a barrage of purges, dissensions and settlements of accounts, from which the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) emerged in 1998-99. But Bouteflika’s “national reconciliation policy” caused turmoil in the ranks of the GSPC. Abdelmalek Droukdal, going by the name of Abou Moussab Abdelwadoud, took control of the GSPC in 2003 with the policy of absolute refusal of all contact with the “impious” regime. He accentuated his reckless flight forward by publicly vowing allegiance to Osama Bin Laden in October of 2006. Since then, the GSPC has formed part of al-Qaeda, becoming its offshoot for an “Islamic Maghreb.”

It was this Maghrebi ambition that visibly set the pace in 2008, since the GSPC seemed incapable of going beyond its profoundly Algerian structure to acquire a truly North African dimension. Although hundreds of Moroccan, Tunisian, Libyan and Mauritanian militants have gone through the GSPC training camps since 2003, the majority of them hoped to go to Iraq to participate in the Jihad against American occupation, very few of them remained in Algeria to join the ranks of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), very well represented in the al-Qaeda hierarchy, maintains its operative autonomy and its Jihadist cells in Morocco and Tunisia seem altogether independent of Droukdal’s dictates.

The only other Maghreb country where the AQIM has attempted to carry out a terrorist dynamic is the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. AQIM has claimed responsibility for the assassination of four French tourists on 24 December 2007, the attack against the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott on 1 February 2008 and the
ambush on 15 September 2008, in which some 15 Mauritanian soldiers perished. The putsch that overthrew the democratic government in Nouakchott in August 2008 did not mitigate the aggressiveness of al-Qaeda, which made reiterated declarations of Jihad against the new regime. Mauritania served as privileged terrain for GSPC operations beginning in 2005, that is, long before its transformation into AQIM, and carrying out subversion associated with al-Qaeda since then thus falls within a logic of continuity rather than rupture.

Saharan Traps

Since its origins, the GSPC was one strong branch in southern Algeria, and its members travelled nomadically through the Saharan Desert from Mauritania to Chad, dedicating themselves, among other things, to trafficking of all sorts. One of these itinerant cells had abducted some thirty Western tourists in Algeria in 2003, holding them for several months before releasing them in either southern Algeria or northern Mali. The fear of these Saharan insurgent networks causing transnational subversion was a determining factor in the US’s decision to launch a regional security initiative (first called Pan-Sahel, then TSCTI/Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative). Parallels between the no-go areas along the Afghan-Pakistani border and the uncontrollable regions along the edges of the Sahara were even evoked. The fear of cross-border destabilisation returned on 22 February 2008, upon AQIM’s abduction of two Austrian tourists in southern Tunisia. The Jihadist organisation quickly brought the hostages to southern Algeria and publicly demanded the release of AQIM members held under arrest in Algeria and Tunisia. This type of demand, common for hostage-taking in the preceding century, contrasts with al-Qaeda’s modus operandi in Iraq as well as Pakistan, where they have used Western hostages to create morbid spectacles and not to negotiate the release of one or another of its militants. It quickly became evident that it was the local group bartering the lives of the Austrian hostages, with no contact whatsoever with the AQIM leadership.

After long months of laborious negotiations, punctuated by crises and theatrical moves, the two Austrian hostages were rescued on 30 October 2008 by the Malian army. Though the conditions of this happy end fortunately remain secret, it seems evident that the ignoble dimension of the abduction of Western tourists was as determining in 2008 as it was in 2003. Jihadist crime in the Saharan Desert, the perpetrators of which the GSPC has managed to rally since its foundation, has changed neither in nature nor in logic under the al-Qaeda banner. Indeed, the growth in regional power, about which Abdelmalek Droukdal and his propaganda machine boast, remains largely a smoke screen.

Relative Containment of Terrorism

The transformation of the GSPC into AQIM immediately meant the introduction into Algeria of the suicide attack technique, practically absent there until then, even at the height of the civil war in the 1990s. This form of operation has entailed considerable loss of human lives, in particular in the double explosions in Algiers on 11 April and 11 December 2007. During the course of 2008, the only operation of comparable dimension was the kamikaze attack against the police academy in Boumerdes, which killed 45 people on 19 August. However, many attacks resulted in the death of only the suicide bomber himself, as on 23 July 2008 in Lakhdaria, when 13 soldiers were injured.

In general, al-Qaeda is coming up against rejection of its mass terror by the Algerian population

AQIM pursued its media campaign of denouncing the “new colonization” and hammering threats against “infidel” America, as well as “crusader” France and Spain. But its repeated attempts to strike Western nationals in Algeria largely failed. It took a year and a half of deadly tracking until the former GSPC finally claimed responsibility for the assassination of a French engineer on 8 June 2008 in Lakhdaria, at the price of the death of 11 other Algerians, killed by the successive explosions of two car bombs. AQIM’s propaganda, however, goes to great efforts to magnify its anti-Western scorecard: according to it, AQIM killed 12 Canadians from the SNC-Lavalin company in Bouira on 20 August 2008, whereas the explosion of the company bus produced only Algerian victims.
In general, al-Qaeda is coming up against rejection of its mass terror by the Algerian population and Jihadist forums relay the serious criticism that this tactic elicits, even among sympathizers. Abdelmalek Droukdal has been making efforts to neutralize this wave of rejection, asserting, despite the evidence, that his organization is careful to spare civilians, concentrating on military targets. But it is the methodical repression carried out by the Algerian secret service, in particular the dismantling of sleeper cells in the capital, that has been the main force behind the waning of the terrorist dynamic. Thus, for the first time in many years, the month of Ramadan, traditionally a period of Jihadist activity, was relatively tranquil in 2008.

International cooperation remains the key to the prevention of terrorism

The threat of al-Qaeda remains very serious in Algeria, but the expansion of AQIM beyond former GSPC bastions seems to have been contained, at least for the time being. Less than half of Algerian provinces were the stage of terrorist activities in 2008, and AQIM focussed its essential operations in the Bouira, Boumerdes and Tizi Ouzou Wilayas. In this “triangle of death”, the populations of isolated villages continue to be plundered by Jihadist commandos, who complete their resources through various forms of trafficking (the criminal dimension of AQIM funding, though not as predominant in Kabylia as in the Sahara, should not be underestimated). In any case, the capacity for projection of al-Qaeda hard core through its mountain strongholds is a good deal more limited than through its Saharan networks. Despite its declared will to expand its field of action to the whole of the “Islamic Maghreb,” al-Qaeda did not really succeed in its plans for regional expansion in 2008, its Algerian organization even largely withdrawing to its historical bastions. However, networks affiliated with Bin Laden are very well established in the south-western Mediterranean and the threats prof ered by Abdelmalek Droukdal against France and Spain should be taken very seriously. It is yet too early to say whether the 2008 trend towards a relative containment of AQIM will be confirmed in the future, or if Jihadist networks will succeed in regaining their territorial projection. In this eminently sensitive topic, international cooperation remains the key to the prevention of terrorism.

Bibliography


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In this paper, I will attempt to provide an overview of the reorganisation underway in the Moroccan political system. The latter seems to be unable to break out of a sequence of transition, both the monarchy and the elite limiting themselves to dealing with the present in a context of a loose consensus; a consensus which settles for the mediocrity of political life and focuses on economic transformation by means of major construction projects run by a techno-structure operating at best in a defused political landscape that does not involve taking any political risks. This consolidates a duality, a two-speed Morocco where politics cannot be the object of appropriation by new forces. In any case, this sweet siesta poorly conceals a degree of anxiety amplified by certain indicators that relate as much to the dwindling of reformist enthusiasm as to popular demands, less and less controlled by political organisations. The incidents at Séfrou and later Sidi Ifni, as well as transport sector strikes, announce the emergence of local figures of a mafia type or radicals free of all political control.

Elements of Political Stalemate

The political scene over the past two years allows certain significant conclusions to be drawn which are perceived as a major risk, including by the monarchy. Indeed, signs of this concern can be found in different speeches made by the King before parliament or during the Feast of the Throne. They consist of the discrediting of politics revealed by low voter participation rate, the failure of the Left, the advance, though timid, of the Islamists and their inability to handle the Salafist challenge, the persistence of certain elite networks and finally, the faintness of the reformist discourse. These phenomena are experienced as a failure by the government, which aimed at restructuring the political landscape and renewing the elite.

One Moroccan in Five Cast a Blank Vote

The wager of lending the electoral process credibility was certainly successful. The majority of national observers showed their satisfaction at the conditions under which the 2007 elections took place. However, with a participation rate of 37% and 19% null votes—that is, a million voters went to the elections to cast a blank vote (by comparison, the blank votes did not surpass 15% in 2002)—, a shadow hangs over these elections. The method of counting the votes does not allow a distinction between the blank ballots and the spoil ones. The illegibility of the political structure dominated by the King is not the only factor involved. The fact that 19% of the electorate made the effort of going to the polling stations and casting a blank vote can also be ascribed to indecision in the face of a weak political offer where the national issues were secondary to local issues, and above all, the fact that the issue of societal divisions was not included among the campaign topics. The task of deconstructing the ambivalent social project proposed by the monarchy was not carried out. The fact that the partisan elite balk at choosing or at least making its commitment explicit has contributed to draining the elections of meaning.

The Failure of the Left

This statement, which could seem exaggerated, needs to be qualified. When I speak of failure, I am not calling into question the importance of the experience of the change-over in government. It marks a turning
point on the symbolic level insofar as it has largely contributed to normalisation of political life and, by the same token, has gotten the country out of the rela-
tions of defiance that characterised relations among parties of the national movement and the monarchy. Its importance resides as well in the level of exem-
plarity of the experience, which has demonstrated that the narrow margins of political action and the imbalance of powers between the monarchy and
the parties do not prevent a political force with a vision of its own from marking its passage in government by lending public policy implementation a specific ori-
entation. It is hard to deny that the first and second terms of the Abderrahman Youssoufi administration weighed upon the country’s political orientations and contribu-
ted to establishing the idea of a bicephalous aspect within the bloc in power. This qualification being made, nothing prevents us from pointing out that among the governmental majority, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), which is the party that embodied the changeover via the former oppo-
sition’s accession to power in 1999, is also the only party for which the sanction of the ballot has func-
tioned normally. The conduct of the Finance Depart-
ment, whose political choice was diametrically opposed to the ideological identity, and of budget-
devouring ministers that would be very difficult to reform (national education, justice, social affairs),
and the party’s inability to assume government results and provide information about reforms, partially explain the discrepancy between the USFP’s performance and the political sanction that facilitated its removal from the Prime Minister’s office.

The Justice and Development Party: The Media Bubble Bursts

The Islamists of the Justice and Development Party (PJD), who were slated to win the elections accord-
ing to all surveys, did not manage to surpass the threshold of 10.9% in votes and 14% in seats, where-
as the Istiqlal Party took first place with 10.7% in votes and 15.9% in seats thanks to the effect of proportionality and the electoral apportionment. The PJD, however, confirmed its strong presence in pop-
ulous, relatively dynamic coastal urban areas from Tangiers to Casablanca, where it attained 23 seats out of 40. It reached shares of nearly 30% in Fez, Rabat/Océan, Kenitra-Ville, Casablanca - Hay Hassani, Casablanca - Hay Mohammadi and Derb Sultan. It obtained poorer results, on the other hand, in peri-
urban areas, namely Médéouna (8.5%) and Nouaceur (7.9%) and nearly mediocre ones in certain provinces where the State had been putting all efforts for some
ten years into what is commonly called participative development projects: Al Haouz (5.6%), Figuig (1.4%),
Al Hoceima (2.4%) and the Sahara area, where a policy of aid is organised through the intervention of local elite endorsed by the administration. The PJD also has a hard time penetrating into rural regions with a strong elite structure where certain individuals have cultivated their fiefs for many years (Taza, Boulmane, Azilal, Taroudant – Mountain Zone).

The Persistence of Notables in Turbans

The dilemma of Moroccan power is that it elicits polit-
cical vocation, a form of leadership which partici-
pates in the administration of public affairs without being certain of durably changing its orientation. This is the competence of the monarchic branch of power, and by extension, the court. In order to fully compre-
hend the issues at stake at the 2007 elections, it is a good idea to take a detour back in history in order to draw up the profiles of the political configurations and pertinent structures arising therefrom. Since inde-
pendence, Morocco has experienced three types of configura-
tions: one favouring the emergence of the traditional elite (1956-1983), a second one accom-
panying the development of the administration and the birth of a position-based elite (1983-1999), and finally, as of 1999, the choice of new forms of gov-
ernance, including formal governance, has fostered the emergence of new profiles essentially produced by civil society and the political ‘equerry’ of the left. The traditional elite correspond to an ethnically homog-
enous configuration, with a predominance of capitalising on lineage as a form of political mobilisation with little intervention from the State. The needs of power in this configuration, with its weak institution-
al regulation, point to a leadership with an arbitra-
tional function. Recruitment is carried out through the consolidation of an extant leadership. It could be con-
sidered, to a certain extent, the same type as the fel-
lah who defends the throne. The second type of leader-
ship had its moment of glory after the 1983 elections, with the creation of new parties that came to repre-
sent a new political elite including technocrats, busi-
nesspeople gaining their wealth through the policy of ‘Moroccanisation’, or profiting from the largesse of a planned economy, compensation policies and the quota system.
The 2007 elections were presumably to respond to this new demand by putting new political personnel in parliament. This objective was not attained, however, the party leaderships attempting to control the changeover that was underway by controlling the process of drawing up the election lists of the competing parties. Apart from the PJD, parties with a strong ideological connotation capable of holding political opinions different from those of the monarchy chose to minimise the risks and regulate the pressure from their rank-and-file members through scissions or by bringing them into line and preferred to sponsor local elite to prevent any excesses by the PJD in major cities. In addition to parties of the traditional local elite, parties with leftist connotations such as the Front of Democratic Forces party (FFD), the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) and even the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) made out alright thanks to a policy of recruiting disenfranchised local elite. This state of affairs has created a divergence between the profile of a member of parliament and a government minister, who should, in principle and according to the ‘democratic’ method, emerge therefrom. The palace has had to intervene with certain symbolic ‘violence’ in order to impose a casting that suits its policy and force party leaderships to accept the profile of technocrats familiar with the public administration and liable to evolve rapidly and become accomplished politicians.

Thus, Morocco has apparently chosen to substitute the idea of ‘democratic transition’ by the formula ‘consolidation of the democratic process’, based on the principle that the monarchic nature of the regime is not in contradiction with this option. It has also, according to these documents, opted for the model of a liberal economy by prioritising the role of regulator of the State. On the geopolitical level, Morocco seems to be opting for an allegiance to the West, the gateway being more southern Europe (Spain and France) than Algeria or the Arabic countries, which are seen at best as a heritage to be administered. On the level of values, Morocco seems to have chosen ‘the values of modernity’, the promotion of responsible individuals via the school system, human rights, gender equality, freedom of thought and so on.

Morocco has apparently chosen to substitute the idea of ‘democratic transition’ by the formula ‘consolidation of the democratic process’, based on the principle that the monarchic nature of the regime is not in contradiction with this option.

The administration, which believes it is providing an advanced ideological offer by insisting on hearing public opinion and maintaining a strong relationship with the participative option, does not understand the weak responsiveness of the political class, and at times even its indifference or hostility to these choices. It does not manage to enter into debate on these political projects or choices of society in order to place the responsibility before public opinion. This incapacity weakens the monarchy and challenges it to directly confront the potential Yassinite and Salafist opposition, which constitutes an enormous risk in a globally conservative society. The monarchy cannot bear ambivalence and ambiguity; it requires loyalist intermediaries in public opinion to foster the reformist discourse in a power configuration that does not allow sharing but only subcontracting and specialisation.

Now the monarchy faces three challenges: the traditional elite are no longer managing to pick up signals from the administration; the former opposition is a victim of wear; and finally, the monarchy itself is not succeeding in lending credibility to its political
course. By creaming off the market of technocrats to assist in the diversification of its needs in the sphere of intermediation and administration, it has drained the sources that would allow the renewal of the elite. It is in this context that one must consider the low-intensity tremors that the main actors on the political stage may have experienced at the respective conventions of the Istiqlal Party, the PJD, the USFP and the newcomer, the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM).

The Political Party Crisis

The different opinion polls, amplified by the media, have not ceased to discuss figures highly evocative of the crisis that parties are undergoing: less than 3% of the Moroccan population are members of a party, and little more than double that would like to join one. These findings, with the halo of legitimacy lent by ‘science', quickly turned into an irrevocable judgement on the nuisance of political parties and their inability to represent the people. The workings for reforming them were begun. After the new law of parties, it became obligatory to hold conventions and have politicians abide by a new governance, which posed certain problems for the better-established structures.

The Socialist Union of Popular Forces and the Difficulties of Renewal

The 2007 election caused the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) to go from second to fifth position. The party could have avoided this setback if it had assumed its results, and above all if it had not squandered its human capital through several split-offs after its 6th convention, confirmed at its 7th, which has given rise to a party where personal imperatives take precedence over ideals. Indeed, no less than three parties emerged from these split-offs. These parties (the socialist party, the labour party and the National Ithiadi Congress party) total 652,650 votes, without including the fidelity and democracy movement, which joined the Unified Socialist Party. In number of votes, this restructuring places it far ahead of the Istiqlal Party and the PJD. On the other hand, one can say for certain that the party definitely changed its geographical distribution, and that its presence in government made it lose its traditional urban middle-class electorate, bringing it closer to an elite structure that has allowed it to remain a force in rural regions. It was 6th in Casablanca and Tangier, three times less than the electorate for the PJD, and 5th in Rabat, whereas in rural areas with a well-established elite, it managed to secure a certain presence (in Azilal, Chaouia Ouardigha, El Aaiún and above all, Kelaâ Seraghna and Gharb Beni Hssen). The party lost its traditional positions in major cities, however. This situation grew worse at the 8th convention held in Bouznika in two stages – June and November 2008. The party was on the verge of collapse. An overhaul of the method of electing the party leadership by the list system would presumably allow the expression of the different trends. The first part of the convention became a war of leaders. The former Secretary General was removed after several months of preparation, yet his successors could not decide to leave the stage, rendering any discussion on ideological renewal or the clarification of relations with the government majority impossible. The party, though it analysed its failure, was not able to draw all the necessary conclusions by resolving the dilemma between a third-rate participation that accentuates its crisis and a departure from government that would lead to a long desert crossing that some of its older party bosses are not ready to assume. On 7-9 November 2008, the second part of the convention took place. The party’s national committee, meeting on Saturday in ordinary session, had previously rejected the list system. The convention was to directly elect the members of the party executive and the national committee. Abdelwahid Radi emerged vic-

| Table 4: Political Values According to Level of Education |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                 | None            | Koran School    | Primary School  | Secondary School| Higher Education|
| Lack of interest in politics    | 44.8%           | 27.8%           | 18.6%           | 8.2%            | 4.8%            |
| Would like to join a party     | 7.8%            | 11.1%           | 15.2%           | 7.1%            | 13.3%           |
| Cannot tell the different political trends apart | 63.0% | 41.1% | 35.5% | 12.2% | 6.0% |

Source: RDH50 Enquête nationale sur les valeurs (National Survey of Values), TelQuel, No. 214, February-March 2006.
torious in a provisional solution renewing former bal-

ances until the 2009 local elections.

The Justice and Development Party:
The Price of Normalisation

The Justice and Development Party (PJD), which is
presented as the party of the future, the party that
limits itself so as not to dominate political life, also
revealed its limitations. Its failure in 2007, whose caus-
es we will attempt to explain, led to a mini-tremor at
the convention (19-20 July 2008). Abdelilah Benkirane
was elected at this convention to the post of Secretary
General of the party by 684 votes, against 495 for
the outgoing Secretary General and 14 votes for the
third candidate, Abdallah Baha, a party ideologist from
the outset. This surprise outcome seems to be the
result of an internal rebalancing of the main party fac-
tions. It is the result of an alliance between members
of the young, reformist guard of the tajdid (renewal)
activists and a particular sensibility among the his-
torical ideologists amenable to the franker forms of
pragmatism/opportunism necessary for establishing
new alliances, but also for going beyond the limits of
the consensualism to which Saad Eddine el Othmani
had accustomed us. To understand these adjust-
ments, it would be useful to take a look at events after
2007.

Internal party factors played
a significant role in setting the
limits for an organisation going
from the status of movement
to that of political party

The explanations of the semi-failure of the PJD in
2007, which cost Secretary General Saad Eddine
el Othmani his post, are, in fact, not very convincing.
One cannot be satisfied with the explanation of the
role played by the Ministry of the Interior, which allegedly
influenced the electoral apportionment and the elec-
toral system; and much less so with the pheno-
non decried by everyone of the purchase of votes and
misappropriation of funds. Internal party factors played
a significant role in setting the limits for an organise-
tion going from the status of movement to that of polit-
cical party. The price of going from a fundamentalist
religious movement playing upon religious sensibili-
ty and making the best of a moralising, generalist dis-
course targeting a broad spectrum in a conservative
society to a political movement needing to satisfy a
specific electorate and above all, reassure its adver-
saries, has been relatively high. The party gambled
on not necessarily following its grass roots and rely-
ing on an autochthonous technocracy primarily edu-
cated at the major local schools. A party that goes
from a tribune-like function without a great deal of
responsibilities to that of outlining a project for soci-
ey is obliged to establish itself as a candidate to
power, and the PJD was obliged to make use of a
certain administrative competence in place of piety,
which has become a secondary criteria. This new
configuration\(^1\) has obliged the party leadership to
crack down in three spheres:

- The readjustment of internal balances among the
three party components.
- The recasting of the party doctrine to respond
to the doubts of political partners and adversaries,
both internal and international.
- The strengthening of the party organisation in order
to allow the mastery of participation of the rank-
and-file members in decision-making matters.

Historically, the party is composed of three factions,
each with its own particular political culture, the first
one being the ideologists emerging from the circle
of influence of political Islam. They were the founders
of the movement, primarily former Islamic chabiba
activists. This generation, composed of individuals
who are more like professional politicians, currently
in their fifties, managed to gain elective positions in
parliament or in the trade union related to the party
beginning in 1997. Its leadership was built on its
capacity to construe a political project of Islamist
inspiration through an effort of relatively intense doc-
trinal renovation in the eighties and nineties, and which
has since slowed down greatly, and by the control of
activist organisations on the university level. The sec-
ond faction is composed of ulamas and preachers

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\(^1\) We have borrowed the concept of ‘configuration’ from the works of Norbert Elias (Norbert Elias, La civilisation des mœurs, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1973, La Société de cour (unabridged edition) and Sociologie et histoire (édit en français), Flammarion, 2008); as described by Tabboni as well (Tabboni N. “Norbert Elias: pour une sociologie non-normative” in Tumultes, No. 15, October 2000)
who joined the movement as of 1996, in particular, people from the *jam’yat al mostaqbal al islami*, such as Ahmed Raissouni, who has allowed the basic ideology of the *Al Islah* movement to become consolidated by placing his study on *Fiqh al Maqassid* at its disposal, but who has never been wholly bound by the political dimension of this pragmatic *fiqh*. He allowed himself to remain within the mindset of the preaching ulamas who would not accept the commitment unless obliged by necessity and who would betray them as soon as the possibility arose. The third faction, consisting primarily of locally trained technocrats or entrepreneurs of the pious bourgeoisie, joined the party in hope of its breakthrough in the 2003 local elections. This group, composed of engineers, doctors and pharmacists, has benefited from the favours (*tazquia*) of the party via highly sophisticated mechanisms of creation of candidatures that would transform co-optation into the democratic choice of the party’s rank and file. This recruitment has allowed the party to renew its image and has lent it the argument of managerial efficiency that it lacked. The administration of municipalities or urban districts such as Salé, Temara, Meknes, Casablanca (Barnoussi) thus became a foreshadowing of what the administration of the country could be like (rationality and technical efficiency). On the eve of the 2007 elections, the balances among components were redistributed. The founding group of ideologists and since then professional politicians preferred to make an alliance with the technocrats and therefore let go of the movement’s two significant forces: the *tajdidi* youth and the preaching ulamas. The separation of the party and the Movement for Unification and Reform (MUR) was, in principle, to allow them to keep them at their disposal. However, this game led to a loss of status for the militant founders to the benefit of the technocrats, not necessarily popular among the party’s rank and file. By placing technical skill and ideological moderation in the fore, along the lines of Turkey’s AKP (Justice and Development Party), the party was obliged to go through the same stages that all reformist parties go through: restructuring to push the ideologists, in this case, the ulemas, aside or control them; the need to consider possible unnatural alliances and as a consequence, to put away the piety requirements and make commitments that would involve reinterpreting the dogma by walking a fine line between opportunism and pragmatism; marginalisation of the rank and file; and regional conventions with populist consonance to the benefit of the technocratic party leadership. These measures have blurred the PJD’s message and led to the defection of part of the rank and file who no longer commune with these men and their discourse, all the more so since the competition is rough with the Salafists and Adlists. Benkirane thus emerges as the right man for the job. His “historical frailty” immediately places him above the melee to faithfully interpret the real power relations in the field.

The Istiqlal Party: The Annuities of Power

The Istiqlal (Independence) Party seems to be the party that has made the most of the prevailing stagnation, even if at the price of an incursion against democracy inside the party sphere. The Secretary General and Prime Minister, Abbas El Fassi’s was kept in office and will now serve his third mandate at the price of a reform of the statutes at the 15th convention held 9-11 January 2009 in Rabat. The Istiqlal Party, which was present in all administrations (even if it rarely directed them), is the best prepared to use the mechanisms of administration. It has thus managed to consolidate its positions in society through a highly efficient distributive capacity that lends it the means to expand the perimeter of its electorate. It has also opted for a strategy of minimising risks by giving up any pretensions to leadership in the face of the monarchy and by declaring itself simply an agent executing the monarchic programme, which distances it from the ambitions of the Youssoufi regime, or even those announced by the government under the technocrat, Driss Jettou.

The Authenticity and Modernity Party: A Courtly or Political Phenomenon?

The creation of the Authenticity and Modernity Party (al-Assala wa al-Mu’assara Party, or PAM) on 8 August 2008 was the highlight of the year. In fact, it is an agglomeration and not a fusion of five parties. In my opinion, it is a political response to the unease, some of whose elements are described above. The establishment of a simple association for all the democrats that was supposed to relay the qualitative advances regarding the development of a strategic vision established in the IER and RDH 50 Reports was not enough. The emergence of Al Himma to serve orders or as a risk-taker according to a capacity acquired through
proximity sought to anticipate the Prince’s desires before he even conceived of them.
The Al Himma phenomenon is at once a court phenomenon for the methods of its establishment, its choice of vocabulary for public relations and its reception, while at the same time, it is a political response to a political configuration threatening the system with running out of elite. The postulate I would like to develop in this paragraph to evaluate the current political configuration points to a mutation in the system’s forms of adaptation when confronted with a crisis of the elite. The point is not in the least to place political projects or choices of society in competition. In fact, the palace faces two problems:

- Finding a political force that could be the carrier of its political offer while respecting the dual requirement of loyalty and autonomy (the same problem is posed, moreover, by the ulamas).
- Controlling the mechanisms of production of new elite and meeting the demands for new political personnel that could wear the colours of a new leadership.

At the same time, the form of implementing this policy raises a series of questions on the capacity of the system to convince others, beyond the court rationale, considering that the risk taken by the courtiers is real but not convincing to future partners.

The current political configuration points to a mutation in the system’s forms of adaptation when confronted with a crisis of the elite

The hypothesis of an anticipation of the Prince’s desires is, therefore, real, yet it does not protect Al Himma, insofar as the struggle among courtiers is ruthless.
The matter consists of restructuring the political landscape by bringing a group of parties into a coalition that would handle the ‘secular’ aspects of the monarchical project. The least one can say about this coalition is that it is ideologically weak and politically variegated. Indeed, in contrast to the association for all the democrats, which has managed to expand the sphere of possible alliances and capitalise on the dynamic of the IER, the al-Assala wa al-Mu’assara Party (PAM) bears in its very name the seeds of an ambivalence that places it outside of the project of modernisation. Whereas the doctrinal foundation of the Movement for All Democrats has a certain coherence, the brief history of the PAM, including its founding assembly in 2009, strengthens our hypothesis of its incapacity to contribute decisively to restructuring the political landscape.
When taking stock of 2008 with regard to the conflict between Israel and Palestine or, more specifically, between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs (which more accurately reflects the two sides of the issue), it is necessary to engage in an analytical exercise that harbours a certain paradox: on the one hand, the conflict appears to be frozen; on the other, some of its variables have dramatically changed. An example of the former would be the feeling that 2008 ended (and 2009 has continued) with 'more of the same'. In other words, it is not that nothing is happening, but rather that what is happening has already been witnessed by international opinion many times over. The transition from 2008 to 2009 will forever marked by the Israeli attack on Gaza, whose horrifying outcome is well known, and the ensuing political debates, in particular at the international level. An example of the latter would be the feeling that 2008 ended (and 2009 has continued) with 'more of the same'. In other words, it is not that nothing is happening, but rather that what is happening has already been witnessed by international opinion many times over. The transition from 2008 to 2009 will forever marked by the Israeli attack on Gaza, whose horrifying outcome is well known, and the ensuing political debates, in particular at the international level. An example of the latter would be the sort of general consensus that, whilst Obama’s election as president of the United States is an historical watershed (another 2008 milestone), one way or another the conflict discussed herein will put him to a very demanding test. Indeed, the whole world agrees that if anyone can decisively influence the Israeli Government, it is the United States. Whether the Obama administration will try to exert this influence sooner or later has yet to be seen. However, looking back on the first one hundred days of his presidency, it seems unlikely that Obama will continue to pursue the same strategies as his predecessor. It would be the only domestic or international issue where that would be the case.
This is important, since, from the Israeli perspective, the current situation did not begin now, with the attack on Gaza at the end of the year. The social consensus on the hardening of Israel’s stance, or, if you prefer, its distancing from the principle of negotiation as understood in the nineties, has undergone three phases: the second Intifada broadly speaking (from 2000 to 2005), the rise of Sharon and his policy of unilateral disengagement, that is, the Wall, and the continuation of the policy of constant growth of the settlements in the West Bank (with the manoeuvre of the pseudo-withdrawal from Gaza).

This runs parallel to the evolution of Palestinian society, which can likewise be summarised in three key moments that define the current legacy of the breakdown of the Oslo peace process: the death of Arafat in late 2004, the elections (presidential and parliamentary) of 2005 and 2006, and the ensuing Palestinian civil war, which, by mid-2007, had led to a de facto partition of the Palestinian territories, with Gaza remaining under Hamas’s power and the West Bank under Fatah’s and the secular parties of the Palestinian political spectrum.

Social Fractures and Political Consensus: Israel

Contemporary Israeli society has changed more over the last fifteen years than it did between the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the early nineties. To understand what is happening now, one must bear in mind the social fragmentation of these last fifteen years, a fragmentation which, as will be seen below, increasingly emerges around parliamentary elections and which, at the same time, is apparently masked by a complete political consensus on taking a hawkish approach to security issues. Many experts, Israelis among them, agree that Israeli Jewish society has veered ‘to the right’, both socially and politically, as well as, and above all, regarding the conflict with the Palestinians. Compared to the thirty-year hegemony of Labour and other parties from the Israeli left, or to the fact that, for years, the main secular parties from both the left and right occupied more than eighty percent of the electoral space, Israel has changed.

At the same time, it is instructive to examine the social components of the Israeli political system as it stands at the turn of the century. It could be argued that, on the face of it, this is less necessary for Israel than for the Palestinians. Because Israel is a state, with a structurally stable political system predominated by the mechanisms of the rule of law (separation of powers, political pluralism, open and competitive elections, etc.), the impact these components have on the conflict is more readily visible in public decisions and institutions (the Government, the Supreme Court, the General Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces, etc.). However, precisely because it is a representative democracy, the trends toward heterogeneity, disintegration and fragmentation make Israeli Jewish society a decisive variable in the problem.

In any event, mention should be made of at least some key factors behind this fragmentation.

First, Israel is a relatively young state (founded in 1948), which emerged and developed under highly exceptional circumstances: several wars, a hostile environment (or one perceived as such), uncertain borders (for whose uncertainty Israel is now exclusively responsible), changing but steady immigration flows as a main population driver, difficulties consolidating a common civic culture (unbound by theocratic constraints) and other paradoxes.

Second, over time, its civil society has grown less, rather than more, cohesive. From 1948 to 1973, the internal cohesion of Israel’s Jewish society was regarded as one of its main assets. Since the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, this cohesion has entered into decline, compounded by the first Intifada, the contradictory effects on civil society of the peace process launched in 1993, the additional factor, relatively unknown outside the country, of the massive immigration from the former USSR in the nineties and, above all, the second Intifada.

Third, Israeli society is divided into five more or less equal social blocks, which are partially, albeit unpredictably, reflected in the party system.

As seen above, one fifth consists of Israeli Arabs. Their loyalty to the political system is subject to several determinants and obligations that there is no need to go into here; however, tensions are growing, as seen in the serious clashes in the city of Acre in late 2008. Whilst, as citizens, and in exchange for certain mechanisms of social marginalisation, they are afforded the same civil and political rights as any other Israeli citizen, this fifth of Israeli society underscores the main contradiction of the State of Israel insofar as its adhesion to the rule of law. As Israel does not have a written constitution (which is not, in itself, an insurmountable obstacle: the United Kingdom likewise lacks one), the separation of church and state is unclear. This leads to significant interference with
individual freedoms. There is only one possible way to put an end to this debate, which has been simmering in Israel for some time now: to clarify the definition of Israeli citizenship constitutionally, irrespective of one's religious and/or supposedly ethnic identity. The other blocks also pose structural problems. The second fifth is comprised of the approximately one million Russians (more accurately, Jews or alleged Jews from the former Soviet Union) who, in less than ten years, have built up a formidable lobby, including their own parties in parliament and client relationships with the major parties, which have generally allowed them, since 1992, to form part of the government. Their sudden incorporation into Israeli society poses problems for integration, civic culture and religious observance. They are perceived as newcomers and foreigners and, indeed, such a massive migratory influx in so little time had not been seen since 1948.

The third fifth, the most well known, is that of the observant Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews, who have three large parties, a proportional number of seats in parliament and a completely disproportionate influence over the government in a society where 75% of the population is non-practicing.

The final two blocks are the classic fifths. The first is a block of secular right-wing citizens (from the centre-right, right and extreme right), of which Sharon was the perfect paradigm. The second is a block of secular left-wing citizens (Labour, the radical Zionist left, human rights groups, Peace Now, etc.), who were once equal in number to those on the right but today are in decline. It should be noted that for the first forty years of Israel's history, these two blocks, with their respective political parties, held more than three quarters of the seats in parliament and governed alone or in small coalitions with a religious party.

Political Fracture and Social Consensus: The Palestinian Case

On the Palestinian side, the situation is grave. On the one hand, the asymmetry of the parties to the conflict has increased since 1948 and, above all, since the Oslo peace process. The fragmentation of the territory, the economic and social hardships, the expansion of the settlements, etc., have given rise to a dramatic panorama that fits into Israel's strategy of providing incentives for individual Palestinians to leave on the condition that they not return (this is particularly true in the case of the Christian Palestinian population and Jerusalem).

The Palestinian population is moreover subject to an imposed chronic social fragmentation that is in no way derived from partisan options. The latest fragmentation is due to intra-Palestinian political confrontations regarding the 2005 and 2006 elections and the ensuing confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, which, paradoxically, resulted in the partition of a territory (the Palestinian one) that is not sovereign and which neither faction actually controls.

This chronic, inherited fragmentation continues to play a decisive role in the future of Palestinian society. Additionally, those Arabs who, at the end of the first war in 1948, did not go into exile and were not expelled by Israeli troops, a group primarily found in Galilee, the Negev, Jaffa and Ramle, today comprise 20% of the Israeli population and make up an approximately proportional part of the Israeli electorate. This group finds itself in a delicate situation. They are Israeli citizens with (in theory) full civil and political rights. Their freedom of movement may not be more limited than that of other citizens. They have Arabic-language newspapers and radio stations, as well as Arabic schools and family law, etc., and their own MPs (there are three Arab parties with parliamentary representation). However, their fundamental problem is twofold. First, they face a problem of loyalty with regard to the national causes that they must obey (the Israeli political system) and/or embrace (Arab nationalism in general and Palestinian nationalism in particular). Second, their relationship with regard to both Jewish society and the Palestinians from the occupied territories, who live under much harsher and adverse conditions, is not easy.

Then there are the Palestinians who, in 1967, at the end of the Six-Day War, remained in the territories that Israel occupied and ultimately annexed. These are basically the Palestinians who, since 1967, have lived in greater Jerusalem, the municipality that the Israelis created after occupying the entire city, multiplying the original municipal area by twelve to its current limits. Unlike the group discussed above, these inhabitants are not Israeli citizens; rather, under the Entry into Israel Law (1952), Israel considers them to be foreigners with permanent residence in Israel. They are entitled to vote in municipal elections, but have boycotted them since 1967 so as not to legitimate the city government and, above all, not to legitimate the unilateral proclamation of Jerusalem as the 'unified and eternal' capital of Israel.
This group consists primarily of Palestinians from the totally or partially occupied territories that have not been formally annexed and that, therefore, lay at the centre of the ‘land for peace’ process negotiated between 1993 and 2000. Some 3.5 million Palestinians live in these territories (the West Bank and Gaza), but the continuity of the territory has been severely curtailed and interrupted by more than 200 Jewish settlements. These Palestinians are the worst off, particularly since the conclusion of the peace process (or, more accurately, the negotiated process), not just economically and socially, but also with regard to their freedom of movement and political conditions. However, they are also the engine and troops of the resistance to the occupation.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, at the social level, the conflict is underpinned, as is well known, by an element of continuity, despite the intifadas and peace processes, the road maps and other assorted plans, namely: the asymmetry of power between the parties and the strategy of territorial dispossession, which has been constant since 1967 and, in particular, since 1980, and which consists of expropriations, settlements, home demolitions, etc. The newspaper Haaretz recently published (see Le Courrier International, No. 963, 2009) an article based on an Israeli military intelligence report, which cited the following figure: in 1993, when the Oslo peace accords were signed, there were 120,000 settlers in the occupied territories and 160,000 in East Jerusalem. That is, there were nearly 280,000 Israelis in settlements considered illegal under international law. In 2006, there were 270,000 settlers in the territories and 200,000 in East Jerusalem, despite Oslo, despite the Road Map and despite Annapolis (who remembers that?). This strategy of territorial dispossession is believed to be derived from two strategic considerations: the use of the time factor to change the situation on the ground in favour of a new status quo and the support of the Israeli Jewish population for the perception of the Wall as a means of unilaterally guaranteed security.

According to the data, in 1948, Palestinians owned 87% of the land in the historic Palestine under British mandate, equal to a surface area of 26,000 km²; beginning in about 1900, Jews had purchased 7% of this land; under Ottoman law, which the British did not modify, the rest of the land was for public use. Since the Six-Day War, Israel has confiscated some 70% of the current occupied territories: approximately 30% for military needs, 20% for security reasons (including, for example, the building of exclusive roads to connect settlements amongst themselves whilst avoiding Palestinian towns), 10% for green areas that cannot be developed, and 12% because the owners were absent or could not be found. From this perspective, what kind of Palestinian state will be viable?

The fourth group of Palestinians with a separate legal status is the Palestinian diaspora, which can be divided into two groups: refugees and residents in other countries. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), the Palestinian diaspora consists of 3.5 million Palestinians spread out around the world and, in particular, in Arab countries. This diaspora constitutes approximately half of the entire Palestinian population.

As seen above, the conclusion is clear. Nuance, resignation and commitments aside, the social attitudes of both sides have changed dramatically since the nineties. The notion of short-term political expectations has been eroded. One side, the Israeli Jews, has socially barricaded itself behind the paradoxical conviction that it continues to face what it calls an ‘existential threat’ and that time is on its side (i.e., by indefinitely postponing the creation of a Palestinian State). The other side must overcome the civil confrontation arising from the incompatible agendas of the different sectors of its political class and try to survive. Its scepticism regarding the very idea of politics is already huge.

References


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The ineffable Lebanon remains unaffected by the global economic crisis, banks are functioning normally and the speculative construction industry has not collapsed. Precautions taken by the director of the Central Bank have led a major financial publication to name him best director of all the central banks in the Middle East. In this market-focused republic, the risks do not lie in the banking sector but in the country itself.

Whilst little is said about the crisis, the legislative elections announced for next summer have been the nation’s talking point for months. The political forces from both sides are in a state of constant mobilization in an atmosphere of virulent controversy. The choice of candidates advocates opposing ideologies. On the one hand, there is the 14 March alliance, constituted by Sunnis, Druses, Christians, supporters of the West and anti-Syrians. The group is led by Saad Hariri, son of ex-Prime Minister and Sunni Muslim Rafiq Hariri, who was killed in 2005 in an attack that led to historical upheavals in the republic. On the other hand, there are the supporters of the pro-Iranian and pro-Syrian Shiite groups, Hezbollah, and Amal and those of the Christian General Michel Aoun.

Passionate declarations can be seen or heard every day on television and radio stations and in the numerous Beirut-based newspapers, accusations against the unchanging political elite who for years have dominated power. General Michel Aoun has been accused of populism by his adversaries among the Christian community because of his criticisms of the Maronite Patriarch, which have fuelled the Eastern Church’s threats of excommunication. Aoun signed a controversial agreement with the powerful Hezbollah organization, which according to supporters has averted a Christian-Muslim confrontation, but for critics has created a deep divide within the Maronite community.

Everybody knows that buying votes will be decisive when it comes to the electoral count. Certain parties have even planned to pay for many ex-patriot Lebanese to return to Lebanon to cast their ballots, an action dubbed by some as “electoral tourism.”

The security situation in several regions was severely affected last February, and fears of attacks, confessional confrontations and kidnappings raise doubts regarding the necessary pre-election stability. The last elections held in Lebanon, organized after the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, saw heterocloite anti-Syrian groups win a parliamentary majority and thus end a long period of pro-Syrian political domination. Nabih Berri, the Shiite leader himself, however, was voted by this ineffable country as Speaker of the Parliament, having presided over previous assemblies.

The key areas of economic development, social justice, housing and education are excluded from debate at the expense of accentuated confessional politics, and Sunni, Shiite, Christian and Druze parliamentary blocs remain unchanged. For decades there has been no change in the governing elite. Seats left empty by the death of a deputy are sometimes passed on to their widow, father or daughter through local party elections, in accordance with regulations regarding the distribution of power among religious communities.

The worshipping and veneration of the ‘zaim,’ a leader figure, is engrained in a people where community identity holds more importance than civil society. Until now all efforts towards ‘national reconciliation’ have failed, an aim which seems all the more ambitious since the war in the summer of 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel, and political language
is becoming increasingly impregnated with a militia spirit.
The extension of the presidential term of General Emile Lahoud, who was branded as pro-Syrian, together with the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and the successive assassinations of nationalist and anti-Damascus Christian leaders was the cause of eighteen months of internal conflict that threatened to provoke another war. The subsequent disagreement between the parliamentary majority and minority regarding the election of a new Head of State worsened the situation, and although the political crisis was resolved in May of last year with the election of General Michel Sleiman, national stability has still not been fully restored.
The Doha Agreement, backed by the Emir of Qatar, saw representatives of the Western-backed parliamentary majority and the pro-Syrian and pro-Iranian opposition, sign an agreement to meet in parliament, following 19 postponements of the parliamentary session, and elect the army’s commander-in-chief, Michel Sleiman, as Head of State. Two other former presidents of the republic, Generals Cheab and Lahoud, have also been commanders-in-chief of the army, and another armed forces commander, Michel Aoun, was appointed Prime Minister of a provisional military government in the Christian part of Lebanon. This is one of the few Arab states not to have suffered a coup d’etat led by the armed forces.
The agreement called for a national unity government of 30 ministers, including 11 from the Hezbollah-led opposition who were granted veto power on government decisions. Once again, it was regional and international pressure that forced the Lebanese to seek a solution. The street fighting in May of last year, a show of strength by Hezbollah and its allies, overwhelmed the government of Fouad Siniora, which was unwilling to yield to the demands of the opposition; an opposition that stood its ground through campaigns of civil disobedience which, in the end, led to violent protests.
Another positive move, which has helped to improve the security situation both politically and on the streets, was the establishment of diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria last winter. Since the independence of both countries in 1943, the Syrian state had never fully recognized this small eastern Mediterranean republic. The decision came in response to international pressure and to the Syrian government’s need to normalize relations with Lebanon. While Syria’s first diplomatic representative has already been appointed but has not yet taken up the position, Lebanese leaders have yet to announce their ambassador. Evidently the change will not resolve all bilateral disputes as if by magic, such as the complex situation of the Lebanese who are either missing or imprisoned, the demarcation of borders or the revision of certain signed agreements, which have been widely criticised by anti-Syrian members of parliament.
Contemporary history has seen these nations living on a knife-edge. When the French in 1920 created the so-called “Great Lebanon”, they added territories, such as the Bekaa plain, which they tore away from Syria. For decades their relationships have been highly ambiguous. The Syrian military intervention of 1976 at the request of President Frangié, to deal with Palestinian fighters during the civil war, brought Lebanon under political tutelage, a state of affairs that lasted until recently. In 2005 following the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, which raised suspicions regarding the possible involvement of high-ranking officials in Damascus, the last Syrian soldiers were forced to evacuate Lebanon. However, Syria, which provides protection for Hezbollah, has recently regained some of its political influence. Lebanon cannot disassociate itself from Syria. Since the two countries are united by geography and the blood of their people, the only solution is the challenging task of establishing a balanced relationship.
Each side believes the coming elections will be vital for the republic. The recent constitution of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon in The Hague, which aims to try those responsible for the attack on Rafiq Hariri and his entourage, is a subject that may disturb the country’s fragile situation. The political forces stand face to face at the hour of truth. Members of the 14 March alliance are determined to find those responsible for the assassination, believing that not only former Lebanese security heads were involved, who have already been jailed under suspicion, but also prominent dignitaries of the Syrian regime. In any case, the tribunal will take three to five years to pass its longed-for and feared sentence.
The Growing Economic Presence of Gulf Countries in the Mediterranean Region

Abdullah Baabood
Director
Gulf Research Centre, University of Cambridge

Fuelled by a historic record increase in oil prices, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states’ (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia) economies and their financial surpluses continued to grow at an unprecedented rate. Oil wealth has transformed these backwater traditional and conservative states to the forefront of international politics and finance, and Gulf foreign investments have been on the increase over the years. Although the bulk of GCC investments were channelled into the traditional economies of the developed countries of the US and Europe as well as the rising Asian economies of China and India, a growing proportion of GCC investments stayed in the region, including the neighbouring Mediterranean. Indeed, over the past few years, partly because of the geopolitical ramifications following the events of September 11, 2001, GCC investments have started to pour into the Mediterranean region, spurring its economic development.

In 2008, Gulf investments and economic presence in the neighbouring Mediterranean region continued to grow, albeit at a slower pace, due to the recent global economic and financial crisis, which precipitated a fall in the oil price and reduced GCC states’ revenues and financial surpluses.

The Global Economic Crisis Slows Down the Process but Does Not Halt It

By 2008, the global financial crisis profoundly changed the global business environment, and the accompanying uncertainty has impacted on the growing trend of global foreign direct investment (FDI). World FDI flows, which, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), rose by 30% in 2007 – well above the previous all-time high set in 2000 and reaching a historic record of 1.833 billion dollars, were estimated to have fallen by 21% in 2008 to an estimated 1.4 billion dollars.

Over the period of 2002-2006, the Mediterranean region managed to capture its fair share of this global inflow, receiving world FDI corresponding to its demographic importance of 4%, but began to slow down in 2007 due to the crisis. In 2008, the Med share of global FDI began to decrease only slightly below the global trend (-17%) and below the bar of 4%, helped by the strength of their economic performance and the resiliency of North Africa (-5.2%) and particularly Egypt (10.9 billion dollars against 11.6 billion dollars in 2007). (See Table 5 and Chart 17)

The 13 countries that border the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestine Authority, Syria, Tunisia, plus Turkey, Libya, Malta and Cyprus) received direct foreign investment totalling 68 billion euros in 2006 and 61 billion euros in 2007. In 2008, the Mediterranean region started to be affected by the world economic and financial crisis with an overall drop in FDI of a little less than 40 billion euros in 2008 (-35%).

The Gulf States have not been entirely immune from this global crisis. It precipitated a fall in energy demand and a dip in oil price from their historic record levels, causing a drop in government revenues and a loss in confidence. Petrodollars from the oil and gas industries and sovereign wealth funds (SWFs), which had shielded many Middle Eastern economies from the global meltdown and delayed its impact, began to dry up as global liquidity became tight. The increasingly adventurous Gulf investors, who had shown a strong appetite to invest in the Mediterranean region,
slowed or deferred some of their decisions as they began to weigh up the effect of the global financial crisis.

The Gulf Economic Growth as a Source of Investment

Despite the global turmoil, GCC economic growth remained strong in 2008, pushing the GCC’s combined nominal GDP up to 1 trillion dollars. The region’s economy continued to expand vigorously, especially in the first half of 2008 (about 7%), before it began to decelerate in the latter half due to the secondary effect of the global economic crisis and averaged 5.7%.

High oil prices with a higher volume of exports between 2002 and the autumn of 2008 strengthened the key macroeconomic indicators in the six GCC countries, and the region achieved record budget surpluses over the seven years before the global financial crisis caused prices to collapse and economic growth to stall. (See Table 6)

With average oil prices 45% higher in 2008 than in 2007 and coupled with incremental additions to export volumes, this gave another boost to the GCC’s cumulative export earnings, which reached about 2.2 trillion dollars over the period. Such was the ascent of oil prices that the current account surplus swelled dramatically from around 50 billion dollars in 2003-04 (year ending June) to almost 400 billion dollars in 2007-08, equivalent to over 30% of GDP. In aggregate, the current account registered a cumulative surplus of 912 billion dollars over the period (Table 7, Charts 18 and 19).

The GCC as an Investment Powerhouse

Like most oil-exporting countries, the GCC states started transforming oil windfall into financial wealth after the 2002 surge in oil prices by setting up ded-
icated investment funds exclusively for the oil surplus they had earned. In fact, the funds of the GCC alone accounted for around half the assets held by sovereign wealth funds globally (Chart 20).

Whereas in the beginning of 2000, the funds of the GCC did not constitute more than 350 billion dollars and investments were predominantly concentrated in US assets, this trend began to change after September 11, so by the end of 2008, where foreign assets of state institutions and the banking sector were reported to rise to nearly 900-1.5 trillion dollars (not taking into account possible recent declines in asset values), the pattern of investments changed from low-risk portfolios to high-risk ones, such as equity and alternative investments, especially in the emerging economies of Asia and the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6</th>
<th>GCC: Main Economic Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal GDP ($bn)</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbon, GDP ($bn)</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-hydrocarbon GDP ($bn)</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP (% change)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbon</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-hydrocarbon</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation (average)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account bal. ($bn)</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% GDP</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Assets (% GDP)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Assets ($bn)</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% GDP</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal balance (% GDP)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil price (Brent, $/barrel)</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil production (mbd)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas production (mboe/d)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Institute of International Finance (IIF), 2008. f = forecast; 1 Refers to crude oil and natural gas, mbd = millions of barrels a day, mboe/d = millions of barrels of oil equivalent a day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7</th>
<th>GCC Current Account Surplus (in billion dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Balance</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbon</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hydrocarbon</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>-201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services, net</td>
<td>-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomes, net</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers, net</td>
<td>-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% GDP</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoranda:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil production (mbd)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent oil price ($/bl. av.)</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IIF, Nov. 6, 2008. f = forecast; mbd = million barrels a day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHART 18</th>
<th>Current Account Surpluses Remain Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In $ billion (left scale)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of GDP (right scale)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institute of International Finance (IIF), 2008; f = forecast;
Mediterranean. Nearly one quarter of Gulf foreign investments since 2002 were in Asia and the Middle East/North Africa (Table 8 and Chart 21).

The Appeal of the Mediterranean

Besides a geographical proximity, and cultural and linguistic affinity, the Mediterranean region offered the Gulf States an attractive alternative outlet for the diversification of their investments and for recycling their financial surpluses. For the Gulf States, investment in the Mediterranean is viewed as an extension of the home market and safer and closer to home, especially after the events of September 11, 2001. Moreover, the Mediterranean region’s economic base, as well as economic reform, although patchy, offers high return and an enormous potential given the prospects of further Euro-Mediterranean integration following the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean with the envisaged Euromed Free Trade Area.
in 2010. Largely due to this, global FDI, especially from the Gulf States, but also from Europe and the US, began to pour into the Mediterranean economies. (See Chart 22)

**Gulf Investment in the Mediterranean Is Enduring**

Given the Gulf States’ financial surpluses and the appeal of the Mediterranean, investment from the GCC into the Mediterranean has been growing over the last five boom years. According to Anima, Gulf investments in the Mediterranean constituted around 30% of total amounts and 18% of announced projects. However, as financial surpluses began to dry up, Gulf investments decreased and recorded only 8.5 billion euros in 2008, against 22 billion in 2007. The Gulf, however, remained one of the main pillars of investments in the Mediterranean, with concentration in the Mashreq (Charts 23 and 24), alongside European investments, which concentrate especially in Turkey, the Maghreb and Egypt. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) heads the pack with an investment of 30.6 billion euros between 2003 and 2007 (see Table 9), which is more than half of the GCC total, and taking 183 of the projects. In
2008, the UAE announced a further 66 projects with a cumulative gross value of 17 billion euros, equivalent to 4.7 billion euros in 2008, constituting around 12% of all FDI emitters in the Med region in that year, the majority of which has been in the real estate sector. Three long-term real estate megaprojects – Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and Gulf Investment House (GIH) at Porta Moda in Tunisia (10 years), Al Maabar at Aqaba in Jordan (seven years) and Emirates International Investment Company (EIIC) Dounya Parc (five billion dollars over five years) – alone represent two thirds of this amount. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia follow the UAE with slightly more than 11 billion euros each and more than 100 projects by 2007. In 2008 Kuwait announced a further 34 projects, mainly in Egypt and Jordan, while investment projects of Saudi Arabia fell in 2008 to 22 following 43 projects in 2007, mainly in Egypt and Algeria. The main concentration has been in the real estate sector. In 2008 the Gulf States invested 4.2 billion euros in this sector, which constituted around 50% of the FDI in the region, principally in the Mashreq.

Bahrain and Qatar follow the rank with about 2.3 and 2.9 billion euros respectively and about 20 projects each, while Oman does not appear in Table 9 for lack of projects. Bahrain showed more interest in Jordan and Morocco (Batelco owns Umniah Telecom in Jordan, and real estate and tourism projects by Gulf Finance House in these two countries). UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar-based investors show a strong preference for Egypt as the main destination of their investments, while investors from Saudi Arabia tend to prefer Turkey, followed by Egypt. Saudi Arabia announced eight significant projects in Turkey in 2007: massive investments by Oger in telecom and banking and acquisition of banks and food-processing industries.

### Changing Pattern of Gulf Investments

As well as the size and volume, the pattern of Gulf investments and their diversification in the neighbouring economies has also changed since the 1970s and 1980s earlier oil boom periods. At that time Gulf investments were more concentrated in the traditional sectors of real estate development and activities associated with the hydrocarbon sector. This time round, there seems to be more appetite for diversification, but Gulf investments in the Mediterranean still represent an unbalanced sectoral profile. Construction and transport sectors took 52% of the amounts (and 26 of the projects), while the tourism sector made up 19% and telecom was 10% over 2003-2008. Energy, heavy chemical industry, cement and metallurgy account for 13% of the total. There is also a growing investment in the banking and finance sector. This sectoral mix reflects the model of unbalanced development of the economies of the Gulf, in which consumer goods industries and light industries are not very present.

However, through partnerships with companies based in industrial countries and their accumulated cooperative experience in GCC countries, Gulf investments have increasingly become more diversified and more enterprising. Gulf presence in Egypt, for example, has expanded beyond their traditional areas to include manufacturing, organic farming, communication and information technology, financial services, and logistics (see Chart 25).

The new Gulf leadership in charge of investment decisions has proved to be more bullish than its forefathers. This new generation has had the benefit of a wider business and finance education as well as international exposure and training. International expertise has also been employed to support their investment activities. Gulf investors showed great panache for launching large budgets and ambitious greenfield...
projects (the creation of new facilities) in comparison to their European and American counterparts. Over 2003-2007, Gulf investments in greenfield projects in the Mediterranean made up 40% of the projects and 53% of the amount invested. External growth (acquisition, including privatisation), or brownfield projects, accounted for 23% of the projects and 30% of investment flows.

Conclusions

Despite the global financial crisis, which caught up with the region a little later than elsewhere, the Gulf economies have managed to achieve high growth rates in 2008. Although with the onset of the crisis in 2009 they are expected to slow down, their financial surpluses are estimated to rise even with a worst-case oil price scenario. Recycling their oil wealth is a strategic tool, given their low absorption capacity, particularly for the benefit of the next generation. Foreign investment income is part of a strategy to prepare for a Gulf economy beyond oil.

The attraction to diversify their investment in the neighbouring Mediterranean region beyond traditional markets is more appealing given the high return on their investments and the potential growth of the Mediterranean countries given the partial liberalisation and reform that some of these countries are undergoing. Besides its geographical proximity and cultural and linguistic affinity, the economic base of the Mediterranean countries and the looming Euro-Med space adds a further dimension.

Gulf presence in the Mediterranean, which has been growing over the past few years despite the global financial crisis, which has slowed the pace but not altered the trend, is expected to grow further as Gulf investors start to build up momentum and develop valuable business networks in the region. The scale and nature of the Gulf presence, which has predominantly been in the real estate and tourism sectors, has begun to change and Gulf investments have increasingly become more daring than their US and European counterparts.

Regional dynamics including stability and a successful completion of the Middle East Peace process, as well as further inter- and intra-regional integration, especially between the Mediterranean and the Gulf through, for example, the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) are bound to increase this relationship. In addition, the possibility of linking the EU-GCC track with the Union of the Mediterranean will provide the needed institutional framework under which greater exchange of trade and investment is bound to flourish. The institutional support for the combination of European know-how and technology with Gulf financial muscle will help to invigorate the very necessary and long-awaited development process in the Mediterranean region.

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The Role of Turkey in the Middle East

In the last two decades, Turkey’s Middle East policy has been evolving towards more activism. 2008 was not an exception. In fact, the Middle East was the region where Turkey focused most of its energies throughout the year. This policy led to some criticism at home and abroad that the government was reorienting Turkey’s foreign policy towards this region. In particular, the perception that in the last few years there has been less emphasis on developing Turkey’s relations with the EU exacerbated these concerns. Nevertheless, such criticisms did not bar the government from increasingly engaging in Middle Eastern issues.

Iraq Policy: A New Opening

In 2008 Iraq continued to be one of the most important issues in Turkish foreign policy. The year started with Turkey’s ground military operation in the north of Iraq in pursuit of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), a Kurdish organization fighting with the State. This was a major development, as Turkey had had to stop such incursions after declining to cooperate with the US in its war effort in Iraq in 2003. However, amid domestic criticisms due to escalating PKK violence in 2007, the government obtained a one year parliamentary mandate to conduct operations in Iraq to undermine the PKK’s ability to launch attacks from there. This development alarmed the Bush administration, as it did not want to have instability in the relatively quiet north. Since a meeting at the White House between the US President George W. Bush and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in November 2007, the two countries have restarted cooperation over Iraq issues. Particularly important has been the understanding to eliminate the PKK as a factor in Turkey-US and Turkey-Iraq relations, including relations with the Iraqi Kurds. Within this context, a trilateral mechanism between Turkey, Iraq, and the United States was created. The United States started to cooperate with Turkey by providing intelligence on the PKK in Iraq. As a result, Turkey started aerial operations in the area. In February 2008 Turkey also undertook a nine-day ground operation against suspected PKK targets in Iraq.

Although it is still hard to tell to what extent this operation achieved its military objectives, it clearly was successful in political and psychological terms. The operation meant that a barrier was overcome in Turkey-US relations. It also eased the domestic uproar against the PKK attacks and what was seen as the inability of the state to deal with them. More significantly, in terms of relations with Iraq, what happened signified a dual track strategy. On the one hand, the military operations gave Turkey an opportunity to show its resolve to deal with the PKK attacks emanating from Iraq. On the other hand, the operations created an opportunity for an opening towards the Iraqi Kurds, which was not possible before, due to the supportive attitude of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) vis-à-vis the PKK. The invitation of the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, during the land operations, was a sign of this dual track policy. Talabani visited Ankara in March and Turkey has continued its rapprochement with Baghdad and the government of the autonomous Kurdish region since then. It was clear that this new policy was based on a consensus between the government and the military. The National Security Council, where the military is also represented, issued a statement saying it was interested in having good relations with Iraq in general based on positive developments there.
As part of the Turkish government’s new opening to Iraq, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan visited Baghdad in July 2008. This was a first by a Turkish Prime Minister in 18 years and the second visit to Baghdad by a leader of one of Iraq’s neighbours after that of the Iranian President. The visit ended with the establishment of the Higher Strategic Cooperation Council, which is to meet once a year under the co-chairmanship of the two Prime Ministers, three times a year at the ministerial level and once every three months by senior-level officials. The Council is designed to deal with the vital issues of energy, military, industry, security, and politics. The declaration that announced the decision did not mention the PKK, but it called for respecting each other’s territories and “supporting the joint efforts of Iraq and Turkey to prevent the transit of terrorists and illegal arms to and from Iraq and emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to control their common borders and prevent all kinds of illicit trafficking.” The declaration also calls for completing a military framework agreement, concluding a pact on fighting.” The declaration also calls for completing a military framework agreement, concluding a pact on combating terrorism and fostering trade relations in both countries’ defence-related industries.

Therefore, Turkey was able to come to a point of cooperation on PKK issues with the US and Iraq in 2008. The central Iraqi government was already more inclined to eliminate the PKK as a negative factor in Turkish-Iraqi relations. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki reiterated this position when he said, “PKK’s actions are designed to create problems in Turkish-Iraqi relations” during his visit to Ankara in December. Nevertheless, there were limitations to what the central government could do as long as the KRG refused to cooperate. Thus it was quite significant that Turkey and the KRG were able to develop a working relationship on this issue. Faced with the reality of US withdrawal and increasing power of the central government under Maliki, the KRG realized that it would no longer gain by using the PKK against Turkey. On the contrary, it needed Turkey as an outlet to the world. Thus, the KRG ended its hostile rhetoric against Turkey and started to put pressure on the PKK in its region. Turkey responded by opening an official dialogue for the first time since 2003. Throughout the year, the Turkish Special Representative to Iraq visited the KRG several times.

Turkey reiterated the main elements of its Iraq policy throughout the year. These include, most importantly, the strengthening of territorial unity and stability of Iraq. To this end, Turkey continued to develop its dialogue with all the parties in Iraq, now also including the Kurdish parties. Ankara also continued to work for Sunni participation in the political process, as it had done in the past. Moreover, Turkey focused on developing economic ties with Iraq, Turkish investment, especially in the Kurdish region, continued to grow in 2008. Finally, Turkey continued to work with the US and the countries in the region for Iraqi consolidation. Iraq’s Neighbours’ Meetings, which started as a Turkish initiative in 2003, continued in 2008 in their enlarged form.

The fate of the Kirkuk region also continued to be of interest to Turkey in 2008. Turkey has been opposed to the inclusion of multi-ethnic Kirkuk in the KRG, instead advocating a special status for the region. This position has increasingly been adopted by the Arab, Turkmen, and Christian inhabitants of the region. Thus, the decision about the status of Kirkuk has been postponed. This issue became critical once again in 2008, amid preparations for the election law. In the end, the law passed, stipulating separate local elections for the Kirkuk region.

Iran: A Balancing Act

Two issues of cooperation continued to dominate Turkish-Iranian relations in 2008. First, the two countries cooperated against the separatist Kurdish organizations of the PKK and its Iranian version, the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK). Such cooperation had intensified after 2003. To reflect the new level of cooperation, the Turkey-Iran High Security Commission, which was established in 1988 but largely remained ineffective in those years, was revived. The 12th meeting of the Committee, convened in Ankara in April 2008, was said to be once again dominated by discussion of security and cooperation against terrorism. The statement issued after the meeting declared, “The increase in some terrorist movements in the region damages both countries, and the most influential way to battle this outlawed problem is the exchange of intelligence and security cooperation.” To further explain the Iranian position, the head of the Iranian delegation, Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Abbas Mohtaj, stressed that “the two countries fight against terror and cooperate with each other, and Iran looks at the PKK and the PJAK as a single terrorist organization under two different names. We want to increase cooperation with Turkey against the terrorist organizations.”
Second, energy cooperation between Turkey and Iran also intensified. Negotiations for a comprehensive energy agreement started in 2007 and continued throughout 2008. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in July 2007 to export Iranian gas to Europe through Turkey, including a provision for Turkey to produce Iranian gas from the South Pars gas field. This project was seen as a significant step towards the realization of the Nabucco project and yet was highly criticized by the Bush administration. The issue was discussed during Ahmadinejad’s visit to Turkey in August. Yet the visit did not yield the expected oil and gas deals.

Turkey welcomed Barack Obama’s announcement that he would prefer to talk to the Iranians

Ahmadinejad’s visit was not only criticized by the US but also became highly controversial in Turkey. Like many other foreign policy topics recently, this issue immediately became part of the domestic polarization and debate. First, the issue of whether Ahmadinejad will pay a visit to Anitkabir, Atatürk’s mausoleum, as foreign leaders on an official visit to Turkey generally do, was questioned. A crisis was resolved when the government announced that the visit would take place in Istanbul. The government was further criticized for allowing Ahmadinejad to attend a Friday prayer at the Blue Mosque. While he was cheered by some who were there to attend the prayer, others protested him for blocking the traffic. In any case, the visit was significant, as he was visiting a NATO country for the first time. Agreements were signed in cooperation against drug smuggling and terrorism. There were also reports that the nuclear issue was also discussed.

In 2008 Turkey continued its basic position on the nuclear issue. While accepting Iran’s right under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to have peaceful nuclear capability, Turkey felt threatened by the possibility of Tehran developing nuclear weapon capability. Ankara preferred this issue to be resolved through diplomatic means. Thus, Turkey welcomed Barack Obama’s announcement during the campaign that he would prefer to talk to the Iranians if he was elected president. In the meantime, Turkey continued to align itself with all the EU declarations on the issue.

Third Party Roles in Middle East Conflicts

A relatively new aspect of Turkey’s Middle East policy in the last two decades has been Turkey’s increasing eagerness to play third party roles in the management and resolution of regional conflicts, particularly the Arab-Israeli one. This is in significant contrast to Turkey’s long-held policy of not getting involved in regional conflicts. The reasons for this change are mainly two. First, the changing geo-strategic environment and increasing instability in the region began to have repercussions for Turkey and forced Ankara to become more involved in the management of conflicts. The protracted conflicts led to radicalization and a constant threat of war in the region. The continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict also allows some states to exploit the conflict to increase their power and influence in the region. For instance, the Palestinian conflict has allowed Iran to increase its power and influence beyond its immediate neighbourhood and made it effectively a Mediterranean power. These developments upset the regional balance of power and thus are of concern to Turkey. Secondly, the current AKP government has been particularly eager to play third party roles in the region. The government believes that due to its historical ties with this region, Turkey cannot be indifferent to what happens there.

Mediation between Israel and Syria

Following the gradual improvement of Turkey’s relations with Syria after the October 1998 crisis, and after the collapse of Syrian-Israeli talks in 2000 and the deterioration of US-Syrian relations, Turkey has been trying to restart negotiations between Israel and Syria. Prime Minister Erdogan is said to be involved personally and to have conveyed messages to both sides. Finally, in May 2008, after several failed attempts, the two countries started indirect peace talks in Istanbul under Turkey’s aegis. Israel and Syria held four rounds of indirect negotiations in Turkey after the peace talks were launched in May. The talks were suspended when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced he would step down as a result of charges of corruption brought against him in Israel. During Olmert’s visit to Ankara in
December 2008, Erdogan and Olmert had a meeting that lasted more than five hours. Later it was revealed that through telephone diplomacy Turkey had facilitated another round of indirect talks and aimed to bring parties to agree on starting direct talks soon. The parties began working on a common text to that end. However, when, five days after Olmert’s visit to Turkey, Israel launched its Gaza operation, Turkey announced that it had ended its efforts to facilitate Israeli-Syrian talks.

The Israeli-Palestinian Issue

Disappointed by post-Annapolis inaction and the negative impact of the embargo on the Gaza population, the Turkish government emphasized the volatility of the situation throughout the year. Erdogan referred to Gaza as an open prison and apparently asked the Israeli government to lift the blockade. When the cease-fire between Hamas and Israel ended, Ankara supported Egypt’s efforts to extend it.

When Israel launched its Gaza operation, Turkey announced that it had ended its efforts to facilitate Israeli-Syrian talks.

The Israeli attacks against Gaza created a harsh response from the Turkish government. Prime Minister Erdogan immediately started a regional tour in which he paid visits to Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. He also had talks with the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. Turkish diplomats then took part in a shuttle diplomacy to broker a cease-fire.

The government’s response to the Gaza attack, however, seemed to tarnish Turkey’s image as an honest broker in the conflict. The Prime Minister’s approach to the issue in particular was quite emotional. Erdogan was very critical of Israel and yet equally silent about Hamas’ share in the saga. The overall Turkish attitude during the crisis gave the impression of Turkey acting as a spokesperson for Hamas. Although this attitude has become popular with the masses in Turkey and in the Middle East, it created tensions in Turkish-Israeli relations. Furthermore, it also damaged Turkey’s position in the highly polarized Middle East as being above such divisions. On the other hand, the new setting also created some opportunities for Turkey to be influential over Hamas and to convince it to act as a legitimate political party. Turkey has also been active in reconciling Fatah and Hamas, which seems essential for any progress in the peace process. Whether Turkey can use this potential, however, remains to be seen.
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The year 2008 was an extraordinary year in Turkish politics even by local standards, mainly for two reasons. First, the chief public prosecutor of the country demanded the closure of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has been in power since 2002 and has garnered no less than 47% of the national vote in parliamentary elections held in July 2007, for having become the focus of activities against secularism. The Constitutional Court in Turkey had closed down close to thirty political parties, but never a ruling party. The year 2008 was also an extraordinary year because the country witnessed, for the first time ever in its history, the detention and putting on trial of retired and current high-ranking military officers accused of involvement in an underground organization that calls itself Ergenekon. Ergenekon is an umbrella organization of clandestine groups that were accused by the Istanbul public prosecutors of seeking to overthrow the democratically elected government.

Events leading to the closure case against the government party, which brought the country, in the words of the Financial Times editorial on 28 July, to “the brink of a national disaster” began in the spring of 2007, when the AKP government nominated Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül for President, to be elected by the Parliament. An electronic memorandum was posted on the Chief of Staff’s website on 27 April, the night of the first round of voting in the Parliament, indicating the military’s strong opposition to Gül’s election, based chiefly on his wife’s wearing of the Islamic headdress, regarded by the military as a symbol of opposition to secularism.

The next day, the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) applied to the Constitutional Court arguing that a quorum of two-thirds of Parliament members was necessary for the Parliament to continue with the voting, which the AKP lacked. In clear violation of the provisions of the Constitution, which require only one-third present, the Constitutional Court decided in favour of the CHP petition within a few days. The AKP government responded by making the decision to go to early elections in July. The elections resulted in a landslide victory for the AKP, and Gül was duly elected President in August.

The national elections in July 2007 were highly significant for Turkish politics, not only because the AKP increased its share of the national vote from 34 to 47%, which enabled it to continue to run the country single-handedly, but also because it was able to collect the majority of the votes in the Kurdish-majority south-eastern region, where the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) has been pursuing an armed insurgency since 1984. In another important result of the national elections of 2007, the Democratic Society Party (DTP), regarded by many as the political wing of the PKK, succeeded in becoming the first pro-Kurdish party to gain representation in the parliament by overcoming the 10% hurdle to win parliamentary seats through candidates running on independent tickets. The year 2008 opened with expectations that the AKP government would use its increased political capital to fulfil its election promises and pursue reforms towards European Union membership, which had stalled due partially to various differences between Ankara and Brussels since the start of accession talks at the end of 2005. In this context, it was expected, particularly by the Europhile segments of society, that the AKP government would pass through Parliament the draft of a new constitution prepared by a group of liberal-minded experts commissioned by Prime Minister Erdogan and amended by the party organs.
The new constitution, the first to be adopted by an elected Parliament, was to replace the one adopted in 1982 during the military regime, which, despite having a third of its provisions amended in the course of EU reforms between 2001-2004, still remained highly authoritarian.

The main opposition parties, both the CHP and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), however, had declared that they would not lend their support to the adoption of the draft constitution. It soon became clear to the AKP leadership that it could not rely on the support of its entire parliamentary group either. The draft constitution was thus put on hold, and the government instead seized on the opportunity created by, or fell into the trap laid by, the MHP, which declared its willingness to back constitutional amendments to lift the headscarf ban for university students that has long been a major point of controversy between state elites led by the military committed to the authoritarian form of secularism and the pro-Muslim AKP government as well as the liberal-minded intelligentsia.

The constitutional amendment was adopted by the Parliament in February by nearly four-fifths of Parliament except for the CHP, which immediately applied to the Constitutional Court for the abrogation of the amendment on the grounds of it being in violation with the principle of secularism.

In March, the chief prosecutor filed a closure case against the AKP for having become the “focus of activities against the secular nature of the state” with a highly controversial indictment based partially on the constitutional amendments to lift the headscarf ban for university students. The chief prosecutor also demanded the banning from politics for five years of as many as 71 leading members of the AKP, including President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Constitutional Court abrogated the amendments lifting the headscarf ban in June, once more in violation of the constitutional provisions that entitled the Court to review amendments only on procedural grounds and not in substance. The decision of the Court was criticized in liberal circles as the replacement of democracy with juristocracy. The Court was widely expected to close down the AKP following its decision on the headscarf amendment. However, it failed to reach the qualified majority to ban the party in July. AKP thus narrowly escaped closure when six justices, that is, one short of the qualified majority, voted in favour. Ten of the justices of the Court agreed, however, that the AKP had indeed become the focus of anti-secular activities, while five of them did not regard the violations severe enough to necessitate closure.

The fact that the only member of the Court with a background in the military voted against closure led to speculations that perhaps there was a behind-the-scenes deal between the government and the general, who expected to be appointed Chief of Staff in August. There were also speculations about whether the closure case against the AKP was a response by the Ergenekon organization under investigation.

The judicial investigation into the shadowy criminal organization, which named itself the Ergenekon after an ultra-nationalistic legend, broadened in 2008. The Ergenekon first came to public attention when the police seized a weapons cache in a district of Istanbul in June 2007. Beginning that month, and in at least ten waves of detentions, over a hundred people, including politicians, businessmen, academics, journalists, mafia members, and retired and active members of armed and security forces, were taken into custody, most of them to be arrested. The first indictment against the Ergenekon disclosed in July accused the suspects of organizing a terror organization with the purpose of overthrowing the elected government in a coup planned to take place in 2009. Various unidentified political assassinations, such as the murder of a Council of State judge in May 2006 and that of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in January 2007, are suspected of having links to the Ergenekon. The Ergenekon trial began in October and was expected to take a long time and involve an increasing number of suspects.

There is broad public debate and controversy over the nature of the Ergenekon. Circles led principally by Deniz Baykal, the leader of the main opposition party CHP, who accuse the AKP government of violating the secular principles of the Republic, islamizing Turkish society, and attempting to establish an authoritarian rule, argue that the Ergenekon case is based on flimsy evidence and aims primarily to silence opposition to the AKP rule. Others regard the Ergenekon case as a vital test for Turkish democracy since it promises to disclose the dark side of Turkish politics, to bring coup plotters before justice, and to shed light on the "deep state," that is, gangs with links to security and intelligence forces responsible for a large number of extrajudicial killings that have taken place since the nineties, particularly against supporters of PKK. Perhaps the most significant reform in respect to the Kurdish question was the official launch of the state televi-
sion channel broadcasting in Kurdish on 1 January 2009, following the adoption of the law allowing for it and preparations that stretched over the latter half of the year. TV-6 channel broadcasting in Kurdish signified nothing less for Turkey than the official end of the non-recognition of the ethnic identity of nearly a fifth of its population. On 1 January 2009, state television channels also began broadcasting programs on the religious beliefs of the Alevi, in a further step towards the full official recognition of the religion of the largest Muslim minority in the country, estimated to constitute another fifth of the population.

Sporadic fighting between the Turkish security forces and the PKK continued throughout 2008. The Turkish army conducted a winter ground operation against PKK bases in Northern Iraq in February, and the Turkish Air Force pounded the PKK targets in the Qandil mountains. The deadliest attack by the PKK militants against the Turkish army took place in October. The liberal daily Taraf, launched at the end of 2007, disclosed a number of documents relating to the Ergenekon gang, as well as to the military’s attempts at behind-the-scenes manipulation of politics. On 5 October, PKK militants entering Turkey from Iraqi territory attacked a military outpost near the Aktutun border station, killing 15 soldiers and wounding 21 others. Taraf published leaked documents that indicated that the attack took place despite prior intelligence on its preparation, and questioned for the first time in the history of Turkish media whether the military was doing its job properly, invoking harsh responses from both the Chief of Staff and the government. Ankara continued in 2008 to pursue the AKP government’s foreign policy objectives of improving relations with neighbouring countries and dialogue with all the relevant state and non-state actors in the region with the aim of facilitating peace in the broader region. War over South Ossetia in August between Russia, Turkey’s biggest trading partner and supplier of energy, and Georgia, its close ally, placed Ankara in a difficult position, in response to which it put forward the initiative of a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform on the basis of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) principles.

Perhaps the most significant development in Turkish foreign policy in 2008 was President Abdullah Gül’s visit to the Armenian capital of Yerevan to attend, together with his Armenian counterpart, the World Cup match between the two countries’ national football teams. “Football diplomacy” further pushed efforts towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the opening of borders that have been kept closed by Turkey since 1993 as a consequence of the occupation of Azerbaijani territory by Armenia. In an equally significant foreign policy drive, Ankara intensified the dialogue with the Kurdistan Regional Government, which seems to have enhanced the security cooperation against the PKK between Ankara and the Iraqi Kurdish authorities. During the course of 2008, Ankara facilitated normalization of relations between Israel and Pakistan when the Foreign Ministers of the two countries met for the first time in Istanbul in September. Ankara also continued to facilitate indirect talks between Israel and Syria. Prime Minister Erdogan said he felt betrayed when Israel attacked Gaza on 27 December 2008, just four days after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s visit to Ankara, during which Israel and Syria came very close to declaring the start of direct talks for a peace treaty. On 29 December, Ankara suspended its role as mediator.

The Turkish economy grew by about 1.5% in 2008, with a rate far below the average of 6.7% between 2003 and 2007, during which long-term foreign direct investments in Turkey rose from 1.8 billion to 21.7 billion and per capita income rose from circa 3,400 to 9,300 dollars. Turkish exports went up between 2003 and 2007 from 47 to 107 billion, while imports soared from 69 to 170 billion. The short-term funds influx into the Turkish economy rose from 8.2 billion in 2002 to 107 billion in 2008, helping cover the yearly current account deficit, which increased from 1.5 billion to 47 billion in the same period.

The world economic crisis has also hit Turkey in the last quarter of 2008, when short-term funds dropped significantly to 59.5 billion in October and the stock market dropped to circa 22,000 points, down from circa 58,000 in October 2007. The unemployment rate is 12% in urban areas, and an estimated three million people were officially unemployed at the end of the year. Analysts predict a negative growth rate for 2009.

The biggest political event in 2009 will be the local elections to be held in March. Surveys so far indicate that the ruling AKP may win as high a share of the national vote in the local elections as in the national elections held in the summer of 2007. The local elections are expected to be a kind of referendum on the AKP rule following the closure case against the party in 2008.
After its declaration of independence in February 2008, Kosovo took a further step toward self-government with the signing of a new constitution in April 2008. With the constitution going into effect, UN authority over Kosovo formally ended in June 2008. Despite these developments, the amount of bridge building still necessary in Kosovo is formidable. The events during the past year in Kosovo remind the international community that there is much unfinished business to attend to.

When writing about Kosovo, the ethnic diversity of Europe’s youngest country requires careful differentiation between its northern (Serb-dominated) and southern (ethnically Albanian-dominated) parts. More than 40,000 Serbs are said to live in the northern part of the city of Mitrovica. According to the Statistical Office of Kosovo, there are between 120,000 and 150,000 Serbs currently living in Kosovo, forming 5.3% of its total population in 2007. It is important to underline that, despite fears to the contrary, there has not been a mass exodus of Serbs from Kosovo since the declaration of independence!

Kosovo’s “supervised independence,” as the UN prefers to label the new status, triggered adverse reactions across the political spectrum in Belgrade and Moscow. The meaning of the “Province of Kosovo” –as it is termed in Belgrade– is encapsulated in phrases such as “ancestral heartland” that seek to capture the depth and centrality of Kosovo as a symbol of national pride, even among the most pro-Western, reform-minded Serbs.

It is important for future developments and efforts at reconciliation not to underestimate the Serbian historical bond and cultural attachment to Kosovo. Doing so would risk being a serious misjudgement by policymakers in Brussels, Berlin, Paris, and Washington. The ardent articulation of Serb national interests vis-à-vis Kosovo’s independence cannot be reduced to a desire for self-isolation as during the Milosevic years.

The bitterness many Serbians still express at being attacked during the NATO bombing campaign in 1999 is real and not limited to nationalists wishing to turn back the clock. Some observers in Belgrade have chillingly likened the loss of the province for Serbia to an “amputation without anaesthesia” (International Herald Tribune, 25/02/2008). The failure to gain a resolution in the United Nations Security Council in favour of the independence of Kosovo is consistently cited by citizens as proof that Kosovo’s declaration was illegitimate and thereby void.

Establishing a Pragmatic Working Relationship with Serbia

There will be no easy rapprochement between Serbia and Kosovo following the declaration of independence in Pristina in February 2008. However, the search for and implementation of a pragmatic working relationship that initially focuses on technical cooperation issues is the order of the day for both countries. A few examples in the economic sphere illustrate the need for such a pragmatic working relationship. A key economic signpost for Kosovo and Serbia’s future relations with the EU will rest on the question of whether the latter country will continue servicing the foreign debt obligations of the former. Since losing administrative control of Kosovo in 1999, Belgrade has continued to service Kosovo’s debt at a cost of roughly 150 million dollars a year. The argument forwarded was to thereby maintain its principal claim on the territory. The Serbian central bank has calculated that some 1.3 billion dollars were owed by Kosovo
prior to independence. Most of the foreign debt is owed to the World Bank and was allocated to Kosovo in the 1980s when it was an autonomous province of Serbia within what was then Yugoslavia.

If Belgrade were to agree with international creditors to stop servicing the debt after Kosovo’s independence, it would de facto – but not de jure – recognize the country’s new status. This paradox cannot be overcome by redirecting the earmarked funds towards establishing fiscal sovereignty in Kosovo’s Serb-dominated northern city of Mitrovica and subsidizing the Serb enclaves inside Kosovo, e.g., regarding education, health care, and financing job creation. The need for arriving at a day-to-day working relationship is also apparent in other areas of economic activity that will considerably influence the sustainability of the new state. Kosovo remains dependent on Serbia for its energy supplies. Most of Kosovo’s electrical power and fuel deliveries and many food supplies are imported from and sold by Serbia. While Kosovo exports next to nothing to Serbia, the same does not hold vice versa. Serbia exported goods worth in excess of 200 million euros to Kosovo in 2007.

As regards water supplies, Kosovo’s main water pipeline runs from Serbian Gazivoda into Kosovo. Finally, the Kosovo Property Agency (KPA), a donor-funded executive agency in Pristina, is responsible for the restitution of residential, agricultural, and commercial properties to their legal owners. Most of its more than 30,000 unresolved claims have been submitted by Serbs living outside of Kosovo today and seeking their property back when it was still a province inside Serbia. Will these Serbs accept – one way or the other – the legality of property claims decisions made by the KPA in an independent Kosovo?

Migrant workers’ transfers constitute a major economic factor. In 2007 remittances as a share of GDP reached 16.5% in Kosovo. Remittances increased slightly in 2008 from 430 million euros to 450 million euros. But the economic crisis will leave its mark on migrant workers’ continued ability to transfer such amounts back home to Kosovo. Many of these labourers in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria are employed in sectors adversely affected by the recession in their host countries, in particular in car manufacturing, construction, and household work. A decline in remittances from relatives working abroad will affect Kosovar families and their income expectations during 2009. It will equally impact the country’s foreign currency holdings, medium-term budgetary planning, and financing of high current account deficits.

The EU as Kosovo’s Most Important External Anchor

One year after Kosovo’s declaration of independence, its international recognition leaves much to be desired. Inside the United Nations a total of 55 countries have formally recognized Kosovo as a legitimate state. Nor have all 27 EU members officially recognized Kosovo’s independence. Six EU members – Spain, Slovakia, Greece, Malta, Romania, and Cyprus – have refused to recognize Kosovo even 15 months after its declaration of independence.

Despite the EU split as regards Kosovo’s independence, the EU Member States’ Foreign Ministers still agreed to deploy a 2,000-strong judicial and police mission to the country (the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, or EULEX). The EU mission and its accompanying financial aid to Kosovo were
endorsed by all 27 EU members. It is to last for 28 months, and it constitutes the EU’s most important foreign policy initiative in the Balkans. Its success will also define the EU’s credibility and policy-making capacity beyond Kosovo.

The consequences of this EU division are potentially dire for Pristina. Under these circumstances, Kosovo continues to have limited international legitimacy, thereby curtailing its capacity to seek commercial agreements and financial assistance from international institutions in which the EU is represented.

A divided EU will also not be able to initiate the first steps in Kosovo’s approximation process, i.e. drawing up a negotiating mandate for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the authorities in Pristina. Even among those countries that have recognized Kosovo, few have followed up with high-level visits, investment projects, or bilateral trade agreements. This diplomatic lapse is reflective of the rather tepid embrace of the new republic, and it risks encouraging Belgrade to yield little ground in its attempt to hold on to the territory.

**Institutional Confusion over a Divided North?**

Ultimately, Belgrade cannot have it both ways. To date, the Serbian authorities neither recognize nor cooperate with an EU mission that seeks to establish the transfer of authority from the UN mission, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), to the EU in Kosovo. It is important to bear in mind that the newly adopted Kosovar constitution does not apply to the northern part of Mitrovica.

The EU administrative mission can exercise neither its authority nor its responsibilities in the Serb-dominated part of the ethnically divided northern city of Mitrovica. In consequence, UNMIK continues to be the legitimately recognized cooperation partner for Serbian counterparties in Kosovo’s northern areas bordering Serbia. Apart from manifest security concerns, the legitimacy and legal basis of the ICO in post-status Kosovo is not recognized by Serbia.

To illustrate: following directives from Belgrade’s Ministry of Home Affairs, over 100 Serb police staff who had been working in the multi-ethnic UN-sponsored Kosovo Police Service abandoned their positions and pledged allegiance to Serbia. In these institutions we continue to observe a deepening of ethnic divisions and a determination towards non-cooperation.

The duplication of responsibility – UNMIK in the north and the ICO in cooperation with EULEX in the rest of Kosovo – raises two disturbing questions: (i) who is really leading the various international missions inside Kosovo, and (ii) to what degree does this institutional confusion constitute a further hurdle for the new state’s sovereignty and international recognition?

The litmus tests in day-to-day working arrangements will be under what conditions Serb representatives inside Kosovo are prepared to hold talks with EULEX without UNMIK serving as an intermediary. Another sign of progress – which is gradually gaining traction – is the willingness of some Serbian citizens in the Serb enclaves to start using Kosovar passports and car license plates. The latter development points to an important distinction that all too often gets lost in the heated debates over Kosovo’s independence and Serbia’s adverse reaction to it, namely that Serb citizens living in enclaves around Kosovo face different challenges and are confronted with Kosovar citizens in much more diverse conditions than their Serb brethren in the northern part of Mitrovica directly bordering Serbia. In a word, the Serb community in Kosovo is politically, culturally,
and economically much more diverse than meets the eye.
In a significant and highly symbolic move, three of Serbia’s neighbours—namely, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Hungary—jointly recognised Kosovo’s independence in March 2008. The three countries were the first of Serbia’s seven neighbouring countries to take this joint step. Three successor states of the former Yugoslav federation have now recognized Kosovo, i.e. Slovenia, Croatia, and most recently, in October 2008, Montenegro, while the Republic of Macedonia continues to withhold recognition. Serbia subsequently withdrew its ambassador in protest from Podgorica. NATO currently has 16,000 troops stationed in Kosovo. Its mandate is to ensure Kosovo’s security while seeking to avoid becoming a de facto police force for the territory. The ability of the international community, primarily the EU on a political and assistance level and NATO on a security-related level, to stand united and hold Kosovo together will determine whether the new state can mature into a stabilizing force in the Western Balkans or lead to an intractable new conflict in Europe’s backyard. A “frozen conflict” lasting decades such as the one in Cyprus cannot be an option, nor is it in the interests of the EU, the UN, or the US.

Conclusions

Writing about Europe’s newest state is an undertaking similar to focusing on a moving target. By the time the publication is complete and the book in print, the risks are high that some parts of the analysis are already outdated, having been overtaken yet again by new events in Pristina. The intricacy of the challenge is not helped by the fact that there is a mix of competing international missions in Kosovo with institutional confusion over their political objectives and the execution of their distinct mandates. Under these circumstances, Serbia can easily exploit existing contradictions within and between different, and at times competing, UN, EU, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) missions.

Furthermore, the institutional geography of Kosovo continues to be fragile and subject to considerable legitimacy problems inside and outside of the country. This fragility cannot entirely be blamed on Serbian intransigence or international foot-dragging. It is also the result of government authorities in Pristina that have far too long been addicted to status, i.e. independence, instead of focusing on standards of governance and institutional sustainability.

The defining issue in the coming years will be the manner in which and by whom the northern part of Kosovo, i.e. the Serb-dominated part of Mitrovica, will be administered. While the authorities in Belgrade claim that they have lost 15% of their territory, they also forward the counter-claim vis-à-vis Kosovo, namely that Pristina has equally lost 15% of its territory through the situation prevailing on its northern border to Serbia. The danger of this perception rests in the assumption that the “15% argument” further cements the de facto ethnic divide in Kosovo, which the international community has always claimed to avoid since its intervention in 1999.

The modus vivendi is acceptable for the time being for Serbia because it leaves all options on the table and resolves little. But for the authorities in Pristina, who are keen to advance the country’s international legitimacy and focus on the business of consolidating functioning state structures and a sustainable economy, this modus operandi is politically unacceptable.

Kosovo will thus continue to occupy us in policymaking terms as much as in writing, stimulating thought-provoking research and debate. Innovative solutions and “out of the box” thinking will be required from all parties concerned. One such option being considered is the manner in which the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) managed to establish diplomatic relations with each other between 1949 and 1989 while the former never fully recognized the sovereignty of the latter. The so-called Ischinger “Basic Treaty FRG-GDR” proposal could be a starting point from which both sides engage in constructive negotiations. Whether this complex diplomatic arrangement can serve as a working premise for Serbia and Kosovo remains to be seen. But one issue is clear: both countries do not have the luxury of time to wait another 40 years in order to arrive at a compromise. It is hoped that this diplomatic provocation will identify solutions for the right reasons in the coming years without having to “cry wolf” about Europe’s youngest country.
Europe as a Pole of Attraction for Serbia

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Introduction: A Peace Project as Context

The European Union (EU) as it stands today is at origin an emphatic political post-World War Two peace project. It has created an institutional framework encompassing 27 Member States, comprising close to half a billion citizens.

Serbia is a European country, and along with other countries of the Western Balkans, strongly aspires and endeavours to join that peace project and its present institutional framework.

The soft power of the EU with its policy of open doors to further enlargement is an incentive for new European democracies of the post-communist world to join.

As with the enlargement of the EU (then European Community) to the two post-dictatorship countries of the Iberian peninsula, Spain and Portugal, and to Greece after the dictatorship, so the embracing of the Central and Eastern European countries after 1989 –the “return to Europe”– has been a fundamental shift in the political geography of Europe.

The Balkans are encompassed by the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and Serbia, although no more a seafaring country since the independence of Montenegro in 2006, has strong links to the whole Mediterranean Basin.

The Balkan Peninsula, after the Apennine and Iberian Peninsulas, is the final South European component that will join the EU.

The year 2008 has been a crucial one for Serbia’s European outlook in many respects. It was a year of difficult challenges with the proclaimed independence of Kosovo, but also a year of the people’s adamant choice to go forth on the European path.

Geography and History

Serbia is part of the geographical core of Europe. It is thus not a neighbour to Europe as is sometimes underlined.

Serbia is today part of what can be defined as the inner courtyard of the European Union and NATO. It is, as is the whole of the Western Balkans, completely surrounded by EU and NATO members. After the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 and to NATO earlier, and the accession of Albania and Croatia to NATO in April 2009, the remaining countries of the region are all on the EU conveyor belt and are nearly all members of NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme.

Geography matters and the case of the Balkans confirms it. But history has an equal if not greater impact.

As part and parcel of modern European history, Serbia, whether as an independent state in the 19th century or as part of Yugoslavia in the 20th century, has been an engaged European ally and actor. In particular, in the First and Second World Wars, Serbia/Yugoslavia’s role was a crucial contributing factor to the victory over those who in Europe and the world attempted to subjugate and repress freedom and democracy.

The Fall of Communism

On the night of 9 November 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, symbolizing the end of communism, a new political reality dawned on Europe and the world. Yugoslavia, which had had relations with the European Community since 1971, was seen by many as the first prospective post-communist country to join the European peace project. Initial contacts and an outlook for negotiations were launched by the last Yugoslav Federal Government in 1990. This unique
historical opportunity to join the EU early on was squandered and the country fell into a catastrophic violent breakdown, causing huge loss of life, uprooting hundreds of thousands of people, and provoking devastating extremes of suffering.

The absence of democracy, rule of law, and a rights-based societal framework meant that there were no institutional levers for citizens of Yugoslavia to impede what the political leaderships were leading towards. The devastating institutional legacy of communism—which had atomized society; impeded political pluralism and freedoms of expression and association; and reinforced paternalistic and patriarchal authoritarian patterns of behaviour through a negative selection of cadres based on loyalty and obedience—meant that a power-retention battle was in the making between the existing leaderships, using nationalism as a mobilizing tool and appealing to the worst historical legacies/memories of the inter-ethnic strife. In fact, this was completely opposite to the Spanish model of transition, in which all political forces in the mid-seventies decided not to invoke the legacies and memories of the 1930s Civil War.

It is important to recall briefly this recent history to underscore the importance of the idea of Europe as value and the European Union as an institution making life somewhat more predictable. That is in essence why they aspire to join.

**Without necessarily having an in-depth knowledge of EU institutions citizens of all these countries, and thus those of Serbia, know that the EU, while imperfect as other human constructs, gives its citizens that additional increment of security, prosperity and certainty**

Also, the successful accession in 2004 and 2007 of all Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union from Estonia in the north of Europe to Serbia’s neighbour Bulgaria in the south was a key example of how states who successfully pursue the work of democratic, political, social and economic reform are accepted into the framework of the European political peace project, the EU.

**Why is Europe Attractive?**

Serbia and its citizens, along with other countries of the post-communist world, have aspired and aspire to normalcy, a life free of fear, uncertainty and insecurity, freed from the turmoil of history. In Churchill’s famous words, the Balkans produce more history than they can consume. And yet contrary to all expectations a war occurred in Europe at the end of the 20th century in spite of all the post-1945 lessons and exhortations that war should never occur again on the continent. Why did this occur? The reason, to be added to the absence of democracy, is simply that among others it had not become part of the Monnet-Schumann European project, due to the Yalta-Potsdam Cold War order.

Without necessarily having an in-depth knowledge of EU institutions or of the intricate 50-year history of the European institutional construction since the Treaty of Rome, citizens of all these countries, and thus those of Serbia, know that the EU, while imperfect as other human constructs, gives its citizens that additional increment of security, prosperity and certainty, making life somewhat more predictable. That is in essence why they aspire to join.

**Serbia in 2008**

In 2008 the citizens of Serbia went to the polls in two crucial, future-defining elections. In February, in the presidential election Boris Tadic was elected for a five-year term on a pro-European platform. In May, snap parliamentary elections were called by the outgoing government of Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica over the issue of the independence of Kosovo. The electoral coalition For a European Serbia, led by the Democratic Party of President Tadic won a convincing victory with a close to 10-point margin over its main rival the nationalist, right-wing Radical Party. The declaration of independence of Kosovo on February 17, 2008 had been an enormous political, social and historical challenge for Serbia. It came at the tail end of the nineties dissolution of Yugoslavia, after a NATO bombing in 1999, lasting 78 days that ended with the Kumanovo agreement on 10 June 1999, which led to Kosovo being put under the authority of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. Serbia retained formal sovereignty over Kosovo but had lost the practical tools of sovereignty in its Southern Province, Kosovo and Metohija.
The voters of Serbia in 2008 reconfirmed what they had decided in the historical elections of September 2000 when they ousted, peacefully, through the ballot box—a European way—Slobodan Milosevic and his regime. They had reconfirmed their choice of a European future, based on European values. The Democratic Party of President Tadic and all its coalition members had decided that, notwithstanding the challenge that Kosovo’s decision represented, only institutional, legal, diplomatic means would be used to uphold Serbia’s positions in opposition to that decision. President Tadic declared in the electoral campaign that he would not lead a new generation of young Serbs to war over whatever challenge Serbia faced. Serbia thus chose the attraction of a more stable European future, ready for the difficult tasks that lay ahead.

In July 2008 a further confirmation of the determination to pursue the European path came with the arrest of the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. The new government of Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic had just been voted in and showed that Serbia was ready to tackle the remaining obligations regarding the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The political will to move forward on this issue was patent. Two indictees remain at large: Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic.

The Serbian Parliament set about defining an agenda of pro-European legislation based on the government’s draft-law proposals.

In the political arena two significant events underscored the power of the European pole. First, the Socialist Party of Serbia, the party of Slobodan Milosevic (who had died in the ICTY prison in 2006), with a young leadership, made a clear choice after the May 2008 elections for a European future and joined the pro-European governmental coalition. Second, in the autumn of 2008 the nationalist, right wing Radical Party split over the issue of Europe, with a majoritarian wing espousing the European road for Serbia and naming itself the Serbian Progressive Party.

These changes in the political landscape of Serbia testify both to the success of the attraction of the EU model and to the soft-power dynamics at work in Europe.

**Communicating Vessels**

Serbia and its citizens have been well aware of the dynamics of Europe. They know what membership in the EU has done for former dictatorships such as Portugal and Spain. They have witnessed how Greece has developed rapidly since its membership in 1981. Serbs have been guest workers since the 1960s in Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, and many other countries and they have brought back their experiences. Very many of them have lived in the European democratic institutional framework with market economies and a system of social security.

The ethnification of politics in the 1990s that then led to war and destruction was a cul-de-sac that Serbia entered and then needed 10 years to extricate itself from. It found that it had inherited in 2000 a devastated state, society and economy and that it was at the end of the queue to Europe, a laggard. The ten years of the 1990s were very long in the lives of people and yet historically they were an aberration in Serbian history. Serbia had found itself for one “brief” but destructive historical moment on the wrong side of its allies, friends and itself.

On the territory of Europe, countries, societies and citizens observe each other, communicate and interrelate. Serbia at one moment found itself excluded and ostracized. The effect of communicating vessels played its beneficial effects. To have seen neighbouring countries Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria firmly on the path to the European Union in the late 1990s and then their entry into the EU; to have witnessed Slovenia’s entry and Croatia’s advance in negotiations as well as Macedonia becoming a candidate for entry into the EU—all these examples have defined the effect of what European Union is capable of. It must be repeated, without any idealization or naïve expectation, that the EU is a panacea.

**Enlargement Fatigue**

As in previous years, but probably more so in 2008, the question of the EU’s readiness and disposition to enlarge further has been a much debated issue. An EU older than 50 in which many young generations have little recollection of World War II, in which in prior years the French and Dutch electorate for differing reasons had rejected the new Constitutional Treaty, in which growing economic problems and finally the global financial and economic crisis have hit hard and created much unemployment—all lead to an inward-turning of domestic publics, to temptations of protectionism, to fear of immigrant workers, to opposition to enlargement.
Nevertheless, the next enlargement of the EU will happen and it will be to the Western Balkans. The EU, at its June 2003 Thessaloniki Summit under the Greek Presidency, made the decision to enlarge to the Western Balkan countries when they meet the required criteria. This decision has been subsequently and consequentially reconfirmed. It thus behoves the countries of the Western Balkans, and Serbia among them, to continue first of all at home the hard work of wholesale reform in all societal domains so as to advance on the path of full membership.

The work on visa-free travel to the EU in Serbia has been a strong motivating force for the overall EU integration process. And the recommendation (in July 2009) of the EU Commission to move forward on visa-free travel for Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro by the beginning of 2010 will be a most significant additional incentive on the road to Europe.

But there is also the need for these countries and Serbia in particular to communicate much more intensely not only with the capital of the EU, Brussels, but with all the capitals of the 27 Member States on the issue of enlargement and what it signifies for the future members involved but also for the continuation of the European political peace project and its further deepening. The Western Balkan countries all in all constitute in volume about 20 million citizens. This is smaller in size than for example the population of Romania. And thus, although among some publics and leaders in EU Member States enlargement may seem, very often because Turkey is a candidate (which I believe should join in future), as a foreign, unwanted prospect, the need to “complete” Europe is a historical task that relates back to the original post-World War II project of a Europe whole and free and at peace; Europe as a political project only if it moves forward toward future challenges. Serbia needs to show others the progress that it has achieved and to be candid about the challenges that lie ahead. It needs to allay by its reform efforts the fears that further enlargement will import problems into the EU rather than successful responsible members. In the region Serbia has a leadership role to play by demonstrating good neighbourly relations and cooperation in a true European spirit.

There are numerous regional cooperation frameworks such as the South East European Co-operation Process and the Regional Co-operation Council, as well as the coordinated combating of organized crime and trafficking of people, narcotics and weapons, or the cooperation on infrastructure such as energy, roads, or cities networks. The region already has a life onto itself linked to other European regions. Much more remains to be done.

The EU is also a pole of attraction because it plays such a supportive role in the difficult work of reforming a post-communist, post-conflict society. Although the effort of change and reform is principally domestic, the visible helping hand of Europe in this work is a fundamental burden-sharing dimension that demonstrates a crucial European value: solidarity.

In turn, the countries that have undergone the process of democratic transition and EU membership bear an obligation to show solidarity with others on the European continent and beyond it who are in need and in difficulties.

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At the EU Thessaloniki summit in summer 2003 the prospect of full EU membership was held out to the countries of the Western Balkans. Since then, some policymakers and analysts have assumed that the main question was not *if*, but *when*, the region would become part of a democratic and prosperous Europe. As Elizabeth Pond wrote in her book *Endgame in the Balkans*,

“The EU process of tutoring, hectoring, and funding candidates for membership has implanted hope in today’s parents for the prospects of their children—and this in a transatlantic atmosphere of cooperation rather than strife. The Weberian politics of drilling through hard wood proceeds, millimetre by millimetre. [...] In their attempt to escape from the nineteenth into the twenty-first century the Balkans are already light-years away from what the most optimistic observers foresaw in 1995 or 1999, or even 2004.”

Although the Balkans’ recent past is full of tragedies (from Srebrenica in 1995 to the Kosovo war in 1999, from state collapse in Albania in 1996 to interethnic warfare in Macedonia in 2001), this (optimistic) view seems to hold; at least the *future* is certain and full of promise. Social progress, in other words, is irreversible.

The implication for policy-makers (and civil society activists) is that the most efficient way to advance the cause of democratization and social development is to help countries make progress towards EU accession. While EU membership clearly does not solve all of society’s problems—a look at today’s European Union easily dispels such illusions—it does provide a credible guarantee that the future will be different from the tragic past of the nineties. How plausible is this vision today, however, against a background of EU enlargement fatigue and a global economic crisis? And even if the overall vision of stabilising the Western Balkans through EU accession remains plausible as a medium-term objective, then what does it imply for policy-making in the interim—a period that is almost certain to last more than a decade, and possibly two?

There are also some who argue that in fact little has truly changed in the region. In this alternative (pessimistic) vision, which downplays the importance of a “European perspective,” the countries of the Western Balkans appear not that different from the fragile semi-democracies of the South Caucasus. European—yes, but also peripheral and with no credible accession perspective in the short-term; a post-conflict region—yes, but also potentially pre-conflict, as some core status issues remain unresolved; fledging market economies—perhaps, but structurally weak, uncompetitive, highly dependent on remittances (what with unemployment rates often above 20%) and extremely vulnerable to any global economic downturn.

In fact, neither the optimistic vision (which sees the Balkans riding the EU conveyor belt towards democratic prosperity) nor the pessimistic one (which sees the region as a perpetual powder keg) is useful when it comes to analysing the choices ahead. This much became obvious from events in the region in 2008. The Balkans have changed—and while it is not Central Europe, it is not the South Caucasus either.

A different axis for debate is necessary. For a better understanding of the Balkans in 2008, six points must be addressed: demilitarisation, status issues, (not) catching up, EU accession in the medium-term, isolation and the credibility of the EU perspective.
Demilitarisation of Politics

The Western Balkan region is today largely demilitarised. The notion of armed conflict to advance political agendas is no longer a credible threat to stability. Montenegro abolished conscription and destroyed the tanks inherited from the Yugoslav army following independence. Bosnia and Herzegovina abolished conscription in 2006 and now has one professional army instead of three (previously largely ethnic) conscript armies. Macedonia’s professional army has made a successful effort to increase recruitment of minorities, both Albanians and Turks. Croatia and Albania have both joined NATO. Serbia, whose military was at war with NATO in 1999, has seen significant reform of its armed forces. Until recently, military service was the essential component of (male) identity among young adults. A profound but often ignored shift towards a more civilian identity has taken place: for the first time in centuries young Montenegrins, Bosnians and Albanians are no longer trained how to fight and kill.

Arguably, this is the most important achievement of the past decade. It is certainly the basis on which a different future can be built. Problems like the lack of full freedom of movement for different ethnic groups within their own countries, opposition to the return of displaced persons, and challenges of physical reconstruction and demilitarisation—all widespread a few years ago in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo or Macedonia—have been overcome. The post-war period has largely come to an end in southeast Europe—unlike the South Caucasus, where armed conflict remains a very real threat.

Status Issues

In Kosovo, recognition of national independence by some but not all Balkan states and EU Member States has fallen short of settling the region’s most intractable status issue. For now, therefore, EU accession and regional integration are not even a credible medium-term vision for the poorest member of the Balkan family.

It now appears as if a confused EU policy has merely succeeded in re-labelling the different aspects of the Kosovo problem without seriously addressing them. Independence day has come and gone, but few issues in Kosovo have actually been settled—from the future role of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the future borders of Kosovo to the question of whether Kosovo has any meaningful European perspective. This uncertainty exists against the background of a deeply worrying social and economic situation. Until there is a joint European stance on the issue of Kosovo’s status, the EU has nothing to offer to citizens of Kosovo beyond the status quo, and it can only hope that Kosovars will not start looking for alternatives to a European future for their country in the meantime.

(Not) Catching Up

In recent years a number of experts have argued that high growth rates in Western Balkan economies are evidence that the region is beginning to catch up with the rest of Europe following a period of disastrous social and economic decline in the nineties. It is far from certain, however, whether this process is already underway, or whether it can continue under current conditions. Real unemployment rates in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia were above 20% even before the onset of the current global economic crisis. The structure of exports shows that the region remains far from being integrated into European production networks. Weak governance and a continuing image problem continue to bedevil real development in the Balkans. Poor education systems remain a real problem in parts of the region.

EU Accession Remains a Medium-Term Goal for the Region

One of the most dispiriting facts for pro-reform elites in the region is the distance that still separates their countries from the rest of Europe. Even in the best of worlds it would take more than a decade for Serbia or other Western Balkan countries to become EU members. But the fact that as of spring 2009 some Western Balkan states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, and of course Kosovo) have still not submitted an application for EU membership shows how distant the goal of accession remains. Even the scenario above might appear overly optimistic for some of the Western Balkan countries. Macedonia signed its Association Agreement in 2001. Bosnia, meanwhile, had to wait another seven years. Most EU Member States, in fact, do not expect
Bosnia to make progress towards achieving candidate status in the near future—some are actually discouraging the Bosnian government from submitting an application for EU membership in the near future. An EU perspective that remains so distant is unlikely to motivate leaders to make painful compromises.

The Region Remains Isolated—Though This May Be about to Change

On the eve of the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari told the International Herald Tribune (IHT), “A clear signal of European commitment to the region would be if the EU would ease and then lift the visa regime, as it did with Croatia. At present, visas make travel from the region to the European Union difficult.” Since then six years have passed. Others have repeated Ahtisaari’s call. In the meantime, however, the people of the Western Balkans, aside from Croatia, have become not less but more isolated—more so, in fact, than at any previous point in their history. (Only Albania was more isolated under its peculiar form of communism.) The isolation of southeast Europe has undermined progress in many fields. It has also contributed to cynicism about the “European future” of the region.

Table 11 is an overview of selected countries out of the Henley Visa Restrictions Index—Global Ranking 2006. It shows the number of countries to which people from a particular region can travel without a visa: while a Finn can travel freely to 130 countries and a Romanian to 73, a citizen of Bosnia-Herzegovina can only visit 25.

Recent EU enlargement has added to the problem, making it more difficult for a Serb, for example, to travel to neighbouring Bulgaria, Romania or Hungary. Despite European rhetoric to the contrary, the recent trend has been negative.

At the same time, visa facilitation is an area where 2009 might still see substantial progress. For the first time since 1991 there is a credible prospect that the EU might lift the visa requirement for some of the countries of the Western Balkans. This would go some way towards addressing another critical point: the credibility of the EU membership perspective.

The European Perspective Matters—But Only if It Is Believed

In 2006, on the eve of Romania’s accession to the EU, Romanian analyst Alina Mungiu Pippidi wrote,

“The existence of a European option prevented Romania from staying as Albania or regressing to become a new Belarus […]. More than any constitutional or electoral law, European integration and the prospect of accession to the EU have shaped Romanian politics, and it is in this challenging environment that Europe achieved its largest success to-date. Romania’s transition may have seemed long and strenuous for Romanians, but from Ceausescu’s snipers and Iliescu’s vigilante miners to the signing of the Accession Treaty with the EU [it] has taken only fifteen years.”

For most of the transition period, Romania was governed by ex-communist Ion Iliescu and his parties. During the first six years, Iliescu and company allowed several former communist organisations to maintain and consolidate their positions.

The European Commission’s 2004 regular report complained of a secret service in the Ministry of Justice. “This service—the Independent Service of Protection and Anti-Corruption—is fully staffed by former Securitate officers and was still sipping on judges in 2004.
It had its powers trimmed only in 2005. "The first years after the fall of communism proved difficult, with an unreformed political elite (led by the Party of Social Democracy in Romania/Social Democratic Party, or PDSR/PDS) –its roots in the powerful apparatus of the communist party– holding the reins. The turning point in Romania’s reform story was December 1999, when EU leaders, meeting in Helsinki, decided to open real accession talks with Romania.

“In Romania, Iliescu tried an in-between approach in the first years of the transition and failed. Policy changed only after 2000, with the PDSR/PDS agreeing to keep the economy open to competition and foreign investment, in other words, to continue the policy of the previous CDR government.”

“By 1999, two-thirds of Romanians still thought that communism had been a good idea badly put into practice. […] Politics changed importantly after Romania applied for EU membership, and furthermore, after it was granted ‘candidate’ status in 1999. This meant that tutorship from Brussels had become acceptable even for the PDSR.”

In the end the EU accession process brought about a dramatic transformation:

“The prospect of accession to the EU opened the door for a new type of political change, a change pushed from below but taking advantage of external conditionality, necessary in a society where powerful people remained above the law.”

Is this also a credible vision for change in the Western Balkans? After 1999 the notion that Romania had a genuine chance to join the EU was essential for the transformation to work. Mungiu-Pippidi argued that the public desperately wanted Romania to join “Europe.” The country’s “laggard status” was bitterly resented. “The PDSR/PSD [Iliescu’s party] needed the Romanian economy to become successfully integrated with the European one, and after securing their domestic domination, seeking European recognition was their next important objective. Romania’s former communists have been genuinely convinced of the EU and its advantages.” In today’s Western Balkans—with leaders and voters becoming growingly sceptical of an EU membership perspective—such ideas do not resonate as well as they did in the Romania of the late nineties. At the same time, no alternative vision to mobilise broad-based social and institutional change has emerged. This raises the prospect that parts of the Western Balkan region may remain in limbo for some time to come, caught between a post-conflict past and an uncertain European future, burdened by high unemployment and weak institutions, and (in the worst case scenario) isolated from the rest of the world. Complacency, based on a belief in the all-curing potential of European integration, is not warranted, particularly when the EU itself has not offered countries like Serbia or Bosnia a sufficiently credible membership perspective—or, as in Kosovo’s case, failed to articulate any perspective whatsoever. Even if a return to conflict does not ensure a path towards stability.

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Of the 180 million inhabitants of the eight Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria), nearly 70 million (40%) are between the ages of 15 and 34. Of these, 15% of the males and 47% of the females, equal to some 20 million people (three quarters of them, young women), are neither in the educational system nor in the job market. Another five million are unemployed, the vast majority seeking their first job. Two thirds of the remaining 45 million young Mediterranean Arabs scrape by with informal jobs at subsistence wages (the minimum wage tends to act as a salary cap for the informal sector and ranges from 102 euros a month in Egypt to 256 euros a month in Lebanon) with no type of social security coverage or prospects for improvement. Over the next ten years, through 2020, at least 30 million more young people will join the workforce as a result of growth in the working-age population. It is thus hard to think of a more critical factor for the future of these countries (and of their economic and social relations with Europe) than the job prospects of these youths.

The largest youth generation in the history of the Arab Mediterranean is facing a dire equation whose main variables are: i) job prospects that are essentially limited to the informal sector (with wretched wages and working conditions that in no way constitute a decent job; see Middle East Youth Initiative 2009); ii) an increasingly widespread desire to emigrate; and iii) inadequate education and training to meet the needs of the job market (in both their home countries and Europe). Given this panorama, at the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour, held in Marrakesh in November 2008, the Ministers approved a ‘Framework of Actions’ to tackle the problem of employment in the Mediterranean at the regional level. This essentially means tackling the problem of youth unemployment, since 80% of the region’s unemployed are young people between the ages of 15 and 34 (see Table 12).

Indeed, Arab Mediterranean Countries have the world’s lowest labour participation rates (only 46% of the working-age population is in the job market, primarily because the region also has, at less than 25%, the world’s lowest female participation rate). At the same time, they have the world’s highest average unemployment rates (close to 15% of the labour force, equal to some 7 million unemployed). Taken together, these figures mean that only one in every four inhabitants has a job, and this figure does not reflect the fact that nearly half these jobs are informal.

Unemployment rates are especially high among young people and women. These groups have hardly benefited from the increased job creation the region saw from 2002 to 2007, a period of strong economic growth. They moreover run the risk of suffering the impact of the current global economic crisis more strongly than other population groups (Middle East Youth Initiative 2009). As seen in Table 12, in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon, unemployment among young people aged 15 to 25 more than doubles that of the labour force as a whole and, at an average of 21.6%, is far higher than the world average of 14%. (In fact, these rates are also the highest in the world.) Rates of over 15% were also registered in most AMCs for the 25-to-34-year-old age bracket.

**Migratory Pressure and Economic Cost**

Given this panorama, it is unsurprising that several surveys conducted in the region show that the most
common aspiration for a growing number of the region’s young people is to emigrate. According to one survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, one third of young Palestinians between the ages of 10 and 29 wish to emigrate (45% of young men and 18% of young women). Another statistical study conducted in Algeria in 2002 showed that 37% of young Algerians wish to emigrate (44% of young men and 29% of young women), and three consecutive surveys conducted in Tunisia in 1996, 2000 and 2005 showed that, despite the fact that Tunisia has some of the most robust socio-economic indicators in the region, the desire to emigrate is not only widespread, but also on the rise, having climbed from 22% in 1996 to 75.9% in 2005 (84.2% of young men and 66% of young women) (see Fargues 2009, pp. 20-21). Such high rates can only be seen as indicative of economic failure on all counts.

However, in addition to reflecting the lack of viability of the AMCs’ current economic model, the de facto exclusion of youths from the job market has a high economic cost. Based on the assumption that young people earn on average 80% of the average national wage and that women earn, on average, 25% less than men, it is possible to calculate the exact cost to the national economy of this youth exclusion from the job market (Chaaban 2008, p. 8). Assuming that youth employment rates should be equivalent to the rates for adults (arguably it would be unrealistic to assume zero unemployment for youths), youth unemployment has an annual cost in terms of foregone income of 1.76% of GDP for Algeria, 1.38% for Egypt, 1.84% for Jordan, 1.07% for Lebanon, 3.6% for Morocco, 2.36% for Syria and 1.69% for Palestine, with a total yearly cost for these seven countries of USD 14.4 billion (adjusted for purchasing-power parity -PPP). However, if we broaden the scope to include not only unemployed youths, but also inactive youths who are not engaged in the educational system (which better reflects the true cost of the inability of youths to enter the job market, especially with regard to young women), the cost of youth exclusion from the job market based on the same assumptions as above, rockets: the yearly cost amounts to 9.09% of GDP for Syria, 7.29% for Egypt, 4.14% for Jordan and 2.74% for Lebanon, for a total annual cost of USD 28.8 billion (adjusted for PPP). These figures clearly show that few economic policy measures could have a stronger impact on these countries’ economic development than the promotion of youth employment.

**The Education Factor**

In fact, the real figures are even more discouraging, as the unemployment data reveal that unemployment rates increase in accordance with young people’s
education levels: the average unemployment rate among university graduates (17.4%) is more than twice as high as the rate for workers with no or only primary education (among women, this trend is especially acute, with unemployment rates among university graduates topping 25%). The problem of unemployment among university graduates, although it does not prevail in absolute terms (this group accounts for just over 1 million of the region’s 7 million unemployed), is not only a glaring waste of educational investment (5% of the region’s GDP, compared to 3% in Latin America or East Asia), but also calls attention to the vast chasm separating the region’s education and vocational training systems from the needs of its job markets. It is not that the AMCs are producing too many university graduates (no more than 15% of the region’s labour force holds an undergraduate degree), but rather that just as most of these countries have achieved, or are about to achieve, universal primary education, the job market is pointing up the inadequacy of their educational systems. The problem is, in part, due to the quality of their educational systems. However, it can also be traced to the heavy concentration of university students in disciplines, such as the humanities or social sciences, primarily geared toward the public sector, which is no longer able to guarantee jobs for recent graduates as it did up until the 1980s. In contrast, the technical, scientific, engineering and management fields required by the private sector attract far fewer students.

Nor have the region’s secondary school and technical and vocational training systems fared any better. A recent study by the World Bank on job markets and mobility between Europe and North Africa and the Middle East (MENA) showed that the education levels of the burgeoning labour force in Arab Mediterranean Countries were not suited to meet the growing labour demand, especially for workers with medium-level skills, that Europe will experience over the next fifty years as its population ages (World Bank 2009). Chart 26 shows this mismatch between the educational profile of the labour force in Arab Mediterranean Countries and the European labour demand both if educational reforms are not undertaken and current labour participation rates are not increased (Panel A) and if a substantial investment is made in education and labour participation rates are stimulated (Panel B).

It is not that the AMCs are producing too many university graduates but rather that just as most of these countries have achieved universal primary education, the job market is pointing up the inadequacy of their educational systems.

As indicated by the World Bank, ‘the labor force [in Middle Eastern and North African countries] is currently predominantly low skilled. If these ratios do not change (and assuming constant labor force par-
Participation rates), [by 2050,] the labor force under 40 years of age will mainly expand among those with primary education or less (25 million) and to a much lesser extent among the secondary educated (25 million) and the tertiary educated (7 million). [...] Poor education outcomes in MENA countries remain an obstacle to compete in global labor markets'. Although the average years of schooling among the region’s labour force almost doubled between 1980 and 2000 (climbing from fewer than three years to more than five), it continues to be almost two years less than the average for countries in Latin America and East Asia. Thus, upgrading educational policy in these countries is another key to their future development, a fact that should be given serious consideration with regard to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Indeed, many of the policy actions and institutional reforms that will be needed to increase these countries’ competitiveness in the global labour market and promote job mobility are in keeping with those needed to foster private-sector job creation and labour productivity growth at home. In other words, some of the factors blocking economic growth and domestic job creation may also lessen the potential for higher migration benefits in the sending countries (World Bank 2009, pp. xx-xxi).

Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Strategy?

In light of these prospects, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which, until 2005 did not undertake any direct action or programme in the field of employment (see Aita, Martin, et alia 2008, and Lannon and Martin 2009, pp. 17-23), seems to have begun to equip itself with policy instruments to tackle this challenge. Thus, the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour, held in Marrakesh on 9 and 10 November 2008,[^1] addressed ‘concrete initiatives and proposals to promote employment creation, the modernisation of labour markets, and decent work’, undertaking to develop a ‘Framework of Actions which would contribute to developing a genuine social dimension within the Euro-Med agenda’. The Ministers moreover stressed ‘the need for a better match between –current and future– labour market needs and the development of necessary skills through […] enhanced education and vocational training as well as through reforms at national and regional levels concerning the framework of qualifications and competencies’, whilst at the same time underscoring the benefits of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in this sphere.

The Ministers also acknowledged that, in addition to high economic growth rates, the situation calls for a greater investment in human capital, training and employability, as well as concrete job creation measures and an improved environment for said investments. They further emphasised the interdependence between employment, education and training, social cohesion, economic development and growth and sustainable development and called for an integrated approach whereby economic, fiscal, employment, social and environmental policies, as well as education and training policies, would be defined and implemented together.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership seems to have begun to equip itself with policy instruments to tackle this challenge, and the Employment Ministerial Conference to be held in 2010 will review the progress achieved.

Having made the diagnosis and defined the framework for political action, the Ministers then committed themselves to a regional Framework of Actions based on the objectives set out in the Annex to the Conclusions, namely: i) create more jobs, including through active employment policies; ii) enhance employability and human capital; iii) create better jobs and decent employment opportunities; iv) promote equal opportunities for men and women; v) integrate more young people into decent jobs; and vi) design a comprehensive strategy for transforming informal employment into formal employment; and vii) manage labour migration, taking into account the job market needs of both sides of the Mediterranean. Specifically with regard to youth employment, the stated objective consists of ‘integrating more young people into productive, formal employment’ through measures that: i) ensure equal access for both sexes

to all levels of quality education by 2015; ii) take into account the Cairo Declaration on Higher Education; iii) reduce the mismatch between young people’s education and professional aspirations (in particular, with regard to the public sector) and actual job market needs; and iv) to this end, prioritise expanding and improving the quality of vocational training, whilst at the same time making it more attractive to young people.

Finally, the Ministers established a follow-up mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Framework for Actions, consisting of a Working Group that ‘will collect information and data on national trends and policy developments, identify and exchange best practices, as well as address issues which arise in the implementation of the Framework of Actions. The partner countries will provide the group with the information needed for drawing up during 2010 a follow-up report on progress under the Framework of Actions’. This progress report will be based, in the case of the Mediterranean partner countries, on national action plans and progress reports to be submitted by 2009 and, in the case of EU Member States, on the reports submitted within the framework of the EU’s Lisbon Strategy.

A framework for action has thus been defined. The challenge now consists of equipping it, at the Second Ministerial Conference to be held in 2010 precisely under the Spanish Presidency of the EU, with the appropriate instruments to enable medium-term progress towards a true Euro-Mediterranean Employment Strategy able to address the issue of employment at a regional level as what it is: a regional challenge.

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Contextual Background

Agricultural development and food supply represent a central issue and one of the biggest challenges facing the MENA region. Despite some notable progress and successes, agriculture has not played an effective role in lifting the population of this region out of poverty by providing a platform for diversified economic growth. The food gap for the region has been increasing and widening in recent years. Rising food and oil prices and the adverse climatic conditions in the last year (2007-2008) have further aggravated the food situation for the region.

The general picture painted for agriculture and food security in the region is characterized by non-, under-, and mal-utilization of material and natural resources, resulting in low resource productivities and inadequate crop yield levels aggravated by a widening technological gap. The increasing disproportion between per capita food production and consumption suggests a worsening of the food situation in the region when the business-as-usual approach persists. It could deteriorate further if the negative tendencies of the triple global crises on food (bio-fuel production and rising food prices), energy (rising oil prices) and the environment (natural and man-made calamities) become more pervasive.

The region relies heavily on food imports, and foreign exchange earnings constitute a major determinant of food security. Fluctuations in oil prices, the key source of export earnings, influence directly the economies of the exporting countries and indirectly those of the non-oil exporting countries, especially through flows of remittances from intraregional labour migration.

Drivers for Rising Food Prices

In 2007, there was a sharp increase in food prices calculated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at 40%, compared with 9% the year before. And in the first months of 2008 prices again increased drastically. Nearly every agricultural commodity is part of this rising price trend. Wheat, maize and rice prices have more than doubled during the last couple of years, jumping to unprecedented levels. Dairy products, meat, poultry, and palm oil have also experienced price hikes.

Food price increases have resulted from a combination of new and ongoing forces. One emerging factor behind rising food prices is the drive for fuel production at the expense of food consumption brought about by rising energy prices. With oil prices at an all-time high of more than 140 dollars a barrel, agricultural production is increasingly used to produce bio-fuel. This trend has been supported by bio-fuel policies in some countries, particularly the US, aiming at subsidizing farmers to grow crops for energy. About 30% of US maize production (i.e. about 80 million tons) will be used for ethanol production in 2008 rather than for world food and food markets. In Brazil and other countries, sugar cane is massively used in ethanol production. In the European Union and the US, oilseed crops are widely used for the production of bio-diesel, with focus on rape seeds in the EU and soybeans in the US. The world production of ethanol reached more than 16 billion gallons in 2006, half of that from in the US, while world bio-diesel production reached 8 billion gallons in 2006. High energy prices contributed to a higher cost of production by raising the cost of mechanical cultivation, inputs like fertilizers and pesticides, and transportation of inputs and outputs, all of which made agricultural production more expensive.
Rapid economic growth in many developing countries, particularly in China and India, has pushed up consumers' purchasing power, generated rising demand for different kinds of food, and shifted food demand away from traditional staples and towards higher-value foods like meat and milk, which in turn has led to increased demand for grains used for animal feed.

Other factors have also played a role in the rise of food prices. They include poor weather and severe drought in Australia, one of the world’s largest wheat producers. Speculative capital in future commodity markets has been another factor contributing to rises in energy and consequently in food prices.

Role of the Agricultural Sector in the MENA Region

The population of the MENA countries has been estimated at 311 million in 2006, amounting to 4.8% of the world’s population. During the period from 1990 to 2006, the region’s population grew at 2.4% annually, compared to 1.4% for the world population. The overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the region amounted to 734 billion dollars in 2006, constituting 1.5% of the World GDP.

Agriculture continues to dominate the economies of most of the MENA countries and is an important vehicle for economic growth. The sector continues to produce the bulk of food consumed in the region, accounting for about 40% of total employment and about 20% of total merchandise exports in many countries. Agricultural exports are the main source of raw materials for industry, and as much as two-thirds of manufacturing value added in most of the MENA countries is based on agricultural raw materials.

Agriculture is generally viewed as the driving force for the development of the MENA region, especially in non-oil producing countries. The sector is critical to overall growth, food security, and poverty reduction in the region. The Agricultural Gross Domestic Product (AGDP) amounted to 88 billion dollars in 2006, representing 12% of the overall GDP. The rural population amounted to 132 million in 2006, accounting for 42.5% of the total population in the region.

Agricultural production is important for food security because it is a source of income for the majority of the rural poor. It is particularly critical in those countries with highly variable domestic production limited tradability of food staples and foreign exchange constraints in meeting their food needs through imports. These countries are exposed to international risks, and for them, increasing and stabilizing domestic production is essential for food security.

Agriculture is a source of livelihoods for an estimated 70% of rural people. It provides jobs for a large number of smallholders and landless workers and acts as a foundation for viable rural communities. More than 80% are engaged in smallholder agriculture. Accordingly, high priority should be accorded in the region for utilizing agriculture as a tool for poverty reduction.

Food Situation in the Region

The MENA region is generally characterized by food shortage in most of the food commodities. Production of wheat and rice meet only 25 and 52% of the total consumption, respectively. The group of cereals shows the lowest Self-Sufficiency Ratio (SSR) in the total region food basket, with wheat occupying the least SSR. The second group of the food basket reflects higher SSRs ranging from 73 to 98% and including pulses, sugar, milk, and vegetable oils. The third group, including fish, vegetables, fruits, and meat, shows SSR surpassing 100%.

In many countries, average per capita caloric intake is below minimal nutrition standards. Several countries are currently experiencing severe food shortages, and the food shortage problem is expected to increase during the next decade. Food production has declined or sustained during the last two decades, while the population size has increased. The demand for food imports has markedly increased, thereby seriously aggravating the shortage of foreign exchange in the majority of the MENA countries, particularly the non-oil producing countries.
Agricultural Resources and Socioeconomic Constraints

The MENA region is endowed limited arable lands estimated at 53 million hectares in the year 2005, with per capita arable land of only 0.17 hectares, compared to 0.22 hectares at the world level. Renewable fresh water resource flows amount to 228 billion cubic metres of water annually in the MENA region, representing 0.5% of total fresh water flows in the world. Per capita renewable internal fresh water resources amount to 757 cubic metres in the MENA region, representing only 11% of the world level. Access to water and irrigation is a major determinant of land productivity and the stability of yields. Irrigated land productivity is more than double that of rain-fed land. In the region, only 20% of the area in production is under irrigation. With climate change leading to rising uncertainties in rain-fed agriculture and reduced glacial runoff, investment in water storage will be increasingly critical. Agriculture uses 89% of MENA’s scarce water, compared to 70% at the world level, at a time of concern about water’s availability for cities and industry.

Several socioeconomic and technological constraints confront agricultural development and food security programmes, particularly in the major agricultural producing countries. Demographic pressures and declining farm sizes are some of the major constraints reflecting the continuous and deepening imbalance between population and agricultural resource base. The average farm size is already quite small. Continued population growth, declining farm size, and growing landlessness put huge pressures on the agricultural and rural sector in the Arab region.

Water security is the second major constraint in the Arab area, the driest in the world. Fresh water supplies are already fully used, 80% of which are currently used in agriculture, and escalating demands for industrial, urban, and environmental uses will reduce the water available to agriculture. Water scarcity is particularly acute and projected to worsen with climate change and rising demand in the Arab region. Some rural areas in the non-exporting countries are lagging areas that have stagnated with high levels of poverty. The causes are varied: poor agricultural potential, low investment in roads and irrigation, and social marginalization. The political pressure of farmers to reduce the urban-rural income gaps through protection and subsidies is increasing. Because of the large number of poor people, protecting food prices to raise farm incomes may have high costs for poor consumers, including most small farmers, who are net food buyers.

There is considerable evidence that slower growth in agriculture relates to the macro and sectoral policy biases against it. Furthermore, pro-rich policies have been seen recently in the region. Several countries have taxed agriculture relative to other sectors. Interventions induced a 30% decline in the relative price of agricultural products with respect to a non-agricultural price index. This policy bias was largest in the agriculture-based countries of the MENA region, with overvalued exchange rates, high tariff protection in industry, and taxes on agricultural exports all contributing to the bias. It was estimated that a 10 percentage point reduction in total taxation to the sector would increase overall annual growth by 0.43 percentage points. Since the mid-nineties, most MENA countries have substantially improved their macro-economic policy and reduced their biases against agriculture.

Impact of Rising Food Prices on the MENA Region

Given that the majority of the MENA countries are net importers of food commodities, they become the ones most seriously affected by rising prices. The dramatic increases in the food bills place a heavy burden on public budgets, thereby deepening deficits in balances of payments. Large importers will also be at risk when seeking their needs from the world markets, given the declining trend in world food stocks, which have reached their lowest level in the last three decades.

At the household level, surging and volatile food prices hit those who can afford it the least—the poor and food insecure, who constitute the larger part of the population. The few poor households that are net sellers of food will benefit from higher prices, but households that are net buyers of food—which represent the large majority of the region’s poor—will suffer. Larger sections of near poor people will be pushed below the poverty line and their accessibility to food will be decreased. The nutrition of the poor is also at risk when they are not shielded from the price increases. Facing higher food prices, poor people will have to adjust their food consumption and shift to even less-balanced diets, with harmful effects on health in the short and long run.
MENA countries have responded to the soaring food prices following different approaches, depending on each country’s specifics. However, the MENA region is generally characterized by subsidies dominating the policy response, high share of staples in consumption, high dependence on imported food, relatively high (for income levels) malnutrition rates, fragile social equilibrium—recent growth is widely perceived to be pro-rich—and absences of targeted safety nets.

**Proposed Food Supply Policies**

Food production is central to food security in the MENA countries. The overall goal for countries in the region is to secure sustained agricultural growth, reduce poverty, and improve food security. This goal is reflected in the sustainable agricultural development strategy for Arab countries that was agreed upon at the Arab Economic Summit in Kuwait in January 2009. Specific structural features of the MENA countries must be considered in designing the agenda to achieve the overall growth, poverty reduction, and food security goals. However, the diversity across the MENA countries and across countries is huge in terms of size, agricultural potential, transport links, reliance on natural resources, and state capacity.

In view of the high dependence of the people, especially the marginalized groups of the population, on agricultural resources, improving agricultural productivity will enhance food security by making food available in the hopes that this shall improve the livelihoods of the impoverished strata of the population, which remains to be an important objective of agriculture in the next two decades.

Specifically, the region requires:

- Increase in the production (availability) of and access to food required by the population, especially the poor sections of the population.
- Improvement of employment and income-earning opportunities to enhance access for all, especially the poor, to basic foods.
- Reduction in vulnerability to economic and environmental changes, and provision of economic “cushions” and security during external market-shocks and natural calamities in the event of rising food prices and droughts and floods.

These objectives are inseparable: mitigating poverty is critical to environmental protection, and protecting the environment is crucial for addressing poverty through sustainable agricultural production.

Long-term solutions for the food supply problem should include: 1) a multi-sector approach to development; 2) the active participation of rural agriculturalists; 3) land tenure policies that place limits on land acquisition; 4) improved price structures on the world market for export crops; 5) environmentally sensitive agricultural programmes; and 6) international cooperation among MENA countries to improve their bargaining position in international matters.

A priority action for partnerships in the field of food supply in the MENA countries includes Arab investment support to productive activity in existing Arab agricultural schemes, in smallholder agriculture, and in new large-scale agricultural schemes to produce strategic food crops. Another action includes the establishment of food reserves complemented by composite flours as long-term measures of food security. Other actions suggested involve infrastructure and trade and Research and Development (R&D). The broad-based economic development requires prior growth and productivity gains in agriculture. Rising agricultural productivity is a significant source of economic growth that generates employment, export earnings, and additional incomes.

**References**


The developing Arab South and East Mediterranean Partners (ASEMPs)1—which are partners with the EU through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), also known as the Barcelona Process, and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)–, are evolving in their relations with the EU in variable geometry. Hence, there is certain political, economic and social diversity among these countries, as well as differences in their progress insofar as free trade and reforms.

Differences among these countries can be noted in such aspects as whether they are members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or not, or whether they have concluded Association Agreements or undersigned Action Plans (see Table 13). The four countries most advanced in the process of trade integration with the EU are Tunisia (FTA fully entered into effect in 2008), Morocco (FTA will fully enter into effect in 2010), Egypt and Jordan. Moreover, these countries have concluded a Free Trade Agreement amongst themselves (the Agadir Agreement), which entered into effect in March 2007. Only Tunisia and Morocco, however, can boast an ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU of sufficient duration.

What Effects Is the FTA Expected to Have?

First of all, in the process of North-South ASEMPEU integration, the southern partners expect three major effects.

Convergence Effect

A convergence effect is expected, in other words, a reduction of disparities with regard to GDP (PPP) per capita among the partners (upward trend) in the medium- and long-terms through a more sustained rhythm of growth in the South and a greater attraction of financial flows, above all foreign direct investment (FDI). This is the so-called announcement effect to the benefit of the less wealthy partners (the ASEMPS).

Incentivising Effect for Economic and Political-Institutional Reforms

In this regard, it must be kept in mind that, concerning the FTA and according to the Barcelona Declaration, the South and East Mediterranean Partners have committed to proceed to economic and institutional adjustments by undertaking fundamental structural reforms. By the same token, the ENP is intended to be a partnership for reform, with a system of incentives for economic, administrative and political reforms (benchmarking) and contractual neighbourhood relations that are more or less advanced according to the progress made in the reform process.

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1 Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Palestinian Territories (when data available).
South-South Integration Effect

It must be kept in mind that both the EMP, via the Barcelona Declaration, and the ENP, through its Action Plans, insist on the goal of promoting and strengthening the process of South-South cooperation and integration (Maghreb, Agadir Group). For numerous analysts, South-South integration strongly conditions the benefits expected by the ASEMPs from the FTA with the EU.

The Effects of the FTA on the ASEMPs:
A Brief Assessment

It is risky at the present state of progress (except in the case of Tunisia and, to a lesser extent, Morocco) to draw any conclusions, all the more so since there is always the problem of the ‘imputation’ of the developments registered to the single effect of Free Trade Agreements between the EU and the ASEMPs. The results should therefore be relativised.

Macroeconomic Effects on the ASEMPs

In terms of convergence, that is, reduction of the gap in GDP (PPP) per capita, few significant changes have been registered, except in the case of Tunisia (gap with the EU comparable to that of Romania). Indeed, if the EU monetary system is taken as a reference (base of 100), it turns out that the GDP (US$ PPP) per capita between 1995 and 2005 went from nearly US$ 20,000 (PPP) to approximately US$ 25,000 (PPP) in the Euro zone. In the ASEMPs, the (simple) average went from US$ 4,000 (PPP) to US$ 4,800 (PPP) between 1995 and 2005, that is, 20% and 19.2% in proportion to the Monetary Union in 1995 and 2005. This would actually indicate an absence of convergence. Only Tunisia has experienced a certain degree of convergence, since the gap in terms of proportion went from 23% to nearly 30% from 1995 to 2005.

This relative weakness in attracting FDI (apart from in the energy sector) remains a serious handicap for accelerating growth and allowing convergence to begin.

Regarding foreign direct investment (FDI): FDI flows entering the ASEMPs went from 1,365 billion US dollars in 1995 to 3,312 billion US dollars in 2006. The ASEMPs’ share was, on average and in proportion to the incoming FDI, on a global level of between 0.76% and 0.98%. Though there is slight progress, it is well below the demographic potential of the ASEMPs. This relative weakness in attracting FDI (apart from in the energy sector) remains a serious handicap for accelerating growth and allowing convergence to begin.

Incentivising Effect for Economic and Political-Institutional Reforms

- Trade liberalisation: The European Commission\(^2\) (EC) indicates progress for the majority of ASEMPs insofar as trade liberalisation (lowering of tariffs, implementation of FTAs with the

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which translates into a rise in the volume of goods traded between the ASEMPs and the EU. In this regard, the EC points out the reforms undertaken here and there, in Egypt in particular and Tunisia to a certain degree, to facilitate external trade. In any case, tariff barriers generally remain elevated (Syria, Egypt, Morocco).

The Index of Economic Freedom has 10 component factors including Trade Freedom. The Trade Freedom Index takes into account the average weighted tariff and non-tariff barriers (NTB), and ranges from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the greater the trade freedom. In comparison to Romania and Slovenia, and with the exception of Lebanon, the average index for the ASEMPs is weak (50.6% on average, as compared to 74.9% in Romania and 64.5% in Slovenia). In any case, there has been greater relative liberalisation in Tunisia and to a lesser extent, Egypt and Jordan. It is undeniable that the relatively weak trade liberalisation, and therefore the persistence of strong tariff and non-tariff barriers constitute obstacles to an intensification of South-South trade in particular.

- The business climate: Globally and by comparison, the rhythm of reforms tending to improve the business climate remains weak as yet. This could explain the poor performance insofar as attracting FDI, competitiveness and productivity (except in Tunisia, relatively speaking).

Negative factors often cited by businesspeople:

- The persistent rigidity of labour markets (employment and dismissal conditions, etc.);
- The rather insufficient quality of educational systems;
- Problems relating to the conclusion and effective implementation of contracts (time, procedures and the like).

- Public institutions and systems of governance:

  - With regard to the efficiency of public administration, the regional average is below the world average (according to the World Bank’s governance indicators);
  - Insofar as the struggle against corruption: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Morocco have recently ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This is not yet the case with Syria and Tunisia. With the exception of Morocco and Jordan’s relatively good score, the control of corruption in the other countries has deteriorated (Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Libya).

**South-South Integration: The Agadir Agreement Is Promising**

One factor to keep in mind is that trade among the Agadir group of countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) has been marginal to date. In any case, the weak concentration of exports is a sign of diversification of export products and this should foster intra-Agadir trade.

Moreover, in terms of degree of synergy, it is, for instance, greater than that of the Andean Community (CAN), which would indicate that the weakness of intra-Agadir trade cannot be attributed to this factor. A finer analysis for each pair of partner countries in the Agadir group in the 12 possible partner-partner configurations reveals rather high Egypt-Morocco, Jordan-Egypt, Tunisia-Egypt and Tunisia-Jordan synergies. Everything would seem to indicate that the potential synergy of the group is relatively significant.

In addition, the Pan-Euromed cumulation of rules of origin is promising. Indeed, the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Region of cumulation of origin consists of 25 EU countries, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), plus Romania, Bulgaria, the Faeroe Islands, Turkey and the ASEMPs (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Palestinian Territories and Tunisia) and Israel. The Pan-Euromed cumulation is applied hereafter to trade among the four partners of the Agadir Agreement, as well as among the four partners and the EU-25.

The multiplicity of integration agreements is a real puzzle, with problems of coherence, compatibility and opposition, resulting in a complexity of management that handicaps the process of integration

In any case, the stalemate in South-South integration concerns the institutional dimension. Indeed, on an internal level, it can be noted that in the
The stalemate in South-South integration concerns the institutional dimension. Indeed, on an internal level, it can be noted that in the four countries and to varying degrees, the institutional framework is yet too fragile and incomplete for establishing open market economies.

Overview of the Perspectives
Towards Greater Integration

With the exception of Tunisia and Morocco, the majority of other partners are to be given from four to nine years more for concluding an FTA with the EU. Moreover, the EC emphasises little progress in the sphere of services and FDI. In fact, a new trend began to emerge in October 2007 towards Deep Free Trade Agreements (DFTA), which include all goods and services. A working group was constituted in 2008 to this effect, with the goal of drawing up a road map with the new stages for 2010 and thereafter, integrating issues relative to agriculture and fishing, non-tariff barriers, services, letters of establishment, compliance agreements, convergence of regulations and the like. Bilateral negotiations are underway with Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt (and soon Israel). Jordan already concluded an agreement of this type in 2006. In any case, the EC reports that there has been no progress with Syria, Lebanon or the Palestinian Authority.
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Cairo

Doha Round negotiations are in a freeze and the world is plunging into a state of recession that was only previously experienced in the early thirties. Can trade in services play a role in alleviating the problems associated with the stalling of multilateral trade and the aftermath of the financial crisis? This short essay argues that liberalisation of trade in services between four Arab South Mediterranean Countries (ASMCs) can play an important role in enhancing intra-regional integration. Regional liberalisation of trade in services can alleviate some of the potential negative repercussions of the financial crisis on trade in goods among ASMCs, provided some preconditions are met.

This essay aims to investigate some important means of enhancing trade in services on a regional level between four ASMCs, namely Agadir countries including Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan. The essay starts by pointing out the economic importance of services in ASMC economies and trade. It then explains how liberalisation of trade in services can act as an engine for enhancing intra-regional trade among ASMCs. It further highlights various approaches for liberalising services on an intra-regional basis. Finally, a list of policies and procedures that should be adopted by ASMCs before regionally liberalising trade in services to ensure a positive outcome of such liberalisation on intra-regional integration is presented.

Why Are Services Important in the ASMC Intra-regional Context?

Merchandise trade has not been able to play the leading role as an engine of intra-regional trade in the Arab world in general and among ASMCs in particular. Despite the relative and absolute increase in intra-regional trade among ASMCs, they remain characterised by low intra-regional trade, ranging from two to 5% of ASMC trade.

There are several reasons for such a low level of intra-regional trade, including the similarity of production and export profiles of ASMCs, the lack of well-developed transport infrastructure, and the weak intra-industry trade pattern among these countries. Though such impediments are of a structural nature, they can change, but this requires ample time. Hence there is an urgent need to agree on a main driver of intra-regional trade. We argue that services can play this role due to their significant position in the ASMCs, where they constitute the lion’s share of GDP and a significant portion of trade.

The services sector constitutes on average 50-60% of GDP in ASMCs, as depicted in Table 14. Hence, the importance of this sector for the growth and development prospects of ASMCs is paramount, especially since the share of the services sector in ASMCs has been rather stable for a period exceeding 10 years.

Table 15 reconfirms that services have been playing a major role in ASMC economies. ASMCs differ in the comparative advantage they enjoy in services. For example, depending on data availability, Egypt and Tunisia enjoy a comparative advantage in travel and transport services, whereas Morocco enjoys a comparative advantage in other business services, and finally Egypt and Jordan enjoy a comparative advantage in construction (based on data for 2003 calculated from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development - UNCTAD, 2007).

This is just an example of what ASMCs enjoy in terms of exporting services, which is an issue that can be built upon to enhance their regional integration.
Moreover, the world has started to focus on the ASMCs for outsourcing a number of services, including business services (such as back office services), communications, and computer services, implying that ASMCs are developing their services to meet such demand.

ASMCs should undertake all the necessary measures on the regional level to ensure that their service sectors prosper and benefit from the development and growth processes of their economies. Among the measures that can be undertaken to enhance regional integration among ASMCs is the intra-regional liberalisation of trade in services.

How Far Have ASMCs Gone in Liberalising Their Trade in Services?

The level of commitments among ASMCs in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) differs significantly as shown in Table 16. However, it should be noted that the level of commitments does not necessarily reflect the extent of liberalisation. On the contrary, the extent of GATS commitments in terms of number of commitments is rather a reflection of the date of membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Old members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) generally have a low level of commitments, whereas new members of WTO have a larger number of commitments, as a result of the pressure exerted on newly acceding WTO members to include a larger number of commitments. Hence, it is not surprising to find that Jordan has the highest number of commitments among ASMCs, and even among the WTO members in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 14</th>
<th>Share of Services in GDP of ASMCs (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>50.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>66.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>52.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>59.24</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE 15</th>
<th>Trade in Services as a Percentage of GDP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>49.41</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 16</th>
<th>Number of GATS Commitments of Arab Countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status of GATS Commitments in the ASMCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
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Source: WTO (2008), Trade Profiles.
Approaches to Liberalising Trade in Services on an Intra-regional Basis

First Approach: ASMCs can start by comparing the sectors in which they have undertaken commitments. There are a large number of sectors where ASMCs have undertaken commitments that are highly similar, including finance, tourism, and communications services. This is not to say that commitments are the same, but rather that the inclusion of a certain service sector in the GATS schedule of an ASMC is a signal of the willingness of that country to open up its sector at some point in time. Moreover, the ASMCs’ domestic regulations are in general more liberal than what they have committed themselves to in their GATS schedules, implying that the scope for regional liberalisation on a GATS-plus basis is high, while still preserving the national preference.

Second Approach: There are a number of service sectors that are more eligible for intra-regional liberalisation than multilateral liberalisation. The specific nature of such sectors, in terms of setting their standards and the rules and regulations governing their markets, makes it more convenient to liberalise on an intra-regional rather than on the multilateral level. Among such sectors are infrastructure-type and network services (e.g., transport and energy), where intra-regional liberalisation is more suitable than multilateral liberalisation for technical and/or economic reasons (such as economies of scale) (Stephenson, 2002; Fink and Jansen, 2007). Hence, ASMCs can start their intra-regional liberalisation by focusing on such sectors.

Third Approach: Intra-regional liberalisation of services can help ASMCs to improve their infant service activities that have the potential to compete at the global level, but need to get ready through “learning by doing” by liberalising within the region as a first step. There are a number of service providers in ASMCs that have started to play a role on the global scene (e.g., in the fields of telecommunications and construction). There are other potential champions that need to be promoted on the intra-regional level to be able to compete on the global level as business-services. In other words, regional integration can be viewed as a step towards opening up to the whole world in the WTO context. In this regard ASMCs can focus on sectors where their service providers have established a significant presence in the intra-regional context and ASMCs need to sharpen the competitiveness of such service providers (e.g., in construction, telecommunications, and tourism).

Any liberalisation attempt, whether at the unilateral, regional, or multilateral level, should be undertaken mainly to enhance competition in the provision of services to increase positive welfare gains from liberalisation.

Policies and Procedures that Should Be Adopted by ASMCs to Liberalise Trade in Services at the Intra-regional Level

Any liberalisation attempt, whether at the unilateral, regional, or multilateral level, should be undertaken mainly to enhance competition in the provision of services to increase positive welfare gains from liberalisation. For competition and liberalisation to work efficiently, there is a need for a healthy regulatory framework that aims to avoid service-specific problems associated with market failures and asymmetric information. In this context, intra-regional liberalisation is likely to enhance regional integration among ASMCs and is expected to enhance the competitiveness of their economies provided that certain procedures are undertaken before liberalisation. Among such procedures are the following:

1) Regulatory Audit as a Step for Streamlining Laws and Regulations

In many cases there are a number of laws and regulations that prevail and are outdated, and that hence remain a bottleneck for further reform and liberalisation. In this regulatory audit process, a comprehensive review of the rules and regulations governing specific sectors should be carried out. Unnecessary regulations should be eliminated.
2) Regulatory Convergence

As a step towards effective intra-regional integration, it is not necessarily needed to put it in the form of opening up. An alternative means is what is coined regulatory convergence. Regulatory convergence can be achieved through the unilateral removal of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) (after undertaking the regulatory audit), mutual recognition (banking licenses or professional certifications), or a compliance with global standards (e.g. international accounting rules) (Müller-Jentsch, 2004). Mutual recognition in the context of services can in principle span a wide range of practices, including recognition of prudential measures under financial services (in order to facilitate Mode 3), recognition of educational qualifications with a view to enrolment in higher education or further training (to facilitate Mode 2 consumption of education services and subsequently Mode 4), as well as recognition of professional qualifications (to facilitate trade under Mode 4) (Fink and Jansen, 2007). ASMCs should start initiating projects on a bilateral or sub-regional basis to facilitate the recognition of education qualifications that will have a positive effect on enhancing trade in business services.

3) Cooperation among Regulators in Network Industries

There are a number of service sectors that are called network industries, including electricity, gas, telecom, water, and rail. The establishment of independent regulators is an integral part of reform and liberalisation programmes in those sectors, which is often the case in ASMCs. To ensure effective liberalisation at the intra-regional level there should be cooperation between regulatory authorities. The optimal degree and type of cooperation, however, varies between sectors according to the nature of the sector. There is a need for creating institutional networks among regulators to facilitate the spread of the best practices (through information exchange and benchmarking). This type of cooperation indirectly helps effective liberalisation to level the playing field in cross-border markets through regulatory convergence (Müller-Jentsch, 2004). It is worth noting that the establishment of the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association in 2007 is a step in the right direction. Similar models in other network industries and among regulators should be adopted to enhance cooperation in such service activities.

4) Rules of Origin

Rules of origin play an important role in determining the preferential treatment allowed for regional partners. In the case of services, in contrast to the case of goods, rules of origin are more difficult to determine. Services can be provided by different modes, which in turn affect the rules of origin adopted. In Modes 1 and 2, rules of origin do not constitute a major problem, as the service is to be provided by the trading partner. However, there is a need to agree on the broad lines for rules of origin adopted in Modes 3 and 4. There are often three criteria that can be applied following Article V.6 of the GATS, including: “jurisdiction to which an entity belongs,” and in particular, free trade areas often require that enterprises eligible for privileges be incorporated under the laws of one of the partner countries and that eligible individuals (“natural persons”) be citizens or residents of one of the countries; and “location of services suppliers’ economic activities”, and in particular, enterprises may be required to have “substantial business activities” within the region and individuals are expected to have their “centre of economic interest” in the region. The criterion of “ownership and control” can be added to the other two criteria as long as Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) involve developing countries only. The three criteria are not mutually exclusive and a mixture of the three can be applied, but there is a need for ASMCs to agree on which criterion is likely to be adopted (which can differ by sector) to ensure effective negotiations and avoid prolonging them (Fink and Jansen, 2007). To ensure that preferential treatment is granted only to regional partners and to avoid circumvention of rules of origin, ASMCs can adopt additional requirements similar to those adopted in other RTAs. For example, RTAs in the western hemisphere (with the exception of MERCOSUR) go further than GATS rules of origin, defining a service supplier not only as a legal entity under majority ownership or effective control but also as one that must conduct substantial business activities or operations in the territory of any of the member countries in order to benefit from the agreement. Moreover, given the wide-ranging nature and complexity of many sectors included within the service activities, various sectors can be subject either to separate protocols or annexes in RTAs (Stephenson and Prieto, 2002).
5) Including a Discriminatory Aspect in Domestic Regulations and Overcoming Legal Loopholes

Among the main challenges that increase the costs of liberalisation of services at the regional level is the need to revisit the domestic regulations to include a discriminatory aspect that favours regional partners. The inclusion of such a discriminatory aspect can entail a severe cost associated with the change of domestic laws and regulations. Flexibility in designing such laws and including provisions in the regulations and/or executive decrees should be maintained to ensure the ease of regional liberalisation without extra regulatory costs.

Intra-regional liberalisation is not expected to yield its potential positive outcomes before undertaking a number of necessary measures to ensure a fruitful outcome of intra-regional liberalisation of trade in services.

Moreover, the challenge of tax treatment duplication or tax evasion, which is likely to arise in specific modes (mainly Mode 1) when providing a service, should be dealt with cautiously. To be more explicit, imagine for example that Egypt liberalises computer services with country Y. Firms in Egypt start to provide their services through Mode 1 to customers in country Y. What type of tax treatment should such firms receive in Egypt and in country Y? Are their services free from Egyptian domestic taxes? Or will they be subject to taxes in country Y as well as to Egyptian domestic taxes? And how to prevent tax evasion from the governments of both Egypt and country Y? Those are all questions that need to be considered up front in any regional liberalisation attempt. This short essay pointed out that the potential of trade in services among ASMCs is still un-reaped. There are potential gains from regional liberalisation, especially in light of the freeze of the Doha Round, and the engagement of ASMCs with other trading partners in regional trade agreements, as with the EU and Arab countries. However, intra-regional liberalisation is not expected to yield its potential positive outcomes before undertaking a number of necessary measures such as those aforementioned to ensure a fruitful outcome of intra-regional liberalisation of trade in services.

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With regard to sustainable development in the Mediterranean, 2008 will be remembered as the year when the Union for the Mediterranean was launched. In order to make the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”, inaugurated in Paris on 13 July 2008, more visible and comprehensible to public opinion, specific projects were required. The joint declaration of the Summit for the Mediterranean held in Paris on 13 July 2008 took up this concern for clarity: this process consisted of “translating [it] into concrete projects more visible to citizens” in order to “inject a new continuing momentum into the Barcelona Process” by making the relations among the States concerned “more concrete and visible through additional regional and sub-regional projects relevant for the citizens of the region.” The annex to the 13 July 2008 joint declaration mentions that the Secretariat of the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean” will have to present in detail “a certain number of key initiatives,” among which is the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea.

**Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean: A Major Issue at Stake**

The Mediterranean Sea, an endangered maritime habitat, is also at the heart of an initiative which, incidentally, is not innovative in itself because the project is based on pre-existent initiatives as well as on studies and reports drawn up earlier (Plan Bleu: 2005). The latter indicate that the Mediterranean Basin is highly sensitive to pollution. The Mediterranean Sea is highly frequented. It serves as a vehicle for 30% of world maritime trade, including 22% of the world’s oil transport. Over 2,000 ships are plying the sea at any given moment, among them 200 to 300 oil tankers, with an annual average of some 220,000 ships navigating the Mediterranean (Cartapanis: 2003). Archaeological finds have established that the Mediterranean Sea was bounded by vast forests which have, for the most part, disappeared over the course of the centuries due to agriculture and other effects of human presence. Forests now cover no more than 5% of the Mediterranean Region, primarily on its northern shore. The preponderant consequence of this deforestation is that the surface humus is carried away by rain; this, in turn, causes soil erosion and thus, a decrease in biodiversity: today, soils are generally impoverished. Pines, which can survive on poor soils, have thus replaced the oak genus. (Pelt: 2000)

The shores of the Mediterranean are overpopulated: over 150 million inhabitants, that is, nearly 1/3 of the population of countries with a Mediterranean shoreline. This coastal population has nearly doubled over the past 40 years. The coast is subjected, in certain areas, to often poorly-controlled, rampant construction. By 2025, half of the Mediterranean coastline will be built-up. The Mediterranean Region is the leading tourist destination in the world. It must therefore be taken into account that the regular, year-round population living along the Mediterranean coastline is increased by 200 million or so tourists spending their holidays there every year. It is estimated that by 2025 the number of tourists will rise to 300 million per year, the majority of them staying in buildings within 100 metres of the shoreline, whereas a highly significant rise has already been observed every summer in marine water pollution due to a great deal of biodegradable organic matter. Urban and agricultural wastewater, as well as rain runoff carry with
them and drain solid waste matter, 70% of which are plastic items, bottles and toxic products, all of them with a low degree of biodegradability. These waste products are carried by the currents, though weak, and the wind; they constitute a threat to marine fauna and flora. A study done in 2004 concluded that in the summer, up to 2m$^3$ of waste was left behind per day and kilometre of coastline. Moreover, 70% of the sewage being discharged into the Mediterranean every year is not treated. (Plan Bleu: 2005) The number of coastal inhabitants and the summer rise in population increase the phenomenon of pollution from land sources, while in some countries, as, for example, those of the Middle East and North Africa, it also brings a shortage of potable water, which is often affected by rubbish and sewage. Along the coastline, the increasing needs often surpass the development of infrastructures, particularly wastewater treatment plants.

**The 13 July Summit in Paris: A Catalyst**

In the face of these observations, a long Euro-Mediterranean regulatory and financial process was undertaken and led, during the course of the November 2005 Euro-Med Summit, to the “Horizon 2020” initiative, which addressed the environmental problems in the whole of the Mediterranean Region. In November 2006, the Euro-Mediterranean Inter-ministerial Conference on the Environment was held outside of Europe for the first time, namely in Cairo. There, an agreement was signed for an action timetable for measures to be carried out as part of the Horizon 2020 programme to struggle against the major sources of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. One of Horizon 2020’s pillars, numbering four in total, is financing projects to reduce the most significant sources of pollution.

In April 2008, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) published a list of 44 priority projects to be carried out in Southern Mediterranean countries. In May of 2008, Ambassador Alain Le Roy, in charge of the Union for the Mediterranean on behalf of France, clearly adopted this presentation as his own when he asserted that “130 sites needing attention have already been identified and the project itself targets 44 sites for an estimated investment of € 2.1 billion.” On 6 May 2008, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) was officially launched as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as a new means of financing infrastructure projects in the energy, transport and environment sectors in the Mediterranean. This fund comprises a regional component of € 33 million dedicated to the environment for the 2007-2010 period. This Facility could be implemented through the granting of subsidies designed to provide support for loans by public European financial institutions such as the EIB or Germany’s KfW. It is in this context that the Union for the Mediterranean was launched on 13 July 2008. Initiated in mid-2007 by the French Head of State, the project to create the Union for the Mediterranean, which aimed to strengthen and develop cooperation between Northern and Southern Mediterranean States, was officially inaugurated on 13 July at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, attended by 43 European and Mediterranean States, EU Institutions and regional organisations. Based on the observation that the development gaps are widening between the Mediterranean North-South, thus aggravating the risk of instability throughout the region, the President of the French Republic, thereafter in conjunction with all other European and Mediterranean Heads of State and Government, initiated a new dynamic fostering partnership in the Mediterranean. The aim is to use as a base the acquis of the Barcelona Process, launched 13 years ago primarily on the initiative of Spain and France, but also to considerably expand the ambitions, functioning and means of action. The Union for the Mediterranean project is based on three simple yet essential principles: political mobilisation at the highest level through biennial sum-

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1 The three other pillars are: capacity-building measures to help neighbouring countries create national environmental administrations that are able to develop and police environmental laws; using the Commission’s Research Budget to develop and share knowledge of environmental issues relevant to the Mediterranean; and developing indicators to monitor the success of Horizon 2020. cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/erleng/med/horizon_2020_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/erleng/med/horizon_2020_en.htm)

2 The report, Horizon 2020 – Devising a Mediterranean Hot-Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP), concerns these 44 projects and reports on studies done in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Tunisia. For further information, see website indicated in Footnote 1.

3 Nicolas Sarkozy has announced that France will allocate € 730 million to the Horizon 2020 initiative through its Agence Française de Développement (AFD), namely to finance the implementation of depollution programmes and projects for the Mediterranean Sea. The AFD has already allotted € 230 million since then for projects in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.
mits of heads of state and government; governance on an equal level via North-South co-presidency and a permanent Secretariat with equal representation from both sides; and priority on specific regional projects capable of creating de facto solidarity. This new regional governance has already resulted in the holding of a Ministerial Conference on 22 December 2008, on the shores of the Dead Sea in Jordan.

At this conference, a double objective was attained, with a substantial contribution by civil society actors meeting on 21 December. First of all, the Ministers defined the general lines of a Mediterranean Water Strategy allowing a response to the challenges of climate change and its impacts. This Strategy, which will be brought before these same Ministers in the first semester of 2010 and before the Heads of State and Government in late 2010, will allow problems to be tackled that surpass the means of action of any single country or organisation. It will entail two primary goals concerning the preservation of water quality and the reduction of pressure on water resources by economising on their use. Moreover, the Ministers brought to the attention of the authorities of the Union for the Mediterranean the urgent need to effect new water facilities projects coherent with the Strategy. With this in mind, they put forth a series of projects that will be discussed in the first quarter of 2009. These projects will be completed by the 5th World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul in March 2009 and the first set of financing will be finalized by the Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Development in Monaco in late March 2009.

Another specific result of the Paris Summit was the holding of a conference on 18 December 2008 in Nice on the integrated management of coastal zones, intended in particular to examine the means to be implemented in order to apply the new protocol on this topic signed on 21 January 2008 by 14 Member States of the Barcelona Convention. Four areas for priority action were identified:

- Sustainable tourism
- Climate change and receding coastline
- Exchanges and networks: teamwork and collaboration among actors; governance; financing; cross-border approaches
- Network of protected areas and ecological corridors.

Climate Change in the Mediterranean in 2008: New Data

In addition to this movement towards sustainable development undertaken by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 2008 will also have been the year that the issue of climate change burst onto the Mediterranean stage. On 23-24 October 2008, a seminar was held with the presence of all the National Focal Point delegates from the Mediterranean Countries signatories of the Climate Convention, whose conclusions accentuated the need to get action on the regional level underway. The Mediterranean has been identified as one of the regions of the world most threatened by future climate change. However, no regional initiative of any magnitude had been undertaken in the Mediterranean so far. Indeed, until 2008, the Kyoto Protocol lent itself little to concerted action on the regional level. First of all, essentially striving towards the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations, it focused efforts on emissions reduction. Secondly, the financial instruments it established were hardly adapted to the general situation in the Mediterranean: Emissions Trading is essentially addressed to countries subject to reduction targets, while Joint Implementation is addressed to the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe. Insofar as the Clean Development Mechanism, the Mediterranean has very little presence (0.14% of the emissions credits registered by the Climate Convention Secretariat, June 2008). Moreover, up to 2008, only five countries had sold emissions credits: Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia.


www.planbleu.org/themes/atelier_changement_clim.html
This situation changed radically in 2008, under the effects of two types of evolution:

1. The results of application of the commitments made by Mediterranean Countries appearing in Annex 1.

Upon analyzing these results (Table 15), it becomes evident that no Mediterranean Country can guarantee attainment of the Kyoto Objectives for 2012 on the sole basis of its national efforts. Knowing in addition that these will be reviewed and toughened for the post-2012 period, the Mediterranean Countries appearing in Annex 1 are now in the position of important purchasers of emissions credits (in the near future, Turkey will be added to this list, as it is in the final stage of the Kyoto Protocol ratification).

2. The decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) at the UN Climate Convention in Bali in December 2007.

Two decisions taken at the COP considerably changed the situation in the Mediterranean:

- The creation of an Adaptation Fund
- The participation of all Parties in emissions reduction efforts

A regional initiative aiming on the one hand to create financing mechanisms able to sustain the reduction efforts of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries, and on the other hand to organise the structure of cross-border adaptation projects funded by the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund would thus make a great deal of sense.

We can only trust that the hopes raised are not shattered by the effects of the world economic crisis we are now experiencing.

In this regard, it would therefore be highly logical for all Mediterranean Countries to organise with a view to speaking with a single voice at the COP to be held in Copenhagen in November 2009.

We can only trust that the hopes raised in the year 2008 in terms of sustainable development are not shattered by the effects of the world economic crisis we are now experiencing.

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The fate of de-pollution in the Mediterranean Sea is related to the success of international efforts. Over the years, the problems in the Mediterranean Sea have been well discussed, documented, and categorized into seven major groups; (i) sustainable development, (ii) combating land-based pollution, (iii) preventing maritime accidents and illegal discharges from ships, (iv) managing coastal areas, (v) preserving the Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity, (vi) safeguarding cultural heritage and (vii) promoting information and communication. Each of these topics has equal importance and presents very complicated interactions among the shareholders.

Mediterranean Region: General Perspective

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the borders of the Mediterranean region are determined by nature's borders of the "olive tree line," which include 22 countries neighbouring the sea. Since the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea is said to be among the primary regions of civilization, it is not difficult to understand why this oligotrophic ecosystem has been subject to human intervention for thousands of years, exploited and yet still a very important resource for the world. The Mediterranean region is rich in terms of endemic species. There are over 25,000 floral varieties, more than half of them endemic to Mediterranean region, and several of them have the potential for industrial uses. 6% of the world's marine species live in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Mediterranean Sea has a coastal line of at least 46,000 kilometres, which covers a surface area of 2.5 million square kilometres. In other words, the Mediterranean Sea occupies only 1% of the world's total sea surface. The coastline is inhabited by over 150 million people living in societies with different civilizations. Its mild climate, historical background and unique ecosystem make the region an attraction point for several human activities. Therefore, human population is not limited to the residents of the Mediterranean region; annually around 170 million tourists, mostly in the summer season, visit the area. Annual tourist population is expected to reach 235 to 300 million visitors by the year 2030. It is also known that 80% of the pollution in the Mediterranean Sea is land-based. Over 200 petrochemical and energy installations, chemical industries and around 80 major rivers transport heavy loads of pollution to the Mediterranean Sea. Chemical contaminants (heavy metals, persistent xenobiotics and hazardous substances) discharged into the sea create the major problem for the Mediterranean. Finally, surface water resources are limited and groundwater is a major resource in the region. That is why this "global treasure vault" must be protected, yet even some residents of the region are not aware of the environmental disaster potential threatening this fragile ecosystem.

Activities towards De-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea

In November 2005, at the summit to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Process, the partners decided to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by the year 2020 (Horizon 2020 initiative).
The strength of the commitment towards such an objective is highlighted by the inclusion of a statement towards “providing appropriate financial resources and technical support to implement the programmes” and to use “the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development” and “exploring possible areas for co-operation in this regard with the UNEP.”

In a Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP) activity, coordinated by the European Investment Bank and the World Bank (finalized in 2008), projects that have the largest impact on Mediterranean pollution across the Mediterranean region were to be identified. This programme was initiated to support the non-EU member countries. According to the final report of the study, economically feasible projects in the selected countries are urban wastewater systems, municipal solid waste systems and industrial emission control systems. (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/pdf/mehsip_report.pdf)

In a UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan report (www.unepmap.org/index.php), discharge of untreated sewage to the Mediterranean Sea is identified as a major source of microbial pollution. According to the report, microbial pollution is a major problem in the eastern and southern Mediterranean regions. Even though very economical treatment technologies for sewage are available, cultural and political barriers and conceptual differences prevent the establishment of sustainable solutions.

**Impact of Anthropogenic Activities on the Mediterranean Ecosystem**

According to Galil (2002), the Suez Canal (1869) created the first salt-water passage between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Since the Red Sea is higher than the Eastern Mediterranean, the canal serves as a tidal strait that pours Red Sea water into the Mediterranean. The Bitter Lakes, which are natural hypersaline lakes that form part of the canal, blocked the migration of Red Sea species into the Mediterranean for many decades, but as the salinity of the lakes gradually equalized with that of the Red Sea, the barrier to migration was removed and plants and animals from the Red Sea began colonizing the Eastern Mediterranean. The Red Sea is generally saltier and more nutrient-poor than the Atlantic, so Red Sea species have advantages over Atlantic species in the salty and nutrient-poor Eastern Mediterranean. Accordingly, Red Sea species invade the Mediterranean biota, and not vice versa (Lessepsian migration or Erythrean invasion).

Another historical event, the construction of the Aswan High Dam across the Nile River in the sixties, reduced the inflow of freshwater and nutrient-rich silt from the Nile into the Eastern Mediterranean, making conditions there even more like the Red Sea and worsening the impact of the invasive species. Species from the Red Sea introduced into the Mediterranean through the canal have become a major component of the Mediterranean ecosystem and have had serious impact on the Mediterranean ecology, endangering many local and endemic Mediterranean species. Up to this day, about 300 species native to the Red Sea have already been identified in the Mediterranean Sea, and there are probably others as yet unidentified.

In recent years, plans by the Egyptian government to deepen and widen the canal have raised concerns from marine biologists fearing that such an act will only worsen the invasion of Red Sea species into the Mediterranean, facilitating the crossing of the canal for additional species. According to the 16th International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Special Meeting of Oceana held in Marrakesh in November 2008 (www.oceana.org), because of their market value and lack of management (insufficient monitoring, overfishing, illegal fishing and pollution), tuna, sharks and swordfish are identified as overfished species in the Mediterranean Sea. Among them, the most serious warning is issued for bluefin tuna; according to the expert reports, this species is on the verge of extinction.

To give an example, in 2007, the declared catch was 32,398 tons for the East Atlantic and Mediterranean, according to the industry. However, according to the ICCAT Committee, these numbers are well below the actual catch values. It is argued that the catches are four times above the 2006 and 2008 scientific advice of 15,000 tons.

Another example of the strict management requirement between the use of regional resources and the protection of the Mediterranean ecosystem is seen in mining activities. Mercury is an important economic resource for the Mediterranean region; on the other hand, mercury-related activities must be
regulated strictly to prevent its negative impact on the environment. According to the conclusions of the 25th UNEP Council meeting, an international treaty to control mercury emissions will be negotiated starting from 2009 and is expected to be concluded by the year 2013.

Water scarcity may be the most significant environmental stress that the Mediterranean region will face in the near future. Availability of water will be limited physically and economically. The size of the water availability problem and the solutions to the problem may be beyond the national capacities. Therefore collaboration of all shareholders is expected.

Impact of Maritime Activities on the Mediterranean

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group has published annual reports since 2001. In 2008, reported energy alternatives for the Mediterranean region were evaluated with predictions of an increase in maritime traffic and renewable energy usage in the region; obviously these activities will create environmental stresses in the Mediterranean Sea.

Compared to previous years, the Mediterranean Sea is monitored better for the accidental spills or illegal discharges from maritime transport activities. The EU’s satellite oil pollution monitoring service (CleanSeaNet), coordinated by The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), has been a major contributor to these activities. There are still more things to be done in terms of verification and confirmation of the spills. In all European seas, 3,296 individual hydrocarbon pollution indications were reported in 2008. Among them, 875 of the cases were verified as a spill and 232 cases were confirmed. Unfortunately, most of the spill confirmations were done in other European seas. Most of the indications observed by the satellite in the Eastern Mediterranean were not verified. Actually this statement by itself may help to explain how hydrocarbon spills occur in the region. (www.emsa.europa.eu/Docs/adminboard/emsa_evaluation_final_report.pdf)

According to a Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre (REMPEC) report published in 2008, the Mediterranean is a major marine transit route. Vessel activity within the Mediterranean is projected to increase by 18% over the next 10 years. Overall, the number of transits, as well as vessel capacity, is expected to rise by 23%. Chemical tanker and container vessels will show the highest rates of growth in respect to port callings within the Mediterranean over the next 10 years, whilst increases in transits will be most pronounced in the product and crude tanker sector.

Marine litter, most of which degrades slowly, poses an additional threat to the Mediterranean Sea. The growing threat for the Mediterranean marine environment is mentioned in UNEP Regional Seas Programme reports (2008), among other regional seas.

All of these predictions about the maritime activities in the Mediterranean Sea highlight the need for monitoring and international collaboration to prevent marine pollution.

Closing the Communication and Collaboration Gap

Although all of the countries in the region have close economical, historical and cultural links with each other, there is a communication gap among the partners for pollution prevention. The communication and collaboration gap (very significant between southern and northern shore countries of the Mediterranean Sea) started to narrow with the initiation of de-pollution activities. The UNEP Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean Region (MED POL) and the Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication of the Barcelona Convention (INFO/RAC) are collaborating for an information system that will be available to interested nation-
al and international parties. The system will include data from previous activities of Mediterranean pollution prevention programmes and will gather research results from future studies.
At this point it is not wrong to say that the message – to address any problem related to environmental protection in the Mediterranean region, regional priorities, instead of national ones, must be favoured – is received.

Conclusion

The Mediterranean Sea is on the verge of collapse, not because the region is listed among one of the oldest human settlements, which meant constant exploitation that extended into centuries, but because of conceptual differences among the nations occupying the region for the environment. The responsibility of effective and improved communication among Mediterranean neighbours must be fulfilled by all the nations of the region to eliminate biases.

Land-based pollutants of the Mediterranean region have mostly anthropogenic content. Since it is known that 70% of the wastewater produced in the region is not treated, the increase in human population and mobility can only complicate the problem if priority is not given. Therefore, any sustainable solution to the pollution problem of the Mediterranean Sea must include the management of human population and their needs (including tourism), prevention of pollution from land-based sources and management of Mediterranean natural resources. The Horizon 2020 initiative presents integrated economical, social and technical tools to achieve de-pollution in the Mediterranean Sea.

The responsibility of effective and improved communication among Mediterranean neighbours must be fulfilled by all the nations of the region to eliminate biases

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The Components of Maritime Transport in the Mediterranean

There are several dimensions of maritime traffic in the Mediterranean, which can be considered on three levels:

• As a ‘maritime route’ that, as such, is one of the world’s major trade routes, through which nearly a third of world trade ‘passes’, from the mouth of the Suez Canal to the Straits of Gibraltar or the Bosporus, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.
• As a ‘crossroads’ of continents –European, Asian and African– whose trade is growing with globalisation.
• As a ‘landlocked sea’ through which coastal countries develop their trade.

On the statistical level, it is difficult to obtain homogenous data in order to evaluate the different types of traffic in tonnage: the European database, COMEXT, providing information on trade by EU countries in tonnage and value, must be consulted in conjunction with the UN’s global database, COMTRADE, which only provides data on the value of products traded.

This is why NESTEAR had to carry out estimation work with a view to gaining a set of homogenous data on tonnage based on the value of products per tonne, as well as research on the main routes employed in the Mediterranean for the different types of trade.

The aim of this contribution is to provide a brief report on the research we have carried out over the course of several years in order to compare the different trade levels in the Mediterranean and illustrate the main routes.

The Mediterranean: A World Trade Route

In this ensemble, there is naturally maritime trade between Mediterranean countries and the rest of the world, but above all trade takes place between the entire EU and countries of Asia and the Middle East via the Mediterranean Sea.

Trade between EU Member States and Asia amounted to approximately 210 million tonnes in 2006 and has been rising strongly for the past twenty years or so. It essentially consists of diverse, ‘non-bulk’ merchandise transported in containers. The containerisation rate for non-bulk traffic is often greater than 80 and even 90%. Container traffic represents over 150 million tonnes.

This traffic is highly imbalanced, two thirds of it comprised by European imports. Past trends show that the import growth rate, on the order of 8% per year, is twice as high as the export growth rate, on the order of 4%. This imbalance should increase even more due to the emergence of East Asian countries such as China or South Asian countries such as India.

Trade by South Mediterranean Countries (SMCs) with Asia consisting of non-bulk products remains quite limited to date, on the order of 11.5 million tonnes, nearly 40% of which consists of imports by Turkey and Egypt, which are the most populated SMCs. This
Traffic of imports from Asia is rising very rapidly, with a past trend of approximately 8% average import rate for all countries, which is due to dynamic export by Tunisia, Israel and Jordan. In general, foreign trade by South Mediterranean Countries is diversifying, in particular with countries of Asia, the Middle East and the CIS.

There is naturally maritime trade between Mediterranean countries and the rest of the world, but above all trade takes place between the entire EU and countries of Asia and the Middle East via the Mediterranean Sea for the EU, this traffic can be divided between northern and southern European ports, with a much lower rate in northern port traffic, as shown on the map (Map 1) showing European port traffic.

In any case, the Mediterranean has also seen the development of major hub ports that serve as redistribution points for the largest container ports, whose capacity now surpasses 10,000, and in some cases even 12,000 TEU.

This organisation of world maritime transport has led to the creation of an entire network of 'feeder traffic' among Mediterranean ports, used for trade among Mediterranean countries themselves. World container traffic has allowed an increase of the number of shipments among Mediterranean countries, with passage via maritime hubs essentially implemented for intercontinental world commerce.

The names of these major hubs are well known and their number is rising: in the eastern Mediterranean near the entrance/exit to the Suez Canal, in the central Mediterranean area with Maltese and southern Italian ports, and in the Straits of Gibraltar area with Algeciras and now Tangiers.

**The Mediterranean: A Crossroads of Continents**

The vocation of the Mediterranean serving as a crossroads of continents has grown stronger over the past few years in the Mediterranean, in particular in the eastern Mediterranean with the influence exercised by the countries along the Black Sea, those belonging to the CIS, Central Asian countries and Turkey, whose trade with the Mediterranean has grown considerably, and finally by the Persian Gulf States.

The influence exercised by these continents on trade in the Mediterranean, and particularly in the eastern Mediterranean, has already been discussed in the preceding section on the Mediterranean as a world maritime trade route.
Indeed, it is difficult to estimate the maritime routes of globalisation in this trade, for which terrestrial routes can be used. Hence the interest of researching the effects on the terrestrial and maritime networks of the different continents in order to better comprehend the transport needs these in-depth structural changes will entail. In this perspective, the Mediterranean seems an ensemble of maritime routes connected to terrestrial continental routes.

The European vision of the extension of trans-European networks via land corridors extending towards Central Asia through Turkey and priority corridors identified in the South Mediterranean and the Middle East confirms the interest of having a global view of land and sea transport in order to better understand the Mediterranean’s role as a ‘crossroads’ and the role to be played by land routes in relation to maritime routes.

In many cases, there is no single answer and a solution is the result of a combination of maritime and terrestrial routes, with an emphasis on the future of the intermodal solution, whether this be road/rail transport, RO-RO transport, road/sea, or transport of cargo units with standard ISO containers allowing the three modes to be combined, as well as perhaps the maritime mode.

**The Mediterranean: A Landlocked Sea**

In this area, three types of flows can be identified:

- Trade between the EU and SMCs.
- Trade among the SMCs themselves.
- Trade among EU Member States bordering on the Mediterranean.

With regard to trade involving the EU Member States, moreover, it is important to distinguish between what we will call the southern EU countries, namely, Spain, France, Italy and Greece, and the northern EU countries. In trade between the EU and SMCs, the SMCs display a high degree of dependence, trade with the EU representing 30-70% of their foreign commerce. This dependence is more marked for Maghreb countries than for eastern Mediterranean countries, even if all of these countries have experienced a diversification of foreign trade, as mentioned above, associated with globalisation.

The situation is not reciprocal. Mediterranean countries represent but 5-20% of the EU’s foreign commerce: the highest percentages are attained by the southern EU Member States of Spain, France, Italy and Greece.

In tonnage, this trade represents a considerable volume, standing at 425 million tonnes, a large part of which consists of bulk products and, in particular, petroleum products imported by Europe. In 2006, Europe imported 285 million tonnes of liquid and solid bulk products, as compared to only 33 million tonnes of bulk products exported.

**Trade among South Mediterranean Countries is highly limited due in particular to the difficulties of crossing borders still extant between neighbouring countries and a certain economic competition among these countries**

Thus trade in non-bulk products between EU countries and other Mediterranean countries only amounts to 106 million tonnes.

Trade among South Mediterranean Countries (SMC-SMC trade) is highly limited due in particular to the difficulties of crossing borders still extant between neighbouring countries and a certain economic competition among these countries. In a hypothetical liberalisation of trade in the Mediterranean, trade should increase considerably among Maghreb countries, as well as among countries of the Middle East, Egypt and Turkey, whose populations, in particular urban ones, continue to rise rapidly, while this is not the case in Europe. The diversification of production structures associated with economic development should, moreover, limit the restraints associated with situations of competition in trade, multiplying opportunities for trade in different branches of the economy and businesses among neighbouring countries.

At present, SMC-SMC trade represents but 50 million tonnes, of which nearly 40% involve Turkey’s foreign commerce, relatively well distributed among the ensemble of SMCs. In this trade, including bulk products and oil, ‘non-bulk’ products comprise only 13 million tonnes, which is a weak amount and confirmed by the fact that trade among SMCs rarely represents more than 5-10% of foreign trade for
these countries. Their growth rates from such a low level should be particularly high in the forthcoming years.

The estimates effected by NESTEAR provide the following volumes of traffic (Table 18) for maritime transport in the Mediterranean for 'non-bulk' products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra-MED Traffic (in billions of tonne-km)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South/East MED (Europe excluded)</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(113: Asia; 85: Atlantic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-MED Traffic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Med-EU</td>
<td>165 in MED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(65 Atlantic / North Sea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-South</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus volumes of maritime traffic of non-bulk products in the Mediterranean amount to a total of 774 billion tonne-kilometres, to which must be added the amounts of intra-European trade in non-bulk products (traffic among EU countries, which is basically bulk traffic) and traffic involving national maritime coastal trade (which remains essentially bulk product traffic, except for supplies to islands). Hence, we have, in total, an important amount in play of approximately 800 billion tonne-km, excluding bulk cargo.

At this stage, a certain number of remarks need to be made concerning trade among Mediterranean countries, including trade with the EU:

- In intra-EU trade, northern ports handle a larger volume than southern ones: Antwerp is the main port of entry and exit for Mediterranean traffic, excluding oil.
- For the various merchandise, there are actually two coexisting transport organisation systems:
  - The network of maritime container shipments mentioned above, which creates a sort of 'sub-system' for intra-Mediterranean trade;
  - A more direct provision of RO-RO services in the Mediterranean, as is the case in particular for North-South trade, with much less East-West movement.
These two types of service were analysed by NESTEAR to ascertain their respective significance within Mediterranean trade. Feeder and RO-RO services were introduced into a GIS database (Geographic Information System) on the Mediterranean trade network. The distribution (NESTEAR’s ‘NEST-MED’ models) is illustrated by the map (Map 1), which shows international maritime trade flows among countries as well as their continuation into the hinterland.

Due to European integration and economic development measures undertaken by EU countries, the potential volume of intra-European trade is considerable.

In general, containerised product shipments entering and exiting ports of northern Europe, as shown on the chart, generally take a longer route but also prove less expensive.

- There is a limited amount of competition between terrestrial and maritime transport in certain relations in the western and eastern Mediterranean, in particular between Morocco, Spain and the EU on the one hand, and between Turkey and the EU on the other.

It is quite clear that this type of model will be particularly used to ascertain the interest of new transport techniques such as the ‘highways of the sea’ advocated by the EU. This type of technique, one of the best examples of which is the transport between Turkey and Italy established some twenty years ago, could find privileged applications among southern EU countries wherever maritime transport routes prove much shorter than terrestrial ones.

The third type of ‘landlocked sea’ trade is the trade taking place among EU Member States. Due to European integration and economic development measures undertaken by EU countries, the potential volume of intra-European trade is considerable. For this type of trade, the past trend has been one of growth of road transport along often congested coastal roadways. Non-bulk maritime trade is highly limited except in the Adriatic between Greece and Italy, where there are also nice examples of maritime highways from Igoumenitsa and Patras in Greece, not to mention Piraeus.

Hence, there are many opportunities yet to be developed, in particular among Spain, France and Italy, with much shorter maritime distances as compared to land routes, easily allowing transport agents to avoid crossing the natural barriers of the Alps and the Pyrenees.
On the occasion of the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), and in light of the prominent role played by the transport projects included in the Union’s founding declaration, it is worth revisiting and analysing the evolution of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the sphere of transport.

In 2003, in these pages, it was noted that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’s troubled history with regard to transport had finally begun to find its way, focusing on the issues that truly mattered to the region’s countries. Indeed, after several patchy years, the European Commission issued a communication ‘on the development of a Euro-Mediterranean transport network’ and launched two initiatives aimed at developing regional transport: the creation of an action plan and the identification of the region’s infrastructure priorities.

Five years later, progress has finally been made on these aspects of Euro-Mediterranean transport cooperation. Proof of this can be found in a brief review of the main figures involved in the process and the chief activities carried out through multilateral cooperation in the sphere of Mediterranean transport.

There are basically two spheres of transport cooperation in the Mediterranean. On one hand, there is Euro-Mediterranean cooperation for the region as a whole, based on the Barcelona process and, more recently, the UfM. On the other, there is sub-regional cooperation in the Western Mediterranean, headed up by the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO 5+5).

This cooperation, despite its sub-regional status, has emerged as the true driving force behind cooperation in the Mediterranean at large.

Indeed, with its dynamism and activities, which will be discussed below, the GTMO 5+5 has obliged the European Commission to adopt a brisier, more ambitious pace with regard to cooperation for the Mediterranean as a whole.

**Spheres of Cooperation**

In the Western Mediterranean it has long been argued, in accordance with the region’s countries, that transport cooperation should be based on the analysis and status of regional infrastructure. This insistence on the part of the GTMO 5+5 is what ultimately ‘helped’ the European Commission build its activities around these issues.

Thus, in recent years, the European Commission has promoted several main activities in the region: first, contemplation by ‘Europe’ of extending trans-European transport networks to neighbouring countries; second, the adaptation of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP), which serves as a road map, setting out the targets and actions to be promoted and carried out; and, third, the definition of a trans-Mediterranean transport network, including the identification of priority projects.

The RTAP is a plan to intensify regional cooperation and to create an efficient transport system, which is seen as a critical and necessary condition for economic growth and integration in the Mediterranean. The current Plan covers the 2007-2013 period and was formally requested by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of Marrakesh.

The RTAP comprises a series of 34 actions in different transport sectors (maritime, road, rail, air and multimodal) and primarily seeks regulatory (institutional) reform and the planning and implementation of a trans-Mediterranean transport infrastructure network. It moreover includes sustainable
development, security and institutional considerations.
Many of the actions – in particular, those relating to regulatory reform – are to be implemented at the national level, but monitored at the multilateral level within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, with technical support from the European Commission through EuroMed regional projects (SAFEMED, MEDA-MoS Motorways of the Sea, GNSS and the EuroMed Aviation Project) and technical assistance and twinning programmes at the bilateral level.
The actions relating to infrastructure envisage the detailed identification of projects based on the main transport corridors linking Mediterranean countries with each other and/or with the European Union with a view to paving the way for investment decisions at the multilateral level.

The Impetus of the GTMO 5+5

Under this heading, the actions included under the RTAP acknowledge both the consideration given to extending the main trans-European transport corridors to neighbouring countries and the initiatives of the GTMO 5+5 and its technical secretariat, CETMO. The aim is to design a strategic infrastructure network for the Mediterranean as a whole, the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T), similar to the Trans-European Network (TEN-T), so as to ensure that the reference points and technical tools for analysing flows and exchanges in the region are the same in European and southern Mediterranean countries.
The initiative is a continuation of the work already performed by the GTMO 5+5 for Maghreb countries, which the European Commission has adopted as its own with a view to extending it to include the entire Mediterranean.

Indeed, at the ministerial meeting held in Tunis in November 2008, the GTMO 5+5 approved the Maghreb countries’ multimodal transport network (see maps), thereby turning it into a model to follow for southern Mediterranean countries at large (and even African countries, as expressed by the European Commissioner for Transport).

For the Maghreb countries, priority has essentially been given to projects relating to the region’s main land transport corridors

Parallel to the TMN-T, efforts are being made to identify priority transport infrastructure projects in southern countries. These priorities are identified based on technical criteria and by consensus with each country, but also multilaterally. To this end, whilst in the Western Mediterranean, and thanks to the existence of the GTMO 5+5, the Maghreb countries’ priorities had once again been identified by the start of the year, problems have arisen in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the political conflicts in the Middle East. For the Maghreb countries, priority has essentially been given to projects relating to the region’s main land transport corridors, in particular to the Maghreb Union Motorway and the modernisation and interoperability of the trans-Maghreb railway.
However, all of these initiatives, which constitute major progress in terms of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, are nevertheless insufficient to meet the high expectations placed in this cooperation by southern countries.

The Touchstone

The key question remains unanswered, namely, how to finance transport infrastructure projects. This is what southern countries have been asking for from the start of the Barcelona Process.
With regard to financing, the emergence of the UfM should help to address the issue, as well as with the identification and availability of the necessary mechanisms and funds to overcome the impasse of earlier years.
The solution lies in a combination of instruments and measures. On one hand, mechanisms are required to ensure long-term performance and institutional guarantees for investments. On the other, public grants for investments in priority infrastructure projects must be significantly increased. Finally, the development and adoption of a regional system providing legal protection for infrastructure investments must be encouraged in order to generate confidence in investors and increase the return on projects.

As for public grants or donations, the GTMO 5+5 has taken an initial step, tabling a proposal to address the constant requests made by southern countries for help from the European Union in the form of ‘donations’ to improve transport infrastructure. The proposal encapsulates the spirit of the joint declaration from the UFM’s Paris Summit, which speaks of cooperation on ‘equal footing’.

The GTMO 5+5’s proposal is to set up, within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, a programme, with the necessary funding, to develop the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network similar to the programme in place for the Trans-European Network. A fund would be created for the TMN-T, which, like the European fund, would work by means of calls for projects, the assessment of submitted proposals and the allocation of funds to those proposals receiving the highest scores.

This would make it possible to meet the needs of southern countries through a process, at both the technical and institutional levels, similar to that used in Europe. However, rather than redistributing funds previously contributed by the countries, as is the case with the Trans-European Network, it would consist of a donation of European development aid funds.

This proposal would break the cycle of unanswered requests for funding for transport infrastructure in the South. It would moreover require southern Mediterranean countries’ projects to meet higher technical standards, obliging them to compete against each other during the assessments.

The amount to be allocated to the fund can easily be included in the European Union’s development aid budgets, whether within the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy or other complementary policies.

The creation of the UfM, with the aim of promoting specific projects, is an opportunity to resolve the thorny issue of funding for transport infrastructure projects, which is indisputably the touchstone for the credibility of all European policy on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

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**GTMO 5+5**

The GTMO 5+5 (Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean) was created in 1995 to promote regional cooperation on transport in the Western Mediterranean and contribute to the process of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the transport sector.

The GTMO 5+5’s cooperation activities can be broken down into the following priority areas:

- Preparing transport companies for the implementation of a free-trade area.
- The creation of a database and methods to enable regular identification of regional priorities.
- Research on transport issues in the Western Mediterranean and promoting the participation of Maghreb countries in international research and development programmes.

The GTMO 5+5’s members are the ministers responsible for transport from ten countries in the region (Algeria, Spain, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal and Tunisia), as well as the Directorate General for Transport of the European Commission and the Secretariat General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

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**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN TRANSPORT FORUM**

The Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum is an opportunity for technical cooperation between senior officials from the European Union and MEDA countries. Meetings are organised by the European Commission, which acts as the Forum’s secretariat.

The Forum oversees the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) and operates via working groups on maritime policy, maritime security, air transport, satellite navigation systems, infrastructure and road transport regulation.
The Development of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA),
Beirut

The main objective of ESCWA is to promote economic and social development through regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration, thus serving as the main socioeconomic development arm of the United Nations in Western Asia. ESCWA has 14 members: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Five of these members belong to the Mediterranean region. It formulates and promotes development assistance activities and projects commensurate with the needs and priorities of the region and acts as an executing agency for relevant operational projects.

Also, ESCWA seeks to strengthen regional cooperation and integration in the region, thereby facilitating the trans-boundary flow of goods, services, and capital in order to meet the economic and social challenges posed by globalization and benefit from its opportunities.

On the other hand, the facilitation of transport and trade has recently acquired additional significance in the light of such contemporary developments as globalization, the increasing number of calls for the formation of regional economic blocs, the establishment of free trade zones and the consequent work involved in reducing obstacles to the flow of international goods. Accordingly, ESCWA has been undertaking a number of activities in this connection, focusing on the adoption of agreements and recommendations that ESCWA promotes and coordinates, aiming at transport and trade facilitation in the region.

In recognition of the importance of the subject, ESCWA, at its 19th session, held in 1997, adopted its resolution 213 (XIX) on the establishment of a committee on transport within the Commission. The Economic and Social Council endorsed the resolution by its resolution 1997/11 of 18 July 1997 (Annex 1).

Since its creation in 1997, the ESCWA Committee on Transport (i.e. the Committee) has provided the legal framework for intergovernmental cooperation and concerted action aimed at the development of an integrated transport system and the facilitation of transport and trade in the region. Since then the Committee has conducted nine sessions and is currently organizing the 10th (Beirut, 31 March-2 April 2009).

The first session of the Committee (Beirut, 9-10 February 1999) declared a statement on the adoption and development of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM). The statement was issued during the ESCWA's 20th session held in Beirut on 27-28 May 1999 (Annex 2).

The concept of ITSAM is based on the fact that the transport sector, including land, sea and air modes, has a strategically significant role to play in fostering and sustaining the socioeconomic development of the ESCWA countries and in promoting their integration, notably by enhancing flows of trade and tourists among them and between countries in the region and the rest of the world.

The ITSAM approach is concerned with the development of an integrated infrastructure; the facilitation of procedures, operations and logistics; the formulation of regional multilateral agreements; and the promotion of appropriate recommendations, including legal and administrative reforms. Some of these major achievements are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The most important components of ITSAM are: (a) the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq; (b) the Agreement on International Railways...
in the Arab Mashreq; (c) the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq; (d) National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committees; (e) road safety; (f) multimodal transport; (g) institutional frameworks and legislation; (h) the ITSAM Methodological Framework; and (i) the related geographic information system (GIS).

As an integral part of the development of the ITSAM regional network, the Commission resolved to work on the harmonization of regional road network specifications by preparing the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq (i.e. the Roads Agreement). The preparation and negotiation of the Roads Agreement took more than three years of extensive discussions and negotiations in several expert group meetings and consecutive sessions of the Committee on Transport. The preparation and discussion included a thorough analysis and review of existing international, regional and national road standards and specifications, as well as legal implications.

The Roads Agreement forms the basis of an international network of roads with unified specifications built in conformity with internationally acceptable standards. This would facilitate the flow of goods and passengers among and across the countries of the region. The second session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 6-7 February 2001) finalized the draft Roads Agreement. The ESCWA member countries at the 21st session of ESCWA on 10 May 2001 unanimously adopted the Roads Agreement. Mr Kofi Anan, the United Nations Secretary General at that time, in his opening speech of the 21st session of ESCWA, noted that this is the first United Nations convention to be negotiated within the framework of ESCWA since its establishment (in 1974), and hence constitutes a significant landmark in the history of the Commission.

The fifth session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 2-4 March 2004) adopted an action plan for the implementation of the Roads Agreement, and the sixth session of the Committee (Beirut, 22-24 March 2005) selected two major priority routes in the Roads Agreement, M40 (Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and Mediterranean Southern Coast) and M45 (Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen), in order to focus on their improvements to speed up the implementation of the agreement. As of today 11 members (including the five Mediterranean members) have joined the agreement that entered in force on 19 October 2003. And implementation of the agreement has begun in many of those countries.

The ESCWA Roads Agreement covers more than 31,400 kilometres of international roads distributed over 13 major routes between north and south and 10 between east and west. These roads are numbered in such a way to allow the extension of the agreement to include the countries of the Arab Maghreb should they wish to do so. Care was taken to ensure that signs, signals and road markings are in conformity with the Vienna Convention of 1968 and as amended. A special sign has been designed for the roads included in the agreement; Figure (1) shows the sign that identifies the international roads in the agreement. The agreement includes 13 articles and three annexes. Pursuant to Article 7 of the agreement, which states, “Parties thereto may propose amendments,” a few amendments to the agreement and the respective map have been requested by Saudi Arabia and Syria and recently approved by the Secretary General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, on 16 December 2008. On the other hand, Sudan (recent member of ESCWA, 2008) has requested to join the agreement in February 2009.

The second major component of the ITSAM is the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq (i.e. the Railways Agreement). The Railways Agreement had been prepared by ESCWA in reference with the consciousness of the salient characteristics of railways with respect to construction and running costs, speed, safety, regularity, personal comfort and environmental conservation, and affirming the importance and necessity of providing railway links between the countries of the region in accordance with a well-studied plan for the construction and development of an international railway network in order to meet future transport needs, protect the environment and facilitate the movement of goods and passengers and, as a result, increase the exchange of trade and tourism in the Arab
Mashreq, which will greatly promote Arab regional integration.

The third session of the Committee (Beirut, 5-7 March 2002) finalized the draft Railways Agreement that was consequently adopted at the 22nd ministerial session of the Commission on 14 April 2003. As of today, eight member countries (including the five Mediterranean members) have joined the Railways Agreement that entered into force on 23 May 2005. The seventh session of the Committee (Beirut, 17-19 April 2006) adopted the plan of action for the implementation of the agreement (Beirut, 27-29 March 2007). The Railways Agreement includes 12 articles and two annexes and covers more than 19,528 kilometres of international railways, distributed over six major routes between north and south and 10 between east and west. These routes are numbered in such a way to allow the extension of the agreement to include the countries of the Arab Maghreb should they wish to do so. In this respect, ESCWA contributed to the preparation of the planned railways network to connect the Arab countries in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) based on the expansion of the Railways Agreement to cover the Arab Maghreb region, using the same specifications and numbering system. The planned Arab railways network has been recently adopted by the Arab countries during the Economic and Social Summit of the LAS (Kuwait, 19-20 January 2009).

Taking into consideration that maritime transport plays an important role in strengthening intraregional and foreign trade and promotes the economic and social integration of the ESCWA region, ESCWA adopted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Maritime Transport Cooperation at the 23rd ministerial session of ESCWA (Damascus, 9-12 May 2005). The memorandum entered into force on 4 September 2006 and has been joined so far by eight members (including three Mediterranean countries, namely Lebanon, Palestine and Syria).

In view of the considerable challenges faced by the economies of the states in the ESCWA region and in light of the low volume of intra-regional trade, the reduced level of exports to other states, and the adverse impact of inefficient procedures for international freight flows across borders, ESCWA has been rigorously tackling the subject. In 2000 ESCWA completed a comprehensive field study on the facilitation of international freight transport in the ESCWA region. The study carried out a detailed survey of the procedures for freight transport across borders in the region, analyzed the obstacles to such trade flows and put forward appropriate recommendations for the facilitation and harmonization of transport and trade procedures and operations in the states of the region.

Moreover, the third session of the Committee on Transport approved the recommendation pertaining to the establishment of National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committees (NTTFC) in the countries of the ESCWA region. The manual for the establishment of the national facilitation committees including the proposed implementation steps was finalized during the fourth session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 14-16 January 2003). Chart 29 summarizes the establishment of the NTTFC. So far, nine ESCWA members (including the five Mediterranean members) have already established national facilitation committees.

The UN development account project on “capacity building in trade facilitation and electronic business in the Mediterranean” had been implemented jointly
by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE),
the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and
ESCWA during 2002-2005. Participating countries
in the ESCWA region included all five Mediterranean
countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.
The project deliverables included national trade facil-
itation audits, national workshops in which the find-
ings of the studies were reviewed and discussed with
public and private sector stakeholders, and regional
seminars to review and discuss results. The project
has been instrumental in advancing the establishment
of NTTFC in participating countries.
The UN development account project on “capacity
building in developing interregional land and land-sea
transport linkages” had been implemented jointly by
all five UN regional economic commissions and coor-
dinated by ESCWA for six years from 2002 through
2007. The project was completed with great success
in several aspects including but not limited to the
identification of interregional road, road-sea, rail and
rail-sea transport linkages connecting Africa, Asia and
Europe. GIS maps and software of the interregional
linkages were produced by the project.
As a result of the recent rapid development of inter-
national transport, which is especially apparent in the
widespread use of containers in the majority of trans-
port modes, international multimodal transport of
goods has become one of the most important activ-
ities that contribute to streamlining the flow of inter-
national trade. Therefore ESCWA drafted a Convention
on Multi-Modal Transport among the Arab Countries
(i.e. the Convention) in cooperation with the League
of Arab States. The 21st session of the Arab Transport
Ministers Council (Port Said, 29 October 2008) adopt-
ed the final unified draft of the Convention and thanked
ESCWA for its valuable efforts and cooperation with
LAS in preparing the Convention.
As far as the methodological framework for the devel-
opment of ITSAM is concerned, three volumes have
been issued since 2000. The first volume outlined
the basic principles and elements of the ITSAM frame-
work. The second volume described in detail the math-
ematical formulation of an International Freight Simultaneous Transport Equilibrium Model (IFSTEM).
In 2003, the ITSAM Framework was implemented in
the economic feasibility study for the facilitation of the
exchange of goods across the lands and seas of
Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The study was the first
of its kind in the region to quantify the comparative
benefits of trade facilitation among the three coun-
tries under alternative development scenarios.
From 1999 until the present day ESCWA has been
developing a geographic information system for ITSAM
(GIS-ITSAM). The GIS-ITSAM includes but is not
limited to GIS maps, databases and software appli-
cations for several of the components of ITSAM.
Conscious of the growing importance of road safety,
ESCWA, at its 23rd session (Damascus, 9-12
May 2005) adopted resolution 256 (XXIII), which
urged member countries to take part in the activities
undertaken by ESCWA, including the preparation of studies and meetings on the implementation of good practices for road traffic safety. The resolution exhort-
ed member countries to take part in the prepara-
tions for the global road safety week (which was held
in April 2007) and to make an effective contribution
to relevant United Nations General Assembly debates
on road safety.
Pursuant to the request of the Committee on Transport,
ESCWA undertook the preparation of a review of the
status of road safety in selected countries of the
ESCWA region. This publication, titled “Study on
Assessment of Road Safety in The ESCWA Region”
was submitted in two volumes; the first covered
Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi
Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, and the sec-
ond covered Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Furthermore, it
is expected to issue a third volume that will cover
Palestine and Sudan in 2009.
In conclusion, ESCWA is playing a key role in devel-
oping and promoting an integrated transportation sys-
tem, ITSAM, connecting all the countries of the region.
This system has been designed not only to facilitate
intraregional trade and promote greater economic
integration, but also to connect the ESCWA mem-
bers with neighbouring countries and regions and fur-
ther integrate Western Asia into the global econo-
my. Therefore, ESCWA has a big challenge in
maintaining this positive momentum not only to achieve
the ambitious target by the end of 2009, but also
throughout the future years and biennia to continue
to assist the region in the development and imple-
mentation of relevant integrated and multimodal trans-
port systems based and/or expanding on ITSAM.

For further information:
port&division=EDGD
Internet Freedom in the Arab World: Its Impact, State Controls, Islamisation and the Overestimation of it All

Dr. Khaled Hroub
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Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History and Politics
University of Cambridge, Cambridge

The struggle for freedom of expression in the Arab world, in the media and other domains, takes place against two sets of control: state control and religious control. Ruling groups and religious forces in Arab countries have in common a hostile perception of “uncontrolled” media freedom, each party being pre-occupied with different concerns and fears. These concerns sometimes meet, diverge, or collide. Governments want to keep a tight control against freedom of political expression; religious forces want to keep a tight control on cultural, social and entertainment freedoms. Advocates of freedom of expression have mostly, and rightly so, directed their efforts against state controls. However, though not equally effective, non-state hostility toward many aspects of the internet is widely accepted.

With these two fronts of hostility against freedom of the media in mind, the following discussion attempts to provide a broader and multi-levelled examination of the present particular status of internet freedom. Any juxtaposition of the State as the freedom-controller against the opposition parties as freedom-promoters is simply misleading. Large segments of opposition groups in the Arab world, especially those with a religious bent, embrace a stricter stance on media freedom than the regimes that they oppose. Islamist movements that partake in any power or have members in parliaments (say in Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Yemen, Iraq, Algeria, and Morocco) have achieved a poor record in defending media and internet freedoms apart from those which relate specifically to their own movements. Freedoms are promoted and opposed in a peculiarly selective and self-suiting way by various socio-political and religio-cultural actors. This selectivity is characteristically apparent, and particularly damaging, in the case of internet freedom. The promotion of freedom as a wholesale transforming process is still highly contentious, and disagreements on the meaning and limits of freedom are vast. This is reflected in the prevailing paradoxical attitude among many opposition groups in Arab countries, where the struggle to extract political freedom from authoritarian regimes can often go in tandem with the approval of, if not the demand for more, restrictions and control over religious and social freedom.

Overblown Impact?

Statistics concerning the use of the internet –quoted cautiously here– show that the internet penetration rate in the Arab world is significantly low at 14.2% (www.internetworldstats.com, 31 March 2009). This lack of access makes many Arabs feel bitter when compared to Israel’s rate of 74.0%, Europe’s 48.9%, North America’s 74.4%, or even Latin America’s 29.2%. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) takes the lead among Arab countries at 48.9%, whereas Yemen lags at the bottom with only 1.4%. It is estimated that the number of Arabic-speaking blogs exceeds 450,000 the world over; however, almost one-third of them are in or about Egypt, where the rate of penetration hardly reaches 13%.

These low levels of internet use in the Arab world are coupled with high rates of illiteracy, which exceed 40% in Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, and Yemen. Add to this situation two factors that further limit the impact of the internet: the increasing repressive state measures against internet freedom and the overpricing of internet use (which is six times more in the Arab world than in Europe). All of this combined together trims off much of the unfounded euphoria about the poten-
tial change that the internet in the Arab world is assumed to make. Caution against the overestimation of the impact of the internet is thus a more than needed caveat. There is no doubt that the internet has created an expansive Arabic sphere for freedom of expression and unlocked new territories. But it is equally true that it is still elitist in nature and form. Because of language and high levels of technological illiteracy, vast portions of the Arab public remain attached solely to TV or radio broadcasting. Parallels of the wishful thinking and exhilaration that accompanied the rise of trans-border TV broadcasting in the Arab world (e.g. the Al-Jazeera phenomenon) in relation to change-making are presently seen in the exaggeration of the impact of the internet.

State Controls, First and Foremost!

While all Arab countries impose restrictions on free internet access, the scale and magnitude of controls vary. Alas, Arabic-speaking websites advocating internet freedom are flooded with features and news about new restrictions, banned websites, arrests of bloggers and even pan-Arab concerted official efforts against “some dangers of the internet.” Examples of such news items would give an entry point to a broader discussion, providing a general picture, albeit a grim one, of the state of affairs of internet freedom in this region.

Over the course of writing this, during the last week of March and the first week of April 2009, leading websites that promote internet freedom such as the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (www.anhri.net) and the Initiative for an Open Arab Internet (www.openarab.net) posted many items, including the following: in Egypt, harsher measures including solitary confinement have been taken against the jailed blogger Dia Eddin Jad who has been under arrest since February 2008, and other bloggers such as Rami al-Souwasi, Mohamad Adel, Tamer Mabrouk and the famous couple bloggers Manal and Alaa have been arrested on and off; in Oman, the blogger Ali al-Zwaidi has been convicted of breaching the law by posting material on his website raising questions about possible corruption in the state-owned Omantel communication company; in Sudan, the authorities arrested blogger Abed al-Hakim Abed al-Rahman, who posted on his site supportive material to the International Court of Justice decision regarding the arrest of the Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir in relation with crimes in Darfur; in Bahrain, the authorities harassed Facebook activists and have extended the ban on any websites seen to be critical of the ruling family; in Morocco, a court sentenced the journalist and blogger Hasan Barhoun to six months imprisonment for “publishing and publicising lies;” in Tunisia, state media has launched attacks against Facebook users and demanded the authorities to ban it; in Syria, the authorities banned the website of the Syrian Human Rights Organisation; and in Saudi Arabia, the authorities arrested blogger Humoud bin Saleh, who converted to Christianity and shut down his own blog. These news items from only these two weeks give some glimpses of the current state of the internet in the Arab world. Previous months and years are only an extension of these two weeks. Part of the bleak picture is reflected in a March 2009 report by Reporters Without Borders on the “Enemies of the Internet,” which included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia among a list of 12 countries that also included Burma, China, North Korea, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam (www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=30543).

Most Arab governments justify banning measures on the grounds of maintaining state security, preserving national unity and safeguarding public morality

Despite compounded restrictive governmental measures, there are in fact ongoing “internet wars” between authorities and opposition groups in the Arab world. “Internet police” in various forms and names strive hard to keep pace with thousands of newly emerging websites and blogs that invent novel techniques and find leeway to out-maneuver increasingly stricter measures. These measures take many forms: direct regulations, mobilisation of public opinion against “terrorist and immoral websites,” and coordinated regional plans at the ministerial level. Internet service providers in the Arab world are mostly owned by governments or by government-affiliated or remotely controlled companies. Thus, the gateways to this global sphere are in fact guarded by official authorities deciding what to allow and what to fend off. Most Arab governments justify banning measures on
the grounds of maintaining state security, preserving national unity and safeguarding public morality. These governments exploit the so-called “war on terror” to ban opposition websites or news blogs that criticise their regimes. To market their harsh measures in the public eye authorities always mix such banning of political and oppositional websites with similar banning of pornography and “immoral” websites. Both kinds of websites, political and pornographic, are thus displayed as equally damaging and harmful.

“Talk Shop” or “Sphere of Action”?

Despite all restrictions, surely the internet has provided an avenue for political activism across the Arab world, however limited and with less outreach than is believed. An example of political action in Egypt shows something of this picture. In Egypt during March 2009 all opposition groups attempted to mobilise the public to participate in a nationwide public strike on 6 April. Widespread support was gathered on opposition media and internet blogs behind the “6 April Movement.” The page www.manalaa.net, a popular blog run by the couple Manal and Alaa stirring debates on socio-political issues and strongly critical of the regime in Egypt, provides an example of this specific “internet mobilisation.” On its homepage a huge poster of the strike is posted, saying “6 April: General Strike for the People of Egypt” signed by “the Youth of 6 April.” On both sides of the poster there is one list of “our rights” and another list showing how people could/should participate in the strike, both written in simple vernacular Egyptian dialect. Under the “rights” list are demands against high prices, the succession of the presidency (from President Mubarak senior to his son), brutal police, torture, and corruption. The “strike participation” list asks people not to go to work, university, school, market, or civil service departments. Internet campaigning by many websites of opposition parties to rally Egyptians behind this “general strike,” along with all other collective efforts of political groups, did not succeed. The message of protest was delivered by and via blogs and websites wider than any similar attempt in the past. But this slight change in mode of “messaging” yielded but a slighter change in the political reality. The disheartening story of internet failure to revive the “6 April Movement” as a mass protest is in fact only a replica of what could be seen in many Arab countries from Morocco and Tunisia to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The internet blogs and campaigns are merely an auxiliary factor for effecting change and realising freedoms. The hope that internet activity would be a principal agent of political and social change is one thing, the reality is another.

Not all political talk on Arabic-speaking blogs and websites is oppositional in nature, attacking regimes and governments. Numerous internet communication and chatrooms entertain debates and discussions between and within different groups. One of the most popular worldwide voice/video websites is www.paltalk.com, founded in 1998, where there are many chatrooms created by members focusing on specific countries or issues. Clicking on “Middle East” on Paltalk leads to a list of sub-headings of all Arab countries and “themes” with the number of rooms discussing each of these countries or themes shown between brackets, for example Egypt (36), Iraq (23), Morocco (42) and Kuwait (47). Examples of thematic and issue-focused rooms include Business & Technology (23), Community & Family (3), Friends & Relationships (68), Government & Politics (32), Christianity (32), Islam (60) and Adult (27) –checked around 10 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time, 6 April 2009.

The “Adult” section chatrooms cover Arab gay and lesbian discussions and intimate debates, and offer networking between Arab homosexuals across Arab countries.

Debates and concerns that gather more chatters are those relating to Islam, intra-relations with fellow non-Muslim citizens, corruption, and sectarianism mainly along the Sunni-Shiite divide. Discussions about North African issues include identity representations and the language demands of Berbers and Amazigh speakers in Morocco and Algeria. Other ongoing debates develop into fierce mutual attacks between religious groups –Muslims versus Christians
or between Muslim groups. Major issues in the Arab world, such as Palestine, Iraq, and Darfur, are intensely debated between competing partisan supporters. In most of these chatrooms people participate through voice talk, alongside typing, giving discussions a lively atmosphere. Controversial issues and voices that are never heard in any other Arab media outlet are expressed without boundaries. Yet this freedom is exclusive to small groups of active chatters. And although many hot debates have been actively discussed in these rooms for many years it is difficult to gauge their impact outside their virtual world.

**Internet Freedom: Agent of Change?**

Any examination of compromised media freedoms in the Arab world would in fact necessitate a broader discussion on the situation of all other liberties and their dilemmas: political, social, ethno-cultural and religious. When other agents fail to bring about socio-political and religious freedoms it is easier to resort to the media for help, or even to blame.

The Arab public, with relation to the media, could be seen as comprising four main groups: the ruling elites; the traditional and religious activists and groups; the secular and liberal activists and groups; and the majority of people, who are mostly influenced by traditional value systems. Media freedom, its limitations, and its role represent different meanings, aspirations, consequences, or even threats for each of these groups. Therefore, discussing these freedoms in the Arab world should be approached with the different perceptions of these groups included. The differentiated perceptions of “media freedom” by various social, political and religious groups require a more nuanced analysis. Using the toolbox available in the dichotomy of “ruling elite” versus “ruled” to gauge freedoms and their interrelations within the broader societal context becomes less applicable. In practical terms, any advocacy for internet freedom grounded in the proposition that the “public/ruled” would want unfettered and free internet access against the will of the “ruling elite” is in fact inaccurate. Internet freedom is promoted by its exponents as a means to escape state-controlled media, allowing more space for political action and liberties. But major segments of society would fear this same freedom as the facilitator of an “invasion” of the “corrupt Westernised culture of sex and moral decadence.” In Saudi Arabia, for example, the law allows members of the public to lodge demands to close down websites on moral and religious grounds. A website disliked by a few people could be banned if they complained about it to the authorities. In the Palestinian West Bank where internet regulations are not so strict because Israel controls the main servers, many families protested against internet cafés because of their “moral corrupting influence” on the youth.

**i-Islam: Jihadists, Fatwas, and Modes of Islamisation**

Arabic-speaking religious websites are vast, numerous, very powerful, and wide-ranging. At one end of the spectrum there are websites that promote extreme and violent messages and practices, such as blogs affiliated with al-Qaeda do. Other extreme but non-violent websites promote strict Salafi or other interpretations of Islam such as that of Hizb ut-Tahrir. At the other end of the internet-religiosity there are those websites that advocate official and state-associated modes of Islam. In between these two ends and around them there are thousands of websites that promote different understandings of Islam. All put together, Islamic websites occupy the central area of the Arabic-speaking internet.

One of the areas that these websites are most concerned with is the “fatwa,” which is a religious ruling issued by a scholar concerning a rising matter or issue to an inquiring person who asks for guidance. Some fatwas could be issued by scholars on certain issues without anyone particularly inquiring about it. Historically, the fatwa is a socio-religious practice that fulfils the spiritual and religious concerns of many Muslims. By referring to knowledgeable scholars (ulama), ordinary Muslims who want to stay committed to religious obligations concede moral power to ulama by listening to their views and opinions. Fatwas range widely, covering religious, political, social, family, cultural, financial, and even technological matters. Thousands of websites, or parts of websites, are now solely dedicated to fatwas.

The most worrying aspect of the fatwa practice is its transcendental insinuation into others’ lives, even if they are not religiously committed or did not ask for a fatwa. For example, a scholar could post a fatwa on a popular website prohibiting certain practices, bullying non-religious Muslims to adhere to this specific religious duty. The limits as to where the fatwa should refrain from transgressing individual liberties
is indeed one of the formidable questions that faces Islamic thinking nowadays. The amalgamation of undefined religious territories occupied and expanded by Islamist movements, the official religious establishment, and constitutional articles that stipulate Islam and Sharia Law as a principal, or in some cases the principal, source of legislation have all created an atmosphere where legitimisation of social behaviour is drawn on religious normativeness. In this process of legitimisation the fatwa is in fact the main tool.

The centrality of the fatwa in the socio-religious legitimisation processes is not new. What is new, however, is the modern communication medium, mainly the trans-border television broadcasting and the internet, by which the “fatwa institution” has expanded to unprecedented outreaches.

The centrality of the fatwa in the socio-religious legitimisation processes is not new; rather it has always been a feature of the role of Sharia in Muslim communities. What is new, however, is the modern communication medium, mainly the trans-border television broadcasting and the internet, by which the “fatwa institution” has expanded to unprecedented outreaches. Given the status and authority that Islam still enjoys in the Arab world, along with extremely high rates of illiteracy, the power of the fatwa has only but multiplied. The Islamisation projects that many religious and Islamist movements have been pursuing over decades have benefited greatly from the new dawn of intensive communication. For this writer, a crucial measure by which we could gauge the success or failure of the Islamisation process is the enhancement of religious references as the underpinnings of normative behaviour in society. The new channels of modern communications have further elevated religion and modes of religiosity promoted by the Islamists to a new “normative and moral” pinnacle. Consequently, other intellectual and ideological worldviews adopted and/or supported by other segments of society have been downgraded as lower in status than the religious ethos, and consequently are seen as decadent, immoral, westernised and anti-religions. For many years, Islamist media had limited channels on mainstream media to advocate their messages. The space of freedom offered by the internet has opened fresh and broad highways for religious formations not only to advance the Islamisation agenda, but also to dominate the construction of the normative criteria of sociality.

One consequence of the elevated status of religion and religious scholars that the new media has helped to enhance is the overblown sense of paternal responsibility on the part of the ulama and religious establishments. To counter waves of “westernisation” and moral decadence, these scholars have launched campaigns against multiple manifestations of sociality that are seen to be un-Islamic. Fatwas have flooded thousands of internet websites warning Muslims against endless practices and behaviours. From the minuscule act of how to enter or exit a toilet to such larger-scale foreign issues as the American occupation of Iraq in 2003 or Hezbollah’s stance against Israel in summer 2006, fatwas have flowed tirelessly advising Muslims on things to do or not to do. In the pursuit of protecting Muslim societies against “cultural invasions,” many fatwas have prohibited many “freedoms” on the internet. “Immoral” websites, chatrooms, music channels, and “secular and atheist” homepages have all been targeted by fatwas. An angry fatwa on one religious website called on “our Muslim hackers brothers” to destroy a website of Arab atheists (www.el7ad.com). Wars between Arab hackers have also become a feature of the Arab internet sphere, mostly against un-Islamic websites, but after the implosion of sectarianism in post-2003 Iraq, many hackers became aligned along the Sunni-Shiite schism. Sunni or Shiite websites that belonged to competing parties or groups, or even un-aligned institutions, would be targeted by the other side. A fierce “hackers” war broke out during and after the Israeli/Hezbollah war in summer 2006 between Hezbollah and other Shiite-affiliated websites on one side and Saudi and Salafi-affiliated websites on the other side.

In conclusion, the impact of internet use in the Arab world and that of all discourses and mobilisation using this medium, including the most powerful religious discourse, remain confined to active circles and those who have access. With the continuity of socio-political authoritarian systems coupled with illiteracy rates and technological poverty, the internet stays on the margin both as a public sphere of freedom and as a venue for political action.
The State of Freedom in the Arab World Five Years after the First Arab Human Development Report

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The Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), at least in the first cycle of four reports (2002-2005), has aspired to rise to the role of conscience and vanguard in the Arab intellectual arena, championing the causes of knowledge, freedom and good governance, and the empowerment of women. These issues were rarely raised with any force in the development discourse in the region or about the region. The AHDR has succeeded, in my opinion, in elevating the development discourse in the Arab region from the base world of dollars, bricks, and trade to the lofty plane of human dignity, spanning knowledge, freedom and good governance, and the empowerment of women.

However, it is fair to acknowledge that the intellectual stimulation did not last for very long and was not translated into effective strategies and programmes for human development as envisaged by the AHDR. Under the weight of authoritarian governance regimes and stagnant opposition politics, caused in part by the “treason of intellectual and political elites” and aided by savage globalisation, not to mention imperialistic projects in the Middle East, the development discourse and practice settled back to dollars, bricks, and trade, and perhaps a spot of tourism for the wealthy.

Hence, it is perhaps fair to claim that the development crisis, from the human development perspective, in the Arab region has intensified rather than ameliorated in the past five years.

It was maintained in the analysis of the AHDRs that the most binding constraints on human development in the Arab region are restriction of freedom and bad governance. Hence, attainment of freedom, in the comprehensive sense adopted in the AHDR, was recognized as the most crucial human development challenge in the Arab region.

In fact, starting with the third AHDR, human development was defined as synonymous with freedom, in a comprehensive sense, elaborated therein.

In this article, the course of freedom and good governance over the past five years will be taken as the yardstick to monitor change in human development in the Arab region over that period.

To fix ideas through concrete evidence, reference will be made to the important case of Egypt being a pivotal country in the region.

Freedom, the AHDR Concept

Freedom is taken here in the comprehensive sense of “eradication of all forms of curtailment of human dignity.”

This comprehensive sense not only incorporates civil and political freedoms (in other words, liberation from oppression) but also adds to them the imperative that the individual be liberated from all means by which human dignity may be curtailed, such as hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty, fear and, above all, injustice.

Furthermore, an individual can only be free in a free society. Societal freedom operates on two dimensions, the first being the protection of freedoms of subgroups and subcultures – terms that I prefer to the current category, “minorities.”

In addition, according to this concept of freedom, national liberation and self-determination are perceived as essential components of freedom, especially in the Arab nations, where infringement of national liberation is conspicuous.

Operationally, respect of freedom thus defined can
be embodied in the strict adherence to the entire body of the international human rights law, which should take precedence over national legislation.

**Freedom is one of those superior human culmination outcomes that require the presence of societal structures and processes**

In this sense, freedom is synonymous with human development and is perhaps the quintessential public good demanded in less-developed countries. Freedom is, however, one of those superior human culmination outcomes that require the presence of societal structures and processes that will attain and safeguard it, ensuring its uninterrupted continuance and promotion. These societal structures and processes guaranteeing freedom are summed up in the good governance regime, embodied in synergy between the state (comprising the government, elected representative councils, and the judiciary), civil society, and the business sector, all run respecting the principles of rational public administration. This good governance regime is founded on the following axes:

1. Total respect of freedom in the comprehensive sense and especially the key freedoms of opinion, expression, and association (assembly and organisation in both civil and political society) in harmony with the international human rights law.
2. Governance strictly based on institutions and on the separation of powers.
3. Full representation of the people in governance institutions.
4. Institutions that work efficiently and with total transparency.
5. Institutions subject to effective inter-accountability based on the separation of powers and direct accountability before the people via periodical, open, free, and fair elections.
6. Application of the law to all without exception in a form that is fair and protective of human rights.
7. A competent, honest, and totally independent judiciary to oversee the application of the law.

This model of good governance then ensures both freedom and justice. Since justice is the paramount value in Islam, this concept of freedom, incorporating justice, and the associated model of good governance would be inherently suitable for predominantly Muslim societies such as the Arab countries.

**The State of Freedom in Arab Countries Five Years after the First AHDR**

**Restriction of Key Freedoms**

The key freedoms of opinion, expression, and association (the right to peaceful assembly and the right to organize freely in civil and political society) are severely constrained in almost all Arab countries, precluding the potential for good governance (representative, institutional, and accountable under strict rule of law and completely independent judiciary). This malaise is prevalent to the extent that Arab culture itself has been blamed for the presence of authoritarian rule.

Though we do not subscribe to this Arab-Muslim exception, we must admit that reactionary interpretations of Islam have thrived on authoritarian rule in Arab countries.

Restriction of key freedoms that normally coexists with centralized authoritarian rule filters down to the fabric of Arab societies.

Unfortunately, the trend in Arab countries at large has not been towards expansion of key freedoms of late. Arab countries, in fact, exhibit exactly the opposite trend, showing a clear tendency towards further restricting key freedoms in the last few years.

**Foreign Occupations**

National liberation and self-determination are essential components of freedom, especially in the Arab region, where infringement of national freedom is conspicuous. Violation of freedom on the national level destroys individual freedom and human dignity, clearly manifest in the sinister occupations of Palestine and Iraq.

**Iraq**

In Iraq, the huge and rising human costs of occupation became clear in the context of growing lawlessness, internal conflict, and undue concern for an apparently flawed political process.

In spite of claims to the contrary by the US administration and its client regime in Baghdad, the country
has been destroyed, its resources have been plundered, and human suffering has reached gigantic proportions. In particular, for the nearly six million Iraqi displaced and refugees, many of whom are women and children, the “liberation” of Iraq by the Bush administration has meant nothing but untold misery. The great challenges for the Iraqi people remain the reform of the constitution in order to guarantee the territorial integrity of Iraq, the rebuilding of state institutions, the protection of human rights, the achievement of national reconciliation, and the elimination of anarchy and corruption in a unified country free from foreign occupation and terrorism.

Palestine

Palestine is the exemplary case in the world today of violation of national liberty undermining the freedom of the individual citizen. The occupation of Palestine has surely compromised the human dignity of all Palestinians.

With repeated incursions of the occupation forces committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, a lack of territorial integrity of the territories under the fragile and corrupt Palestinian Authority, and the barbaric siege of the Gaza Strip, human suffering has reached epic proportions.

At the time of writing, the Gaza “holocaust” was raging on. After two weeks of hugely unequal war by the vastly superior Israeli military machine, the densely populated Gaza Strip was left devastated and nearly five thousand Palestinians were left dead or injured, half of them women, children, and elderly persons. The holocaust description is not a mere aphorism in this case, as evidence accumulated that the Israeli armed forces used internationally-banned weapons, including chemical ammunition such as white phosphorus warheads, which literally incinerate all living creatures that fall victim to them. All these abominable weapons are products of the American evil genius and its unfair and unconditional support of the Zionist project in the Arab region in clear contravention of international law.

Egypt has traditionally exhibited a demonstration effect on the entire region. Events in Egypt, good or bad, seem to have been copied in other Arab countries.

Egypt, a Brief Profile

Long recognized as the heart and pioneer of the Arab and Islamic worlds, Egypt has recently witnessed a change of fortunes. As a regional power, the Egyptian state seems to have opted for dependence on, even subservience to, dominant powers in the world and the region, namely the US and even Israel, in the hopes of support and protection. Hence, its regional leadership role has been eroded recently and overtaken by oil-rich Saudi Arabia and even relative upstarts such as Qatar, not to mention the two relatively large regional Islamic powers: Turkey and Iran.

On the internal front, with a population of more than 70 million, and in spite of the ruling authoritarian regime boasting a successful economic reform program, economic misery has been mounting for the ordinary masses. Unemployment has been on the rise, poverty has been mounting, and inequality in the distribution of income and wealth has been intensifying. The youth, a great majority of the population, have been subjected to a heavier dose of this economic misery. To add insult to injury, the ruling authoritarian regime has adopted a strategy of increasingly restricting basic freedoms.

Blocking the Benign Path to Reform

According to the third AHDR, the benign path to reform in Arab countries starts with an opening act
that liberates civil society, in the extended sense, through total respect of the key freedoms of opinion, expression, and association (freedom to assemble peacefully and organize in civil and political society), the latter being the most consequential prerequisite of a vigorous and vibrant civil society. Freedom of association is perhaps the essence of democratic reform. In the Arab region, freedom and good governance are goals to be attained through a precarious process of societal reform, and the threat of a “one-time election” is ever-present. Under these conditions, freedom of association is needed to guarantee a benign path to reform on one hand and to ensure that any majority that comes to power through elections will not undermine, or even annul, democratic processes.

The catch is that present authoritarian governance regimes are in fact the gatekeepers to the legal and institutional reforms required to ensure respect of these three key freedoms. In reality, developments in the last five years have not given credence to the ruling authoritarian regimes reforming from within and ushering in the legal and institutional reforms required to ensure respect of the three key freedoms.

On the contrary, the authoritarian regime has shown the resolve to stay in power even if it means the destruction of the country. To attain this illusive goal, the authoritarian regime has been doing exactly the opposite. Legal and institutional changes and wrongly labelled “reforms” were introduced to restrict key freedoms even further. In fact, the ruling authoritarian regime in Egypt introduced constitutional amendments that embedded restrictions of freedom in the heart of the supreme legal document, the constitution. When a slim, carefully manipulated margin of freedom of expression is allowed, the freedom of association is kept severely rationed and subject to regime control. A heavy dose of managed media brainwashing and brutal police repression is then administered to quell popular discontent.

We need to keep in mind that this regime has also failed miserably in the arena of development, inflicting untold miseries on citizens in the form of widespread unemployment, increasing poverty, and worsening distribution of income and wealth in an environment of rampant corruption leading to escalating social polarization and political tension. The authoritarian regime is seemingly convinced that this lethal combination will allow the continuation of the authoritarian regime forever.

The lesson of history is that they are dead wrong! It is akin to the frantic and violent movements of an already slaughtered chicken on its last breath. Such acts of desperation might in fact be the death knoll for these regimes. People can be wronged for some time but they cannot be wronged forever. As these regimes continue to produce appalling injustices through impoverishment and repression while blocking peaceful and effective political channels to address them, they inevitably invite protest behaviour.

Protest Movements

The extent and tempo of protest movements in Egypt of late has laid to rest traditional wisdom about the passivity of Egyptians. One estimate puts the number of protest movements during 2007 alone at nearly 1,000, comprising 400 workers strikes and slow downs. Even government employees have participated in labour unrest, a development that would have been considered inconceivable a few months ago. In one famous government employee strike, thousands of men, women, and children from government departments throughout the country camped behind the Prime Minister’s office for weeks on end in the middle of winter. That movement was crowned by the declaration of the first labour union independent of regime control, a historical first! It is of little wonder that the pace of protest movements in Egypt has taken all observers and students of society and politics by storm.

What is the explanation?
The lethal combination contrived by authoritarian governance regimes to prolong their control over societies has finally worked against them. The injustice levied by impoverishment and repression has reached a breaking point where the oppressed can stand to lose only their misery and collective protest becomes the only path of expression open to them because the political regime does not provide channels to address these injustices effectively. Authoritarian governance regimes could have committed suicide by devising this brutal and fundamentally inhumane strategy.

The success rate of protest movements has been admirable. Another crucial demonstration effect! True, many of these movements adopted union, social, or economic demands. But these goals are political in essence and the socio-political separation is spurious. Furthermore, what
starts as "social" easily becomes "political" through the accumulation of quantitative change turning into a qualitative transformation, as the recent experience of Latin America clearly shows!

**Could Protest Movements Become the Vehicle of Reform?**

Probably, yes. However, to understand the contention fully, a few points of detail add insight. Protest movements have yielded a new breed of leaders on the ground, struggle-hardened, confident, and with progressive social and political visions and agendas. An especially welcome development is the appearance of a new breed of women protest leaders, another progressive move considered unthinkable in Egypt a few months ago. In fact, this protest leadership is, in my opinion, far advanced on the path of political reform of the majority of intellectual and political elites in the country. As a sign of the extensive state of discontent in the country beyond the circles of active protest, ordinary citizens in quarters where sit-ins were staged tended to embrace the protesters positively, and even the security forces brought in to restrain them if needed tended at times to show passive support, bordering on respect and admiration.

However, the authoritarian regime has of late tended to order police and even army troops to tackle the dirty tasks of enforcing a blockade of even potential protest movements using excessive force, as has happened recently with the landslide calamity in *Dweeka* in the heart of Cairo; plundering farmers' land for the benefit of investment projects of the ruling clique; stopping Palestinians under the grossly unfair blockade from fleeing Gaza to Egyptian soil seeking basic medicine and food stuffs; and preventing Egyptian civil society activists from providing aid to them.

This new tactic might work for some time. Nevertheless, it could only buy authoritarian regimes a little additional time, and can never stop the march of history. However, perhaps the most important premise for the protest movements as candidates for carriers of reform is their tendency to coordinate and build bridges within the protest movement landscape and the country at large. If the political and intellectual elites in opposition to the authoritarian regime exhibit the same tendencies while rising to the same level of strength and daring as the leaders of the protest movements, a credible alternative to the present authoritarian regime could coalesce, hopefully ushering in a historical transition towards a society of freedom and good governance. If elites can deliver on that front and build bridges with the mounting protest movements, the building blocks for the desired societal transformation leading to freedom and good governance could be put together. Unfortunately, the ruling authoritarian regime seems to have opted for this disaster scenario. Reacting to a series of recent rulings by the judiciary upholding civil and political liberties and holding the executive authority accountable for infringements on the public good, the regime has unleashed a fresh wave of heightened police brutality to block the implementation of these rulings. The ruling clique is trying to block the peaceful path to a society of freedom and good governance, knowing full well that it will pay the heaviest price for this transformation in fair punishment for rampant corruption and repression. The end result could be an epoch of disastrous infighting in the country, nonetheless leading to the fall of authoritarian rule, but at a very heavy price in human suffering.
2008 saw many in the public and national political elites being convinced that the EU needs a common immigration policy. Indeed, the French Presidency’s public relations campaign had many convinced that the EU now has a common immigration policy, thanks to its voluntary and non-binding “European Pact on Immigration and Asylum,” just like it now has a coherent Mediterranean policy, thanks to its “Union for the Mediterranean.” Closer to the truth would be the concepts of the “Global Approach to Migration” and a “Europe of projects.” Since 2005, the European Commission (EC) has argued that the basis for a common immigration policy is partnership with third countries, developed through projects in three main areas: the managements of legal migration, irregular migration, and migration and development. Though Member States have certainly acquired greater tools for cooperation on border management and irregular migration, the failure of the 2001 Economic Migration Directive halted much work on the positive aspects of migration, until 2008. In that year, the Commission capitalised on these renewed calls for a common immigration policy to launch new projects on legal immigration like the “Blue Card” Directive for highly skilled workers and the European Union (EU) Immigration Web Portal for prospective immigrants.

The most relevant of these immigration projects for EU external relations, especially in the Mediterranean, are EC mobility partnerships. A mobility partnership is a cooperation and dialogue mechanism between EU Member States and a third country on all areas of the Global Approach. They are supposed to be living frameworks that are easily adaptable to Member States’ interests and a third country’s needs. Pilot EU mobility partnerships were signed with Moldova and Cape Verde in May 2008, while the Commission has a mandate to negotiate two more pilots with Georgia and Senegal.

This article evaluates EC mobility partnerships as 2008’s major innovation in the EU’s Global Approach to Migration. Taking the pilot projects agreed upon with Cape Verde and Moldova, the first half of this article explores the added value of mobility partnerships over traditional bilateral agreements, their selection criteria for a third country, their content and their negotiation procedure. The second half looks ahead to the EC mobility partnerships’ potential to make the needs of third countries and their diaspora in Europe front and centre in future negotiations on managing migration in the Mediterranean. Taking Morocco as a strong case in the region, the article demonstrates how migration profiles can inspire the terms and content of a partnership and recommends specific initiatives for Member States and interested stakeholders.

The Current State of EC Mobility Partnerships

A number of factors make it difficult to conceptualise mobility partnerships in the international migration landscape. Public information on the selection criteria for a third country or on the negotiation of mobility partnerships is dramatically lacking. It is also too early to draw up any preliminary conclusions on the outcomes, as the implementation phase only started in January 2009. Built upon past existing bilateral agreements, mobility partnerships are shaped on a case-by-case basis, without systematic approach. Mobility packages differ in terms of content but also from the point of view of Member States that are
taking part. Mobility partnerships constitute à la carte collections of commitments, with which Member States may decide whether or not to participate.

**A New Approach to Negotiating Migration?**

Cooperation with third countries on immigration issues has traditionally taken the form of bilateral agreements. Bilateral agreements typically strengthen cooperation between national authorities for the purpose of border management or lay out return and readmission procedures. Bilateral labour migration schemes provide provisions facilitating the acquisition of work and residence permits for third country nationals concerned. Mobility partnerships merely coordinate and encourage bilateral actions, whose implementation is still left to Member States. But under mobility partnerships, national competences are exercised under a single common framework. It encourages cooperation between Member States without exceeding respective EU or national competences. Coordination at the EU level will enhance past bilateral efforts, as the main role of the Commission will be to supervise the implementation of fieldwork activities so as to reduce the overlap between different national initiatives and actions. A common mobility framework will bring up actions where there were none (i.e. the creation of legal migration channels and the conclusion of readmission or visa facilitation agreements). Mobility partnerships allow new Member States to get involved in areas in which they have traditionally been less active. Coordination and coherence of EU and Member States’ policies and measures, with a common methodology and common principles, are core dimensions of the common immigration policy establishing the foundations for a common legal framework on immigration and asylum.

**Criteria for Membership: A Secretive Club**

The way mobility partnerships have been concluded in practice stresses the ad hoc approach and the lack of strict guidelines. Candidate countries showing a strong interest in entering into an EU partnership are more likely to be selected as partners. Yet the final choice of Cape Verde and Moldova was made on grounds whose objectivity is debatable. Cape Verde shares strong historical and economic ties and a common language with Portugal, which was presiding as Council President at the time of conclusion of the mobility partnership. Moldova, through its representation based in Brussels, has conducted vigorous lobbying activities to be included in the pilot mobility partnerships.

**Content: A Comprehensive Instrument**

Mobility partnerships convey the Global Approach to Migration’s prime objective to work closely with third countries in a comprehensive and balanced manner. The content of a mobility partnership is complementary to the broader bundle of carrots (i.e. visa facilitation) and sticks (i.e. readmission agreements and border cooperation) that third countries are being asked to sign and use in the bilateral and multilateral management of migration. Within partnership agreements, proposed commitments on legal migration would include initiatives where information on legal migration is provided or measures helping to identify legal opportunities to migrate. Assistance on capacity building to manage migration flows with job-matching services and training provided to experts or to prospective migrants are other possible actions. The Commission supports the conclusion of bilateral agreements on visa facilitation for certain categories of migrants. Third countries are urged to contribute actively to the fight against irregular migration by improving border controls and management, to collaborate with FRONTEX or to improve security of travel documents. On the migration and development agenda, measures on brain drain mitigation, on circular migration or on remittances are encouraged. Readmission agreements are a core element inseparable from mobility pacts.

**The Negotiation Process: A Non-Binding and Flexible Instrument**

There is little information on the negotiation and conclusion of these pilot partnerships, but they seem to present similar features to mixed agreements, except that the latter create rights and impose obligations under international law. Mixed agreements have increasingly developed in the practice of EU agreements concluded with third countries, so as to better reflect legal and political realities inherent to the EU division of powers. Mobility partnerships, as external instruments of the EU’s migration policy, bring together different policy areas where the EC has no exclusive competences, which de jure entails Member States’ involvement in the decision-making process.
and implementation. In practice, mobility packages are the result of informal meetings where participating Member States put forward ad hoc initiatives whose effective implementation is totally subject to Member States' political goodwill and available financial means.

**Mobility Partnerships: The Way Forward**

Mobility partnerships are generally perceived as the new innovative tool for migration management. By bringing together Member States to cooperate, mobility packages harmonise external migration actions without entering into national competences. Member States may share successful supporting strategies and cooperation with third countries or exchange good practices and policies. Undeniably, a flexible approach and implementation leaves Member States comfortable room to manoeuvre to adjust the proposed actions when required. Yet a number of factors may endanger mobility partnerships, such as their non-binding nature or the lack of coordination at either the national or the European level.

Objective selection criteria allowing for a fair and equal treatment between comparable candidates could be setting up for the future. In the pilots, migration profiles presenting comprehensive data on migration flows and stocks are proposed to be elaborated so as to accurately define migration issues of common interests. Such profiles would be better exploited prior to the conclusion of mobility partnerships, so as to adequately assess the socio-economic situation and mobility needs of a country and its population abroad. Member States presenting strong migration ties would propose a comprehensive range of appropriate actions to be taken.

**The Future Potential for Partnership: The Strong Case for Morocco**

According to this logic, an EC mobility partnership would have some of the greatest benefit in the Mediterranean region for Moroccans, who are one of the world’s largest populations on the move, mostly to the EU. One of the few countries that combine a significant emigration rate (8.6%) with a large population (33 million), Morocco has one of the world’s largest diasporas (2.7 million Moroccan-born living abroad in 2005). In 2000, an estimated 71.8% had settled in the EU (1.9 million). The largest group (estimated at 29% in 2000) chose France, while 12% went for Spain, 11% for Germany, 7% for Italy, 6% for the Netherlands and 5% for Belgium. Among these countries, Morocco has become the most important country of origin for immigrants in Italy and Spain, whereas it ranks second in France, third in Belgium, fourth in the Netherlands and sixth in Germany. 1.8% of Moroccan emigrants are split among the modest Moroccan communities that have developed in most EU Member States.

The preference of this large, mobile population for European countries of destination is supported by many of the objective criteria that make a strong case for partnership. The EU and Morocco are neighbours, with one of the highest income inequality gaps between them in the world. The population of Morocco is relatively young and internally mobile. Furthermore, they share parts of their history with the continent and their official languages with Spain and France. Add to that the family and social connections with the diaspora in Europe and these strong bonds have great monetary value for the people of Morocco. Moroccan emigrants sent back 4.6 billion dollars in 2000, according to World Bank estimates. Remittances were three times more important to Morocco than foreign-direct investment in 2006, and nearly seven times more important than official development aid in 2005.

**Setting the Terms of a Euro-Moroccan Partnership**

Sketching a “migration profile” for the country reveals great mobility potential for international students and recent highly skilled graduates, Moroccan-trained doctors and low-skilled agricultural workers. Morocco is also one of the few countries that combine a significant study abroad rate (11% in 2006) and a large
population in post-secondary and tertiary education population (491,667 enrolled in 2007). Moroccan students are more likely to study abroad than their counterparts in the rest of North Africa and the Middle East. And they have as much international educational experience as Americans, Canadians or Japanese. In 2005, 48,162 Moroccan students received their university degree and entered a job market, where 222,400 highly skilled persons (half of them women) were out of a job. So far, highly skilled emigration has been moderate and steady, with only one in ten highly-educated Moroccans living outside the country. Brain drain has been less of a problem for Moroccan doctors, whose emigration rates are lower than the highly skilled average. Since 1991, more doctors have been trained in Morocco and more are choosing to stay there. In Morocco in 2005, 44% of all workers and 57% of female workers were employed in the agriculture and fishing sector. In that same year, a third of the 1.8 million unemployed workers were seeking their first job, while a similar amount came from elementary or unclassifiable professions.

Sketching a “migration profile” for the country reveals great mobility potential for international students and recent highly skilled graduates, Moroccan-trained doctors and low-skilled agricultural workers.

The longstanding countries of Moroccan immigration, such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands, receive most of Morocco's international students and its highly skilled. Their contributions to an EU mobility partnership could be to promote the retention and mobility of Moroccan students trained in their countries. Complementary measures can combat brain waste and the non-recognition of skills and qualifications obtained in Morocco. For instance, although France is the major country of destination for Moroccan immigrants, highly-skilled, and international students, twice as many Moroccan doctors go to Belgium. France allows doctors to be Moroccan nationals, but only if they obtained their qualifications in France or the EU. For more evidence of the waste of Moroccans’ skills and qualifications, one need look no further than the one in ten Moroccan-born highly-skilled looking for work in France, Italy and Spain.

In the new major countries of Moroccan immigration like Italy and Spain, Moroccans have grown to become the largest immigrant community, with many newcomers overrepresented in the foreign work force. Within a possible EU mobility partnership, these countries could look to Spain for example and launch recruitment programmes for Moroccan international students and provide more information and openings for their seasonal agricultural work programmes. Spain has been much more successful than Italy for instance in attracting Moroccan students. Now, one in ten head to Spain and one in ten international students in Spain are Moroccan-born. On temporary work, Spain has been the top destination for Moroccans moving abroad on temporary work permits since 2005. One in five is declared as working in agriculture and fishing, while the official numbers in Italy, Greece and Portugal are comparatively low.

More out-of-the-way destinations (Ireland, the UK, Scandinavia and Central Eastern Europe) could also contribute new study abroad programmes. With less than 1% of Moroccan students choosing Ireland or the UK, English-speaking universities might specifically think of better exchange and language training. Recent, particularly female, Moroccan-trained graduates could be the target group for new highly-skilled twinning or job-matching services. Although two out of every three highly skilled Moroccans in the EU are in France and have been there for over a decade, highly-skilled Moroccan newcomers are more likely than most compatriots to settle in countries with smaller Moroccan communities. The few Moroccan migrant workers who choose these countries tend to be more highly-skilled, male, and concentrated in mid-level positions like clerks.
The attention of the European Union was dramatically focused on migration between Africa and Europe by the fatalities on the borders of Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005, which demonstrated the terrible consequences of the growing inequalities between Europe and its neighbours to the south. The resulting “Global Approach to Migration,” which the European Commission drafted in December 2005, continues to frame the practices and politics of migration management across the Mediterranean and beyond. Although this approach was expanded at the end of 2007 to cover migration relations with the EU’s eastern neighbours, particularly the Balkans, it is apparent that throughout 2008 the Euro-African relationship remained the primary axis of concern.

Concerns of governments and civil society are motivated above all by the large numbers of migrants who continue to lose their lives crossing the Mediterranean or the Sahara. Available information suggests that more than 1,500 people died while trying to reach Europe during the year. This included a number of large-scale tragedies, some of them apparently involving border control forces. Although data on apprehensions is uneven, it appears that on some routes, particularly to Lampedusa, the number of people attempting to reach Europe increased, after a widespread fall in 2007.

There were two significant developments in 2008 that point to longer-term changes in the EU’s Global Approach. First, the overwhelming emphasis on dialogue that has characterised the Global Approach so far is beginning to result in some concrete policy initiatives. Second, although the EU remains the dominant instigator of these policy developments, often with much less “partnership” than the Global Approach calls for, there are signs that African partner countries are increasingly involved as their particular needs are identified, separately from a control-focused European agenda. Developments within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in particular, suggest the beginnings of a more collaborative approach. This paper examines data on migration from Africa to Europe before turning to dialogues and resulting policy developments.

Migrations

Probably more than any other single factor, it is the continued high profile of clandestine migration across the Mediterranean, and increasingly across the Sahara, that has emphasised the importance of the Euro-African migration relationship. As a proportion of all undocumented migration to Europe, movements across the Mediterranean are not significant. Studies of undocumented migrants conducted in Spain and Italy have estimated that between five and 10% enter the country in a clandestine manner, compared to the vast majority who arrive with a visa and overstay (Collyer, 2008). Nevertheless, the power of the images of trans-Mediterranean migration that have circulated across the world over the past decade emphasise the urgent humanitarian need to respond to the desperation and suffering of migrants involved and have increased the concern of governments keen to demonstrate that they are in control of their own borders.

European governments have therefore faced apparently contradictory demands, emphasising their capability to reinforce their borders on the one hand, while responding with the compassion that is demanded by international legal obligations and widespread public concern on the other. This is the difficulty that has underpinned the Global Approach to Migration. It has involved limiting access to European territory,
through reinforcing the system of “remote controls” that had been established from the early nineties, instituting controls at sea and coordinating patrols between Members States, primarily through the establishment in 2005 of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX), the Europe border control agency, and emphasising the obligations and increasing the capacity of border control agencies of neighbouring states. Many of these measures have been controversial and are continually criticised by civil society organisations. The impact of these border control measures is always difficult to estimate. The only statistics available are for those migrants apprehended while attempting to reach Europe, or in rarer cases, attempting to cross a more distant border, without documentation. These statistics are not universally collected, and it is unusual for them to be made regularly, publicly available. Data must therefore be pieced together from a variety of different sources. Even when data can be obtained, interpretation varies considerably. The most easily comparable data are produced for the various FRONTEX operations, though EU Member State ministries also publish some data. Beyond the Mediterranean, data are much more patchy and are available only irregularly.

Statistics on apprehensions in recent years do not reveal a general trend for the entire region. The numbers of migrants caught at different crossing points vary quite widely as a function of the number of migrants attempting to cross and the intensity of control operations in the area. Annual apprehensions for the entire region gradually increased until 2006, when there was a slight decline in the central and eastern Mediterranean but an increase in apprehensions in Spanish waters. This was particularly dramatic on the crossing to the Canaries, where apprehensions increased from 4,715 in 2005 to 31,678 in 2006 in response to the FRONTEX operation Hera, which began in that year. In 2007, apprehensions as a result of Hera II fell just as dramatically to 12,478 and those due to Hera 2008 fell further to 9,615. Apprehensions around all other Spanish coasts fell by a similar proportion to just under 7,000 for 2008. Apprehensions on routes in the central Mediterranean witnessed the opposite trend. Having fallen substantially in 2006 and stabilised in 2007, apprehensions around Italy’s coasts more than doubled to 37,000 during 2008, 41% of the total maritime apprehensions for the year. The vast majority of these, 31,300, occurred around Lampedusa. The situation was of such concern to the Italian Parliament that on 25 July a state of emergency was declared in response to undocumented migrations. Apprehensions in seas around Malta increased from 1,700 in 2007 to 2,800 in 2008 and in the eastern Mediterranean apprehensions also doubled to 29,100.

Crossings at land borders were similarly varied. The most significant for undocumented crossings were the Greece-Albania border and the Greece-Turkey border, though Ceuta and Melilla, with a fraction of the border length, recorded 7,500 undocumented crossings, the third highest and more than the entire eastern border of the EU. Spain also reported 400,000 denials of entry to Ceuta and Melilla during the year, indicating the unique status of this border. This compares to 140,000 refusals of entry at all other European borders during the year (FRONTEX, 2009).

Dialogues

Establishing dialogue among “countries of origin, destination and transit” is a key part of the EU’s Global Approach and probably the most successful element to date. Since 2006, three separate high-level processes have become established for dialogue between Africa and Europe. Discussions were initiated in July 2006 with the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rabat. The Rabat meeting involved the EU27 plus Norway, Iceland and Switzerland and 27 African countries from the north, west and centre of the continent, though the absence of Algeria was unfortunate.

Establishing dialogue among “countries of origin, destination and transit” is a key part of the EU’s Global Approach and probably the most successful element to date

The Rabat meeting resulted in an action plan concerned with facilitating legal migration, combating irregular migration and promoting migration and development, subsequently referred to as the Rabat Process. This meeting was quickly followed by an EU-African Union (AU) meeting in Tripoli in November 2006, also on migration and development, which resulted in a
much more comprehensive nine point plan, referred to as the Tripoli Process. Finally, the first Ministerial Meeting on Migration was held amongst states belonging to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Albufeira in November 2007. Each of these meetings has led to further high-level discussions. The next meeting of the Rabat Process occurred in Madrid in June 2007. Discussions on migration between the EU and the AU were continued at the general summit in Lisbon in December 2007, which adopted the EU-Africa Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment. These meetings did not substantially change the content of the earlier declarations but offered a further chance for relevant officials to meet and monitor any progress. The bilateral or multilateral work necessary for implementation of these declarations typically occurs between more junior officials on a much more regular, often quarterly, basis.

In 2008, there were two further meetings in this series. The French Presidency of the EU was particularly active in this area. In July 2008 President Sarkozy hosted an inaugural meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean, a new initiative designed to replace the Euro-Mediterranean Process, which assembled 43 heads of state from Europe and around the Mediterranean in Paris. In November, Paris hosted the next round of the Rabat Process, renaming it the Euro-African Process. The conference declaration largely kept to the three themes of the Rabat action plan. The first theme, “organising legal migration,” emphasised bilateral and multilateral labour agreements and called for improved information exchange on possibilities for legal migration. The second theme, “the fight against irregular migration,” covered four sub-points: improving coordination and support for regional programmes in Africa; reducing document fraud; strengthening the control of borders, including the ambitious objective (5.2) to “improve controls along all borders in Africa,” and finally readmission and voluntary return. The third objective, as in Rabat, was “strengthening synergies between migration and development.”

Quite apart from this range of regional discussions, many of the states forming part of the Euro-African Process, the EU-AU dialogue of the Union for the Mediterranean, are also involved in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which held its second meeting in Manila in October 2008. These meetings cover much of the same ground as discussions in the three regional processes. In addition to global processes, the EU’s Global Approach now emphasises intra-regional discussions, promoting dialogue within sub-Saharan Africa and between sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb. These elements were clear in the declaration of the Paris meeting and form one of the most interesting regional policy developments of 2008.

Policies

Relations with third countries were first introduced as an element of common EU migration and asylum policy at Tampere in 1999, but received much less policy attention than other elements of the Tampere agenda. They appeared again as a priority in the Hague Programme in 2004 but again received relatively little attention until the fatalities in Ceuta and Melilla in 2005 shocked the British Presidency into action. Since then the Global Approach has provided a framework allowing the external aspect of EU policies to receive much greater priority. Nevertheless, for the first few years there was little to show for this in terms of policy outcomes, as the emphasis on dialogue and discussions dominated. Developments in 2008 suggest that this has begun to change and some concrete policies are now emerging; although most of these relate to EU policy, there are signs of developments elsewhere too.

The most significant development outside Europe was the adoption of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration in January 2008. Although this was influenced by dialogue with European partners, after Rabat, it goes well beyond relations with Europe, dealing with the much more significant intra-regional mobility. An estimated 90% of international migrants in ECOWAS do not leave the region (Bensaad 2009), and 7.5 million people, 3% of the regions population, are thought to live outside their state of citizenship (ECOWAS 2007). This compares with five million people in the EU, barely 1% of the region’s population. The Common Approach recognises the significance of this movement, initially establishing provisions for free movement of citizens within ECOWAS. It sets out a six point agenda, which partly echoes but also goes beyond dialogue in the Euro-African Process: free movement within ECOWAS, the management of regular migration, policy harmonisation, controlling irregular migration and human trafficking, protecting rights of asylum seekers and refugees and actions to take into account the gender and migration dimension.
In contrast to what appears to be an extremely progressive migration agenda developing in ECOWAS, 2008 also saw what many consider to be far more regressive policy developments within the EU. In February, the Commission published two discussion papers on external border management. The first (COM 2008 68) set out an agenda for establishing a united European border control system, the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR). It would involve the integration of existing systems with the deployment of new technologies to create a unified picture of the border zones, principally in the Mediterranean. The second (COM 2008 69) examined the “next steps in border management in the EU,” including the introduction of expedited checks for EU citizens. These developments would substantially transform the ways in which European borders are managed, yet they “do not appear to stand up to the tests of proportionality and reasonableness that are essential for any new EU legislation in light of the general principles of EU law”, principally because there is no provision for independent monitoring of their likely impacts (Guild et al 2009: 8).

Operations of FRONTEX were significantly expanded in 2008. The agency has seen its budget increase from 19 million euros in 2006 to 41 million euros in 2007 and just over 70 million euros in 2008, signifying the increase in its operating capacity. In 2008, FRONTEX managed five separate maritime operations across the Mediterranean and between West Africa and the Canaries. Also in 2008, the Council finally approved the Return Directive (OJ 24.12.2008), which had been under discussion since 2005. Most controversially, this legislation fixed a maximum term of detention of 18 months for undocumented migrants in the EU before return and received widespread criticism from around the world. In December, in the most recent analysis of the Global Approach, the Commission went some way towards acknowledging the lack of partnership demonstrated in the adoption of this directive: “The animated discussions accompanying the adoption of the Return Directive in the summer of 2008 are a clear reminder of the need for the EU to better communicate its policies.” (COM 2008 611, p12).

The Commission is right to critically examine the passage of the Return Directive, since it has significantly damaged the trust on which the partnerships essential to the success of the Global Approach depend.

SECOND EURO-AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development was held in Paris on 25 November 2008 under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference drew inspiration from the conclusions of the three meetings of experts held within the framework of the implementation of the Rabat Action Plan. Specifically, these meetings were held in Rabat in March 2008, to discuss legal migration, Ouagadougou in May 2008, to discuss the fight against irregular migration, and Dakar in July 2008, to discuss the link between migration and development. The first Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, held in 2006, primarily addressed the emergency situation along the West African migratory route. It adopted the main tracks of the ‘Global Approach to Migration’, proposed by the European Commission, which addresses all aspects of migration flows: the organisation of legal migration, the fight against irregular migration and the synergies between migration and development.

At the second conference, measures were taken to ensure the follow-up and assessment of the Euro-African Process and, particularly, of the Rabat Action Plan. Moreover, the commitment to promoting a Three-Year Cooperation Programme that specified the lines of action and defined the concrete measures to be taken and that would be implemented in the 2009-2011 period was renewed.

Attendees at the second conference likewise agreed to provide sufficient financial resources to fund the actions defined under the Three-Year Cooperation Programme, within the framework of the Partnership between the Commission of the African Union and the Commission of the European Union, who were urged to speed up the examination, as set out in the Tripoli Declaration, of the feasibility of setting up a fund.

For further information:
Paris Conference on Migration and Development
Paris Three-Year Cooperation Programme
Africa-EU Partnership on Migration Mobility and Employment: Tripoli Declaration
Rabat Declaration and Action Plan: Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development
www.maec.gov.ma/migration/En/default.htm
Implementation of the Rabat Action Plan
www.dialogueexaofricainmd.net/project/hf
The Commission is right to critically examine the passage of the Return Directive, since it has significantly damaged the trust on which the partnerships essential to the success of the Global Approach depend. Policy initiatives that are potentially much more positive have been met with suspicion and negotiated with much more difficulty by the Commission than may have been the case otherwise. Mobility partnerships, an essential element of the Global Approach, are a good example. Essentially, these establish a framework for exchanging greater rights, such as visa facilitation agreements, with obligations of readmission and control and, well managed, there is potential for African states to benefit. They are currently piloted in Moldova and Cape Verde, where the partnership was implemented in June 2008, though discussions are currently underway with Senegal.

The Migration Information and Management Centre (CIGEM) in Bamako was also inaugurated in 2008. According to the EU, this centre was financed as a way of assisting Mali in responding to various migration demands. There is a real need for this, given the specific context of migration in the region, set out in the ECOWAS approach, for example, yet there is widespread suspicion that this centre will be used to gather information to support EU migration control efforts. By the end of 2008, the global financial crisis was already forcing a re-evaluation of some of the developing elements of the Global Approach, as falling demand for migrant labour, particularly in sectors such as construction, may undermine some provisions of the key elements, such as the mobility partnerships. The introduction of the European Blue Card, for example, received support in the September European Council but was delayed for a future date and though it seems likely that developments will continue in this area, progress appears likely to slow in 2009.

References


Ten years on from their last meeting, Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership convened again in Athens on 29-30 May 2008, under the Slovenian Presidency. The Council of Europe subsequently held a new ministerial conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 2-3 December, while the French government was organising the Mediterranean Cultural Forum on 4-5 November. These are just three of the initiatives that took place in 2008 to celebrate the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, which this author was able to participate in.

The outbreak of conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, the increase in hostility displayed by Europeans towards people from outside the European Union and the consequent security measures taken by European governments and the so-called “terrorist emergency” declared immediately after 9/11 are all factors that have finally led the cultural option, particularly intercultural dialogue, to be considered as a possible instrument for problem resolution.

The Euro-Mediterranean civil society has always used common projects in the cultural arena as indispensable instruments for spreading mutual knowledge throughout the different Member States. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, on the other hand, has focused on policies that safeguard heritage (Euromed Heritage) and audio-visual material (Euromed Audiovisual). In fact, the Anna Lindh Foundation, created in 2005, is the first and only structure specifically dedicated to intercultural dialogue. Despite the diffuse nature of its actions, the Foundation remains an intergovernmental instrument with all the restrictions of accessibility and representation that this implies.

The two key stages of the conference, the meeting of the ministers and their conclusions, should be distinguished in order to gain a realistic overview. The conference itself served to publicly present work carried out at other moments in time, which preceded the conclusions but could give a reasonably accurate idea of how things stand. Most of the ministers made reference to what constitutes historical heritage in their own culture and –particularly governments in the South– sought recognition for what they claimed to be a major role in the creation and definition of a common cultural context, while any kind of reference to what constitutes contemporary cultural and artistic production and the concept of cultural diversity was entirely absent from the debate.

This approach is symptomatic of the standpoint most governments adopt regarding culture, and therefore, the possibility of dialogue, often seen as a remote consideration; an attitude reflected in the almost total absence of support for independent cultural activities from governments in the South, and in the marginal support from some governments in the North, as is the case in Italy.

Considering culture exclusively in terms of heritage or claims for recognition is not conducive to a favourable orientation of a government’s cultural policies, whether on a national or international scale. If freedom of expression, of association and a secular state cannot be guaranteed, then neither can the right to culture, neither in terms of its access nor its production.

However, the conclusions were developed in such a way as to contradict this initial impression.
The Conclusions and the Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture

Without doubt one of the most significant moments was the constitution of the Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture as an instrument for "enhancing the cultural dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in a way which is both innovative and focused" and relating intercultural dialogue with cultural policies. Reference was also made to culture as an instrument for fostering democracy, human rights and fundamental liberties, and to combat racism, xenophobia and extremism. Ministers recognised the need to improve mobility for artists, intellectuals and teachers, as well as for cultural and artistic products, simplifying among other things, procedures for issuing entry visas.

Emphasis was given to the need for a fair consideration of cultural and linguistic minorities, although this would have to take national legislation into account.

On the subject of cultural policies, ministers agreed on the need to establish a greater balance for cultural exchanges, whose notorious imbalance is tipped heavily in favour of the European area.

Finally, the need was recognised to foster contemporary cultural creation with the aim of "perpetuating our rich cultural heritage" and the need to intensify cooperation with civil society, assuming this is done "in accordance with national legislation."

The Baku Conference

The Council of Europe, with its 47 Member States and a structure which, thanks to its characteristics, is surely more agile, celebrated the Year of Intercultural Dialogue with a conference for Ministers of Culture, which was extended to give room to representatives of both civil society and religious communities.

The host nation, Azerbaijan, is a candidate for the headquarters for the "Artists for Dialogue" project. The initiative, if set in motion, could respond effectively to the needs of artists and contemporary creators for a programme that finances their creations and also aids their dissemination.

The premises on which the declaration is based make reference to the European Convention on Human Rights and to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. The stated principles are similar to those contained in the conclusions of the ministerial meeting in Athens, but pay more attention to the richness of cultural diversity and, hence to the need to defend and value this. There is also more emphasis on respecting human rights through free cultural activity and the declaration makes explicit reference to the role of religions in the field of dialogue.

Although it was scarcely mentioned, it is precisely the religious dimension as a subject for dialogue that, along with matters regarding democracy and freedom of expression, constitutes one of the most critical points in question.

Mediterranean Cultural Forum

Organised by the French government and initiated the same day as the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, this meeting aspired to be the point of convergence for three other such events that took place in Paris (September 2006), Seville (June 2007) and Alexandria (January 2008).

Subdivided into eight thematic workshops, the Forum had the pre-established aim of reviewing all that could be classified as culture, from heritage to cinema, as well as libraries, creation, religions, modernisation and education, among others.

Furthermore, since the mandate was to establish specific and attainable objectives, each workshop would also have to identify projects that, if put into practice, could respond to needs that arise from each work group. However, it is a well-known fact that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." In such a short period of time it was impossible to make any serious proposals, and for the same reason it was not a viable option to debate projects that had been suggested previously by the organisers.

What is most surprising is the fact that the French government, instead of offering cultural creators a space for discussion between themselves and the institutions, believed that it could replace civil society with a clumsy attempt at managing proceedings. If this initiative could have any consequences, they are as yet unknown.

Some Considerations

This brief summary of three of the events that characterised the Year of Intercultural Dialogue cannot be concluded, in my opinion, without raising some personal considerations in light of ten years of experi-
ence as an activist in the field of culture and the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Action taken by some governments in the Partnership could undoubtedly be classified as a formality dictated by the theme chosen for 2008, and while the principles and aims indicated in the different conclusions and declarations are certainly praiseworthy, the instruments used to reach them are ineffective. Frequent reference to national legislation reduces issues of human rights and fundamental liberties to an exercise in rhetoric. National sovereignty clashes relentlessly with laudable principles, and delicate diplomatic manoeuvres are needed to avoid attacks on firmly consolidated positions on the different shores of the Mediterranean.

It is the Euro-Mediterranean civil society itself that today must innovate its own strategy to avoid being “adopted” by the different governments and therefore running the risk of becoming the “fig leaf” of Euro-Mediterranean politics.

This extended custom of raising walls, albeit virtual ones, is converting Europe into a fortress with weak foundations. Rising immigration and the onset of economic and social crises have led governments from the North to toughen up procedures for obtaining visas, with the aim of settling concerns regarding national security; measures which instead of tackling any real problems are in fact favouring the illegal practice of human trafficking. Needless to say the much trumpeted issue of mobility as an instrument of knowledge and dialogue has once again been reduced to an exercise in verbal rhetoric. Furthermore, dialogue between religions was scarcely touched upon and often raised as if it were a token obligation. In the debate between the diverse Euro-Mediterranean actors there are those who consider that religion should be included in its own right within the social and cultural themes, and those who would prefer to assign it a specific area. In any case, it should be noted that the increasingly rigid Vatican hierarchy does not exactly constitute the ideal setting for inter-religious dialogue, or even for dialogue with the secular civil society.

In a reality that evolves with ever-increasing speed, whose symptoms we are increasingly less accustomed to perceiving, there is a risk of overlooking the role of fieldwork, which although slow and complex, is the only way to provide representation with meaning and content.
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Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta, Tal-Qroqq

Education is a sector that all Euro-Mediterranean countries recognise needs to be on top of the cooperative regional agenda if fostering closer relations across the Mediterranean area is to be achieved. However, since the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in November 1995, the educational field has not received the attention that is necessary to enhance closer cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean.

In order to address this shortcoming, the European Commission, together with its Member States, needs to trigger both public and private stakeholders to work hand-in-hand with a long-term perspective to attract a larger number of Arab students to European shores and vice-versa. This will of course require an updating of procedures for visas, making them more user-friendly for such a category of professionals.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Union for the Mediterranean that commenced in July 2008 is also seeking to add momentum to cooperation in the field of higher education by implementing a plan of action that will witness the launching of a substantial scholarships scheme for university students from Euro-Mediterranean Partnership countries and an increase in mobility grants for higher education staff.

Future Euromed programmes need to ensure that people-to-people interaction is at the forefront, especially among young people. It is essential that a much larger number of students from the Arab world be given the opportunity to study at EU universities. The Bologna Process must be made functional to them. The same goes for joint EU-Arab research projects. The EU must introduce a package of programmes that seeks to tap into the wealth of intelligence in the Euromed region via scholarships, seminars, and other initiatives. The Euromed Education Ministerial that took place in Cairo in June 2007 has started to serve as a catalyst in this regard.

When it comes to diplomatic training, Malta has already established itself as a regional centre of excellence in the Mediterranean through its educational and training institution, the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) at the University of Malta, where over 500 graduates from 41 countries have been trained in the last 18 years. Since 1996, MEDAC, together with the European Commission and the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has also been responsible for coordinating the Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminars, or as they have become more commonly known, the Malta Seminars, which are an official confidence-building mechanism of the Barcelona Process where more than 1,000 diplomats have had the opportunity to interact and openly discuss Euro-Mediterranean issues.

Malta's active participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is perhaps best described as an extension of its co-operative security philosophy. It should also be regarded as a tangible contribution to creating a Euro-Mediterranean region based upon the attributes of positive diplomacy.

The proposal to establish a Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) offers Europe and the international community an opportunity to carry out a strategic reassessment that will allow for more political attention and economic resources to be directed towards upgrading stability and opportunities across the Mediterranean.

The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (BP: UfM) with a focus on education must be welcomed,
as it has again helped focus international attention on a very important geo-strategic crossroads of different civilizations and a crucial post-Cold War theatre of operations. The BP: UfM should not be perceived as a fixed concept but a work in progress – the objective is to create a ‘Barcelona Plus’ situation where Euro-Mediterranean relations are truly re-launched on a more solid footing.

The main factor that should move European and Mediterranean states closer together in future is the mutual security interests they share: Euromed political, economic and cultural cooperation must be strengthened if stability is to be secured in future.

In February 2009, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, announced that Erasmus Mundus, the European co-operation and mobility programme that supports academic excellence and the attractiveness of European higher education worldwide and fosters cooperation with third countries, is entering a new phase with a substantially increased budget and a wider scope.

The main factor that should move European and Mediterranean states closer together in future is the mutual security interests they share

In the period of 2004-2008, Erasmus Mundus and the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows offered more than 10,000 scholarships to students and academics from all over the world, with a combined budget of 609 million euros. The programme offered the opportunity to third-country students to obtain a degree in Europe, and to academics to share know-how and to contribute to study programmes through teaching or research activities whilst avoiding the brain drain and favouring vulnerable groups. Thanks to these exchanges, and through cooperation with non-EU partner countries, the programme also made a significant contribution to the enhancement of intercultural dialogue and to the sustainable development of higher education in third countries.

The Erasmus Mundus programme (2009-2013) will fully integrate the former Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows and continue to support partnerships between EU and non-EU higher education institutions as a basis for mobility among students and academics.

The European Commission has confirmed that between 2009 and 2013, the EU would increase its support to the most talented students and professors from countries outside the EU with grants to take part in joint programmes in Europe. It will also extend the scope of the programme to the doctoral level. The expected budget for Erasmus Mundus will be an indicative amount of 950 million euros from 2009 to 2013, a significant increase over previous years.

The key reason to support the Union for the Mediterranean initiative is that it is in both the EU and the Mediterranean states’ interests for the UfM to succeed given the indivisibility of security between Europe and the Mediterranean. Across the Mediterranean, geopolitical and geo-economic indicators are not as positive as they could be. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is lacking, intra-Mediterranean trade remains limited, and North-South economic and educational disparities are resulting in a permanent poverty curtain across the Mediterranean. Moreover, the demographic time-bomb continues to escalate, unemployment continues to increase, illegal migration has reached alarming levels, illiteracy remains at very high levels, and an escalation of ongoing conflicts remains a serious concern.

When it comes to addressing Euro-Mediterranean security challenges, the list of threats and risks is a daunting one. The plethora of security challenges associated with the North-South debate includes illegal migration, terrorism, religious intolerance and the lack of human rights.

Both the EU and the Arab world need a critical reassessment of regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is not an aim in itself. It has to be pursued with a clear strategy, clearly defined objectives and instruments to advance long-term objectives, and a clear sense of priorities. What sort of regional cooperation makes sense? Where is there a chance of advancing?

In the case of the Mediterranean, the task of overcoming the obstacles that are hampering regional cooperation must consist of better management of ongoing regional efforts and more effective monitoring of goals being sought.

A road map that stipulates short, medium, and long-term phases of region-building is necessary if progress is to be registered in establishing a Euro-Mediterranean community of values. All international institutions
VARIous CULTURAL INTERMEDIARIES OF THE EMP AND THE UFM

• Conservatoire International des Cuisines Méditerranéennes (International Conservatory of Mediterranean Cuisines, CICM)

The Mediterranean, though very poor at first, beginning in Antiquity becomes the main cradle of gastronomy and the art of living... thanks to its creative capacities. This age-old heritage is endangered by globalisation. In any case, there is still hope, for the EMP has fostered numerous initiatives, among them the CICM (www.cuisinesmed.com), founded in 1998 by Bruno Giraud-Héraud at La Friche la Belle de Mai establishment, in Marseille (http://cuisinesmed.lafriche.org).

Essential innovation for the EMP: the creation of different branches of the Conservatory, known as Conservatories of Mediterranean Cuisines (CCMs) in ten countries: Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey. United by a charter by which the new members commit to abide, the CCMs raise awareness among local populations and ensure that flavours and know-how will endure by passing them on to the latest generations.

A place for reflecting on and safeguarding the culinary heritage of the Mediterranean countries, the CICM promotes products and production areas and enhances their value. It creates labels for local products and restaurants, encourages environmentally-friendly agriculture and tourism, makes this heritage known and defends it on a global scale. Every year it organises seminars, colloquia, food festivals and ‘philosophical banquets’.

In 2008, it organised the 5th Festival internazionale del cibo di strada (26-28 September) in Cesena, Italy; Setting Similar Tables around the Same Sea (15-18 May) on Crete; and the Master of Food – Vino (7-26 May) in Turin. It also participated in the Torino Food Market Festival (25-27 April). In December, the CICM launched a programme in Marseille with Ségolène Lefèvre of Fureur des vivres (www.fureurdesvivres.com). For the fifth consecutive year, the CICM also organised the Salon Oléicole (olive oil fair) of Draguignan (5-7 December), a Mediterranean culinary event with three countries invited to participate in 2008: Croatia, Italy and Tunisia. In previous years, invited countries or regions were: Catalonia, Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon and Syria.

• "Saveurs Méditerranéennes": 1er festival international de l’art culinaire

Held in Tipasa, Algeria (7-9 November 2008), this festival focussed on Mediterranean cuisine and was based on the book Boire et manger en Méditerranée (Actes Sud, also available in Spanish, Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo) by Paul Balta, who gave the opening speech. In any case, since the Ministry of Culture did not pay out the subsidies, the festival turned into a meeting between the CICM and researchers from Algeria’s Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique. The organisers plan for the 1st Festival to take place in 2009 or 2010 in Algeria, with the participation of many Mediterranean countries.

• Fondation René Seydoux pour le monde méditerranéen

In 2008, the Fondation René Seydoux celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. Directed by Giovanna Tanzarella, its aim is to develop ties of solidarity among countries in the Mediterranean Region, above all in the sphere of culture. Since 1982, it has published the Mediterranean Directory, also known as Répertoire Méditerranéen, which includes over 700 Mediterranean research centres, cultural centres, associations, organisations and periodicals (http://fondation-seydoux.org).

Head of the French National Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) from 2006 to 2008, the Fondation René Seydoux contributed to restructuring the ALF then handed over the baton in 2009 to the Association pour le Développement Culturel Européen et International (ADCEI) in Marseille, directed by Frédéric Jambu (www.euromedin-culture.eu).

• Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM)

The COPEAM (www.uni-copeam.org), created in 1996, is a forum for exchanging skills and cooperating by means of professional action and training, also promoting the production and distribution of programmes. It has over 120 professional members from 25 Mediterranean countries. Its Secretary General is Alessandra Paradisi, Head of International Relations for the Italian television network, Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI).

The 4th edition of COPEAM University took place in Bejaia, Algeria (5-12 April 2008), under the aegis of Algeria’s Entreprise Publique de Television (EPTV) in collaboration with Canal France International (CFI) and with the participation of France Bleu Frequenza Mora and Radio Douaiya. The 90 participants from 16 different countries formed part of 14 transnational, intercultural teams in charge of producing radio or television reports on the topic of “Tourism and Sustainable Development as Factors of Connection among Peoples”.

At its 9th meeting, convening in Algiers (8-11 May 2008), North-South cooperation projects in the Mediterranean Region were reinforced and TERRAMED was launched. A multicultural and multilingual satellite channel, it will ‘regroup’ television programmes (on cultural, institutional, economic, social and sports topics) broadcast by the public channels of Algeria and other Mediterranean Basin countries already available through the Hotbird 2 Satellite.

The COPEAM, in partnership with the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), has launched the first European-Arab television co-production. Called Inter-Rives, it has 14 partner broadcasting companies and, since July of 2008, has been broadcasting a 32-episode programme on three different topics: contemporary art, women and emigration.

At the COPEAM’s 14th General Assembly (18 May 2008) in Bucharest, Emmanuel Hoog, President of the Institut national de l’audiovisuel (France) was unanimously elected as President. He succeeded Chawky Hamraoui, CEO of Algeria’s Entreprise publique de télévision (EPTV). The 15th General Assembly was held in Cairo on 19 April 2009.

• BabelMed: the leading website on Mediterranean cultures

BabelMed (www.babelmed.net), “Porte de la Méditerranée”, was created in Rome in September 2001 by Nathalie Galesne. This website is available in French, Italian, English and—since 2008—Arabic thanks to the sponsorship of the Compagnia di San Paolo. With over 5,000 articles produced by a network of 20 journalists of the Mediterranean Region, BabelMed offers independent news, lending superb visibility to artistic expression and major debates in the societies bordering the Mediterranean. It thus helps to combat stereotypes and closed ethnic or nationalist attitudes. In 2008, it created a virtual multimedia festival (www.babelmefestival.net), one of seven cultural programmes funded by the EU.

Paul Balta
Writer
with a Mediterranean dimension should provide their think tank platform to map out such a strategy so that a UfM of diverse states becomes a reality in the near future. The Euro-Mediterranean University mechanism that was set up during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU in 2008 is already seeking to promote closer cooperation in the field of higher education between Europe and the Mediterranean.

A road map that stipulates short, medium, and long-term phases of region-building is necessary if progress is to be registered in establishing a Euro-Mediterranean community of values

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Mediterranean must avoid becoming a permanent fault-line between the prosperous North and an impoverished South. The key development to watch in the Mediterranean in the next decade will be to see whether there will be an improvement in the mobility of students across the Mediterranean. If this scenario of socio-cultural interaction does take hold, order will dominate Mediterranean relations. Such a scenario of stability and certainty will spur the economic growth that is necessary to improve the standard of living of all peoples across the Mediterranean.

The only way this future can be achieved is if the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Union for the Mediterranean succeeds in attracting the interest of international institutions such as the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the IMF and persuades them to become more altruistic in their dealings with the region when it comes to educational programmes. The Mediterranean countries themselves must also adopt more of a self-help mentality. Rather than undermine or diminish the significance of the BP: UfM, the growing socio-economic disparities that exist across the Mediterranean underline further the significance of the BP: UfM, the only multilateral process of its kind in the area.

The Union for the Mediterranean must aim at reviving and recalibrating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership by building on the pattern of Euromed relations that exists today. The UfM offers an opportunity to spur the resurgence of sub-regionalism—intensify sub-regionalism and bilateral interplay in the Mediterranean. It also offers the chance to map out a more action-oriented and target-focused agenda. The UfM will only succeed if matched by leadership and political will that succeed in engaging all European Union and Mediterranean states.

All those who are in favour of a harmonious neighbourhood in the South should welcome the Union for the Mediterranean plan of action! The task is enormous! The success or failure of the Union for the Mediterranean will determine whether Euromed relations in 2020 will become more co-operative dominant.
Cultural Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

2008: A Year Rich in Cultural Events

Operation Cast Lead, directed by Israel against the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip from 27 December to 18 January, tragically marked the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009. This notwithstanding, the contribution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 2008 was significant, and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue equally rich. To be more specific, the meaning of the word ‘culture’ has evolved over time. It now includes highly diverse societal phenomena, from tourism to the media, which often have greater influence than literature or the arts. The latter must therefore be given support.

Of the main events occurring in 2008, we will discuss seven: 1) the positive evolution of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF); 2) the colloquium organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), entitled Intercultural Dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean, in Barcelona on 23 May; 3) the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Cultures (FEMEC) in Bari (23-25 May); 4) the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture in Athens (28-29 May); 5) the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, launched in Paris on 13 July on the initiative of President Nicolas Sarkozy, and the adoption by the Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting in Marseille of the Final Declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM); 6) the Euromed Civil Forum (ECF) organised in Marseille (31 October - 2 November) by the Euromed Non-Governmental Platform; and 7) the Euromed Ministerial Conference in Marseille (4-5 November).

Before discussing each point, it is indispensable to first define a few concepts.

The Six Shores of Our ‘Mother Sea’

Paradoxically, we almost always speak of the ‘two shores’ of the Mediterranean, i.e. the northern and southern one, most often to contrast them, if not keep them separate. However, our ‘Mother Sea’ is a mosaic of peoples, with their languages, dialects, traditions and political regimes.

To my eyes, there are actually six shores:

- The Eurasian eastern shore, the ancient Greek and Byzantine Asia Minor, which has become Turkey, the only Muslim country to have adopted secularism, proclaimed in 1923 by Atatürk.
- The Asian eastern shore, cradle of the Hebrews and Phoenicians, including five countries: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Israel. With a predominance of Muslim Arabs, it has Christian and Jewish minorities, as well as non-Arabic ethnicities (Armenians, Druses and Kurds).
- The African south-eastern shore, that of Egypt, the oldest nation-state on the planet, and linchpin of the Arabic world, between the Mashreq and the Maghreb.
- The south-western shore, that of the Maghreb, from Libya to Morocco and Mauritania (on the Atlantic), deeply Amazigh, Islamised and Arabised.
- The north-western shore or Latin Arc, consisting of the ‘Latin sisters’ (Portugal, on the Atlantic coast, and Spain, France and Italy) primarily Catholic, but where secularism is progressing.
• The north-eastern shore, that of the Balkans and Greece, with a predominantly Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim population.

It is therefore important to know their evolution, exchanges and how they have mixed, for, despite wars, the flame of civilization has not ceased to circulate from one shore to another since Antiquity. The UfM should protect the diversity of languages and defend their being taught better than the EMP did.

Transformation of the Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria

Founded in 2004 and officially inaugurated in 2005, the ALF (www.euromedalex.org), based in Alexandria, underwent significant transformation in 2008: its charter was seriously revised and André Azoulay was unanimously elected president. Political scientist and Advisor to Kings Hassan II and Mohamed VI, he also holds the positions of, among other things, member of the High Level Group of the UN’s Alliance of Civilisations and Member of the Board and President of the Executive Committee of the Three Cultures Foundation (Fundación Tres Culturas), based in Seville. Just as important was the election as Executive Director of Andreu Claret, former Director of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed, see www.iemed.org), previously the Catalan Institute of the Mediterranean (ICM).

In 2005, the first director of the ALF, a German appointed by the Member States, knew little about the Mediterranean Region. Then the situation improved. André Azoulay has Moroccan, Andalusian, Arabic-Amazigh, Jewish, Mediterranean and European links. The ALF groups together 43 countries and 2,000 organisations, with a weak budget of 14 million Euros for three years. The new executive body intends to obtain greater funds, play a political and cultural role of great scope, and provide support to multidisciplinary projects lending value to initiatives between actors and countries. The aim is to foster the creation and structuring of a collective Euro-Mediterranean cultural space.

In September 2008, the ALF published a four-page brochure in English, Arabic, Spanish and French in order to explain its activities to the citizens of the 43 UfM countries. In December, it adopted its new triennial programme, whose implementation will have to be monitored.

IEMed Meeting in Barcelona

The Meeting between Writers and Intellectuals - Europe Mediterranean Intercultural Dialogue, a concept developed by Maria-Àngels Roque - and held on 23 May at the initiative of the European Commission and IEMed, the latter serving as host as well as co-organiser, gave rise to magnificent presentations and rich debate. The participants, from the different coastal countries of the Basin, approved a number of recommendations, which were immediately submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture in Athens (28-29 May). The text asserts that:

• Culture must be reshaped into an instrument for progress. In addition, intercultural relations need to help address common social, political and economic questions, transcending the frontiers of identities.
• Conditions for establishing dialogue must be created by fostering receptivity, eliminating misunderstandings, respecting pluralism and recognising differences.
• Intercultural dialogue cannot be reduced to focusing between the North and the South. It should also strike up between South-South, East-East and even West-West.
• The importance of the actors must be acknowledged, along with their freedom to act and the role that should be lent to young people, women, immigrant communities, local and regional authorities, cultural operators and industries, and the media.

Culture must be reshaped into an instrument for progress. Intercultural relations need to help address common social, political and economic questions, transcending the frontiers of identities

• Action in specific areas: education, communication and audiovisual media, and literary and artistic creation. Participants recalled the recommendations unanimously adopted at the Cultural Forum in Barcelona in 1995, which have been either poorly applied or not applied at all. One of the most important ones concerned the ‘House of
the Mediterranean, an information centre and meeting place. Each EMP country was to open at least one. In any case, civil society proved not to have the means of funding them. The public authorities (national, regional or local government) should therefore take on the job of creating these Houses in the UfM Member States.

Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Cultures Event in Bari

Conceived of in 2000 at the first Euromed Civil Forum (ECF) in Marseille to make up for the weak place accorded to culture, the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Cultures (FEMEC) was officially launched in December of 2001. Since then, it has taken place before the ECFs, including that of 2008, for which a bulletin (No. 66, December 2008), and since 2003: Afkar/Ideas, a quarterly for dialogue among the Maghreb, Spain and Europe; and the Mediterranean Yearbook.

A SELECTION OF IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS

- **Confluence Méditerranée**
  This quarterly publication was founded in 1990 by Hamadi Essid, Head of the Arab League Mission in Paris, and later Permanent Delegate of Tunisia to the UNESCO. The first issue came out in November 1991, a few days before Essid’s death. Since then, it has been directed by Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, a university scholar and writer. Its Editor-in-Chief, Pierre Blanc, is an agricultural engineer. Each issue is dedicated to a specific topic and also includes three sections: History, Current Affairs and Culture (www.confluences-mediterranee.com). In 2008: No. 65, L’Iran, une puissance virtuelle ? (Iran, a Virtual Power?); No. 66, Chrétiens d’Orient (Christians of the East); No. 67, Un autumne méditerranéen (A Mediterranean Autumn); and No. 68, Italie : le grand bond en arrière ? (Italy: A Great Leap Backwards?). In addition to the journal, published by L’Harmattan, Paris, there is also a series of associated books, Les Cahiers de Confluences, among which is Le Dialogue interculturel, une action vitale (Intercultural Dialogue, a Vital Measure), published in 2008 and edited by Jacqueline Valantin and M.G. Euzen-Dague.

- **Quaderns de la Mediterrània**
  Published by the IEMed since 2000, this journal, a strategic tool for mutual knowledge and dialogue between the Mediterranean’s northern and southern shores, has over 400 pages and is directed by Maria-Àngels Roque (www.iemed.org/quaderns). Articles are published in English, Catalan, Spanish and French. In 2008, the Dossier Section in No. 9 was dedicated to “Ramón Llull and Islam, the Beginning of Dialogue”, the issue also including the two sections, Overview of Recent Events and Cultural Overview. No. 10’s Dossier was entitled “Intercultural Dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean”, and was divided into three themes: Memories and Mingling; Frontiers and Cosmopolitanism; and Representations: Art and Spiritualities. All issues contain a column by Claudine Rulleau, entitled De la Méditerranée, des hommes et des livres. The IEMed also publishes a bulletin (No. 66, December 2008), and since 2003: Afkar/Ideas, a quarterly for dialogue among the Maghreb, Spain and Europe; and the Mediterranean Yearbook.

- **Dialogue Mediterrâneo**
  The quarterly, **Dialogue Mediterrâneo**, was founded in Madrid in 1995 when the EMP was emerging. Created by Pedro Martínez Seiquer, who has just celebrated his 90th birthday, it publishes articles in Spanish and French on Strategy, Politics, Economics and Culture. They are available on-line at (www.dialogo-mediterraneo.com). Issue No. 48 (October 2008), nearly entirely dedicated to the UfM, recalls that the EMP “was a Mediterranean powerhouse.”

- **A Tunisian Initiative**
  The very rich publication, La Méditerranée pour l’Union méditerranéenne, was published in early 2008 in Tunis. It’s Editor, Professor M’Hamed Hassine Fantar, is the Ben Ali Chair for Dialogue among Civilizations and Religions. The publication contains some twenty contributions, including articles by such EMP activists as Maria-Àngels Roque and Pedro Martínez Seiquer.

- **Dialogue between the Baltic and the Mediterranean**
  A number of university scholars, various writers and an ambassador contributed to the book entitled, **Building Peace by Intercultural Dialogue - Construction de la Paix par le Dialogue Interculturel**, in tribute to Tuomo Melasuo, founder of the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI), University of Tampere and Director of the Finnish branch of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF). Published in English and French in September 2008, with Kirsi Henriksson and Anitta Kynsilehto as editors, the book thanks and congratulates Melasuo for his many initiatives, which have particularly fostered unprecedented and productive dialogue between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. By way of conclusion, I would like to recall the Institute’s meetings to foster cultural dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Paul Balta
Writer
The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture in Athens

During the course of this conference (28-29 May), the Ministers launched a two-year Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture with two facets: intercultural dialogue and cultural policy. Based on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, this strategy will emphasise the cultural dimension of the EMP. To accelerate its application, a follow-up mechanism has been entrusted to a Euro-Mediterranean group of experts on culture who will meet before each ministerial conference. At the conference, it was pointed out that “it is necessary more than ever – particularly in the area of culture – to encourage dialogue on the possibilities of understanding humanity today, and on the values of humanity that give meaning to the world.”

The Ministers inaugurated the plenary session with the awards ceremony for the EuroMed Journalist Prize for Cultural Dialogue, the award-winners chosen from among 76 candidates from 37 countries. Organised by the ALF and the International Federation of Journalists, this was the award’s third edition. Entitled the Youssef Chahine Award in honour of the Egyptian filmmaker, its theme was “Dialogue through Arts” as essential instruments for building the bridges necessary for dialogue.

The members of the jury were the leaders in the following networks: Malta, Cyprus, Tunisia, Palestine, Israel and Syria. The laureates, two from the South, two from the North, were: Gideon Levy (Israel), Jamila Zekhnini (Belgium), Verichan Ziflioglu (Turkey) and Uros Skerl (Slovenia).

The Anna Lindh Euromed Award for Dialogue between Cultures was awarded in Naples on 27 September to Rima Maroun, a Lebanese photographer, for her Les Murmures (photographs of Lebanese children). The works were on exhibit for a month at the headquarters of the Fondazione Mediterraneo (www.euromedi.org), whose president is Michele Capasso. The Anna Lindh Foundation and Fondazione Mediterraneo designated Ms. Maroun Good Will Ambassador for Dialogue through the Arts.

The Euromed Civil Forum in Marseille

After Barcelona in 1995, the successive ECFs have taken place on Malta and in Naples (1997), Stuttgart (1999), Marseille (2000), Brussels (2001), Valencia (2002), Chania on Crete and Naples (2003), and Luxembourg (2005). In 2006, the ECF was held in the South for the first time, namely in Marrakesh (4-7 November).

The ECF of Marseille (31 October - 2 November 2008) organised by the Euromed Non-Governmental Platform directed by Abdelmaksoud Rachdi (Morocco), attracted 250 representatives of civil society organisations from the EMP countries. This ECF, dedicated to the theme of Moving and Living Together in the Euromed Space, was broken down into six workshops: 1) Culture; 2) Human Rights; 3) Environment; 4) Youth and Education; 5) Women; and 6) Socio-Economic Issues and Impact on Urbanisation.

Final Declaration

The following are the main passages from the eight proposals put forth therein:

1. “We urge the end of short-stay visas which impede family ties and human exchanges and endanger artistic, scientific and educational exchanges.”

2. “We claim that all countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership ratify all international conventions, especially the Geneva Convention on the right of asylum and the Convention on the Rights of Migrants [...]]"

3. “We claim that all the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries recognize and respect the freedom of association, the freedom to form syndicates, the independence and autonomy of civil society [...] and that they "support civil society in all instances of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership [...]"

4. “We urge the organization in 2009 of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference for the follow-up of the Istanbul Action Plan [...] This historical summit (14-15 November 2006) was the first to focus on strengthening the role of women in society.

5. “We claim that all Euro-Mediterranean partner countries implement educational policy acting against discriminations, sexism, xenophobia and racism [...]]"

6. “And that environmental and natural resources preservation in the Mediterranean be considered by States as the highest priority since we believe
that degradation of ecosystems impairs sustainable development and worsens phenomena of forced migration [...]

7. In the face of the world crisis, “we call upon the Euro-Med community to revise the social and economic agenda from an approach that addresses poverty eradication, decent employment and comprehensive migration policies based on human rights [...] Aid within the economic partnership should not be a condition used to promote economic liberalization or security measures on migrations or terrorism. In achieving that, spaces for civil society’s full participation should be assured and promoted.”

8. “We call for the support, protection and assistance of independent and alternative Medias in the context of a new regional plan to be created [...] Thanks to alternative Medias and their networks Mediterranean people, in their cultural diversity, will be able to create their own image and writings.”

The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

On 28 February 2007, when he was still a candidate to the Presidency of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy stated his desire to launch a ‘Union for the Mediterranean’. After his election, on 6 May, he proclaimed: “I want to issue a call to all the people of the Mediterranean to tell them that it is in the Mediterranean that everything is going to be played out, that we have to overcome all kinds of hatred to pave the way for a great dream of peace and a great dream of civilization. [...] The time has come to build together a Mediterranean Union that will form a link between Europe and Africa.”

The time has come to build together a Mediterranean Union that will form a link between Europe and Africa

German Chancellor Angela Merkel insisted that the EU be allowed to join the Union. President Sarkozy thus invited 43 Heads of State and Government to Paris on 13 July 2008, namely, the 27 EU Member States and 16 Mediterranean Non-member Countries (MNCs). Only Libya refused to join the Union. They approved the name of Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, later shortened to Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

Innovation: the UfM has two presidents, in the North, Nicolas Sarkozy, and in the South, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, selected by consensus for a two-year, non-renewable term. The Secretariat-General, entrusted to Spain, is located in Barcelona. The Deputy Secretary Generals are to be from the Palestinian Authority, Greece, Israel, Italy, the League of Arab States and Malta.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), essentially political and economic, wholly neglected the fundamental sphere of culture. In view of the fierce reactions in both North and South, Nicolas Sarkozy consulted Jacques Huntzinger, French Ambassador who had contributed to launching the 5+5 Dialogue in Rome in October 1990. On 9 June 2008, the Euro-Mediterranean University was inaugurated in Piran, Slovenia, though it is but an empty shell. In the end, it is the Anna Lindh Foundation that embodies culture for the UfM.

Final Declaration of the UfM in Marseille

The Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting in Marseille (3-4 November 2008) completed the work started by the Heads of State and Government, adopting a Final Declaration of some twenty or so pages. First and foremost, six major commitments were made: 1) De-pollution of the Mediterranean; 2) Maritime and Land Highways; 3) Civil Protection; 4) Alternative Energies: Mediterranean Solar Plan; 5) Higher Education and Research, the Euro-Mediterranean University; 6) the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative. As you can see, the sphere of culture is missing.

The Ministers decided that “important steps need to be taken in 2009 to implement the Barcelona Five-Year Work Programme and the declaration of the Paris Summit in order to advance the regional integration process.” The fields for cooperation to be pursued in 2009 were: a) Political and Security Dialogue; b) Maritime Safety; c) Economic and Financial Partnership; and d) Social, Human and Cultural Cooperation. The main issues to be addressed in the latter field were:
Developing a Genuine Social Dimension; Health; Human Development; Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area; Promoting Dialogue among Cultures and Cultural Diversity; Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (the ministerial conference by the same name in Istanbul in 2006 will be followed by another in Morocco in 2009); Euromed Youth (the Euromed Youth IV Programme will be followed by the Youth in Action Programme); Cooperation with Civil Society and Local Actors (the Ministers announced that they “take note of the recommendations of the Marseille Civil Forum.” They also emphasised that “civil society should be further empowered and its capability enhanced through improved interaction with governments and parliaments.”); Enhancing the Visibility of the Partnership (the four components of the new programme will cover: “media activities; journalist training and networking; campaign support; and opinion polling/surveys.”)

For the UfM, the Anna Lindh Foundation represents culture

In the second semester of 2009, a ministerial meeting will be held to review the progress made in implementing the work programme and prepare the Summit to be held in 2010.

The Mediterranean Cultural Forum in Marseille

Organised on initiative of Jacques Huntzinger, the Forum (4-5 November 2008) brought together some 300 actors and representatives of civil society organisations from the EU and the whole of the Mediterranean Basin. This force, with great development potential, constantly comes up against the indifference of policymakers on both sides of the Mediterranean. The participants once more emphasised the importance of culture and artistic creation for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Region and the strengthening of intercultural dialogue. The work to be done remains immense for, as Huntzinger pointed out, the UfM did not include a basket on culture, and this will have no opportunity to be integrated before the ministerial conference in 2010. Indeed, for the UfM, the Anna Lindh Foundation represents culture. This Forum allowed numerous artistic initiatives fostering ties between the North-South Mediterranean shores to be put forth.
Appendices
Summary of Damage in the Gaza Strip by Governate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governate</th>
<th>Buildings: destroyed or heavily damaged</th>
<th>Greenhouses: destroyed or heavily damaged</th>
<th>Impact crater in field</th>
<th>Impact crater on road</th>
<th>Total damage by governate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Gaza</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir el Balah (Middle Area)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Yunis</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafah</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total damage</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>3,777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timeline of Barcelona Process Milestones

1995
- 1st Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Barcelona Declaration
- Regulation No. 1488/96, MEDA Programme
- Entry into force of the Interim Association Agreement between the EU and the PLO (on behalf of the Palestinian Authority)

1996
- 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Malta
- Communication from the Commission: ‘Common Strategy of the European Union for the Mediterranean Region’

1997
- 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Stuttgart
- Adoption of the Common Strategy of the European Union for the Mediterranean Region

1998
- 4th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Murselles
- Regulation No. 2008/200, MEDA Programme

1999
- Communication from the Commission: ‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood

2000
- Communication from the Commission: ‘Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument
- Entry into force of Regulation No. 1488/96, MEDA Programme

2001
- 6th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Naples

2002
- 7th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Luxembourg

2003
- 8th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Tampere
- Entry into force of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement

2004
- Regulation No. 2698/200, MEDA Programme
- Adoption of the ENP Action Plan by Israel, Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine and Morocco

2005
- Adoption of the ENP Action Plan
- Participation in the Partnership

2006
- 9th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, Lisbon
- Inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University

2007
- Entry into force of the EU-Morocco and EU-Israel AAs
- Inauguration of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures

2008
- Entry into force of the EU-Jordan AA
- Entry into force of the EU-Algeria AA
- Inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP)
- Adoption of the ENP Action Plan
- Inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)
- EU Morocco Advanced Status

2009
- Inaugural session of the EMU Ministerial Conference, Marseilles
- Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, Creation of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean

Own production.
Map A.3 Migrant Remittances, 2007

Remittances as percentage of GDP, 2007

Evolution of the Receipt of Remittances in the Most Dependent Mediterranean Countries (millions of dollars)*
* Countries where remittances account for more than 5% of GDP

Evolution of the Receipt of Remittances by Region (millions of dollars)

Civil liberties (CLs) include the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organisational rights, rule of law and personal autonomy without interference by the state. In this context, the *Freedom in the World 2008* survey measures CLs, assigning each country and territory a numerical rating on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest. The rating process is based on a list of 15 civil liberties questions. The questions are grouped into four subcategories and raw points are awarded to each question on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 points represents the smallest degree and 4 points the greatest degree of rights or liberties present. The total number of points awarded for civil liberties in each subcategory to each region yields the rating on the aforementioned scale of 1 to 7, in accordance with the following key:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total raw points</th>
<th>CL rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53-60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Freedoms of expression and belief: 4 questions (0-16 points)
- Associational and organisational rights: 3 questions (0-12 points)
- Rule of law: 4 questions (0-16 points)
- Personal autonomy and individual rights: 4 questions (0-16 points)

Maps

Own production. Source: Freedom House www.freedomhouse.org
Political Rights

Political rights (PRs) allow people to participate freely in the political process and include the right to vote freely for different alternatives in legitimate elections, run for public office, join parties and political organisations and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policy and are accountable to the electorate. In this context, the Freedom in the World 2008 survey measures PRs, assigning each country and territory a numerical rating on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest. The rating process is based on a list of 10 political rights questions. The questions are grouped into three subcategories and raw points are awarded to each question on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 points represents the smallest degree and 4 points the greatest degree of rights or liberties present.

The total number of points awarded by subcategory to each country and territory for political rights yields a rating on the aforementioned scale of 1 to 7, in accordance with the following key:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total raw points</th>
<th>PR rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Functioning of government: 3 questions (0-12 points)
Electoral process: 3 questions (0-12 points)
Political pluralism and participation: 4 questions (0-16 points)
Map A.6 | Natural Gas: Reserves, Production, Consumption and Trade

Top 10 Consumer Countries
The graph shows consumption per capita in m³ (2006) and, in brackets, the % of world consumption attributable to each country.

R/P Ratio (years)
The reserves/production (R/P) ratio indicates the number of years that a reserve will take to be exhausted if production continues at the current rate.

Evolution of World Consumption (1965-2007)
Evolution of World Production and Main Producer Countries (1970-2007) Excluding gas flared or recycled

The international natural gas trade—including liquid natural gas (LNG) and pipeline gas—moves 861.68 billion cubic metres.

The world’s ten largest exporters account for 77.1% of all world exports. The list is headed up by Russia (20.1% of the total), followed by Canada (13.3%) and Norway (11.0%). The other seven countries are, in descending order, Algeria, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Qatar, Malaysia, the United States and Australia.

Seven Mediterranean countries account for 12% of world natural gas exports, equal to a total volume of 120 billion cubic metres. Algeria is the largest Mediterranean exporter, accounting for 67% of all Mediterranean exports (and 8% of the world total), followed by Egypt (25% of the Mediterranean total and 3% of the world total). They are trailed at some distance by Libya (5% and 0.6%), France (0.8% and 0.1%), Tunisia (0.6% and 0.1%), Croatia (0.4% and 0.05%) and Italy (0.4% and 0.04%).

The world’s ten largest importers account for 74.8% of world imports. The list is led by the United States (15.6% of the total), Germany (12.1%), Japan (10.9%) and Italy (10.3%). They are followed, in descending order, by France, Spain, Korea, Turkey, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

Thirteen Mediterranean counties account for 25% of world natural gas imports, equal to a total volume of 207 billion cubic metres. Italy is the largest Mediterranean gas importer. Its imports account for 37% of all Mediterranean imports (9% of the world total). It is followed by France (23% and 6%, respectively), Spain (18% and 4%) and Turkey (15% and 4%).

The Mediterranean Basin contains 8.6 trillion cubic metres of natural gas, equal to 4.7% of world reserves, a small but highly strategic share.
Gross tertiary enrolment rate.
International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 5 and 6

- 40-50%
- 30-40%
- < 30%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- > 70%
- Data unavailable

Percentage of Graduates by Field of Study

- Education, humanities and the arts
- Social sciences, economics and law
- Science, engineering, manufacturing and construction
- Health and welfare
- Other

Maps

Note: Latest data available from this period. Own production. Source: UNESCO www.uis.unesco.org

Map A.7 Education (2004-2007)*
The Global Gender Gap Index is a tool for measuring gender gaps in different spheres. The index is calculated from four sub-indices that measure the gender gap based on economic, educational, health-related and political criteria. With both the global index and the sub-indices, 0 indicates the largest gap, whilst 1 indicates complete equality.

The 10* Countries with the Highest Global Gender Gap Index Scores (with the greatest equality):

- Sweden
- Norway
- Finland
- Iceland
- N. Zealand
- Philippines
- Germany
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Spain

The 10* Countries with the Lowest Global Gender Gap Index Scores (with the greatest disparities):

- Oman
- Egypt
- Turkey
- Morocco
- Benin
- Saudi Arabia
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Chad
- Yemen

* The Global Gender Gap Index has only been calculated for 128 countries.
Although Cyprus and Malta have only been members of the EU since 2004, their data have been included due to their status as MPCs from 1995 to 2004.

Percentage of Exports to the EU

- <30%
- 30-40%
- 40-60%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- >70%
- Data unavailable

Although Cyprus and Malta have only been members of the EU since 2004, their data have been included due to their status as MPCs from 1995 to 2004.


* To show the evolution of exports over the period, the volume in millions of $ in 1995 was used as the benchmark (=100) for the other years in the period.
Port Network

Class A seaport: Port where:
- the total annual volume of traffic is equal to or greater than 1.5 million tonnes of freight or 200,000 passengers, or
- port intended to play a major role in international shipping.

Class B seaport: Port where:
- the total annual volume of traffic is between 0.5 million and 1.5 million tonnes of freight, or
- the total annual volume of traffic with countries in the region is at least 0.25 million tonnes, or
- the total annual volume of traffic is less than 200,000 passengers, but the port is linked by at least one regular passenger line to other ports in the region.

Class C seaport:
- Port belonging to the national port system that does not meet the criteria for inclusion in either of the foregoing classes.
Class A airport: Airport or airport system where:
- the annual passenger flow is greater than or equal to 5 million (10%), or
- the annual commercial aircraft flow is greater than or equal to 100,000, or
- the annual international passenger flow is greater than or equal to 1 million, or
- any new airport built to replace an existing Class A airport that has reached its maximum capacity at its current site or is intended to play a major role in international air transport.

Class B airport: airport or airport system where:
- the annual passenger flow is between 1 (10%) and 5 million, or
- the annual passenger flow is between 500,000 and 899,999 and at least 30% of the traffic is not domestic, or
- the annual passenger flow is between 100,000 and 499,999, and at least 30,000 passengers are from countries in the region, or
- any new airport built to replace an existing Class B airport that has reached its maximum capacity at its current site or is located in a landlocked area and offers commercial services.

Class C airport:
- Airports belonging to the national airport system that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in either of the foregoing classes.
Own production. Source: CETMO.
The cereals price index is compiled using the grains and rice price indices, weighted by their trade shares for 2002-2004. The grains price index consists of the International Grains Council (IGC) wheat price index, which is itself the average of nine different wheat price quotations, and one maize export quotation. The rice price index consists of 16 average quotations for three varieties of rice (Indica, Japonica and aromatic), weighted to reflect the assumed trade shares of each variety.

Cereal Export/Import Ratio

Only three Mediterranean countries – France, Croatia and Turkey – are net cereal exporters

Evolution of the Cereals Price Index (1990-2009)

(*) Latest data available are from April 2009.

The cereals price index is compiled using the grains and rice price indices, weighted by their trade shares for 2002-2004. The grains price index consists of the International Grains Council (IGC) wheat price index, which is itself the average of nine different wheat price quotations, and one maize export quotation. The rice price index consists of 16 average quotations for three varieties of rice (Indica, Japonica and aromatic), weighted to reflect the assumed trade shares of each variety.

 OWN PRODUCTION. SOURCE: FAO.
January 2008

The year begins with the scandal of the French bank Société Générale, the second largest in France, which loses 4.9 billion euros as a result of unauthorised, high risk speculative deals on the stock market carried out by rogue trader Jérôme Kerviel. Slovenia takes over the EU’s six-month rotating presidency from Portugal. Malta, Slovenia and France ratify the new Lisbon Treaty. Spain dissolves its Parliament and calls a general election for March. London hosts a summit to discuss the subprime mortgage crisis, which is attended by leaders of the four largest European economies, England, France, Germany and Italy and the President of the European Commission. Amid violence in Lebanon, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Arab League meet in Cairo and agree upon a three-phase plan to achieve stability in the country. Algeria suffers two attacks in the east of the capital which claim the lives of six people.

Portugal

- On 9 January the Prime Minister José Sócrates announces in the Assembly of the Republic that plans to submit the EU Reform Treaty referendum, signed by European leaders in December 2007, will be shelved and that instead it will be ratified by Parliament.
- On 29 January the government introduces moderate reforms. Sócrates appoints Ana Maria Teodoro Jorge as Health Minister, to replace António Correia de Campos, who had been criticised for plans to reform the health service, which included a proposal to close the accident and emergency units in several hospitals in the country. José António Pinto Ribeiro is appointed as Culture Minister following the resignation of Isabel Pures de Lima.

Spain

- On 3 January the National Court sentences Juan Antonio Oiarra Guiridi, the former leader of the terrorist organisation ETA (Euskadi and Freedom), to thirty years imprisonment for ordering members of the ‘Andalusian commando unit’, Harriet Iragi and Jon Igor Solana, to assassinate the Chief Prosecutor Luis Portero, in October 2000. On 6 January Igor Portu and Martín Sarasola are arrested for their alleged participation in the bombing at Madrid airport’s T4 terminal in December 2006. Two people died in the attack which lead to a breakdown in peace talks between the government and ETA.
- On 14 January the government dissolves the Parliament and calls general elections for 9 March. The official election campaign will begin on 22 February.
- On 19 January a police operation in Barcelona results in the arrest of 12 citizens of Pakistani origin and two of Indian origin, suspected of belonging to an Islamist network that was planning suicide attacks in the city. In subsequent interrogations, one of the suspects tells police that the attacks in Barcelona were to be followed by others in France, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

France

- On 3 January the President Nicolas Sarkozy announces his decision to create a new Defence and National Security Council, with greater powers than the two bodies it would be replacing, the Defence Council and the Internal Security Council. Sarkozy also proposes to strengthen EU Defence policy and re-establish military ties with the US.
- On 8 January Corsica’s public prosecutor announces that there were 180 attacks on the island in 2007, 30% fewer than in 2006. However, he warns that there has been an increase in the number of incidents following the imprisonment of nationalist Yvan Colonna, on 13 December 2007.
- On 24 January the greatest bank fraud in history is uncovered. France’s second biggest bank Société Générale announces losses of 4.9 billion euros as a result of speculative deals made on the stock market by Jérôme Kerviel, who sidestepped the bank’s control procedures. Kerviel was able to hide the losses from the company throughout 2007. Société Générale lost a further 2.1 billion euros because of the slump in the financial markets and its exposure to subprime mortgages.

Italy

- On 7 January the army clears up piles of rubbish from the doors of schools in Naples so that children can attend classes. On 31 January the EU threatens the Italian authorities with legal sanctions if they do not proceed to clean Naples within a month. 250,000 tons of rubbish have piled up in the streets since 21 December 2007.
- On 16 January the Justice Minister Clemente Mastella resigns after he and his wife come under investigation for suspected corruption. On 18 January the Prime Minister Romano Prodi assumes the post of Justice Minister, left vacant following Mastella’s resignation.
• On 24 January Prodi submits his resignation to the President Giorgio Napolitano after his centre-left coalition loses in a vote of confidence in the Senate. Napolitano advises Prodi to submit his resignation and abandon plans to run in a second election to the Senate, which he is unlikely to win. On 30 January Napolitano requests Franco Marini, the President of the Senate (upper house), to form a caretaker government in order to delay elections and reform the electoral system.

Malta

• On 29 January the Maltese Parliament unanimously ratifies the EU Reform Treaty.

Slovenia

• On 29 January, the Slovenian Parliament ratifies the EU Reform Treaty with 74 votes in favour and 6 against.

Croatia

• On 1 January, despite warnings from the European Commission that it could delay entry to the EU, the Protected Ecological and Fishery Zone in the Adriatic Sea, created by Croatia in 2004, comes into full effect. According to the agreement reached with Brussels in 2004, the Protected Zone would not affect EU countries until a fishing partnership agreement had been reached between Croatia and the EU.
• On 8 January the conservative Prime Minister Ivo Sanader forms a new centre-right coalition, which includes his conservative nationalist party, Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the conservative Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), the Social Liberal Party (HSLS) and the Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS). The Serb official Slobodan Uzelac member of the SDSS, is deputy Prime Minister for Regional Development, Reconstruction and Return (of refugees). On 12 January the Parliament approves Sanader’s cabinet.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 16 January the authority transference and command relief of the Multinational Battalion takes place between the Navy Marine Expeditionary Force deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (5th FIMEX BH) and the 6th FIMEX BH. The act, presided over by General Stefano Castagnotto, commander of the EU Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR), sees the 6th Expeditionary Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina assume command of the Multinational Battalion.

Serbia

• On 20 January Tomislav Nicolic, leader of the nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS), wins the first round of the presidential elections ahead of his rival, the current President Boris Tadic’s Democratic Party (DS). Nicolic won 40% of the votes against Tadic’s 35%. Both will run in a second round, set to take place on 3 February.
• On 9 January, following elections to the Assembly of Kosovo (Parliament) in November 2007, a new government coalition is formed by the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), with 37 seats of the 120 that comprise the Assembly, and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), with 25. The new Prime Minister is Hashim Thaçi, leader of the PDK.

Macedonia

• On 14 January the Economy Minister since August 2006, Vera Rafajlovска, resigns for ‘personal’ reasons.
• On 16 January the Prime Minister of Independent Macedonia Nikola Kljusev dies at the age of 80. Kljusev is recognised for leading Macedonia through an essentially peaceful transition towards independence from Yugoslavia.
• On 21 January Macedonian and Greek leaders meet in the Macedonian city of Ohrid in a new round of negotiations over the name of Macedonia. Greece maintains that the country should be called the ‘Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’ (FYROM) to distinguish it from the Greek province of Macedonia. Both parties have been negotiating this issue since 1995 under the auspices of the UN. The negotiations end without any firm agreement, although the UN special envoy Matthew Nimetz describes them as ‘positive.’

Albania

• On 30 January the Prime Minister Sali Berisha meets with NATO’s Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer to discuss reforms the country is undertaking to join NATO.
• On 31 January the European Union’s High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Javier Solana meets with Berisha to discuss recent events regarding relations between Albania and the EU, as well as events in the region.

Greece

• On 22 January the Greek Defence Minister Evangelos Meimarakis calls for further negotiations over the future statute of Kosovo and warns against an imposed ‘solution.’ According to Meimarakis, the solution must be reached through negotiation.

Turkey

• On 15 January Turkey launches new attacks on bases of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), a group included in the European list of terrorist organisations, in the Kurdish-dominated territory in northern Iraq. Turkey carried out an air strike in December 2007 on bases used by the PKK to launch attacks into southeast Turkey.
• On 24 January security forces arrest 25 people suspected of belonging to al-Qaeda, in the city of Gaziantep, in the southeast of the country. Four members of al-Qaeda are killed in the cross-fire with the police. One police officer is killed and another four are injured.
• On 29 January the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and the far-right opposition Nationalist Action Party (MHP) present a joint proposal to the Grand National Assembly (Parliament) to lift the constitutional ban on women wearing the hijab –the Muslim headscarf– in universities. For secularists, lifting the ban undermines the separation between State and religion in Turkey. The headscarves are seen by secularist Turks as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism.

Syria

• On 29 January the NGO National Organisation for Human Rights in Syria
(NOHR-S) announces that Riyad Sayf, a prominent dissident, had been arrested the previous day as part of an attack on the opposition. At least 10 other public figures, mostly writers and doctors have been arrested since 2007, when the Syrian National Council was formed, a movement set up to promote democratic change.

Lebanon

• On 25 January a powerful car bomb in a district in East Beirut kills Captain Wissam Eid, a high ranking intelligence officer in the Lebanese police force. Eid was investigating the recent attacks and killings in Lebanon. The explosion kills three other people, including the driver of the vehicle.
• On 27 January violence erupts in a predominantly Shiite neighbourhood in the south of Beirut during a protest against the electricity cuts. Shiite youths block the Mar Mikhael road with burning tyres. After the death of an Amal member, the violence spreads quickly to more neighbourhoods in Beirut, as well as other areas of the country.

Egypt

• On 17 January police arrest Abdel Wahab el-Messiri, member of the opposition movement Kefaya, at a demonstration in the centre of Cairo. They release him in a district 20 kilometres away. Kefaya members have demonstrated on several occasions against the price increases and to commemorate the 1977 bread riots in Cairo, when police killed 70 people.
• On 21 January police arrest 29 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Alexandria. Secretary General of the local Medical Union Ibrahim Zaafarani is among the arrested. On 23 January more Muslim Brotherhood members are arrested at a pro-Palestinian demonstration close to the Arab League headquarters.

Libya

• In early January Abd-al-Rahman Mohammed Shalgun, General People’s Committee Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation Secretary, visits the US where he holds talks with the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.
• On 31 January the Financial Times publishes Libya’s ratification of a gas exploration deal valued at 9 billion dollars with British Petroleum (BP). The contract forms part of the agreements signed by the Prime Minister Tony Blair on his visit to Libya in May 2007.

Algeria

• On 2 January the organisation al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claims responsibility for the suicide car bomb attack on a police station in Naciria, 70 km east of Algiers. Four police officers are killed in the attack and eight others are injured.
• On 29 January a car loaded with explosives heading towards the local police station in Thenia, 65 km east of Algiers, explodes after police officers shoot the driver in an attempt to halt the attack. Two people are killed and 23 injured when the vehicle blows up near the station.

European Union

• On 1 January Slovenia takes over the EU’s six-month rotating presidency from Portugal to become the first ex-communist country in the EU to hold the position. The priority for the Slovenian Presidency is the ratification in all EU Member States of the EU Reform Treaty, signed in Lisbon in December 2007, so that it enters into force on 1 January 2009.
• On 29 January the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown hosts a summit in London with Europe’s four largest economies. In attendance are French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso. The meeting discusses the subprime mortgage crisis and what the EU’s response should be.

Arab League

• On 5 January Foreign Ministers of the Arab League meet in Cairo and agree a plan to end the constitutional crisis in Lebanon. On 6 January the Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa announces that the Foreign Ministers have agreed on a three-phase plan that calls for electing General Suleiman as the new President, forming a government of national unity and writing a new electoral law.

February 2008

On 17 February the Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi proclaims Kosovo’s independence from Serbia. Although welcomed by the Albanian majority in Kosovo and recognised by the international community, Russia, Serbia’s strongest ally, opposes the unilateral declaration of independence, arguing that there was neither an agreement reached with Serbia, nor approval by the Security Council. In Italy the centre-left government of Prime Minister Romano Prodi is dissolved and the President dissolves the Parliament and calls general elections. In the EU France ratifies the EU Reform Treaty in Parliament. The Turkish Parliament approves the constitutional amendments to end the ban on wearing the Muslim veil in public universities.

Spain

• On 14 February the President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero expresses his strong concerns to Manuel Monteiro de Castro, the Nuncio of the Holy See in Spain, over the statement issued on 30 January by the Spanish Episcopal Conference (CEE), in which it called people to vote for the People’s Party (PP). The statement criticised the policy of the ruling Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) and warned of the “danger of certain political and legislative decisions that contradict fundamental values” in reference to negotiations with ETA, support for gay marriage, abortion and euthanasia.
• On 27 February the National Court sentences 27 Islamist fundamentalists to between five and 14 years’ imprisonment for belonging to or collaborating with terrorist organisations; two men are also convicted of document forgery. None, however, is found guilty of the charges of a plot to blow up the anti-terrorist court house in Madrid, and the court decides there is no evidence that the plot was anything more than an “undeveloped individual plan” by Moroc-
can Abderrahmane Tahiri. Ten Algerians are cleared of all charges.

France

- On 7 February the French National Assembly ratifies the EU Reform Treaty with 336 votes in favour and 52 against. Nicolas Sarkozy’s Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) votes in favour while in the Socialist Party (PS) 125 MPs vote in favour, 25 against and 17 abstain. The communists state that they are against the treaty. The text must be ratified by the President of the Republic.
- On 8 February Jérôme Kerviel, the financial trader accused of losing Société Générale 4.9 billion euros in unauthorised, high risk stock market deals, is placed under police custody. Reports state that Kerviel may not have been acting alone, leading the judges to order his arrest and thus prevent him from ‘pressurising’ potential witnesses.
- On 8 February President Sarkozy unveils new plans to improve living conditions in rundown neighbourhoods with majority immigrant populations. The plans come following January’s announcement of the creation of numerous new job posts. Declaring that “the very idea of the nation is at stake”, Sarkozy promises 500 million euros to improve public transport and create three-year training courses for 100,000 young people. Sarkozy also announces a “war without mercy” on drug dealers and gangs.

Italy

- On 4 February the President of the Senate Franco Marini states that it is impossible to rally enough support to form a “technical government” and change the electoral law, following days of talks with political party leaders.
- On 6 February after the dissolution of Prime Minister Romano Prodi’s centre-left government, the President Giorgio Napolitano dissolves Parliament and calls general elections for 13-14 April. Napolitano regrets having to call elections without reforming the electoral system of proportional representation, which grants disproportionate power to small parties and makes a viable majority government impossible for Prodi.
- On 25 February a court in Milan suspends the trial of Silvio Berlusconi for tax evasion and fraudulent accounting practice to allow him to focus on the election campaign.

Serbia

- On 3 February the liberal, pro-Western President Boris Tadic defeats his rival, radical nationalist Tomislav Nikolic in the second round of the presidential elections. With a turnout of nearly 68%, Tadic obtains 50% of the vote against Nikolic’s 48%. On 5 February Tadic’s victory endangers the Serbia coalition since his partner in the coalition, Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), did not support Tadic’s candidature. The divide widens when Kostunica rejects the proposal for a political deal with the EU, particularly following the EU’s decision to establish the civil EULEX mission, which aims to consolidate rule of law and democracy in Kosovo.
- On 16 February the Council of the EU launches EULEX in order to stabilise Kosovo following its declaration of independence. EULEX is composed of police, judicial civil servants and support staff. The mission develops beneath the umbrella of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and aims to help Kosovo’s judicial authorities and institutions of law and order to move towards “sustainability and accountability” and to develop a multi-ethnic justice system and police force, ensuring that these institutions are free from interference and adhering to internationally recognised standards and European best practices.
- On 21 February around 10,000 demonstrators gather in Belgrade to protest against Kosovo’s independence. Numerous embassies are attacked, including those of the United Kingdom, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 17 February in the Assembly of Kosovo, the Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi declares Kosovo’s independence and proclaims: “From this moment on, Kosovo is a proud, independent and free State.” Thaçi announces that Kosovo will be a democratic and multi-ethnic State with intentions of EU accession. Kosovo’s independence is welcomed by the Albanian majority in Kosovo, which had been campaigning to this end since the territory’s administration was handed over to the UN in 1999. Serbia denounced the independence and the Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica issues a televised statement saying that “Kosovo is, and will always be, part of Serbia.” Russia, Serbia’s strongest ally, calls for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council and requests that Kosovo’s independence be annulled, arguing that it violates international law since no agreement was reached with Serbia and it was not approved by the Security Council.
- On 19 February demonstrators burn down two border posts between Kosovo and Serbia, in Jarnije and Banja, approximately 20 kilometres from the divided city of Mitrovica.

Montenegro

- On 20 February the President Filip Vujanovic appoints Milo Djukanovic as Prime Minister. Djukanovic maintains most of the ministers appointed in November 2006. On 29 February the Parliament approves the nomination of Djukanovic, which had been delayed until the end of January for health reasons.

Greece

- On 7 February the Prime Ministers of Greece and Romania Kostas Karamanlis and Calin Tariceanu sign an energy cooperation agreement for the oil, natural gas and electricity sectors.

Cyprus

- On 17 February the first round of the presidential elections is held in which none of the candidates obtains 50% of the vote. On 24 February Dhimitrios Christofias, Secretary General of the main opposition party, the communist Progressive Party for Working People (AKEL), obtains 53.37% of the vote in the second round of the presidential
elections in the Greek part of Cyprus. Christofias receives support from the two parties of the ruling coalition, the centre-right party, the Democratic Party (DIKO) and the Movement of Social Democrats (EDEK).

**Turkey**

- On 9 February the Grand National Assembly (Parliament) approves the constitutional amendments proposed by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the far-right opposition party Nationalist Action (MHP), with 411 votes in favour and 103 against. The reform ends the ban on wearing the Muslim veil in public universities in Turkey.
- On 9 February the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces at an international conference on security in Munich that Turkey wants full membership to the EU and does not consider the option of a ‘privileged association’, proposed by some European leaders, as an alternative.
- On 21 February the Turkish army sends 10,000 soldiers to the Zap region of northern Iraq in a large-scale offensive on bases of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), an organisation included in the European list of terrorist organisations. On 26 February, despite Turkey allegedly warning Iraq and the United States of the operation, the Iraqi government condemns the attack as a violation of its sovereignty and calls Turkey to withdraw forces from the region. Iraq fears the situation may lead to a conflict with the Kurdish peshmerga militia, loyal supporters of the government of the autonomous region of Kurdistan, which may cause greater instability in the country. On 29 February the Turkish army announces the return of troops from northern Iraq. To end speculation that external pressure had led to the sudden withdrawal, the chief of the Turkish general staff announces that goals have been achieved; in the course of the operations 240 PKK members were shot down and 24 Turkish soldiers died.
- On 22 February President Abdullah Gül signs into law two constitutional reforms that lift the ban on women in universities wearing the hijab, the Muslim headscarf. The reform raises alarms among secularist Turks.

**Syria**

- On 6 February the National Organisation for Human Rights in Syria (NOHRS) announces that the authorities have released human rights activist Adnan Makiah, arrested for actions against the opposition. The NGO reports that 12 pro-human rights activists remain in prison.
- On 13 February the US President George W. Bush signs an executive order to expand sanctions against officials in the Syrian government and their associates, accused of having benefited from public corruption.

**Lebanon**

- On 12 February Imad Mughniyah, a leader of the Lebanese Shiite movement, Hezbollah and top of the US Most Wanted Terrorist list, dies in a car bomb attack in Damascus. Mughniyah was considered to be head of both Hezbollah Intelligence and the group’s military wing. On 14 February thousands of Hezbollah supporters demonstrate in southern Beirut as a show of strength at Mughniyah’s funeral. Iran’s Foreign Affairs Minister Manuchehr Motaki is present at the funeral.

**Egypt**

- On 12 February the Muslim Brotherhood’s website, Amlalommah, reports the formation of a new opposition movement, Alternative Current. The article reveals that the new movement includes elements from diverse political factions, is liberal and complies with the constitution.

**Libya**

- On 1 February the project to build a 266-kilometre gas pipeline between Melitah, on the west coast of Libya, and Ghabes, in southeast Tunisia, is reportedly put on hold because of doubts regarding Libya’s gas supply.

**Algeria**

- On 7 February eight Algerian police officers are killed in an ambush in the province of El Oued, 500 km southeast of Algiers. The organisation al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) claims responsibility for the attack.

**Morocco**

- On 18 February Morocco’s official news agency, Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP), reports the dismantling by security forces of a “terrorist network” and the arrest of its leader Abdelkader Belriraj along with 31 other members. On 20 February the Interior Minister Chakib Benmoussa announces that the dismantled group had links with extremist organisations such as al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and was attempting to organise training with Hezbollah in Lebanon. The group was also plotting attacks on government and army officials, as well as Jewish citizens in Morocco.
- On 27 February the television station Al-Jazeera reports the formation by Fouad Ali Himma, former Delegate Minister to the Interior and friend of King Mohammed VI, of the new political party Movement for All Democrats. The group is formed with the aim of working on “social, ideological, economical and development actions to consolidate the achievements in the construction of democracy and modernisation.”

**European Union**

- On 6 February the Romanian President Traian Basescu signs the ratification act for the EU Reform Treaty, approved in Lisbon in December 2007.

**March 2008**

In Spain ETA is blamed for the death of the former socialist councilman Isaías Carrasco two days ahead of the general elections, eventually won by the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE). In France the local elections result in major losses for Nicolas Sarkozy’s ruling centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). The result is interpreted as punishment for decisions taken by President Sarkozy, whose popularity has sunk to its lowest since he was elected in 2007. In Kosov0 clashes and displays of unrest continue following the country’s declaration of independence from Serbia in February 2008. A European summit is held mid-month in Brus-
• On 7 March the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) and the People’s Party (PP) abruptly suspend the election campaign following the murder of former councilman Isaias Carrasco by the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA).

• On 9 March the PSOE wins the general elections with 43.64% of the vote (169 seats of the 350-strong Congress of Deputies, lower house). The result represents an increase of five seats with respect to the previous elections in March 2004, although the party remains seven seats short of an absolute majority. The main opposition party the PP gains 40.11% of the vote (153 seats), five seats more than in the last elections. These results reflect the polarisation of Spanish politics. After the election results are revealed, the United Left (IU) leader, Gaspar Llamazares, announces that he will not run for re-election as General Coordinator of the IU due to the poor results; the party lost 25% of its voters.

France

• On 8 March Jérôme Kerviel, the stock market trader who has been accused of causing losses of 4.9 billion euros at Société Générale, is released on bail by the Paris Appeal Court.

• On 9 and 16 March the local elections result in major losses for the ruling centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), largely to the benefit of the opposition Socialist Party (PS). 25 of the 37 cities with populations of over 100,000 will be governed by the PS. The result is seen as punishment for decisions taken by the President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose popularity has sunk to its lowest since he was elected in May 2007. On 18 March, in response to the election results, Sarkozy declares that the government will not abandon its compromise of total reform and orders a cabinet reshuffle, changing five ministers and seven secretaries of State.

• From 10-14 March the Israeli President Shimon Peres pays a state visit to France on the occasion of the Paris Book Fair, dedicated this year to Israeli writers. French ministers condemn the response of many Arab countries to boycott the fair.

• On 21 March Sarkozy announces the reduction of the French arsenal to fewer than 300 nuclear warheads, although he says that the so-called Force de Frappe (Strike Force) continues to be necessary due to Europe’s new strategic challenges, which include Iran.

Italy

• On 14 March the trial begins against 56 people charged with the bankruptcy of the dairy group Parmalat.

• On 20 March the outgoing Prime Minister Romano Prodi announces his retirement from politics. Walter Veltroni will be the Democratic Party (PD) candidate in the upcoming legislative elections.

Malta

• On 8 March the ruling Nationalist Party (PN), led by the Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, defeats the opposition with a margin of less than 1%, with 49.34% of the vote. The Malta Labour Party (PLM), led by Alfred Sant, gains 48.79% of the vote. Despite its majority, the PN only gains 31 seats in the 65-strong House of Representatives (Parliament), against the 34 seats obtained by the PLM, which benefits from the seats of the minor parties as permitted in the constitution. On 10 March the leader of the PLM submits his resignation with immediate effect.

Croatia

• On 11 March the trial begins at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) against Ante Gotovina, Ivan Cermak and Mladen Markac, three Croatian generals accused of crimes committed in 1995 when the Croatian army re-took the Kra-

jina enclave, a self-proclaimed Serb republic inside Croatia.

• On 14 March the state-run HINA news agency announces that the Croatian Party of Pensioners (HSU) has elected Silvano Hrelja as its new leader. Hrelja was the party’s only representative in the Sabor, the unicameral Parliament, and had won his seat in the 2007 elections.

Serbia

• On 8 March Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica announces the dissolution of the ruling coalition formed in May 2007, due to the deterioration in recent months of relations between the main parties, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and the Democratic Party (DS). While Kostunica’s DSS maintains that if the EU does not recognise Kosovo as part of Serbia there can be no negotiations, Boris Tadic’s DS defends progress towards EU accession independent of the Kosovo issue.

• On 13 March President Tadic officially dissolves the National Assembly (Parliament) and announces new elections for 11 May.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 14 March hundreds of Serbs storm a courthouse run by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in the northern town of Mitrovica. The intruders take control of the building and raise a Serbian flag to replace that of the UN.

• On 31 March 36 of the 192 sovereign states that form the UN have already formally recognised the Republic of Kosovo.

Macedonia

• On 13 March the President of the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH) Menduh Thaçi announces that his party is abandoning the coalition formed in August 2006 with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and other parties, in protest against the refusal of the VMRO-DPMNE to recognise Kosovo’s independence.
Greece

• On 19 March a 24-hour general strike is called to protest against plans to reform the pension system set out by the government of conservative Kostas Karamanlis. The reform eliminates most early retirement schemes, increases the retirement age in certain sectors and establishes a ceiling for complementary pensions. The measure particular affects women, who have to work for five more years before they can retire. On 20 March the Vouli (Parliament) approves the Reform Bill with 151 votes in favour, 13 against and 136 abstentions.

Cyprus

• On 21 March in Nicosia the new Greek Cypriot President Dhimitos Khristofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (RTNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, meet for the first time since Khristofias was elected. Both leaders commit to resuming peace negotiations in three months under the auspices of the UN, with the aim of reunifying the island. One of the approved measures aimed at building confidence consists in reopening Ledra Street in the historical centre of Nicosia, considered a symbol of the country’s division.
• On 25 March Cyprus imposes emergency water rationing and makes a request to import water from Greece to solve the shortage, made worse by four years of drought. Low levels of rainfall since 2003 have reduced the water reserves to 10% and the desalination plants are unable to meet demand.

Turkey

• On 7 March the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani visits the country for the first time as Head of State. During his visit Talabani offers Turkey his support in their fight against the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), whose members have been carrying out attacks in the southeast of Turkey from their bases in northern Iraq.
• On 29 March Turkey bombs PKK positions in northern Iraq with aircraft and artillery, killing at least 15 of its members as they prepared to attack targets in Turkey.
• On 31 March the Constitutional Court votes unanimously to hear a case that calls for the dissolution of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and a five-year ban from political activity for 71 members of the AKP, including the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the President Abdullah Gül for an alleged attempt to impose Islamic law in Turkey, a constitutionally secular country.

Lebanon

• On 28 March Daniel Bellemare, the new commissioner of the UN’s International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) which is investigating the death of Rafiq Hariri in 2005, presents the Commission’s final report to the UN Security Council.

Egypt

• On 5 March The Guardian reports that the Egyptian security forces have arrested hundreds of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in a series of operations aimed at preventing their participation in the local council elections scheduled for April.
• On 25 March Egypt and Russia sign an agreement that opens the way to Russian participation in the construction of the Egyptian nuclear industry. The agreement is reached during talks in Moscow between the President Hosni Mubarak and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. The agreement is signed by the Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Energy Hasan Yusuf and by Sergey Kiriyenko, Director General of the Russian atomic energy agency Rosatom.

Tunisia

• On 10 March the news channel Al-Jazeera, created by the government of Qatar, announces that al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping on 22 February of Austrian tourists Andrea Kloiber and Wolfram Ebner. However, the Tunisian government issues a statement saying that the kidnapping took place outside Tunisian territory.

Algeria

• On 2 March the State Minister for Justice Tayeb Belayez announces that a high-level Algerian delegation had recently visited the Guantanamo Prison in Cuba and had been able to confirm the identity of 17 Algerian prisoners. It is the first time that a precise number has been given of the Algerians held at Guantanamo.

Morocco

• On 10 March the official news agency, Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP), reports that the Moroccan Court of First Instance has sentenced three youths
to prison for their participation in a series of suicide attacks that took place in Casablanca in March and April 2007. Youseff Khoudri receives a 15-year sentence and Othman Raydi and Abdelhadi Raybi both receive 10-year sentences.

**European Union**

- On 13-14 March a regular European summit is held in Brussels that sees the approval of “the principle of a Union for the Mediterranean”, proposed by President Sarkozy. The new structure will encompass the Member States of the EU and non-member Mediterranean countries and will be called the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (PB:UfM), maintaining continuity with the existing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In Brussels the proposal for new European Commission directives are studied, which aim to reduce greenhouse emissions and achieve levels of energy efficiency agreed in March 2007. At the summit a series of commitments are agreed regarding important reserves by some Member States. The summit also launches a new three-year cycle regarding the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ for growth and employment and the current financial instability is discussed. Before the summit, the EU External Relation Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner and the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Javier Solana present a report which warns that “there will be millions of environmental immigrants, with climate change as one of the driving factors”, who will create “major migratory pressure for Europe.”

**Arab League**

- On 29-30 March the Arab League celebrates its twentieth regular meeting in Damascus. Lebanon boycotts the conference accusing Syria of preventing the new Lebanese President from being elected following the pro-Syrian President Émile Lahoud’s departure at the end of November 2007. As a sign of solidarity with Lebanon another three countries allied with the West, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan send low-level representatives to the summit.

**Abril 2008**

In Spain José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero is elected President of the government by the Parliament. In Italy Silvio Berlusconi wins the legislative elections and achieves a third term in office. Kosovo writes a Constitution, which establishes that the country is a “Parliamentary Republic.” In Cyprus the Ledra Street checkpoint, a symbol of the country’s divide, is reopened. Also at the beginning of the month, local elections are held in Egypt amid threats of a blockade by the Muslim Brotherhood.

**Portugal**

- On 17 April Luis Filipe Menezes leader of the centre-right opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD) announces publicly that he is incapable of solving his party’s internal problems and steps down as party leader.
- On 23 April the Parliament approves the EU Reform Treaty with an overwhelming majority.

**Spain**

- On 11 April the Congress of Deputies officially elects José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as President of the government in a second round of elections, with 169 votes in favour, 158 against and 23 abstentions. It is the first time since democracy was restored in Spain that the candidate from the winning party in the legislative elections has not been elected as Head of Government in the first round. On 12 April Zapatero is sworn in as President of the Spanish government.
- On 14 April Zapatero appoints his new cabinet which has a female majority. Two new ministries are created: the Science and Innovation Ministry, led by Cristina Garmendia, and the Equality Ministry, led by 31-year-old Bibiana Aido, the youngest minister in Spanish history.

**France**

- On 24 April following the defeat of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) in the March local elections, President Sarkozy offers a televised interview in the Elysee Palace in an attempt to revitalise his administration. Almost a year since achieving a decisive majority in May 2007, the opinion polls reflect a drop in popularity for the French President with public approval at less than 40%.
- On 5-6 April 148 Muslim graves are desecrated in the Notre Dame de Lorette military cemetery in Arras, northern France. A pig’s head is found on one of the gravestones along with insults written against the Justice Minister Rachida Dati, who is of Maghreb descent. Other incidents take place in France, such as racist graffiti in a prayer room or the attacks on a mosque in Colomiers, in the Haute Garonne region in southern France on 20 April.
- On 25 April the leader of the far-right National Front (FN), Jean-Marie Le Pen, provokes a new controversy when in an interview given to the magazine Bretons he reiterates his 1987 declaration that the gas chambers used by the Nazi’s were “a detail” in the history of the Second World War. Without denying the reality of the deportations or the extermination of the Jews among other groups, Le Pen asserts that the victims were not as numerous as is thought and that concentration camps like Auschwitz were essentially forced labour camps.

**Italy**

- On 13-14 April early legislative elections give Silvio Berlusconi his third term as Prime Minister when his centre-right party the People of Freedom (PD) wins with 46% of the vote against the centre-left alliance of the Democratic Party (PD), led by Walter Veltroni, which obtains 37% of the vote. Berlusconi gained 344 of the 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and 174 of the 315 that form the Senate (upper house). Turnout for the elections stands at 80.4 %. Berlusconi’s coalition partner, the right-wing North League (LN), increases its percentage of votes to 8%, more than doubling its presence in both houses.
- On 28 April Giovanni Alemanno, candidate of the dissolved far-right party the National Alliance (AN) and ally of Berlusconi, is elected Mayor of Rome in a second round, thus bringing an end to the centre-left municipal government. Alemanno obtains 46.4% of the vote ahead of Francesco Rutelli, the Mayor or Rome between 1993 and 2001, and
Deputy Prime Minister and Culture Minister of the outgoing government.
• On 29 April senator Renato Schifani of the PdL is elected President of the Senate and on 30 April Gianfranco Fini, leader of the dissolved AN, is elected President of the Chamber of Deputies.

Croatia

• On 6 April the state-run HINA news agency reports the election of Radimir Cacic as President of the opposition party, the centrist Croatian People’s Party (HNS), with the support of 995 of the 1,368 delegates present at the party’s ninth election meeting.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 2 April the Foreign Affairs Minister writes a letter to Dimitrij Rupel the Foreign Affairs Minister in Slovenia, which currently holds the EU Presidency, in which he asks to participate in the Barcelona Process arguing that “Bosnia and Herzegovina geographically belongs to the Mediterranean Basin and shares a common cultural heritage with other Mediterranean countries.”
• On 10 and 16 April the National House of Representatives and the House of Peoples (the lower and upper houses of the Bosnian Parliament respectively) approve major legislative reforms that pave the way to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU signing the pre-accession agreement, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), for which negotiations had begun in December 2007 after leaders of different political parties adopted an “action plan” aimed at police reform.
• On 24 April the election commission accuses the Foreign Affairs Minister Sven Alkalaj and two deputy ministers Senad Sepic, Deputy Civil Affairs Minister, and Igor Crnadak, Deputy Defence Minister, of a conflict of interests and bans them from participating in elections for the next four years.

Serbia

• On 29 April Serbia and the EU sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in Luxemburg. Although negotiations had begun in November 2007, the signing had been delayed because of Serbia’s failure to arrest war crimes suspects, particularly General Ratko Mladic, commander of the Serbian Bosnian army during the war. According to the agreement reached by the Member States, Serbia will not benefit from the SAA until it considers collaborating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY). Signing the Agreement implies recognition of the pro-European forces for the legislative elections on 11 May.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 3 April the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) clears Ramush Haradinaj and Idriz Balaj of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo during the 1997-1999 war. The third person accused, Lahi Brahimaj, is sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for cruel treatment and torture of two people in the barracks of the now-disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army in Jablanica.
• On 9 April the Assembly of Kosovo adopts a new constitution for the Republic of Kosovo, approved by 103 members of the Assembly, which will enter into force on 15 June. With 40 chapters and 160 articles the constitution declares that Kosovo is a “parliamentary republic and the highest power lies with the President.”
• At the end of April the number of countries that formally recognise the Republic of Kosovo increases to 39.

Montenegro

• On 6 April Filip Vujanovic, the current President and candidate of the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPSCG) wins the presidential elections with 52% of the vote, ahead of his three opponents. Observers from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) declare that in practically all aspects the elections met with the requirements for democratic elections.

Macedonia

• On 12 April the Sobranje (Parliament) votes for its dissolution and to hold early elections for 1 June following a period of instability in the ruling coalition. The proposal to hold early elections is supported by the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski’s Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and the Democratic Party of Albania (PDHs).

Greece

• On 18 April the Greek office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) asks EU countries to stop asylum seekers returning from other EU countries to Greece in accordance with the Dublin II Regulation. The document stipulates that asylum seekers’ requests must be examined by their country of arrival into the EU. The UN agency declares that since it is impossible for Greece to guarantee the essential rights in the procedure, such as supplying interpreters and legal aid, asylum seekers face “undue hardships in having their claims heard and adequately adjudicated.”
• On 29 April the Prime Minister, Costas Karamanlis, and the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, sign an agreement in Moscow for the construction of the South Stream gas pipeline which will transport natural gas from Russia to the EU.

Cyprus

• On 3 April thousands of Cypriots, Greeks and Turks celebrate the opening in Nicosia of Ledra Street (or Lokmaci, as it is known in the Turkish part), symbol of the country’s division in the city’s largest commercial district.
• On 22 April the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) orders Turkey to pay €830,000 to Greek Cypriot John Demades for the loss of his house in Kyrenia when Turkish forces invaded northern Cyprus. The compensation is granted to the Demades family, who have not had access to the house since 1974.

Turkey

• On 1 April the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a speech to the legislators of his Justice and Development
Party (AKP), criticises the decision in March taken by the Constitutional Court to hear the case for the dissolution of the AKP. The party is charged with threatening the separation between State and religion in Turkey, a country with a Muslim majority but constitutionally secular. Erdogan describes the case as an “attempt to weaken politics” and asserts that it will damage the country at a time when the Turkish people are demanding greater “democracy, freedom and welfare.”

- On 1 April the police arrest 45 alleged members of al-Qaeda, suspected of planning terrorist attacks in a number of operations carried out simultaneously in different areas of Istanbul. It is believed that one of the suspects, known as Halis B., was the leader of al-Qaeda in Turkey.

- On 24 and 26 April Turkey launch fresh attacks on bases of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in northern Iraq that the PKK use to carry out offensives on southeast Turkey.

- On 30 April the Grand National Assembly (Parliament) approves a law that amends the controversial article 301 of the Penal Code, with 250 votes in favour and 65 against. The amendment replaces an insult to Turkishness (Turkish national identity), which is perceived as an obstacle to Turkey’s proposal to join the EU, with an insult to the “Turkish Nation”. Article 301 has been used to try well-known writers, including the Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, and is criticised by the EU for restricting freedom of expression.

- On 30 April the AKP delivers its preliminary defence to the Constitutional Court, in which it denies charges of carrying out activities against secularism claiming its actions were politically motivated.

Syria

- On 24 April in a series of closed-door meetings the CIA shows video tapes belonging to members of the US Congress and other evidence that proves that North Korea is helping Syria to build a nuclear reactor in the north east of the country, which was bombed by the Israeli Air Force on 6 September 2007.

- On 24 April the Qatari newspaper Al-Watan reports that the President Bashar al-Assad has confirmed Turkey’s mediation in negotiations between Syria and Israel. However, Assad insists there will be no direct negotiations with Israel until the new US administration takes over at the beginning of 2009.

Jordan

- On 8 April Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a report that reveals the CIA’s transfer of 14 suspected terrorists under Jordanian custody for their interrogation and torture following the attacks on 11 September 2001.

- On 12 and 24 April the Jordan Times reports the dissolution of certain political parties following the political party reform that entered into force in April 2007. The report shows that only 12 of the 36 parties have been able to obtain the license needed to operate beyond the 15 April deadline. The new legislation stipulates that each party must have at least 500 founding members equally distributed over five different governorates. The parties have a year to adapt to the new requirements and register with the Interior Ministry.

Egypt

- On 7 April the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood call a boycott of the local elections. Human rights organisations report that around 800 members of the Muslim Brotherhood have been arrested and detained by the authorities. On 6 April local elections are held in Egypt.

- On 29 April during a speech in Cairo to the Trade Union Federation the President Hosni Mubarak proposes a 30% salary increase for public sector employees, in response to unrest throughout the country as a result of price increases on basic products and low salaries.

Libya

- On 16-17 April the Russian President Vladimir Putin visits Libya to meet with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Russia agrees to cancel the 4.5 billion dollar debt incurred during the cold war in exchange for civil and military contracts between Libyan and Russian companies. Among the commercial deals reached, Gazprom, the Russian state-run gas company, agrees on a joint venture with the Libya National Oil Corporation to explore, produce, transport and commercialise gas and oil.

Algeria

- On 27 April several Algerian newspapers announce that government security forces have killed 14 members of the organisation al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the destruction of refugees the armed group held in the mountains east of Algiers. Four of its members, including one of the group’s leaders, die in the province of El Oued, 700 kilometres southeast of Algiers. The army, supported by helicopters, also shoots down 10 militants and destroys the organisation’s hideouts in different operations in the province of Bournerdas, some 50 kilometres to the east of Algiers.

Morocco

- On 7 April the Justice Ministry announces that nine people, convicted for their involvement in the attacks carried out in Casablanca in May 2003, have escaped from the Kenitra prison, 40 kilometres to the north of Rabat.

European Union

- In April the EU Reform Treaty, signed in Lisbon in December 2007, is ratified by the parliaments of Poland, Slovakia, Portugal, Austria and Denmark.

May 2008

In the elections of 11 May in Serbia the pro-European coalition led by the President Boris Tadic emerges as the group with most votes. In Spain ETA carries out another attack in the Basque Country causing the death of a civil guard. Silvio Berlusconi is appointed Prime Minister of Italy after winning the April elections. In Lebanon mounting unrest provokes fears of a civil war between Hezbollah and the pro-government forces. Finally on 21 May an agreement is reached between the parties at the Arab League meeting in Doha, which ends the crisis regarding the appointment of the Lebanese President and elects General Michel Suleiman as the
new President. Also, Israel and Syria announce that they are holding peace talks mediated by Turkey.

Portugal

- On 16 May MPs adopt a controversial standardisation law regarding the Portuguese language that implies using the Brazilian spelling rules for many Portuguese words. The change reflects a turnaround in the economic weight of Portuguese speaking countries, with over 230 million lusophones in countries such as Brazil (with around 190 million), Portugal (with 10.6 million), Mozambique or East Timor.

Spain

- On 14 May a civil guard dies and another four are injured when a bomb placed in a van explodes in front of the Civil Guard barracks in Legutiano, the Basque Country. The Interior Minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba blames the terrorist attack on the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA). Politicians from all parties join to condemn the attack. This is the first time that the opposition People’s Party (PP), offers its support to the government of the President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero since June 2006.

- On 20 May ETA’s military and political head Francisco Javier López Peña, alias “Thierry”, and three suspected collaborators are arrested in the city of Bordeaux in southeast France, in a joint operation involving the Civil Guard and the French police. Thierry had been on the run for 20 years and had put pressure on ending the ETA truce.

- On 28 May the government announces that it will block any initiative proposed by the President of the Basque government Juan José Ibarretxe to hold a referendum on 25 October 2008 to determine the level of public support for an ETA-negotiated solution and for independence for the Basque Country. According to Zapatero, Ibarretxe’s plan violates the constitution.

France

- On 14 May a Paris court sentences seven men to seven years in prison for planning terrorist attacks. The men recruited militants in France to be trained in Iraq.

- On 22 May the Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë announces his candidature to take over from François Hollande as First Secretary of the Socialist Party (PS), following Hollande’s resignation in November 2007. Delanoë says he will also stand as candidate in the 2012 presidential elections. Delanoë believes that the PS should turn towards market economies and a social democracy that avoids the anti-capitalist debate.

- On 28 May the President Nicolas Sarkozy announces that from 1 July France will lift employment restrictions on citizens from eight former communist countries of the EU.

Italy

- On 6 May the European Commission (EC) announces that it will take Italy before the European Court of Justice over its failure to end the rubbish crisis in Naples, where rubbish has been piling up in the streets since December 2007.

- On 8 May the opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi head of the centre-right party, People of Freedom (PdL), becomes Prime Minister of Italy for the third time when he and his Council of Ministers are appointed by the President Giorgio Napolitano, following their election victory in mid-April. Franco Frattini steps down as Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security in the EU to join Berlusconi’s team as Foreign Minister, a post he occupied from 2002 to 2004 also with Berlusconi.

- On 15 May over 400 immigrants are arrested as part of a government measure against illegal immigration. On 21 May the Council of Ministers announces a security package that will make illegal immigration a crime punishable by up to four years’ imprisonment.

Malta

- On 1 May Sir Anthony Mamo, former President of Malta from 1974 to 1976 and the last (and only Maltese) Governor-General of the country (1971-74) dies in Mosta at the age of 99. Mamo played an essential role in Malta's transition towards independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. Malta continued to form part of the Commonwealth and was finally proclaimed a republic in 1974, with Mamo as the first elected President.

Croatia

- On 30 May a Croatian court sentences the retired general Mirko Norac to seven years’ imprisonment for failing to prevent the murder and torture of Serb civilians at the hands of soldiers under his command, in 1993 in south Croatia. The same court acquits the retired general Rahim Ademi of identical charges. The case against both men had been officially transferred to the Croatian judiciary by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 5 May the Serbian media reports that the Prime Minister Nikola Spirić has initiated the process to dismiss Foreign Affairs Minister Sven Alkalaj, member of the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), and other deputy ministers for irregularities exposed in a report from the Central Election Commission.

Serbia

- On 11 May elections are held in the National Assembly (Parliament) following the dissolution of the ruling coalition in March due to disagreements over Kosovo and relations with the EU. In the elections the coalition For a European Serbia, led by the President Boris Tadić, emerges as the strongest political force gaining over 38% of the vote and 102 seats in the 250-member Parliament. The ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) obtains 78 seats, three less than in 2007, when the party gained the maximum number of seats. The SRS had campaigned for closer ties with Russia and advocated breaking the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) signed with the EU on 29 April, if the EU does not recognise Kosovo as part of Serbia.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

- At the end of May the number of countries that formally recognise the Republic of Kosovo increases to 43.
Montenegro

- On 20 May the President Filip Vujanovic is sworn in for his second five-year term after winning the presidential elections held on 6 April. In his inaugural address, Vujanovic calls Montenegrins to put aside their differences and join "forces" adding that "the EU requires us to unite." Montenegro signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU in October 2007.

Macedonia

- On 1 May the MIA news agency reports that the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) has signed an election coalition agreement with 17 other parties, many of which supported the VMRO-DPMNE in the legislative elections held in July 2006. The agreement enables the parties to run together for the elections scheduled for 1 June.

Greece

- On 12 May, following a week of transport strikes, Greece faces major fuel shortages as well as shortages in fresh food unable to reach sales points. The Truck Owners Federation demands a 13% increase in salaries and pensions, rejecting the Ministry’s proposal of a 5% increase.

Cyprus

- On 23 May the Greek Cypriot President Dhimisios Kristofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, meet at the residence of the new special envoy of the United Nations to Cyprus Taye-Brook Zerihoun. They review the achievements of the 13 bicommunal technical committees and working groups, set up after the two leaders reached an agreement in March to resume peace negotiations under the auspices of the UN with the aim of reuniting the island.

Turkey

- On 1-2 May the Turkish army launches an air strike on members of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), included on Europe’s list of terrorist organisations, in the mountainous region of Quandil, in northern Iraq. 150 members of the PKK are killed in the strike.
- On 3 May the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces he will create a new political party if the Constitutional Court bans the Justice and Development Party (AKP), charged with threatening the separation between State and religion in Turkey. Erdogan says there will be no changes in the constitution to halt the closure of the party since this would cause social unrest. Erdogan, concerned because the case may affect foreign investment in Turkey, proposes an end to the legal proceedings.
- On 7 May the President Abdullah Gül signs the amendment to article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which classifies an insult to Turkishness (national Turkish identity) as a crime, and which has been a stumbling block in the proposal for EU accession.
- On 14 May secular Turks accuse the AKP of having a hidden agenda to gradually eliminate drinking in public by passing a controversial law that prohibits the sale of alcoholic drinks and tobacco outside of their original packaging. The AKP insists that it is a necessary measure to prevent unlicensed premises from serving alcohol.
- On 21 May, in a report on Turkey’s progress towards EU accession, the European Parliament expresses its concern over the lack of reforms and the closure of the case against the AKP. According to the report, the case raises doubts over the independence and impartiality of the Turkish judiciary. The European Parliament urges Prime Minister Erdogan’s government to pursue further reforms and warns that further delays may “seriously affect the pace of negotiations.”

Syria

- On 21 May the Syrian and Israeli governments confirm their participation in indirect Turkish-mediated talks aimed at reaching “a comprehensive peace agreement.”

Lebanon

- On 6 May the Prime Minister Fouad Siniora declares that the Hezbollah telecommunications network in southern Beirut is illegal and against the constitution, provoking clashes with the Shiite Hezbollah opposition movement and its allies. The government also announces the dismissal of General Wafic Chucair as security chief at Beirut airport because of alleged connections with Hezbollah. On 7 May Hezbollah supporters block several roads and take over the airport, while at the same time a workers’ strike turns into a political conflict. On 8 May Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah appears on television and Warns that the government’s actions represent a declaration of war. On 9 May Hezbollah takes control of West Beirut and during the day members of the Shiite movement surround the houses and offices of pro-government leaders, including the Prime Minister and Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. On 10 May the fighting extends to Tripoli in northern Lebanon. On 11 May Hezbollah takes key positions in Aley, a northern Druze village in the Chouf mountains, close to the road that joins Beirut with Damascus.
- On 25 May in accordance with agreements reached in Doha on 21 May, the Lebanese National Assembly appoints the Christian Maronite General Suleiman, as President. On 28 May Suleiman invites Siniora to create a new government of national unity.

Jordan

- On 2 May the Jordan Times reports that following the internal elections at the Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, Haman Sa’d, will replace Salem al-Falahat as leader of the group. Falahat belonged to the “centrist movement” and had been its leader since 2006.
- On 14 May the State Security Court (SSC) sentences Nidal Mumani, Satam Zawahra and Tharwat Daraz to 15-year prison terms for plotting to assassinate the US President George W. Bush during his visit to Jordan in November 2006. The SCC commuted their original death sentence to a prison sentence arguing that the accused, all of who are under 30, “are still young and deserve a second chance in life.”
entities have been shaken by a series of workers’ strikes in protest against the price increase on basic food products, job cuts and privatisations.
• On 5 May the People’s Assembly (Parliament) approves increases in fuel and cigarette prices and vehicle taxes to cover the cost of the 30% salary increase for civil servants proposed by the President Hosni Mubarak.
• On 9 May the ration card system extends to 17 million more people and rice rations are doubled to counteract the effects of price increases on basic commodities.
• On 26 May the People’s Assembly approves a government request to extend emergency law for a further two years. The law, in force since 1981, gives the executive powers to suspend basic rights such as prohibiting demonstrations, censoring newspapers, monitoring personal communications or detaining people without charge.

Tunisia

• On 9 May the TV channel Al-Jazeera reports that the capital’s Court of First Instance has sentenced 14 men to between five and 14 years’ imprisonment for belonging to a “terrorist organisation” and for attempting to prepare explosives.

Morocco

• On 19 May the TV channel Al-Jazeera reports the dismantling by police of an 11-member terrorist network, which included a Moroccan resident in Belgium. The report reveals that the cell was “connected to the Iraqi recruitment operation” and that it was preparing attacks in Belgium.

European Union

• On 5 May the EU, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria agree at the Conference on Energy Cooperation between the countries of the EU, Turkey, the Mashreq countries and Iraq in Brussels, to continue with the development of the regional cooperation in the natural gas sector. The goal is to unify the regional market through the development of interconnected infrastructures in the region and to contribute to the rapid completion of the Arab gas pipeline project and its connection with Turkey, Iraq and the EU. Running from Egypt, through Jordan to Syria, the Arab gas pipeline currently transports 10 billion m³ of gas per year.
• On 20 May the European Commission adopts the structural and functional proposals of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, with the aim of applying the agreement, approved at the EU summit in March, to create the new entity that will unite the EU Member States and the non-EU member Mediterranean countries. The inaugural summit of the Union will take place in Paris on 13 July.
• On 26-27 May 27 EU Foreign Affairs Ministers meet in Brussels to adopt the mandate to renew the EU’s Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, signed in 1997 between the EU and Russia. Russia’s lifting of its ban on Polish meat exports in December 2007 has eliminated one of the main obstacles to negotiations. The negotiations with Russia will include issues such as the unresolved conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and Trans-Dniester in Moldova, judicial cooperation and the energy chapter.

Arab League

• On 14 May the Arab League delegation, headed by the Prime Minister of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr al-Thani, arrives in Beirut in an attempt to stop civil war breaking out in Lebanon. On 15 May Sheikh Hamad announces that the opposing parties agree to “refrain from using weapons or violence” and to wait for “political dialogue” in Qatar, which will continue until an agreement is reached. Between 17 and 21 May talks take place in Doha, Qatar, in which both parties commit to resolving the political crisis that has plagued the country since November 2006. On 21 May it is agreed that the commander of the Lebanese army General Suleiman, will be appointed President to take over from General Émile Lahoud, whose term in office ended in November 2007. Reform of the Lebanese electoral system is also agreed and dialogue is called for regarding the arms issue. Hezbollah gains veto power.

June 2008

The Italian President Silvio Berlusconi, facing a corruption trial, begins his third term in office with a series of legal measures designed to save him from the pending trial. The new Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo comes into force mid-month, while Serb critics continue to consider Kosovo as a Serbian province. The European Parliament approves the Return Directive, which establishes a common policy on illegal immigration and the return of immigrants without papers. The Directive specifies a maximum 18-month detention period prior to expulsion and a five-year EU entry ban.

Portugal

• On 23 June the Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries Minister Jaime Silva announces government measures to help Portuguese fishermen, which compensate the cost increases resulting from the rise in fuel prices. These measures are adopted in the wake of demonstrations of fishermen across different European countries. Silva announces the creation of a new credit line and the three-month suspension of social security contributions for the sector.

Spain

• On 1 June a bomb explodes in Zarrutz in the Basque Country, following a warning from the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA). The target of the attack is the construction firm Amenabar which is part of the consortium responsible for building the high-speed train between Bilbao, San Sebastian and Vitoria. Three people suffer minor injuries. On 8 June another bomb explodes at printing facilities belonging to the Basque newspaper, El Correo, in Zamudio, to the east of Bilbao. None of the workers are injured.
• On 5 June the National Court judge Ismael Moreno convicts five Islamist fundamentalists for belonging to an armed group. The accused were plotting suicide bombings on Barcelona’s public transport network, that would have taken place between 18 and 20 January 2008.
• On 9 June around 75,000 lorry drivers call an indefinite strike against the rise in fuel prices, which spreads to France and Portugal. The hauliers demand a guaranteed minimum price for their transport services to compensate for costs which have risen by 36% in a year. The road block prevents food supplies and fuel from reaching supermarkets and petrol stations. On 11 June the Interior Minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba deploys more than 25,000 police officers to unblock the roads and move strikers away from two French border crossings. On the same day the government announces an agreement with the trade unions that are not part of the strike which includes 54 measures designed to minimise the impact of the rise in the cost of fuel, but does not establish the hauliers’ demands of a guaranteed minimum price.

• On 17 June the Labour Minister Celestino Corbacho announces that unemployed illegal immigrants who want to return to their countries of origin can claim all their unemployment benefit at once. The proposal forms part of a package of reforms designed to cushion the impact of the economic slowdown in the job market. Corbacho predicts that the incentive, aimed primarily at less qualified workers from Latin America and North Africa, will benefit between 10 and 20% of the more than 100,000 immigrants that are currently claiming the subsidy.

France

• On 9 June in Paris two suspected activists from the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) appeal against their sentence in July 2007, together with six others, for collaborating with the perpetrators of the Casablanca bombings in May 2003.

• On 17 June the President Nicolas Sarkozy unveils the first major reform of the French defence policy since 1994, which implies a significant reduction in the number of soldiers and a major investment to modernise military equipment. Designed by a commission of defence experts and political representatives, the revision defines France’s first official security strategy, which will be overseen by the Defence and National Security Council. The reform includes France’s reintegration into NATO’s integrated military command.

Italy

• On 18 June the Senate approves a reform according to which all trials for alleged crimes committed before June 2002 that carry prison sentences of under 10 years are suspended. The reform is intended to enable judges to focus on more serious cases or those that involve violence. The law, approved by the Chamber of Deputies and the President Giorgio Napolitano will freeze all legal proceedings currently open against the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who, together with his former British lawyer David Mills has been on trial for corruption since March 2007.

• On 27 June the government presents a law proposal that would grant immunity to the four highest ranking State officials: the President, the Prime Minister and the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Berlusconi is the only top ranking official awaiting trial.

• On 31 June the government approves a new law that limits the judicial use of telephone intercepts to investigations of more serious crimes, and that carries a prison sentence for those who publish conversations illegally.

Malta

• On 6 June the opposition Labour Party (PLM) elects Joseph Muscat, member of the European Parliament, as its new leader. None of the five candidates gained more than 51% of the votes needed in the first round on 5 June, leading to a second round on 6 June between the two most voted candidates.

Slovenia

• On 4 June the authorities shut down a nuclear plant in Krsko, in the southeast of the country close to the Croatian border, after the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning Janez Podobnik announces a “harmless water leak.”

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 16 June Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which represents the first step towards EU accession. Both parties had begun talks in December 2007 but the Member States insisted that Bosnia and Herzegovina complete its police reform to create a multi-ethnic national police force before signing the SAA.

Serbia

• On 11 June Stojan Zupljanin, the Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect, is arrested by police near Belgrade. On 21 June he is transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

• On 26 June, following the elections to the National Assembly (Parliament) on 11 May the main pro-European faction For a European Serbia, led by the President Boris Tadic, signs a coalition agreement with the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). With the support of minority parties like the Hungarian Coalition (MK) and the List for Sandzak, the coalition controls 128 of the 250 seats in the National Assembly.

• On 27 June Tadic appoints Mirko Cvetkovic, the outgoing Finance Minister, as the new Prime Minister.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 15 June the recently adopted Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo enters into force. On the same day the President of Serbia Boris Tadic declares that Serbia considers Kosovo as “its southern province” and that it will defend “its integrity through peaceful means, using diplomacy and without resorting to force.”

• On 15 June Skender Hyseni becomes Kosovo’s first Foreign Minister. Hyseni, the hitherto Culture, Youth and Sport Minister, had been nominated for the post in March.

Macedonia

• On 1 June the centre-right Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), until now leader of the coalition For a Better Macedonia (ZpM), wins early elections in the Sobarane (Parliament).

• On 1 June Macedonia’s hopes of entering the EU are shaken when on
election day a person is killed and nine others injured in acts of election violence in the country’s Albanian-majority regions.

**Greece**

- On 8 June an earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale shakes a large area of southeast Greece killing at least two people and injuring dozens. Hundreds of buildings are affected. The epicentre of the earthquake has been located in the northeast of the Peloponnesse, 200 km to the west of Athens. Rescue teams report that several people are trapped beneath collapsed buildings.
- On 11 June the Greek Parliament ratifies the Lisbon Treaty with 250 votes in favour and 42 against.

**Cyprus**

- On 13 June the UN Security Council approves Resolution 1818 (2008), which extends the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) by a further six months. The Council, which welcomes the Cypriot leaders’ agreement on 21 March and their joint declaration on 23 May, urges both parties to take advantage of the current situation to continue working together.
- On 16 June the Foreign Ministers agree on measures to reduce the commercial isolation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), in an initiative that aims to strengthen efforts to reunify the island. The measures include lifting taxes from agricultural products and reducing restrictions on service companies close to the UN-controlled separation zone that divides the island (the Green Line).

**Turkey**

- On 16 June the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), currently facing illegalisation for endangering the separation between State and religion, delivers a defence document to the Constitutional Court. Denying the charges, the AKP argues that illegalisation of the party would represent a reversal of democratic election results. It also claims that there is no evidence to prove that the party represents a risk for democracy.
- On 17 June Turkey opens two new negotiation chapters with the EU on “company law” and “intellectual property law.”

**Syria**

- On 10 June the Culture Minister Riad Naassan Agha arrives in France for a meeting with his French counterpart Christine Albanel. The visit follows the decision taken by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy to renew ties with Damascus in response to the breakthrough in Lebanon’s political crisis.
- On 12 June Sarkozy invites his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad to participate in the 14 July celebrations, France’s national day. Assad is also invited to participate in the lunch organised in Paris for the Union for the Mediterranean on 13 July.
- Between 22-24 June a delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) visits Syria to investigate claims that the country is developing a clandestine nuclear programme. According to the reports, the inspection will focus on the Al-Kibar installation, in the northeast of Syria.

**Lebanon**

- On 1 June the Shiite Hezbollah movement returns the remains of Israeli soldiers killed in the 2006 war. According to the Herald Tribune, Israel sees this as a gesture of goodwill and a possible prelude to a prisoner exchange that will include the two Israeli soldiers whose capture by Hezbollah triggered the 2006 war.
- On 2 June the UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1815 (2008), which extends the mandate of the International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC), currently investigating the assassination of former Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, to 31 December.
- On 16 June the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Lebanon. Rice meets with Lebanese President General Michel Suleiman to whom she pledges “US support for his Presidency and his new government.”

**Jordan**

- The State Security Court confirms the death sentence for the Iraqi citizen Ziyad Khalaf al-Karbuli which was passed in March 2007. Al-Karbuli, in collaboration with the most recent al-Qaeda leader in Iraq Abu Musab Zarqawi, had been found guilty of murdering a Jordanian lorry driver in Iraq, as well as being a member of a group affiliated to al-Qaeda, Tawhid and Jihad.

**Egypt**

- On 7 June the former Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil dies in a hospital in Cairo aged 88. Khalil had been Prime Minister from October 1978 to May 1980 and played a fundamental role in the Camp David negotiations that led to the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in September 1979.

**Libya**

- On 27 June the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi visits Libya and holds talks with the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi to discuss the illegal African immigration across the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy. During the meeting Gaddafi upholds his opposition to the French initiative of the Union for the Mediterranean, which he believes divides the Africans and Arabs “in two.”

**Algeria**

- On 14 June the online newspaper, Tout sur l’Algérie, reports that the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb organisation claims responsibility for the latest attacks in Algeria.
- On 21-22 June the French Prime Minister François Fillon arrives in Algeria on an official visit. Both parties sign a framework agreement on nuclear energy for civil purposes that specifies a joint study, and which opens the door for France to build nuclear centres in Algeria. Both countries had signed a nuclear cooperation agreement during the French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s visit to Algeria in December 2007.
- On 23 June the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appoints Ahmed Ouyahia.
as the new Prime Minister. Ouyahia, who held the post of Prime Minister between 2003 and 2006, was the Secretary General of the National Rally for Democracy (RND), one of the regime’s main supporting parties.

Morocco

• On 5 June the official news agency Maghreb Arabe Press (MAP) announces that the counter-terrorism criminal court has passed a two-year prison sentence to Mohammed Leksere, who had been extradited from Spain in 2007 to be brought to trial for his involvement in terrorist activities. Leksere is found guilty of forming an illegal group to perpetrate terrorist acts and recruit young muslims for Jihad (Holy War) in Iraq.

European Union

• On 10 June the US President George W. Bush attends the summit of EU leaders in the Brdo Castle north of Ljubljana in Slovenia. The meeting is seen as the consolidation of the close relations between the United States and the EU, confirmed in the previous meeting in Washington D.C. in April 2007. The summit declaration describes the “strategic partnership” between both parties as the base for joint action “to meet the most serious global challenges and to advance our shared values, freedom and prosperity around the globe.” Between 10-16 June Bush visits Germany, Italy, the Vatican, France and the United Kingdom, in what is considered to be his last major European visit before standing down as President.

• On 18 June the European Parliament adopts the Return Directive, approved by the Interior Ministers on 5 June. The Directive sets out a common policy for dealing with irregular immigrants and regulates their expulsion. It specifies a maximum 18-month detention period prior to expulsion and a five-year EU entry ban. It also stipulates that unaccompanied minors cannot be returned to their countries of origin.

• On 19-20 June the regular meeting of EU leaders in Brussels, under the presidency of the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa discusses Ireland’s rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. Given that 19 of the 27 Member States have approved the Treaty in Parliament and the ratification process continues, the European leaders decide to reconsider Ireland’s position in the next meeting in October.

July 2008

On 1 July France assumes the six-month presidency of the EU. On 13 July the inaugural summit for the Union for the Mediterranean is held in Paris. Leaders from the 27 Member States and 16 non-member Mediterranean countries attend the summit. The vice-presidency is held by the French and Egyptian Presidents. This new partnership plans to focus on fighting sea pollution, the development of alternative energy sources and the improvement of transport connections. Cyprus, Spain and Italy ratify the Lisbon Treaty taking the number of EU countries that have recognised the treaty to 24. On 16 July Hezbollah hands over to Israel the bodies of the two Israeli soldiers, whose capture caused the war in mid-2006.

Spain

• On 15 July the Senate (upper house) approves the Lisbon Treaty with 232 votes in favour and six against, following the approval on 26 June of the Congress of Deputies (lower house) with 322 votes in favour, six votes against and two abstentions.

• On 17 July the European Court of Justice rules that Spain is not complying with European laws of “free movement of capital” and “freedom of association” in its attempt to safeguard national companies from being sold to foreign companies. These conditions were introduced in 2006 during the takeover bid of the Spanish company Endesa by Germany’s EON. Endesa was finally bought by the Italian company Enel and its Spanish partner Acciona in a controversial last-minute deal.

• On 17 July the Supreme Court acquits four defendants who had been convicted, together with 17 others, in October 2007, of involvement in the Madrid bombings in March 2004.

• On 20 July five bombs explode in northern Spain, four in popular seaside resorts. The first device explodes outside the Getxo bank in the Basque Country, causing damage to a car dealership and breaking several windows. Two more bombs explode on beaches in Laredo and Cantabria and the last two in Noja, where a woman is injured. The blasts follow a warning issued by the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA). On 29 July a small device explodes in Torremolinos in Andalusia.

France

• On 1 July a Paris Appeal Court confirms the sentences passed in July 2007 on Redouane Aberbri and Attila Turk, both suspected of being activists in the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) for helping the perpetrators of the Casablanca bombings in May 2003, in which 45 people died.

• On 11 July the Council of State (the highest administrative court) issued a decision to reject an appeal made by the 32-year-old Moroccan woman Faiza Mabchour Silmi when her application for French citizenship in 2005 was denied. The court argues that she failed to integrate, particularly through her use of the burka. This is the first time an application for naturalisation has been denied on these grounds.

• On 21 July deputies and senators, in a joint session of Congress at Versailles, approve the reform bill for the French Constitution of the 5th Republic proposed by Nicolas Sarkozy. The amendments are approved by 539 votes to 357, one more than the required number to obtain the necessary three-fifths majority. The text grants new powers to the Parliament and to citizens and reduces presidential powers, limiting the President to two consecutive terms in office. However, it does allow the Head of State to directly address the Parliament, a right he has been denied until now. The Parliament will also be able to set approximately half of its own agenda and veto certain presidential appointments, while the deployment of troops abroad for more than four months must be approved in Parliament. The text upholds
the requirement to hold a referendum prior to any enlargement of the EU, but opens the way to allowing the Head of State to choose ratification through parliamentary vote.

Italy

- The EU, UNICEF and the Council of Europe declare the Italian government’s proposal in June to take fingerprints of all members of the Roma population as racist and xenophobic. The proposed measure aims to crackdown on street crime and help identify illegal immigrants. On 16 July in an attempt to assuage protests against the proposal, the government announces that all Italian citizens will have their digital fingerprints taken when the new identity cards enter into circulation in 2010. The violence continues in the streets of Rome when on 23 July a camp is attacked in Via Condino, on the outskirts of the city.
- On 23 July the Senate (upper house) approves the Lisbon Treaty with 296 votes in favour and none against. On 31 July the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) approves the treaty with 551 votes in favour and none against.
- On 23 July the Senate finally approves a security package proposed by the centre-right government, with 161 votes in favour, 120 against and eight abstentions. The new measures will see around 3,000 soldiers deployed in various Italian cities to help the police in their fight against crime and illegal immigration. Also, illegal immigrants convicted of crimes will face prison sentences three times longer than those for Italians who have committed the same crimes. The situation leads the government to call a state of emergency in Italy.
- On 23 July the President Giorgio Napolitano signs a law that grants immunity to the State’s four highest ranking officials (President, Prime Minister and the presidents of the upper and lower houses) during his term in office. The law had been approved by the Senate with 171 votes in favour and 128 against.

Croatia

- On 17 July the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) convicts the retired lieutenant general Pavle Strugar former commander of the Yugoslav Navy, of two additional charges: devastation not justified for military needs and illegal attacks against civilian targets in the Croatian coastal city of Dubrovnik in 1991.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 3 July the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) acquits Naser Oric, former commander of Bosnian Muslim forces in Srebrenica, of war crimes committed against Serbs during the Bosnian war (1992-1995). The decision annuls the two-year prison sentence handed down in the court of first instance in June 2006.

Serbia

- On 7 July the new seven-party coalition led by the Democratic Party (DS) and the outgoing Finance Minister Mirko Cvetkovic assumes control of the government.
- On 21 July the office of the President Boris Tadic announces the arrest of Radovan Karadzic by security officers. Karadzic was wanted for genocide and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY). Karadzic’s arrest comes two weeks after the formation of the new Serbian government, supported by President Tadic who had promised complete collaboration with the TPIY to improve relations with the EU.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 11 July representatives of 37 countries and 16 international organisations meet in Brussels at a donor conference, hosted by the European Commission, to support the country’s social and economic development. Participants pledge 1.2 billion euros in aid.

Macedonia

- On 10 July the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) acquits the former Interior Minister Tjube Boskovski of war crimes during the 2001 conflict in Macedonia. Another of the accused, the high-ranking police officer Johan Tarculovski is sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment for crimes committed against Albanians in the city of Lubotn, near Skopje, on 12 August 2001.
- On 26 July the Sobranje (Parliament) approves the new government of the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, the leader of the conservative Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), with a margin of 79 to none. However, the main opposition parties, including the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH), boycott the process.

Greece

- On 13 July a court in Athens dismisses the request of three plaintiffs from the Island of Lesbos, in the north of the Aegean, to stop the gay rights organisation Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece from using the term ‘Lesbian’. The plaintiffs argue that the modern use of the term to refer to gay women usurps their national identity. However, the court rules that the term does not define the identity of the island’s inhabitants and that it can therefore be used by gay rights groups in Greece and abroad.
- On 22 July the fires that began the previous week on the holiday island of Rhodes destroy more than 5,000 hectares of forest, scrubland and vineyards.

Cyprus

- On 3 July the Chamber of Representatives (Parliament) approves the Lisbon Treaty by 31 votes in favour to 17 against, which correspond to the members of the President Dhimitrios Christofias’ Progressive Party for Working People (AKEL).
- On 25 July the President Christofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, agree to open formal direct negotiations aimed at the reunification of the island. The negotiations are scheduled to begin on 3 September.

Turkey

- On 10 July during a visit by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Iraq,
the Iraqi government offers Turkey its support in the fight against the organisation Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). This is the first visit by a Turkish Prime Minister in 18 years. Both countries commit to strengthening political and economic ties.

- On 23 July Turkish war planes bomb PKK positions in the Zap region, in Iraqi Kurdistan. The PKK has been leading attacks on southeast Turkey from Iraqi territory.
- On 27 July two bombs explode in a busy shopping street in the district of Gungoren, in Istanbul. 17 people are killed in the terrorist attack and another 150 are injured. On 30 July nine people are arrested under suspicion of being involved in the attacks.
- On 28 July, following a three-day trial, six of the 11 judges of the Constitutional Court vote in favour of the prohibition of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), four call for the suspension of state financial assistance and one dismisses the case. However, the illegalisation of a political party requires the vote of a minimum of seven judges from the Court.

**Syria**

- From 12-14 July the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad makes an official visit to France, where he meets with his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy. On 12 July the Financial Times describes Assad's visit as a “diplomatic meeting” following years of isolation.
- On 12 July Assad holds a round of talks in Paris with his Lebanese counterpart General Michel Suleiman, in the presence of Sarkozy and the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani.

**Lebanon**

- On 9 July violent clashes erupt between government supporters and allies of Hezbollah in the city of Tripoli, endangering the formation of the Council of Ministers. Four people die and 50 are injured including five soldiers in two districts, one with a Sunni majority and the other Alawite. Clashes were reported in the same neighbourhoods at the end of June.
- On 11 July a new Government Council is formed after an agreement is adopted in Doha on 12 May between the country's rival factions.
- On 16 July Hezbollah hands over to Israel the bodies of two Israeli soldiers Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, whose capture caused the war in mid-2006. Despite Israel's certainty of the death of its two soldiers this is the first confirmation for their families. In return Israel hands over five prisoners to Lebanon (the last five Lebanese prisoners of the State of Israel), as well as the remains of 199 Lebanese and Palestinian soldiers killed in different clashes in recent years.

**Egypt**

- On 21 July the International Herald Tribune reports that the police have arrested 39 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the north of Cairo.
- On 27 July a court acquits the owner of a ferry that sunk in the Red Sea in February 2006, causing the death of 1,300 people.

**Tunisia**

- On 12 July a Tunisian court passes sentences of four to nine years' imprisonment on several Jihadist Salafis, including two security agents. The group had been plotting an attack against police who were maintaining surveillance over a bank in Kairouan, 150 km from the capital.

**Morocco**

- On 10 July the creation of a new political party the Green Left (Gauche Verte) is announced at a press conference in Rabat. Omar Zaidi, the coordinator of the national commission responsible for preparing the party's founding congress scheduled for December, says that the new party's manifesto is based on improving the environment, particularly through water rationing, investment in renewable energy sources, protection of marine resources and fighting pollution.

**European Union**

- On 1 July France assumes the six-month presidency of the EU, taking over from Slovenia. The priorities proposed by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy include the resolution of the crisis caused by Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty and the development of new relations between the EU and the Mediterranean.
- On 13 July the inaugural summit for the Union for the Mediterranean is held in Paris. Attending the summit are leaders from the 27 Member States and 16 non-member Mediterranean countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). The most notable absence is that of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who has described the initiative as an “insult” to non-European countries. President Sarkozy, and the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak are the first co-presidents of this new partnership, which plans to focus on fighting sea pollution, the development of alternative energy sources and the improvement of transport connections. One of the main activities of the Union is to decide on the location of the Secretariat.

**G-8**

- From 7 to 9 July the leaders of the member countries of the G-8 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia) meet in Toyako, Hokkaido, in Japan. The major items on the agenda are the current credit crisis and the consequent slowdown of the world economy, the effects of the price increases on basic food products, policies against climate change and aid commitments for developing countries. In an unspoken acknowledgement of the group's lack of effectiveness in developing policies that solve global issues, the Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda also invites the group known as the G-5, comprising China, Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa, as well as the leaders of Australia, Indonesia and South Korea.

**August 2008**

In Spain 154 people die in a plane crash. In Italy the government of Silvio Berlusconi begins the deployment of 3,000 soldiers in Italy's largest cities to end street crime and illegal immigra-
tion. In Syria at the beginning of the month one of the President Bashar al-Assad’s closest advisors is murdered. Libya and the United States sign an agreement mid-month to compensate the victims of attacks carried out by both countries during the eighties.

Spain

• On 14 August the President of the government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, calls an emergency meeting for the Council of Ministers to approve measures to lessen the effects of the declining economy. The measures include the abolition of wealth tax and the generalisation of the monthly Value Added Tax (VAT) reimbursement system. Zapatero announces a 5 billion euro credit line from the Official Credit Institute (ICO) to facilitate families accessing state-subsidised housing.

• On 17 August two bombs explode in Guadalmar and Benalmádena on the Costa del Sol causing minor damages. A third device is found on the A7 motorway near Malaga and is defused. The attacks are blamed on the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA).

• On 20 August a McDonnell Douglas MD-82 plane from the airline Spanair travelling from Madrid to Las Palmas explodes during takeoff at Barajas Airport killing 153 of the 172 on board, and seriously injuring the other 19. One passenger dies later in hospital.

France

• On 11 August the leader of the far-right National Front party Jean-Marie Le Pen announces that his party has decided to sell its headquarters in Saint-Cloud, in the west of Paris, to a Chinese university that plans to convert it into a language school. The sale is an attempt to overcome the financial difficulties the party is facing.

• From 29-31 August the annual Socialist Party (PS) summer school takes place in La Rochelle. The event reveals the strategies of candidates running for the post of First Secretary, following François Hollande’s resignation in November. Among the candidates are the 2007 presidential candidate Ségolène Royal and the Mayor of Paris Bernard Delanoë.

Italy

• On 2 August the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, an opponent of tax increases, announces the need for budget cuts following a sharp 7% drop in VAT revenues in July. On 5 August in the middle of an economic recession, the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) approves a cut of almost 30 billion euros in public spending to fulfil EU requirements to balance the budget for 2011.

• On 4 August Berlusconi’s government begins the controversial deployment of 3,000 soldiers in Italy’s major cities as part of a series of measures aimed at cracking down on street crime and illegal immigration.

Malta

• On 27 August a Maltese fishing boat rescues eight shipwreck survivors 70 km south of Malta who had been travelling on a boat coming from the Libyan port of Zuwara, along with 70 other immigrants.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 29 August Radovan Karadžić fails to respond to the 11 charges brought against him, including genocide and complicity in genocide, by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY).

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 5 August the Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi appoints Fehmi Mujota as Defence Minister. 45-year-old Mujota was a senior official in the ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), member of the Assembly of Kosovo (Parliament) and Mayor of Shtime, a small town southeast of Kosovo.

Turkey

• On 5 August an explosion near Reyhanlı halts the oil flow through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. On 7 August the organisation Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) claims responsibility for the terrorist attack. On 25 August, following repair work, the pipeline is reopened.

• On 11 August the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) publicly recredits the draft Protection of Youth bill announced by the vice-President of the AKP Edibe Sozen. Secularists warned that this draft was further evidence of the AKP’s Islamist hidden agenda. The law proposal requires all educational centres to provide prayer rooms and proposes that consumers of pornography be made to give their details to shopkeepers, who will be obliged to pass them on to the police.

• On 15 August The Guardian announces that Turkey has backed down, under pressure from the United States, from an agreement to buy gas from Iran. The United States fear that the deal would enhance Iran’s nuclear ambitions. The energy deal was due to be signed during the visit of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on 14-15 August. Several Turkish officials state that the deal could not be closed due to high prices and unfavourable investment conditions.

• On 28 August the Land Forces Commander, General Ilker Basbug, is appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces. 65-year-old Basbug is a secularist who has publicly described political Islam as a threat to Turkey.

Syria

• On 1 August Brigadier General Mohammed Suleiman, one of the most influential aides to the President Bashar al-Assad, is assassinated in the port city of Tartus. Israeli and Syrian opposition sources claim that Suleiman was working as a liason with the Lebanese group Hezbollah.

• On 7 August the authorities release a dissident economist who was serving a 10-year sentence for demanding freedom of expression and association.

• On 20-21 August al-Assad makes an official visit to Russia, where he holds talks with senior Russian officials. The International Herald Tribune reports that al-Assad has gone to Russia "with a shopping list of sophisticated weapons he wants to buy."

Lebanon

• On 12 August the National Assembly (Parliament) approves the national
unity government formed on 11 July with 100 votes to five. Hezbollah and its allies represent 11 of the 30 members of the government, giving the organisation veto power.

- On 13 August a bomb explodes in a bus station in an area frequented by soldiers, in Tripoli. 15 people are killed by the blast and another 50 are injured. The Lebanese army suspects the involvement of Islamist militants.

- On 27 August the UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1832 (2008) which extends the mandate of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to 31 August 2009.

Libya

- On 14 August Libya and the United States sign an agreement to compensate all US and Libyan citizens, or their families, who were victims of the attacks carried out by both countries. The agreement paves the way to re-establishing full diplomatic ties between both countries. The American victims comprise the people who died in the attack in December 1988 on the Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and the bombing in April 1986 of a nightclub in what used to be West Berlin. The Libyan victims include the people who died in April 1986 when US planes bombed Tripoli and Benghazi.

- On 30 August the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi visits Benghazi and holds talks with the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Berlusconi promises Libya 5 billion dollars’ compensation for the 32 years of Italian colonial rule.

September 2008

The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum is approved at a summit of EU Interior Ministers. The pact aims to unify the criteria of the 27 Member States regarding the detention of irregular migrants, treatment of asylum seekers and immigration policy. The pact is harshly criticised by human rights groups and some left-wing parties. The Serbian Parliament ratifies the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), signed between the government and the EU in April. In Italy the rescue package is approved for the airline Alitalia. In Egypt 61 people die in a landslide that hits a shanty town on the outskirts of Cairo.

Spain

- On 10 September the President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announces a 3 billion euro rescue plan to inject liquidity in property developers and halt the job losses in the construction industry. The rescue package will see government-approved developers benefit from tax cuts, intended to encourage renting and investment in the sector.

- On 11 September the Constitutional Court declares the lehendakari (President of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country), Juan José Ibarretxe’s plan to hold a referendum of self-determination in the Basque Country as unconstitutional.

- On 16 September the preliminary report is issued on the 20 August plane crash at the Barajas airport in Madrid that reveals that the wing flaps, which are essential for takeoff, did not activate and that the warning alarm did not sound. However, the report does not specify that the problem with the flaps caused the accident.

- On 21 September a car bomb explodes close to the headquarters of the Caja Vital Kutxa bank, on the outskirts of Vitoria in the Basque Country, causing minor damages. Hours later a second car blows up in front of the Ondarroa police station, in the Basque Country, causing serious material damage and injuries to 10 people. On 22 September a soldier is killed and eight others injured when a car bomb explodes in the town of Santoña, in Cantabria. The blast occurs as police evacuated the military academy after receiving a bomb threat from the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA).
gin in Rennes, western France, under suspicion of preparing terrorist attacks to coincide with the seventh anniversary of al-Qaeda’s attacks in the US.

- On 18 September the Prime Minister François Fillon issues a decree for the creation of a database known as Edvige (Exploitation documentaire et valorisation de l’information générale), which will store information on people who have occupied or occupy important public posts or who have played an important public role, as well as anyone in a position to threaten public order. Opposition parties and civil rights groups criticise the measure saying it threatens civil liberties. Edvige includes data on political and philosophical beliefs, religious orientation, union membership or ethnic origin of persons over the age of 13, if requested by police.
- On 21 September the senatorial elections allow the opposition Socialist Party (PS), to substantially increase their representation in the Senate (upper house) although President Sarkozy’s ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) retains a majority. The First Secretary of the PS François Hollande describes the result as “punishment for the government.”

Italy

- On 7 September Giovanni Alemanno, the Mayor of Rome and former youth leader of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI), says in an interview with the Milan newspaper, Corriere della Sera, that he has never considered and will never consider that fascism was “absolute evil.” Alemanno argues that it was the racial laws imposed by the dictator Benito Mussolini in 1938 that ousted Jews from public work posts that were “absolute evil”, rather than the ideology itself. On 8 September the Defence Minister Ignazio La Russa, in a speech at the anti-fascist memorial to commemorate those who died defending Rome from the Nazi occupation, also paid homage to the members of the Nembo parachute division of Mussolini’s Italian Social Republic, who fought alongside German troops to prevent the allied forces advancing.
- On 29 September the takeover deal begins which aims to save Alitalia from what seemed to be certain bankruptcy. The deal follows the approval of the 1.5 billion euro rescue package proposed by the Italian Air Company (CAI), an investor group composed of 16 national companies. Alitalia is merged with its national rival Air One giving the new airline CAI the monopoly on the Rome-Milan route, one of the most profitable in Europe.

Slovenia

- On 21 September parliamentary elections are held for the National Assembly (lower house), which conclude with the defeat of the ruling Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), which only gains 28 of the 90 seats. The centre-left Social Democrats (SD) wins most votes with 29 seats and is expected to form a new government with the support of the other left-wing parties.

Croatia

- On 15 September the President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso recognises the “good progress” of recent months, but reminds the Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader that it is necessary to push forward with the country’s judicial reform, consolidate human rights and restructure the shipyards to be able to finalise membership negotiations before the end of 2009.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 15 September the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) sentences Rasim Delic, former General of the Bosnian Muslim army, to three years’ imprisonment for war crimes committed against Serbs in the Bosnian war (1992-1995).

Serbia

- On 9 September the National Assembly (Parliament) ratifies the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) signed between the government and the EU in April, with a parliamentary majority. The SAA will only enter into full effect following the arrests of General Ratko Mladic and former President of the self-proclaimed Serbian Republic of Traja, Goran Hadzic, as requested by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY).

- On 9 September the National Assembly approves a strategic energy pact with Russia, which will allow the pan-European South Stream gas pipeline to pass through Serbia in exchange for Russia’s purchase of the state-run oil monopoly.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 3 September the President Fatmir Sejdiu announces that Kosovo will send envoys to 10 of the countries that have recognised its independence: Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Montenegro

- On 2 September the President of Slovenia Danilo Turk meets with his counterpart Filip Vujanovic, the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic, and the parliamentary President Ranko Krivokapic, on his visit to Montenegro to talk about the economic cooperation between both countries, particularly in the banking, insurance, construction and tourism sectors. Turk emphasises that relations with Montenegro are excellent. The President of Slovenia reasserts his support of Montenegro’s application to join the EU and NATO.

Macedonia

- On 4 September the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, asks Macedonia for “greater political stability” before initiating the EU accession process. Rehn congratulates the executive on its progress in judicial and security matters, but states that “efforts still need to be made.”

Greece

- On 12 September the Greek Minister for Mercantile Marine and Island Policy, Georgios Voulaarakis, resigns after being accused of unethical trade deals. On 16 September despite denying the accusations he submits his resignation to the former Justice Minister Anastasios Papaligouras. On 23 September the
Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis sacks the government adviser and former Interior Minister Yiannis Kefaloyannis, charged with harbouring a criminal and inciting perjury in a drug trafficking case.

On 26 September The Guardian reports the creation of a new political party by several companies on the island of Corfu. The companies accuse the government of failing to invest in Corfu and of the consequential deterioration of the infrastructure.

On 30 September Karamanlis dismisses the legislator Stavros Dailakis from the New Democracy (ND) party, for criticising the government's decision to ask for the resignation of Theodoros Roussopoulos Minister of the State and government spokesman, and Yiannis Angelou Director of the Prime Minister's office. The dismissal reduces the ruling ND party's majority to a single seat in the Vouli (Parliament) since Dailakis' office. The dismissal reduces the ruling ND party's majority to a single seat in the Vouli (Parliament) since Dailakis refuses to give up his seat and declares himself independent.

Cyprus

On 3 September the Greek Cypriot President Dhimtriou Christofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (RTNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, begin formal direct negotiations aimed at reunification of the island. Both leaders meet in the UN-controlled separation zone in Nicosia by invitation of the Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in his capacity as special envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations. On 11 September Christofias and Talat meet again.

Turkey

On 1 September after Russia begins to slowdown authorisation of the entry of Turkish food across its borders, the Trade Minister Kursad Tuzmen announces that Russian products that enter Turkey will be subject to the same meticulous inspections as those that Turkish products entering Russia are subjected to. The government suspects that Russia is applying the restrictions in response to Turkey’s authorisation for US ships carrying humanitarian aid to Georgia to cross the Bosphorus.

On 3 September the Foreign Minister Ali Babacan and his counterparts from six member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – sign in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia a memorandum of understanding to prepare the ground for a future free trade agreement between these countries and Turkey.

On 17 September a court in Frankfurt, Germany, convicts three Turkish citizens of diverting some 18.6 million euros from the religious foundation based in Germany, Deniz Feneri, that raises money for Muslims in need, including Palestinians, Turks without resources and Pakistani refugees. The opponents to the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan maintain that part of the stolen money could have been sent to Kanal 7, an Istanbul television channel with government links. Legal experts announce that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) will be illegalised if the accusation of accepting the money is proved correct.

On 25 September 10 Turkish planes bomb 16 suspected positions of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the organisation included in the EU list of terrorist organisations, in the mountainous region of Qandil, in Iraqi Kurdistan. The PKK has used the bases to launch attacks into southeast Turkey. Nine soldiers die in attacks on the PKK along with 16 PKK members, including the militant Kurd, Ahmet Tevfik, a Syrian citizen who had been leader of the PKK in the Bingol region since 2002.

Syria

On 3-4 September the French President Nicolas Sarkozy makes an official visit to Syria, where he holds talks with the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. On 27 September a car bomb explodes near the security complex on the outskirts of Damascus killing 17 people and injuring 14 others, all civilians. The pro-government newspaper Al-Thawra publishes that the attack was prepared outside of Syria and that it was perpetrated by foreign citizens.

Lebanon

On 10 September the pro-Syrian Druze leader Sheikh Saleh Aridi dies in a booby-trapped car bomb attack in the tourist town of Alley, east of Beirut. Aridi was a senior official in the Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP).

On 29 September a car bomb explodes in the northern city of Tripoli by a bus that was transporting Lebanese troops, killing four soldiers and three civilians. The attack is attributed to Fateh al-Islam, a Sunni fundamentalist organisation who the Israeli army had fought against in 2007 near the Nahr ab-Bared refugee camp. On 1 October however, The Guardian publishes that some Lebanese sources relate the attack with Syrian intelligence agencies.

Egypt

On 6 September 61 people die when a landslide hits Manshiyet Nasr, a shanty town on the outskirts of Cairo.

On 21 September 11 European tourists (five Italians, five Germans and a Romanian) and Egyptian officials and guides are kidnapped in the southeast of the country. The authorities quickly announce that the aim of the kidnapping is the payment of a ransom and that it is not an act of terrorism. On 22 September the Tourism Minister announces that the group has asked for a 6 million dollar ransom. On 23 September the Foreign Minister announces that the kidnappers have taken the Europeans to the northeast of Sudan, 25 km from the Egyptian border. On 28 September the Sudanese army announces that it has killed six captors, but on 29 September all captives are released.

European Union

On 17 September the Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker becomes the first leader to declare that he does not believe the Lisbon Treaty will enter into force before the European Parliament elections scheduled for June 2009, as was originally planned.
After the Irish voted overwhelmingly against the Reform Treaty in June, it is unlikely that the Irish government will hold a second referendum before the European elections.

- On 25 September in a meeting of EU ministers in Brussels the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum is approved, according to which the 27 Member States commit to adopting common policies to encourage the entry of qualified immigrants and harmonise the treatment of asylum seekers.

October 2008

With the financial crisis taking hold several countries, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy, announce packages to facilitate liquidity for banks and attempt to survive the economic recession. A summit in Paris of the four largest European economies concludes with the participants pledging their commitment to act together to combat the crisis, although the decision was made not to apply a large-scale bail-out package to the financial system, as has been done in the United States. At a summit in Vienna the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), decides to cut back production by 1.5 million barrels a day, about 5% of its output, to curb the falling oil prices. In Algeria, the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announces his intention to reform the constitution allowing him to run for re-election as President, a post currently limited to two terms.

Portugal

- On 12 October the Finance Minister Fernando Teixeira dos Santos announces that the government will provide a 20 billion euro state guarantee for banks with headquarters in Portugal. Teixeira dos Santos expresses the importance of creating conditions that stimulate an increase in inter-bank transactions, which have been reduced because of the global financial crisis. The measure intends to facilitate banks’ access to liquidity, which in turn allows them to finance their economic activity.
- On 19 October parliamentary elections are held in the Autonomous region of the Azores. The turnout stands at 46.8%. The ruling Socialist Party retains its absolute majority winning 30 of the 57 seats, which represents more than 51% of the vote. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) gains 18 seats, while the Democratic and Social Centre-People’s Party win five.

Spain

- On 4 October a bomb explodes outside the court in the city of Tolosa, in the north of the country, causing material damage. On 30 October 17 people suffered minor injuries after a car bomb explodes at the University of Navarra, in Pamplona. The blast follows a warning call in the name of the terrorist organisation ETA. The attack comes two days after police arrest four suspected ETA members.
- On 7 October the President of the government José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announces a rise in the minimum guaranteed for bank deposits from 20,000 to 100,000 euros. In response to the financial crisis Zapatero also announces the creation of an emergency fund of between 30 and 50 billion euros that allows the State to buy shares in solvent financial institutions in order to inject liquidity into the financial system.
- On 16 October the police arrest 13 people, the majority Moroccan, following a series of raids in Barcelona. They are accused of harbouring Islamist radicals, including suspects of the Madrid bombings in March 2004, and helping them to leave the country.
- On 16 October the National Court’s judge Baltasar Garzón launches a legal investigation into the atrocities committed during the Civil War (1936-1939), in which he intends to pass judgement on the dictator Francisco Franco, accusing him, and 34 of his generals and ministers, of crimes against humanity. Garzón requests that 19 mass graves be exhumed and asks the Interior Minister to identify the members of Franco’s state party to determine if they are still alive and if so charge them with corresponding crimes.

France

- On 1 October the trial begins in Paris against Moroccan Hamid Bach, Reda Barazzouk and Youssef Bousag, and French Algerian Amine Liassine, accused of setting up a Muslim recruitment network for Holy War (Jihad), in and around Montpellier.
- On 1 October Gérard Larcher, from the ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), is elected President of the Senate (upper house) following the midterm elections of 21 September.
- On 3 October the government admits France is entering a recession after registering a GDP growth of 0.1% between July and September and a 0.3% contraction in the second quarter. On 20 October the Economy, Industry and Employment Minister Christine Lagarde recognises that the government is unlikely to achieve the 1% growth it predicted for 2008 and 2009.
- On 13 October the government approves a 360 billion euro economic rescue plan for French banks. The State will provide a guarantee for inter-bank lending of up to 320 billion euros and another 40 billion for the recapitalisation of banks in difficulty. The lending will be subject to various conditions, including restrictions in terms of management salaries.
- On 17 October Nicolas Sarkozy sues Yves Bertrand, the director of Renseignements Généraux between 1992 and 2003, for “invasion of privacy, malicious accusation and forgery” for the publication of extracts from handwritten notebooks in which the former intelligence service chief describes details concerning major rivals of former President Jacques Chirac. The notebooks, used by magistrates in the investigation of the Clearstream affair, connected Sarkozy allegedly to blackening his name. Some of the extracts had been leaked to the magazine Le Point. The notebooks contain rumours of drug trafficking, blackmail and corruption among politicians. Although most of the names had been removed from the published extracts, Sarkozy was quoted as having had an extramarital relationship with the wife of a politician who is now a minister. An entry regarding Jacques Chirac claims he went to Canada in 2003 for a facelift.

Italy

- On 8 October the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announces a rescue package in which banking institutions in
difficulty will be partially nationalised, although no specific budget has been applied to the measures. Strict Italian regulations have, until now, curbed banks’ exposure to the global financial crisis. The Economy and Finance Minister Giulio Tremonti makes it clear that the package should not be considered as a rescue package and that each case will be studied individually. On 31 October the Bank of Italy commits to providing 40 billion euros in treasury bills. It also increases the guaranteed bailout amount for deposits up to 103,000 euros.

- On 23 October the trial begins against the former governor of the Bank of Italy Antonio Fazio, and 17 other defendants, who have been accused of favouritism during ABN Amro’s takeover bid of Antonveneta, which failed in 2005 due to the intervention of Popolare di Lodi. Another 64 of the accused have already been convicted and 326 million euros in profits have been confiscated.

Croatia

- On 2 October the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) begins the trial of General Momcilo Perisic, Yugoslavian Chief of Staff between 1993 and 1998. Perisic stands accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes, which include murder, inhume acts and attacks on civilians committed during the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, in Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Zagreb.

- On 6 October the Prime Minister Ivo Sanader announces the immediate dismissal of Berislav Roncevic as Justice Minister and the replacement of the Chief of Police Marjan Benko by Vladimir Faber. The decision follows the death in Zagreb of Ana Hodak, the daughter of Zvonimir Hodak, a prominent lawyer, allegedly at the hands of the mafia. On 10 October both appointments are approved in the Sabor (Parliament). On 23 October in another act of organised crime, two journalists are killed by a car bomb in the centre of Zagreb. On 24 October Sanader announces that the authorities will do all they can to end organised crime, which he likens to terrorism.

- On 8 October the TPIY Appeals Chamber affirmed the 35-year prison sentence of the Croatian Serb leader Milan Martic, passed in June 2007 for crimes committed in the early nineties against Croats and other non-Serbs in Croatia.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 31 October the number of countries that formally recognise the Republic of Kosovo increases to 35, with the incorporation of Portugal, Montenegro, Macedonia, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia. As former Yugoslav republics, Montenegro and Macedonia’s announcements to recognise Kosovo’s independence represent a major setback to the diplomatic efforts of Serbia to reclaim authority over Kosovo. Serbia reacts to the news expelling the ambassadors of both countries.

Greece

- On 6 October the Finance Minister Georgios Alogoskoufis reveals that Greece has not met its 2007 and 2008 deficit target. In 2007 the projected deficit was 2.7% of the GDP, while the actual deficit stood at 3.4% and for 2008 a deficit of 1.6% was forecast, which actually reached 2.3%. Alogoskoufis estimates the 2009 GDP at 1.8%, claiming that the economy will grow by 3% during that year.

- On 23 October Theodoreos Roussopoulos resigns as State Minister and government spokesman following a scandal over land exchange. Valuable state property was exchanged in 2007 for less valuable land belonging to Vatopedi monastery in Mount Athos, a semi-autonomous republic in northern Greece. The exchange represents the latest scandal for the centre-right government of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis.

Cyprus

- On 10, 13 and 22 October several meetings are held between the Greek Cypriot President Dimitriou S. Kristofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mehmet Ali Talat. The meetings deal with the powers of the proposed federal government and the structure of the federal executive.

Turkey

- On 3 October the terrorist organisation the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) attacks a military post near Semdinli, killing 17 soldiers. On 7 October, in response to the attack, Turkish planes bomb 21 suspected PKK positions in the Avasin Baysan region, in Iraqi Kurdistan, from where the PKK launches attacks into southeast Turkey. On 24 October the army reports the death of 42 PKK members in the air strike on Iraq and the land operations in Turkey.

- On 14 October the Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin announces the dismissal of 19 prison officers following the death of Engin Ceber, a 29-year-old left-wing activist who died in hospital on 11 October from a brain haemorrhage caused by an alleged beating during his detention at Metris prison in Istanbul. The case reopens the controversy over the human rights situation in Turkey and the fulfilment of EU accession requirements.

- On 20 October the trial begins against 86 people, including military officers, writers and lawyers, accused of belonging to the illegalised ultra-nationalist Ergenekon organisation and plotting a coup to overthrow the government. The group is accused of preparing the assassination of prominent figures, among them the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Literature Nobel Prize Winner Orhan Pamuk. The charge links Ergenekon with the attack in May 2006 on the secular newspaper Cumhuriyet and the assassination on 17 May 2006 of the judge Mustafa Yucel Ozbilgin. Ergenekon members are also connected with the protests in April 2007 against the candidature of Abdullah Gül, a practicing Muslim, as President of the country.

Syria

- On 26 October the government announces that US military helicopters have entered Syria from Iraq and attacked a farm, killing eight civilians. On 28 October the Financial Times quoted US officials as stating that US forces have killed an important member of al-Qaeda, Abu Ghadiya, responsible for smuggling foreign fighters from Syria into Iraq and defined by the United...
Tunisia

- On 31 October Andrea Kliber and Wolfgang Ebner, the two Australians who were kidnapped in March by the organisation al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, were reportedly released in Mali.

Algeria

- On 29 October the President of Algeria Abdelaziz Bouteflika declares his intention in a speech broadcast from the Supreme Court to reform the constitution to allow him to run for re-election. Currently, the presidency is limited to two terms. For Bouteflika, the removal of this limit “will allow the people to exercise their legitimate right to choose those who govern them and renew their confidence in them in all sovereignty.” The reform would allow Bouteflika to stand for a third term in office.

European Union

- On 4 October the government leaders of the four largest EU economies (France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom) meet in Paris together with the President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso, the European Central Bank Chief (ECB) Jean-Claude Trichet and the President of the Eurogroup Jean-Claude Juncker to end unilateral action taken by the Member States in response to the crisis. Although it is agreed to coordinate actions, the meeting ends with no significant commitments. The government leaders agree not to apply a large-scale bail-out package to the banking system, as has been done in the United States, but do commit to bailing out banks in difficulty.

- On 15–16 October Brussels hosts a summit under the French Presidency, which is marked by the global financial crisis and deals with the coordinated response of Member States and the ECB to the crisis. The summit also seeks a common agreement on climate change, as well as immigration and asylum policy.

OPEC

- On 24 October a summit is held in the Vienna headquarters of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which concludes that the fall in demand for oil caused by the global crisis has lead to a surplus on the global oil market. Energy Ministers from the OPEC member countries expressed concern at the fall in oil prices, after dropping to 66.2 dollars the day before the summit. With the aim of halting the falling prices they decide to cut back production by 1.5 million barrels a day, about 5% of output, starting from 1 November.

November 2008

The global financial crisis shaped events throughout November. Portugal nationalises the Portuguese Bank of Business before the threat of an imminent suspension of payments. The governments of Spain and Italy present packages to reactivate the economy, while in France Nicolas Sarkozy reveals details of a strategic investment fund. At the European level, a meeting takes place between the Member States to prepare a common European position in view of the G-20 meeting in Washington. Unrelated to the crisis, in Italy controversy ensues the Constitutional Court’s ruling to allow the father of 37-year-old Eulana Enflago, who has been in a coma since 1991, to disconnect the feeding tube that keeps his daughter alive.

Portugal

- On 2 November the Finance Minister Fernando Teixeira dos Santos announces the nationalisation of the Portuguese Bank of Business (BNP), which has an accumulated debt of 700 million euros and faces an imminent suspension of payments. Teixeira dos Santos declares that he has ruled out the possibility of a government bailout believing that this would not be in the taxpayer’s interests. The entity will remain under the control of the state-run savings bank Caixa Geral de Depositos (CGD).

- On 22 November the government declares that Portugal will be the first country in Europe to receive electric cars from the French company Renault and its Japanese partner Nissan. As part of the deal Portugal will install a nation-
al network of 1,300 charging points for the zero-emission vehicles by 2011, when the first delivery is due. The cars will be exempt from road taxes and individual buyers will benefit from tax benefits of 800 euros. The government also pledges that 20% of its public fleet will be emission-free by 2011.

Spain

- On 3 November the President of the government José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announces a partial two-year moratorium on mortgage payments for the unemployed and pensioners who support families. It also announces a 1,500 euro subsidy for companies that hire unemployed workers with families as part of a 170 million euro package aimed at stimulating the job market. On 27 November the government unveils a new 11 billion euro package to reactivate the economy and create 300,000 new jobs.
- On 17 November the French police arrest Miguel de Garikoitza Aspiazu Rubina, alias Cherokee, a suspected military head of the Euskadi and Freedom organisation (ETA), in the French ski resort of Cauterets. A woman suspected of belonging to the group is also arrested. Aspiazu is suspected of having ordered the terrorist attack at the Barajas airport in December 2006, which ended peace talks between the government and ETA. It is believed that Garikoitz assassinated two plain clothes civil guards in the French city of Capbreton, in December 2007. Cherokee’s arrest comes as a hard blow for ETA, six months after the arrest in May of its political leader Francisco Javier López Peña.

France

- On 6 November three French citizens of Moroccan origin Hamid Bach, Reda Barazzouk and Yousef Bousag, and a French Algerian Amine Liassine, are convicted by a Paris court, accused of creating a recruitment network in the south of France to send Muslims to fight “Holy War” abroad. The Moroccans will be deported after serving their sentence and banned from entering the country for the following ten years.
- On 18 November the former Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin is tried for his role in the Clearstream affair and accused of “complicity in libel.” In this case in an attempt to destabilize Nicolas Sarkozy, a minister at the time, he alleged that Sarkozy had received bribes in exchange for major arms contracts. Also facing trial are Jean-Louis Gergorin, former senior official at the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS), computer expert Imad Lahoud, the former auditor Florian Bourgoin and the journalist Denis Robert.
- On 20 November the President Nicolas Sarkozy reveals details of a strategic investment fund, proposed in October, which aims to invest in major French companies in an attempt to protect them from being bought or controlled by foreign investors. The fund will initially be endowed with 20 billion euros and be managed by the government and the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC). Jean-François Dehecq, the Chairman of Sanofi-Aventis, will head the fund’s advisory council.
- On 25 November Martine Aubry is elected by a narrow margin as First Secretary of the opposition Socialist Party (PS), defeating the 2007 presidential candidate, Ségolène Royal. Considered the most left-wing of the candidates, Aubry becomes the first woman to lead the PS and takes over from François Hollande, who had held the position since 1997.

Italy

- On 13 November a protest erupts at a court in Genoa after police accused of brutally beating a young anti-globalisation demonstrator during the G-8 summit in Genoa 2001 are acquitted of the charges against them. Some of the operational commanders are handed out prison sentences of up to four years. They will not have to serve their sentences, however, as their crimes will expire at the beginning of 2009. Some of the victims accuse the police of acting outside of “the democratic order” and of knowing that they enjoy “total impunity.”
- On 13 November the conservatives denounce a decision taken by the Constitutional Court as “the legislation of euthanasia.” The court’s ruling allows Beppino Englaro to disconnect the feeding tube that has been keeping his 37-year-old daughter, Eiuana Englaro, alive since an accident in 1991 left her in a vegetative state. The court upholds a ruling from a court in Milan in July that certifies that Eluana’s coma was irreversible, and that before the accident she had expressed her wishes to die rather than being kept alive artificially.
- On 28 November the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announces the launch of an 80 billion euro rescue package to stimulate the economy. According to the package, one-off payments will be made to Italy’s poorest families, tolls on motorways will be frozen, and banks will be required to restrict mortgage rates. Analysts describe the measures as a relatively modest stimulus. The government has no room to manoeuvre after the Italian economy, the third largest in the Eurozone behind Germany and Italy, entered into a recession in the third quarter of 2008.

Slovenia

- On 3 November the President Danilo Turk officially appoints Borut Pahor as the new Prime Minister, following the National Assembly elections (lower house) on 21 September. Pahor is the leader of the centre-left party the Social Democrats (SD), who received most votes in the elections and gained 29 of the 90 seats in the Parliament.
- On 13 November the SD signs a coalition agreement with three other centre-left parties: Zares (New Politics) with nine seats in Parliament, the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS) with seven seats and Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) with five.

Croatia

- On 5 November the European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn announces in his annual report that accession negotiations with the Croatian government will end at the end of 2009. Ratifying a treaty to integrate Croatia into the EU will take another year, potentially opening the door to their accession at the end of 2010 or early 2011. Although mostly positive, the report highlights certain obstacles for Croatia’s accession, among them the territorial dispute with Slovenia.
- On 18 November the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decides that Croa-
Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 5 November by order of the Special Department for War Crimes of the State Prosecutor’s Office, members of the Bosnian State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) arrest two men suspected of being involved in the genocide against Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica, in July 1995.
- On 20 November the United Nations Security Council approves Resolution 1845 (2008), which extends the mission of the EU peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, the EU’s Stabilisation Force (EUFOR), by one year.

Greece

- On 3 November five cars parked in front of the Greek navy offices in Athens and a mobile telephone shop are set on fire. On 4 November a homemade bomb explodes in the entrance of the office of Evangelos Meimarakis in the Defence Ministry. The explosion causes material damages and nobody claims responsibility for the attack. On 13 November suspected anarchist pyromaniacs set fire to five banks: Eurobank, ATE Bank and Geniki Bank in the northern town of Salonica.

Cyprus

- On 3, 11 and 13 November after commencing direct formal negotiations in September with the aim of reuniting the island, the Greek Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias, and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, meet to discuss a power sharing formula for the federal government proposal. On 17 November both leaders discuss the need to create independent institutions for the proposal of a federal judicial system.

Turkey

- On 2 November clashes break out in Yuksekova in the south-eastern province of Hakkari, between police and about 3,000 supporters of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party, who are demonstrating against the visit by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the Kurdish-dominated region. The previous day, two people had been injured in an explosion at the Justice and Development Party (AKP) building.
- On 3 November the President Abdullah Gül reasserts Turkey’s ambition to form part of the EU and meet all criteria set by the member countries. On 5 November in its progress report the European Commission (EC) criticises the Turkish government for the slow pace of reforms, especially in reference to freedom of expression and human rights.
- On 9 November Prime Minister Erdogan says in an interview published by the New York Times that Turkey is prepared to act as mediator between the administration of the new US President and Iran. Erdogan argues that Turkey’s status as a member of NATO and as a Muslim country with significant ties with Iran ideally positions it to serve as a bridge between both countries, with the aim of solving the long-standing dispute over Iran’s nuclear ambitions, as well as the antagonism the State feels towards Israel.
- On 16 November divisions appear in the secular opposition as the leader of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) Deniz Baykal, when discussing woman wearing hijab, the Muslim headscarf, declares that “it is not right to discriminate against people because of what they wear.” Baykal had previously opposed the lifting of the ban on wearing the hijab in public places. Critics interpret the change as an attempt to gain support in view of the upcoming local elections, scheduled for March 2009.
- On 26 November the Economy Minister Mehmet Simsek, and the Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Motaki sign two memorandums of understanding in Tehran with the aim of expanding economic cooperation between Turkey and Iran. The volume of trade between the two countries, which stood at 1.3 billion euros in 2002, is expected to reach 10 billion euros in 2008.

Syria

- On 6 November Syrian television broadcasts what it describes as “confessions” by those responsible for the car bomb attack on the outskirts of Damascus on 27 September, which killed 17 people. The terrorists say they belong to Fatah al-Islam, a Sunni Islamism faction that fought against the Lebanese army in 2007 in the Palestinian Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon.
- On 12 November newspapers reveal that unnamed diplomats have leaked details from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report. The report makes reference to traces of uranium supposedly found at the site where an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor was bombed by the Israeli air force in September 2007. IAEA inspectors visited the Kibar installation, in northeast Syria in June.
- On 17-18 November the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, David Miliband, visits Syria, where he meets with the President Bashar al-Assad, as well as other high-ranking government officials. This is the highest-level British visit since the Prime Minister Tony Blair visited the country in 2001 and held talks with al-Assad.

Lebanon

- On 19 November the IMF’s Executive Board approves the sum of 37.3 billion dollars for emergency post-conflict assistance to Lebanon in support of the Lebanese government’s programme for 2008-2009. The amount is added to the 74 million dollars given to Lebanon in May 2007.

Tunisia

- On 6 November the Financial Times reports that the Tunisian authorities have pardoned and released 21 prisoners with long prison sentences, including some with life sentences, for belonging to the Islamist group Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance Party). The pardons mark the twenty-first anniversary of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali’s ascension to power.

Morocco

- On 4 November the government reportedly bans an issue of the French
publication L’Express International claiming that several articles that analyse the relation between Islam and Christianity contain insults to Islam. Khalid Naciri, Communications Minister and Government Spokesman, describes the issue as “offensive” and warns that it may undermine public order.

- On 8 November the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) celebrates its eighth congress in the western town of Skhirat. The USFP formed part of the coalition government in October 2007. The congress elects Abdewahed Radi the Justice Minister as the party’s new Secretary General.

European Union

- On 4 November, at a meeting in Marseille in France, Barcelona is chosen as the seat of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. The Palace of Pedralbes will physically house the technical body of the 43-country union.

- On 6 November the Central European Bank (CEB) reduces official interest rates applicable in the Eurozone from 3.75% to 3.25%. At the same time the Bank of England reduces its base interest rate from 3% to 1.5%.

- On 7 November an informal summit, presided over by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the EU for the second half of 2008, is held to find common positions among the Member States for the upcoming G-20 summit. The meeting, which will take place on 15 November in Washington, will deal with the reform of the global financial system. The European Commission presents the controversial proposals for a massive fiscal stimulus of the EU economies, in view of the recession that 15 Eurozone countries have already entered. On 15-16 November the leaders of the G-20, the world’s leading industrialised and emerging economies, meet in Washington DC to tackle the global financial crisis and agree on a plan to reform international financial institutions.

- On 21 November the Lisbon Treaty is ratified by the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, with 243 votes in favour, 39 against and 67 abstentions. The ratification increases the number of countries that have ratified the text from 25 to 27. Ireland voted “no” in June 2008 and in the Czech Republic the Senate, the Parliament’s upper house, is yet to ratify the treaty.

December 2008

Most European parliaments, including, Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Turkey approve budgets for 2009 with public spending cuts and a lower growth forecast than in 2008. During the month numerous packages are also approved aimed at stimulating the economy to tackle the global financial crisis. In Greece violent clashes break out after a 15-year-old boy is killed by police triggering protests and riots across the nation against the rising levels of poverty and unemployment. In the middle of the month in Paris, the Prime Minister of Montenegro submits his country’s formal request to join the European Union to the current President of the EU Nicolas Sarkozy. Lebanon announces the controversial proposals for the Iraqi insurgency. It is believed that the four are connected with a cell in Belgium that had recruited the converted Muslim Muriel Degauque, who became the first female European suicide bomber in Iraq in 2005.

Portugal

- On 12 December the government unveils a 2.2 billion euro economic recovery package as the country approaches recession amid the global financial crisis. The package allocates 800 million to “tax incentives”, 500 million to schools, 250 to energy and infrastructures and 850 to employment programmes. The Prime Minister José Sócrates announces that the measures, which amount to 1.25% of the GDP, will lead to a 3% budget deficit in 2009, above the government forecast of 2.2%.

Spain

- On 18 December the Congress of Deputies (lower house) approves an austere budget for 2009, with 178 votes in favour and 163 against. The plan forecasts a 1% growth increase, which the Economy Minister Pedro Solbes describes as unrealistic following the collapse of the Spanish property market and the crisis in the financial markets. Solbes announces a deficit forecast of about 3% of the GDP for 2008, which will rise in 2009. The opposition People’s Party (PP) describes the budget as “legal fraud.”

- On 31 December a car bomb explodes outside the offices of the regional television channel EITB in Bilbao. No one is hurt by the blast, which followed a warning issued by the ETA terrorist organisation.

France

- On 4 December the French President Nicolas Sarkozy reveals a 26 billion euro package equal to 1.3% of the GDP aimed at stimulating the economy, in light of the recession of the second and third quarter of 2008. The package represents France’s contribution to the European fiscal stimulus, approved at the summit in Brussels on 11-12 December.

- On 11 December Ahmed Bentaieb, Mourad Loghmari, Karmel Mosbah and Fredj Aloulou, of Tunisian origin, are sentenced by a court in Paris to varying prison terms for attempting to recruit Muslims for the Iraqi insurgency. It is believed that the four are connected with a cell in Belgium that had recruited the converted Muslim Muriel Degauque, who became the first female European suicide bomber in Iraq in 2005.

Italy

- On 1 December Venice suffers its worst floods since 1986. On 11 December the fire service has to rescue dozens of people trapped in their cars in the streets of Rome. Four people died as a consequence of the heavy rainfall.

- On 3 December the Financial Times reports that the Italian industry’s 30% reduction in electricity consumption in October and November is a clear sign of the economic recession. Steel and car production is sharply reduced in response to the falling national and international demand for cars, which is down
29% compared with the same month in 2007.
• On 12 December hundreds of teachers take part in a general strike against government cuts in education spending.
• On 18 December the founder of the dairy corporation Parmalat, Calisto Tarzì, is sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment charged with manipulating share prices, hindering auditors and false accounting in relation with the company’s bankruptcy in 2003.

Malta

• On 30 December a Maltese patrol rescues 140 sub-Saharan immigrants from Somalia, Nigeria and Ghana found drifting in a small boat, who intended to enter the EU via Malta.

Croatia

• On 17 December the Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor announces his country’s veto on new chapters in the process of Croatia’s EU accession due to a territorial dispute.

Serbia

• On 12 December the United Nations Security Council authorises the UN Secretary General to appoint, as a temporary measure and within existing resources, additional ad litem judges to the court, in order to complete pending trials and begin new ones. The measure is intended to allow the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (TPIY) to meet its completion strategy.
• On 30 December the President Boris Tadic dismisses General Zdravko Ponos as Chief of General Staff, a post he had held since December 2006. On 31 December the Financial Times reports that Ponos, a reformist general, had discredited the Defence Minister Dragan Sutanovac declaring that he “lacked strategy”. The paper adds that Ponos had not submitted a single report to Sutanovac in a year.

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 9 December following months of misunderstandings between countries, the police and judicial mission deployed by the EU (EULEX) in Kosovo assumes full responsibility of security and initiates its operations in the territory. At a press conference together with President Fatmir Sejdiu and the Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, the head of EULEX Yves de Kermabon, announces that the mission has been deployed throughout the country, including the Serb-majority northern region.
• On 26 December troops from the Serbian Interior Ministry arrest 10 former members of the dismantled Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) for alleged war crimes in the Kosovo war between 1998-1999. The arrests are made in a raid in the Presevo region, which borders Kosovo and has an ethnic Albanian majority.

Montenegro

• On 15 December in Paris the Prime Minister Milo Đukanovíc presents Montenegro’s formal application for European Union membership to the EU President Nicolas Sarkozy. The EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn recognises Montenegro’s “important progress” in its preparations for “European integration” and welcomes the EU accession candidature of the Balkan state.

Macedonia

• On 19 December the Agence France-Presse reports that Macedonia has decided to end its military commitment in Iraq and that its troops will leave the country on Friday 17 December.

Greece

• On 6 December Greece experiences its largest protest in the last ten years after 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos is shot dead by police in the district of Exarchia, in central Athens. According to the police, they were assaulted by teenagers who threw stones at them. On 7 December 24 banks, 35 businesses, 22 cars and 12 houses in Athens alone were set on fire, when groups of left-wing and anarchist youths clash with police. The attacks, initially directed at the police, become protests against the rising levels of unemployment and poverty. On 10 December a court orders that two police officers be detained pending trial for the death of the boy. Epaminondas Korkoneas, the officer who fired, is charged with premeditated manslaughter and his partner Vassilios Saraliotis as an accomplice.
• On 10 December the party of Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis, New Democracy (ND), loses a seat in the Vouli (Parliament) when he expels Petros Tatoulis for having distanced himself from the party. The expulsion leaves ND with a parliamentary majority of just one seat.
• On 22 December the Vouli approves the State budgets for 2009 by 151 votes to 147, which foresee a 2% deficit, a 2.7% growth, compared with 3.2% in 2008, and 3% inflation.

Cyprus

• On 2 and 16 December the Greek Cypriot President Dimitris Khrystofias and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Ali Talat, hold fresh meetings to discuss the island’s reunification after formal direct negotiations were initiated in September. On 22 December both leaders admit that progress until now has been insufficient but reassert their wishes to continue working for a solution to the dispute.
• On 12 December a prisoner charged with rape escapes from a private hospital in Nicosia. On 17 December, as a result of the incident, Kypros Khrysomilhis resigns as Justice Minister. On 22 December Loukas Louka is appointed as the new Justice Minister.
• On 12 December the United Nations Security Council approves resolution 1847 (2008), which extends the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) by six months.
• On 12 December the former Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos died aged 74. Papadopoulos convinced the Greek Cypriots to reject the UN’s plan for reunification of the island and oversaw the EU accession of the Greek side in May 2004.
• On 17 December the Council of Ministers decides to reduce the length of military service from 25 to 24 months.
• On 18 December the House of Representatives (Parliament) approves the
fiscal budget for 2009 by 33 votes to 20. This constitutes the first budget adopted since the euro was brought into circulation in Cyprus.

**Turkey**

- On 4 December Leyla Zana, a known Kurdish activist and former member of the now-defunct and banned pro-Kurdish Democratic Party is sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment for praising the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), included on Europe’s list of terrorist organisations.
- On 15 December 200 intellectuals and writers issue a public apology over the Internet for the murder of 1.5 million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, between 1915 and 1923. The apology, in the form of an open letter extended to all Turks who want to put their name to it, provokes protests by nationalists who consider it to be a national betrayal. The Turkish authorities consider the death of the Armenians as collateral damage during the war. The organisers declare that more than 11,000 people have signed the letter in two days.
- On 16 December the Turkish army launches air strikes against PKK positions in the Iraqi Kurdish region. Three Turkish soldiers and two PKK members are killed in clashes in December. Following a meeting on 26 December with his Iraqi counterpart, Nouri al-Maliki the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces that both countries will work together to fight PKK members operating along the border between Turkey and Iraq.
- On 19 December Turkey opens two new chapters of negotiation with the EU, with reference to the free movement of capital and the information society and media, bringing the total number of chapters opened since accession negotiations began in 2005 to 10 out of 35. On 21 December the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn urges Turkey to overcome internal divisions and resume long-delayed reforms as soon as possible, declaring that 2009 will be a key year for determining whether Turkey is serious about EU accession.
- On 27 December the Grand National Assembly (Parliament), approves the fiscal budget for 2009, which foresees a deficit of 10.4 billion new Turkish lira, by 324 votes in favour and 117 against. As a result, budgets allocated to most ministries are reduced by up to 16% to cut overall spending.

**Syria**

- On 18 December the Lebanese Information Minister Tarek Mitri names the first Lebanese Ambassador to Syria, although the name will not be disclosed until Syria gives its approval. The appointment constitutes the first step towards normalisation of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

**Lebanon**

- On 16 December the UN Security Council adopts resolution 1852 (2008), which extends the mandate of the United Nations Independent Investigation Commission for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri up to 28 February 2009.
- On 17 December Russia strengthens its influence over the Middle East by announcing the donation of 10 MiG-29 Fulcrum planes to Lebanon. Russian officials assert that the gift of these second-hand planes is part of a cooperation deal on defence in which Russia will also provide training to the Lebanese military.

**Jordan**

- On 22 December the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on water takes place, which had been delayed due to disagreements between the Arab League and Israel. At the inauguration Jordan calls for regional cooperation to create a sustainable management system of water resources in the Middle East.

**Libya**

- On 27 December Libya receives US career diplomat Gene Cretz, the first US ambassador to Libya since the seventies.

**Tunisia**

- On 13 December Sadok Chourou, former leader of the banned Islamist organisation Al Nahda, is imprisoned accused of resuming activity with the group. Chourou had served 18 years’ imprisonment for leading the organisation and had been released thanks to a government pardon for 21 members of the group, coinciding with the twenty-first anniversary of the Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali’s accession to power.

**Gulf Cooperation Council**

- On 29-30 December the 21st meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) takes place in Muscat, the capital of Oman. The GCC leaders approve a security strategy between six of the Member States (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). The GCC leaders strongly condemn the “flagrant aggression” against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and call for unity between the Palestinian factions.

**Climate Change**

- Between 1-13 December the United Nations Climate Change Conference is held in Poznań in Poland. This is the last of a series of meetings to try to give the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change a treaty successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which ends in 2012. The different parties commit to preparing a draft for the Bonn Conference in Germany scheduled for June 2009, in preparation for a final text that will have to be agreed in Copenhagen in December 2009.
The beginning of 2008 sees rockets fired into Israel from the Gaza Strip, leading to the closure of the Egyptian border crossings. Trucks carrying food, humanitarian supplies and fuel are denied entry and living conditions for inhabitants of the strip are considerably worsened as a result.

A year of intense diplomatic activity begins in January with the visit from US President, George W. Bush, to Israel and the Palestinian territories. The US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, also travels to the area on several occasions. The diplomatic activity continues in March and April with visits from the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, the US Vice President, Dick Cheney, and former US President, Jimmy Carter, as well as the meeting in Russia between the chief of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Mahmoud Abbas, and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. In July, Barak Obama, US Democratic Senator and candidate for President, meets with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Also in 2008 the Israeli government is investigated over its management during the war in the summer of 2006. In January the Winograd commission presents a report that exonerates the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, but which detects “serious failings and shortcomings” in the country’s political and military leadership during the conflict.

In May the investigation opened into corruption allegations against Olmert provokes reactions both externally and from within his own party. Olmert is forced to call primary elections, which are won by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, the new leader of the Kadima party, announces that she has been unable to form a new government coalition and asks the President to call early elections, which will take place on 10 February 2009.

In February the Israeli Deputy Defence Minister, Matan Vilnai, warns that rocket launches from the Gaza Strip may have serious consequences for the Palestinians, and uses the word shoah, a Hebrew term used to refer to the holocaust. Later, government officials try to downplay his words. However, a series of air strikes are carried out on the Gaza Strip, which continue until March with the aim of preventing further rocket launches into Israeli territory.

Following months of negotiations, the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas enters into force in June, having been threatened on several occasions. At the beginning of July, for example, Israel responds to rocket launches from the Gaza Strip by closing the border crossings, worsening living conditions for civilians there. In July five Lebanese soldiers are released and the remains of 200 Lebanese and Egyptian soldiers are returned, in exchange for the bodies of the two Israeli soldiers whose capture provoked the war between Israel and Lebanon in 2006.

At the beginning of November Israeli troops are involved in clashes with Hamas soldiers. The tension mounts until Hamas declares an end to the December ceasefire. The Israeli army responds by launching an offensive against the Gaza Strip in order to force Hamas to stop firing rockets. The attack causes 200 casualties, including civilians. After being condemned by the international community, the offensive is brought to an end with Israel’s unilateral ceasefire declaration in January 2009.

January 2008

Israel

- On 9 January a court in Tel Aviv convicts David Shamir, a major in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) reserves, with attempted espionage for trying to sell military secrets to countries like Iran and Russia and to groups such as the Islamic Hamas movement.
- On 16 January the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert suffers a serious setback after the extreme right Yisrael Beitenu party withdraws from the ruling coalition in protest against the government’s decision to hold talks with the Palestinians on fundamental issues such as borders, refugees and the status of Jerusalem. Beitenu’s withdrawal leaves Olmert’s coalition with a narrow majority in the Knesset (Parliament).
- On 17 January the Israeli Defence Minister confirms that Israel has conducted a missile test near Jerusalem, raising suspicions that this might form part of a long-range missile development programme or improvements to their anti-missile defence system.
- On 30 January the Winograd Commission, set up in September 2006 to analyse the government and Israeli army’s management of the war in Lebanon in July and August 2006, presents its final report. Although the commission reports “serious failings and shortcomings” in the country’s political and military leadership, Olmert escapes criticism over his management of the war.
**Palestine**

- On 1 January at least eight Palestinians are killed and around twenty more injured in the Gaza Strip in clashes between Fatah and Hamas between 31 December 2007 and 1 January 2008.
- On 26 January George Habash, founder of the radical Marxist-Leninist party, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), dies from a heart attack in Amman, Jordan.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 8 January the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, meet in Jerusalem for a round of negotiations before the US President, George W. Bush, visits the region. Abbas and Olmert agree on a framework for the negotiations which covers core issues related with a future Palestinian State: borders, the status of Jerusalem and the future of the families of Palestinian refugees.
- From 9-11 January the US President, George W. Bush, visits Israel and Palestine in his first official visit to the country as president. Bush calls for dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which has been hindered by Israeli settlement policy following the summit in Annapolis in November 2007. In his first conference in Israel, Bush criticises the illegal settlements for being an obstacle to peace.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On 3 January nine Palestinians are killed by Israeli forces operating in Gaza. Several houses belonging to military commanders are bombed. The Palestinians launch a Katyusha rocket from the Gaza Strip.
- On 17 January Hamas rocket attacks on Israel. At least 40 rockets are launched, half of which land in Israel. On 18 January 31 more rockets are fired towards Israel.
- On 18 January Israel closes all border crossings with Egypt, blocking trucks with fuel or humanitarian supplies. On 20 January Gaza City is left without electricity when fuel runs out in the city’s only power station. On 21 January Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, under pressure from growing international criticism, lifts certain restrictions and authorises entry into Gaza for enough industrial diesel for a week, as well as 50 trucks with food and medical supplies.
- On 23 January thousands of Gazans cross the border into Egypt after Hamas militants open holes in sections of the Egyptian border. The Egyptian security forces do nothing to oppose the action and allow Palestinians to purchase supplies of food, medicine and petrol from Egyptian shops. Due to the situation, the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, gives the order to allow Gazans to cross the border.

**February 2008**

**Israel**

- On 12 February on a visit to Germany the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, accuses Iran of building nuclear weapons and asks for greater international effort to prevent Iran from achieving its nuclear ambitions.
- On 25 February police arrest 200 Africans who, in recent months, had illegally entered Israel across the Egyptian border. The action comes a day after Prime Minister Olmert orders measures to be taken against illegal immigration.
- On 26 February Israel’s Supreme Court accepts a controversial plea bargain signed in June 2007, according to which former President, Moshe Katsav, will not have to serve a prison sentence for alleged sexual offences.
- On 27 February the eldest son of former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, 43-year-old Omri Sharon, begins a six-month prison sentence. Omri Sharon had been sentenced to nine months in prison for illegal fundraising for his father’s campaign in 1999, but his prison term had been delayed on humanitarian grounds after Ariel Sharon fell into a coma following a brain haemorrhage in January 2006.

**Palestine**

- On 3 February the Egyptian authorities close the openings in the border with the Gaza Strip, made by Hamas on 23 January and reinforce it with barbed wire fencing and a deployment of troops.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 4 February the EU Presidency condemns a suicide bombing in the shopping centre in Dimona, causing the death of one woman and injuring 11 others. A second suicide bomber fails to detonate the explosives and is shot down by Israeli police. This is the first suicide attack in Israel since 2007. On 5 February, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, claim responsibility for the attack. If this claim is true it will signal the end of Hamas’s self-imposed moratorium on suicide attacks on Israeli territory, in effect since they blew up two buses in August 2004.
- On 7 February Israeli forces carry out an air strike on a police post in Khan Yunis, in the south of the Gaza Strip, killing eight members of Hamas, at least six of whom are security agents. Palestinian militants then fire eight Qassam rockets at Israel, one of which hits a house injuring four people. Israeli ground troops, with tank and air support, enter the north of the Gaza Strip killing seven Palestinians – six Hamas militants and one civilian – according to Hamas and medical sources.
- On 8 February Israel cuts the electricity supply to the Gaza Strip to put pressure on the territory not to fire any more missiles into Israeli territory. Deputy Defence Minister, Matan Vilnai, argues that these cuts are intended to reduce “Gaza’s dependence on Israel”.
- On 21 February, in a sudden escalation of violence, a civilian is killed by a rocket launched from Gaza and at least seven Palestinians lose their lives in Israeli air strikes.
- On 27 February the Israeli army carries out a series of air strikes on the Gaza Strip in which six Palestinian
militants are killed. A baby dies in the attack on the Ministry of the Interior building.

- On 29 February, Matan Vilnai warns Palestinians that firing rockets from the Gaza Strip will bring the Palestinians a “bigger shoah”, the Hebrew word used to refer to the Nazi Holocaust inflicted on the Jews in the Second World War. Israeli officials immediately explain that in the Deputy Defence Minister’s declaration the word shoah makes reference to disaster and is not an allusion to the Nazi genocide.

**March 2008**

**Israel**

- On 16 March the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, begins a visit to Israel to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish State. This is a particularly symbolic visit since she is the first Chancellor to address the Israeli parliament since the Nazi Holocaust. The visit lasts three days, during which important diplomatic meetings take place between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), at a time of impasse in the Peace Process.

- From 22-24 March the Vice-President of the United States, Dick Cheney, visits Israel and the Palestinian territories as part of a ten-day trip to the Middle East. He also visits Iraq, Oman, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey on the same trip. On 22 March, after meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, Cheney publicly pledges his country’s “enduring and unshakeable” commitment to the security of Israel and its right to defend itself against terrorism. On 23 March after meeting with Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, in Ramallah, Cheney declares that the creation of a Palestinian State is a "long-term" process and calls Israelis and Palestinians to make “difficult concessions” to end the conflict. On 24 March Cheney accuses Syria and Iran of trying to “torpedo” peace talks between Palestine and Israel.

**Palestine**

- On 23 March after a week of negotiations in Sana, Yemen, rival factions Hamas and Fatah sign an agreement to open formal reconciliation talks. The Yemeni initiative envisages new elections, the creation of a Government of national unity and the restructuring of the Palestinian security forces, making them a unifying force for the nation.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 4 March Abbas holds talks with the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, in Ramallah. On 5 March Rice announces that Abbas has agreed to resume negotiations, but without commitment to a deadline.

- On 30 March Rice visits Israel and the Palestinian territories. In Jerusalem she meets with the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, and the Fatah Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Khalid Abdallah Fayyad. Following these meetings, Israel and Palestine present a new package with 18 measures.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- At the beginning of March the Israeli land and air offensive continues, launched on the Gaza Strip on 27 February. Israeli raids are focused north of Jabalya, with the aim of preventing Hamas and other militant groups from firing rockets at Israeli towns.

- On 1 March according to The Guardian, 60 Palestinians are killed. Israel argues that the majority of the victims were armed militants, although Palestinian officials assure that more than half were civilian casualties, including children. On the same day two Israeli soldiers are killed in clashes with armed Palestinian militants.

- On 2 March at least ten Palestinians are killed in Gaza in an Israeli attack, according to local hospital sources. The escalation of violence extends to the West Bank, where thousands of Palestinians protest against the attacks on Gaza. A child is shot dead in Hebron after protesters throw stones at Israeli soldiers. In response to popular pressure, the Palestinian President announces the suspension of peace talks with Israel, constituting a serious setback for the US-backed initiative to reach a peace agreement between Israel and the Fatah-led Abbas administration in the West Bank by the end of 2008.

- On 3 March Israel withdraws troops from the Gaza Strip. However, the Israeli Prime Minister, Olmert, warns of imminent clashes in Gaza and admits that Israel’s primary objective in the Strip is to weaken Hamas. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri proclaims victory for Hamas announcing that “the enemy has been defeated” and threatening that “Gaza will be a graveyard for the occupying forces”. Hamas fires new missiles at the city of Ashkelon and other Jewish communities surrounding Gaza.

**April 2008**

**Israel**

- On 8 April the former Israeli President, Moshe Katsav, renegoties a plea bargain that would have seen the State withdraw charges of rape against him in exchange for pleading guilty to less serious offences of sexual misconduct. Under the terms of the agreement reached in June 2007, Katsav would have avoided a jail sentence, but he tells the court that he is dropping the plea in the hope that the court will find him innocent of all charges. Katsav resigned as President in July 2007 and was replaced by Shimon Peres.

- On 27 April a court in Jerusalem sentences Shlomo Benizri to 18 months in prison after being convicted of bribery, breaching the public trust and obstruction of justice during his time as Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, a position he occupied from March 2001 to May 2002.

**Palestine**

- On 18 April the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and the Head of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Mahmoud Abbas, meet in Russia to talk about a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, together with the possibility of an international conference in Moscow on the Middle East. During his three-day visit Abbas also meets with the Foreign Affairs Minister, Sergei Lavrov.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 7 April the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Prime
Minister, Ehud Olmert, hold talks in Jerusalem in the two leaders’ first meeting since mid-February. Both had committed to biweekly meetings in the peace conference held in Annapolis in November 2007, but Abbas suspended the meetings following operations carried out by the Israeli army to halt missile launches, which killed more than 120 Palestinians.

• On 15 April the former US President, Jimmy Carter, visits the city of Ramallah, in the West Bank, where he holds talks with high-ranking members of Hamas. Of special note is his meeting with Nasir al-Din al-Sha’ir, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education in the Hamas government, formed in March 2006, who is seen as one of the more moderate prominent Hamas leaders. A spokesman to President George W. Bush describes the meeting as “imprudent” as it grants Hamas a legitimacy it does not deserve. On 17 April Carter travels to Egypt where he meets with Mahmoud al-Za’har, one of the most senior Hamas figures in Gaza and the Hamas government’s Foreign Affairs Minister. On 18 April Carter visits Syria, where he meets with Bashar al-Assad and, later, with Khaled Meshal, head of the Political Bureau of Hamas in Damascus.

• On 21 April Carter travels to Jerusalem where he urges Israel to negotiate directly with Hamas, since, according to Carter, the organisation is willing to accept a Palestinian State in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem (if it is approved by Palestinians through referendum) and to live “as a neighbour next door in peace” with Israel. Although he acknowledges that Hamas has repeatedly refused to condemn the violence, to recognise explicitly Israel’s right to exist or to recognise previous peace accords, Carter insists that the new conciliatory tone adopted by Hamas is a genuine renunciation of its old doctrine.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 9 April Palestinian militants enter Israel from the Gaza Strip and attack a fuel deposit on the Israeli side of the Nahal Oz border crossing, killing two Israeli civilian workers and injuring two others. Israeli troops shoot down the two assailants, although another two escape back to the Gaza Strip. Israeli troops and soldiers respond by entering the Gaza Strip and killing at least six Palestinians. On the same day an Israeli soldier and a Hamas militant are killed in an Israeli raid in southern Gaza.

• On 11 April Israeli forces enter an area to the east of the Bureij refugee camp in the centre of Gaza, in an operation aimed at “damaging the terrorist infrastructure”. At least five Palestinians are killed in this operation, including two children.

• On 16 April 19 Palestinians –among them a Palestinian cameraman who worked for the Reuters news agency – are killed in the Gaza Strip during heavy fighting near the Nahal Oz border crossing.

May 2008

Israel

• On 3 May a new police investigation is opened into the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, over the alleged receipt of campaign donations from a US resident, years before becoming Prime Minister. Olmert is questioned in his official residence over what his team says are donations raised by a US citizen to fund elections for the mayoralty of Jerusalem and primary elections in Likud.

• On 8 May Israel celebrates the 60th anniversary of the creation of its State with various acts throughout the country.

• On 8 May Olmert responds to accusations of irregular donations and admits to having received funds from Long Island resident Morris Talansky during the mayoralty of Jerusalem campaign, in 1993 and 1998, and for primary elections in Likud, in 1999 and 2002. Olmert declares that the donations were used to fund his campaign and not for personal gains. On 28 May, speaking at a conference, Ehud Barak, Defence Minister and leader of the Labour Party, the leading member of the coalition, warns that it is “impossible for Olmert to simultaneously run the government and deal with his personal affairs”. On 29 May pressure on Olmert is increased when Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, warns that it is necessary “to prepare for all eventualities, including new elections.”

• From 14–16 May the US President, George W. Bush, visits Israel to participate in the 60th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel. During a speech in the Knesset (Parliament), Bush expresses his pride of the United States for being the “closest ally and best friend in the world” of a nation that is “the homeland of the chosen people.” In reference to the Iranian nuclear programme, Bush argues that permitting “the world’s leading sponsor of terror” to possess “the world’s deadliest weapon” would be “an unforgivable betrayal of future generations.”

Palestine

• On 2 May representatives of the Middle East Quartet (the United States, the European Union, United Nations and Russia) meet in London for the first high level assessment of the peace process between Palestine and Israel since the Annapolis Peace Conference on 27 November 2007. Present at the meeting are: Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Affairs Minister, Sergei Lavrov, US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Slovenian Foreign Affairs Minister, Dimitrij Rupel, and the Quartet representative, former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. The Quartet expresses its total support of the current negotiations between Israel and Palestine and urges the parties to make the efforts necessary for reaching the common objective of an agreement for the creation of a Pales-
tian State by the end of 2008. The Quartet “strongly encouraged” Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Egypt to work together to formulate “a new approach on Gaza” that would guarantee security to all Gazans and end terrorist attacks.

- On 4 May the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, travels to the Middle East to meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. On 5 May the Financial Times reports that Rice was more critical towards Israeli policy in the occupied territories of Palestine than on previous occasions. After her meeting with the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, in Ramallah, the West Bank, Rice describes the continual expansion of the Jewish settlements —together with the checkpoints on the roads and other obstacles in the West Bank— as “particularly problematic to the atmosphere of trust that is needed.”

- On 13 May the Quartet representative, Tony Blair, announces a proposal for the Israeli occupation to withdraw from the West Bank and the creation of the foundations for a functional Palestinian State. Blair says that it would be a mistake to think that political negotiations can work without real changes on the ground.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On 15 May at least 14 Israelis are injured when a Grad rocket launched from Gaza lands in the Israeli city of Ashkelon. The attack coincides with the meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister, Olmert, and the US President, Bush.

**June 2008**

**Israel**

- On 4 June the Israeli Attorney General formally accuses the former Israeli Finance Minister, Abraham Hirchson, of theft, fraud and breach of trust. Hirchson, a member of the ruling party and ally to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, resigned in 2007 after accusations of embezzlement of funds from the non-profit union group the National Workers’ Organisation. Hirchson, however, has always denied the charges.

- On 6 June the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot reports that the Transport Minister, retired lieutenant general Shaul Mofaz, sees an Israeli military attack on Iranian nuclear positions as increasingly unavoidable. Mofaz warns that United Nations sanctions are not effective and declares that they will attack Iran if it continues with its programme for developing nuclear weapons. His declarations reflect the increasing concern in Israel and the United States for the Iranian nuclear programme.

- On 12 June in a new period of pressure on Olmert over a corruption case, the Defence Minister and Labour Party leader, Ehud Barak, expresses his support for a possible motion to dissolve the Knesset (Parliament) and call early elections if the Prime Minister’s Kadima party, does not act quickly to hold new primary elections.

- On 13 June the Interior Minister confirms the approval to build 1,300 more houses in the ultra-Orthodox settlement of Ramat Shlomo, in East Jerusalem.

- On 25 June the Labour Party votes against a motion by the opposition for the dissolution of the Knesset after Olmert agrees to hold primary elections in his party no later than 25 September.

**Palestine**

- On 12 June at least four Palestinians, including a baby, are killed in an explosion in the home of the leader of the armed wing of Hamas, Ibrahim Hamuda, in Beit Lahya, northern Gaza. Hamas confirms the death of one of its top bomb-makers. However, the cause of the explosion is not clear and while Hamas blames the Israeli army, there are suspicions that it may have been caused by an accident on the part of Hamas while handling the explosives.

- On 19 June at six o’clock in the morning, after nearly three months of indirect negotiations mediated by the Egyptian intelligence service, a ceasefire comes into effect between Israel and Hamas, the force in control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas agrees to end all attacks outside of the Gaza Strip if Israel commits to calling off air strikes and lifting the economic blockade on the Strip. According to the terms of the agreement, the ceasefire will last for six months and will be implemented in phases.

- On 22 June Israel begins to lift the Gaza blockade, permitting entry to 90 trucks with basic food supplies. On 24 June the ceasefire suffers a major setback when militants of the Islamic Jihad launch four rockets and a mortar missile into Israeli territory, causing minor injuries to two people. The group argues that the attack is a reprisal for an earlier Israeli raid on the city of Nablus, in the West Bank, which killed two members of the Islamic Jihad. On 25-26 June Israel responds to the attack by closing border crossings with Gaza, thereby preventing the entry of fuel for Gaza’s power station.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 15 June the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, visits Israel and the Palestinian territories. Rice accuses the Israelis of endangering the peace process with its approval of the construction of more settlements in East Jerusalem.

- From 22-24 June the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, visits Israel and the Palestinian territories. On 23 June, in a speech in the Knesset, Sarkozy urges Israel to share sovereignty over Jerusalem with the Palestinians and not to build new settlements in the occupied territories. Sarkozy also reiterates his condemnation of the Iranian nuclear programme and pledges his support for Israel against the threat. On 24 June as Sarkozy is leaving Israel, an Israeli police officer commits suicide in the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, about 200 metres from the plane that was to take the French President back to France.

**July 2008**

**Israel**

- On 10 July the website of the Israeli newspaper The Jerusalem Post announces the arrest of eight Palestinians from the town of Isawiya, near northern Jerusalem, for throwing Molotov cocktails at cars on the Ma’ale Adumim road and close to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The newspaper also echoes the fragile nature of the truce in Gaza after two Qassam rockets hit northern Negev, in Israel, without causing any casualties or damage.

- On 16 July Israel returns five Lebanese soldiers to Lebanon, together with
the remains of 199 Lebanese and Palestinian soldiers who have been killed in fighting in recent years, in exchange for the bodies of two Israeli soldiers whose capture caused the war between both countries in mid-2006.

- On 30 July Ehud Olmert gives into pressure over the corruption charges held against him and announces his intention to resign as Prime Minister. In a televised speech Olmert says that he will not run in the primary elections of the Kadima party, planned for 17 September, and that he will step down from the position as soon as his party has elected his successor. Olmert protests that as Prime Minister he has been deprived of the "basic right of being innocent until proven guilty."

Palestine

- On 15 July Fatah forces arrest at least 13 Hamas militants in Nablus, an Islamic bastion in the West Bank, amid rising tension between the Islamic Resistance Movement and Fatah.
- On 25 July five Hamas activists and a young girl are killed in a car bomb attack perpetrated in Gaza City, which Hamas blames on Fatah. Between 26-27 July, in the wake of the attack, Hamas arrests some 200 members of Fatah. On 17 July the Palestinian Authority (PA) arrests more than 30 members of Hamas in the West Bank. Fatah denies any involvement in the car bomb attack.

Conflict between the Parties

- On 1 July Israel closes the Gaza border crossings in response to the Qassam rocket launches against Israel. Hamas denies carrying out the launches. On 6 July Israel reopens the border crossings in accordance with the Egyptian-mediated ceasefire agreement.
- On 2 July a 30-year-old Palestinian man kills three Israelis and injures another 45 when he deliberately drives a mechanical digger against the traffic along Jaffa street, in the centre of Jerusalem. Before being shot dead by an off-duty soldier, he is able to crush several cars and overturn a bus. This is the worst civilian attack since March. On 22 July another Palestinian rams a bulldozer into several cars and a bus in the centre of Jerusalem, before being shot dead. At least 16 people were injured.
- On 29 July a nine-year-old child is killed during a protest against the separation wall in the town of Nilin, near Ramallah. In the same protest an unarmed 27-year-old man is shot at point-blank range by the Israeli army. The army opens an investigation when NGO B’Tselem publicises a video in which an Israeli soldier can be seen shooting a rubber bullet at the unarmed and handcuffed man at a range of a metre and a half and after his arrest.

Peace Negotiations

- On 24 July the US democratic senator, Barack Obama meets with the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, the President, Shimon Peres, and opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas. Obama tells Abbas that he will begin working towards peace from his first day in the White House, although he makes it clear that Israel will be his priority and expresses his firm commitment to this country's security.
- On 30 July talks are held in Washington between Ahmed Oorei, head of the Palestinian delegation, and Tzipi Livni, the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister and chaired by the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. No significant advances are made due to the almost irreconcilable positions of the negotiators on the question of borders, for example. A crisis of trust is added to this stalemate, fuelled by Olmert's refusal to discuss the Jerusalem question, the increase in Israeli settlements and the continuation of Israeli military operations in the West Bank.

August 2008

Israel

- On 25 August Israel releases 198 Palestinian prisoners in the West Bank, in a gesture described as “a confidence building move” with the aim of strengthening the position of the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas. Unusually, among those released are two men accused of having “blood on their hands”, the two longest-serving inmates. One of them, Mohammed Abu Ali, was elected as a Fatah MP to the Palestinian Parliament while he was serving sentence.

Palestine

- On 2 August Hamas orders the closure of the radio station Voice of the People, which broadcast from Gaza City for the Marxist-Leninist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The PFLP had been a key member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).
- On 9 August the poet, Mahmud Darwish, dies in the United States after undergoing open-heart surgery. Darwish was the author of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988.
- On 28 August the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, travels to Beirut to meet with his Lebanese counterpart, Michel Suleiman, to deal with the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Abbas also meets with the Parliament Speaker, Nabih Berri, and the Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora, as well as representatives of the PLO in Lebanon.

Peace Negotiations

- On 6 August the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and the Palestinian President, Abbas, meet in Jerusalem to discuss the peace talks held between both sides the previous week in Washington.
- On 20 August the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, visits Israel and the Palestinian territories again in an attempt to salvage a stagnating peace process. Rice asks Israel not to endanger the process by building more settlements.
- On 21 August the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, expresses her doubts of reaching a peace agreement with the Palestinians by the end of 2008, as agreed in the Annapolis conference.

September 2008

Israel

- On 7 September police investigators recommend that the State Prosecutor indicts the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, of bribery, fraud, breach of public trust and money laundering.
• On 11 September the Israeli Minister of Pensioner Affairs, Rafi Eitan, says that the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, should appear before the International Criminal Court (ICC), in The Hague, for crimes of genocide. Eitan believes it would even be acceptable to kidnap him and take him before the ICC. In 1960, Eitan was connected with the kidnapping in Argentina of Adolf Eichmann, one of the principal ideologists of the Nazi's 'final solution.'

• On 17 September the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, is elected as leader of the ruling Kadima party after Olmert announced in July that he would step down from his position as Prime Minister and would not run in the party’s upcoming primary elections due to accusations of corruption. Livni wins 43% of the votes (16,936 votes), against 42% of her direct rival, the retired lieutenant-general Shaul Mofaz, the Israeli Transport Minister. On 20 September the Defence Minister and Labour party member, Ehud Barak, meets with the leader of Likud and opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv and expresses his doubts over forming part of the Livni coalition. On 21 September Olmert submits his resignation to the President, Shimon Peres, although he will remain acting Prime Minister until his successor his able to forge a coalition. On 22 September Peres gives Livni a 42-day deadline to form a new government coalition. If she can do this, Livni will be the first woman to lead the country since Golda Meir (1969-1974); if not, elections will be held.

Palestine

• On 1 September the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in Lebanon, Abbas Zali, meets with Saad Hariri, leader of the Lebanese Future Movement. After the meeting, Zali announces that he has delivered a message to Hariri from the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas. The meeting deals with rights of Palestinians in Lebanon, the reconstruction of the Palestinian refugee camp in Nahr al-Bared, in northern Lebanon, as well as the peace process in the Middle East.

• On 4 September a report from the Palestine Strategy Study Group warns that the Palestinians could strengthen their support for a binational State with Israel if the peace negotiations organised by the United States in Annapolis fail. The report argues that a binational solution would “reopen the question of Israel's existence as it is today” and adds that “even if many Palestinians prefer the two-state solution, failure of the Annapolis initiative would, to a large extent, strengthen those who advocate the binational State solution.” The Palestine Strategy Study Group is composed of 27 Palestinian members: intellectuals, academics, former ministers, members of the different political parties and other figures from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the diaspora.

• On 15-16 September 11 members of the Dogmush clan, including a baby, are killed when Hamas forces burst into their territory in the al-Sabra district, in the east of Gaza City.

Peace Negotiations

• On 4 September the Middle East Quartet representative, Tony Blair, makes a surprise visit to the city of Nablus, where he promises Palestinian businessmen that he will ask Israel to lift some of the restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank.

• On 25 September international groups and NGOs that work in the Palestinian territories, including Oxfam International, Care International UK and Christian Aid, publish a report in which they warn that international efforts to advance the peace process are doomed to fail imminently under Tony Blair’s leadership. These organisations accuse the Quartet of having lost steam and of “not improving living conditions on the ground.” They also report that, despite repeated demands from international organisations that Israel stops its expansion of settlements in the West Bank, there has in fact been, “a clear increase in the constructions and no action taken by the Israeli authorities towards their dismantlement.”

• On 29 September the acting Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, announces in an interview for the Israeli newspaper, Yediot Aharonot, that Israel should withdraw from almost all the territories that were annexed in the 1967 war, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, to achieve peace with the Palestinians. On 30 September, The Financial Times reports that Olmert’s declarations represent “the clearest request until now of an Israeli mandate to abandon territory that is seen by many Israelis as both strategic and vital.”

Violence between the Parties

• On 22 September a Palestinian drives his car into a group of Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem, injuring 17 people. The 19-year-old man is shot down immediately by a policeman.

October 2008

Israel

• On 7 October the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, visits Russia for talks with the Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev. On 8 October the International Herald Tribune reminds its readers that the visit comes at a complicated time for the relations between both countries. This is partly due to Russia’s invasion of Georgia in August, which in recent years had become an ally to Israel. Of even more importance is Israel’s concern that Russia may help, or at least not attempt to stop, Iran’s nuclear aspirations.

• On 18 October Pope Benedict XVI announces that he will not travel to Israel until the caption beneath the photograph of Pius XII, which accuses him of remaining passive over the extermination of the Jews during the Nazi regime, is removed from the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem.

• On 26 October Tzipi Livni, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister and leader of the Kadima party, officially announces that she has been unable to form a new coalition government and asks the President, Shimon Peres, to call early elections. Although the Labour Party, led by Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, would be part of a Kadima-led government coalition, the smaller parties that are key to governing in the Knesset (Parliament) had presented very high budgetary and political demands. On 24 October the ultra-Orthodox Shas party (Sephardic Torah Guardians), a member of the Olmert coalition, an-
nounces that it will not participate in the Livni government after failing to reach an agreement on two fundamental points: benefit increases for large families and the promise to keep all of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. According to the Herald Tribune, the date for the general elections could be 10 February, as announced by the President of the Knesset, Dalia Itzik.

**Palestine**

- On 9 October the Islamic Hamas movement paralyses the reconciliation plan presented by Egypt to bring Fatah and Hamas together, which promotes the creation of a technocratic and united government in the Gaza Strip. For Hamas the plan is just a way to gain time and thus consolidate Fatah’s dominion over the enclave.
- On 21 October a report published by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights declares it has found evidence to prove that 68 children had been killed in the Gaza Strip in the 12 months before June 2008 by the Israeli army’s “disproportionate use of violence.” Many of the deaths were the result of the Israeli raid in Jabaliya, to the east of Gaza, in February and March.
- On 30 October Hamas releases 17 Fatah prisoners including Fatah’s Secretary General for the Gaza region, Abu Juda An-Nahhal. This measure is seen as a first step to creating the right atmosphere for the unity talks that will be held in Cairo on 9 November. The Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, asks Fatah to follow its example and release the political prisoners in the West Bank.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On 19 October the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, announces that it will not participate in the Livni government after failing to reach an agreement on two fundamental points: benefit increases for large families and the promise to keep all of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. According to the Herald Tribune, the date for the general elections could be 10 February, as announced by the President of the Knesset, Dalia Itzik.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On 9 October clashes erupt between Arab and Israeli citizens in the Israeli city of Acre, in the north of the country, which last for almost a week. The dispute begins when the Arab-Israeli Tawfik Jamal drives his car through a Jewish neighbourhood during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Israeli youths attack the driver, who is forced to flee on foot. In reprisal for the attack, hundreds of Arab-Israelis attack Jewish people following a rumour of Jamal’s death.
- On 16 October Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian citizen in clashes near the city of Ramallah, in the West Bank, the third incident of this kind in as many days. The Israeli army maintains that the three Palestinians were carrying and about to throw firebombs when they were shot down.

**November 2008**

**Israel**

- On 10 November the Knesset (Parliament) is dissolved to celebrate the forthcoming early elections called by the leader of the Kadima party, Tzipi Livni, after failing to constitute a coalition government. The elections are to be held on 10 February 2009. On 16 November the Israeli newspaper Haaretz announces that the Israeli writer Amos Oz is joining with 30 other intellectuals and public figures to form a new left-wing party with the aim of beating the right-wing Likud, which leads the polls for the forthcoming elections.
- On 11 November elections are held for the Jerusalem mayoralty. With 52% of the votes, 49-year-old businessman Nir Barkat narrowly wins, beating the ultra-Orthodox candidate after five years in office. Despite the Palestinian boycott of the elections, there was a 41% turnout. After his victory, Barkat commits to being mayor to all people living in Jerusalem, those who have voted for him as much as those who did not.
- On 16 November the British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, visits Israel at a time of escalating tension between the British and Israeli governments over the British initiative to stop importing products originating in Israeli settlements. On several occasions the British government has expressed its doubts over products from Israeli settlements in the West Bank that arrive in the EU under favourable terms set up for Israeli products, since trade agreements between the EU and Israel do not include vegetable or cosmetic products.
- On 23 November eight members of the neo-Nazi group known as Petah Tikva Gang, are sentenced by the Tel Aviv District Court to prison sentences of between 15 months and seven and a half years for a series of attacks including assaults on Asian workers, orthodox Jews, blacks and homosexuals. The group is composed of young Russian immigrants who had already appeared before the courts in September 2007.
- On 24 November the Israeli authorities open the Gaza border crossings to permit the entry of 40 trucks transporting food and fuel necessary for the production of electricity. NGOs, however, warn that this temporary opening has little effect after repeated restrictions which have caused shortage in basic products like flour or cattle fodder.
- On 24 November the outgoing Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, visits the United States where he bids farewell to the outgoing President, George W. Bush. Talks focus on the relations between Israel and the United States, the Middle East peace process and the Iranian nuclear programme.

**Palestine**

- On 23 November the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, announces that he will call early legislative and presidential elections in 2009 if unity talks do not begin between Fatah and Hamas. On 9 November Egypt had already proposed talks aimed at ending the conflict
between both parties. Hamas blames Fatah for not agreeing to release Hamas supporters from prison in light of the release of several Fatah prisoners in early November in the Gaza Strip, under Hamas control since June 2007.

Peace Negotiations

• On 7 November the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, visits the Palestinian territories and Israel. In Annapolis (November 2007), the Israeli and Palestinian leaders had committed to reaching a peace agreement by the end of 2008. The International Herald Tribune reports that Rice implicitly acknowledges for the first time that the chances of reaching an agreement by the end of 2008 are poor.
• On 9 November, the representatives of the Middle East Quartet (the United States, the European Union, United Nations and Russia) meet in Sharm el-Sheikh, in Egypt, where they once again pledge their support for the Annapolis peace process. Also present at the meeting are the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni.
• On 17 November the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, promises Mahmoud Abbas that he will release 250 Fatah prisoners on 8 December, coinciding with the Muslim celebration of the Festival of Sacrifice.

Violence between the Parties

• On 4 November fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas soldiers marks the first clashes since the 19 June ceasefire. At least one Hamas soldier is killed in the operation that, according to the Israeli army, was carried out to prevent the release of several Fatah prisoners in early November in the Gaza Strip, under Hamas control since June 2007.
• On 20 December an Israeli air strike that kills another five Hamas soldiers. On 7 November another three rockets are launched at southern Israel, once again threatening the ceasefire agreement reached in June.
• On 12 November, four Hamas militants die in clashes with Israeli soldiers on the Gaza border; according to a report from the Israeli army, the Palestinian fighters were trying to plant an explosive device near the border fence. On 14 November tension rises considerably between Hamas and Israel after Hamas fires a series of rockets into southern Israel, which leaves 18 people in hospital. On 16 November Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, blames Hamas and other terrorist organisations in Gaza for the increased tension. On 18 November Israeli tanks advance 500 metres into Gaza firing mortar shells at Palestinian soldiers.

December 2008

Violence between the Parties

• On 19 December Hamas formally announces the end of the ceasefire with the launch of four rockets into southern Israel. The unwritten, Egyptian-brokered ceasefire had been in effect since June, but had been broken on many occasions. In a note published on the Hamas website, the faction that controls the Gaza Strip declares that Israel has not complied with their part of the agreement by not lifting the economic blockade on the strip and continuing to attack Hamas militants in the West Bank.
• On 20 December an Israeli air strike in Gaza kills a member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, the military wing of Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas’s faction, Fatah.
• On 21 December Palestinian militants launch more than 50 rockets into Israel. The Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for most of the attacks. One person is injured in southern Israel from shell shrapnel.
• On 21 December Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, warns against an imminent large-scale military intervention in the Gaza Strip as a response to the increase in rocket launches. Olmert, reminds his government that “a government cannot throw itself into battle” and urges members to be “cautious with their declarations.” The Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, announces that the Hamas government “must be beaten” by all means: military, economic and diplomatic.
• On 24 December Palestinian militants launch more than 80 rockets at southern Israel, without causing any deaths.
• On 25 December Livni travels to Egypt to hold talks with the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak. This meeting was originally aimed at renewing the June truce, although after the previous day’s rocket attacks Livni rules out this. Mubarak asks Israel to act with moderation, while Livni insists that Israel will do what is necessary to protect its citizens. The Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, warns Hamas that they will pay a “high price” if they continue to attack Israel. Olmert appeals directly to the million and a half Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip asking them to stop the attacks against Israeli “children and civilians.”
• On 26 December Israel reopens the border with the Gaza Strip to allow entry to 90 trucks loaded with emergency supplies such as medical aid, fuel and other essential provisions.
• On 27 December an Israeli citizen is killed after Hamas fires at Israeli targets.
• On 27 December, Israel carries out a massive surprise air strike on the Gaza Strip. It is the largest military offensive in Gaza since the Six-Day War, in 1967. According to Israel, this operation is intended to stop rockets being launched at Israel from bases in the Strip. The targets of the attack are the police headquarters of Gaza City and police stations in the Strip, and the headquarters of the Hamas security forces in the same city and its posts throughout the Strip. 150 Palestinians are killed in the attacks and some 400 are injured.
• On 28 December in a new air offensive involving 40 Israeli warplanes another 150 citizens are killed in Gaza and 500 more are injured. Dozens of tunnels used to smuggle arms and provisions across the border between Gaza and Egypt are destroyed. Other targets are the Al Aqsa television station, in Gaza City.
On 28 December Israel deploys tanks near the Gaza border and calls up 6,700 reserves for a possible ground raid, which is seen as a clear threat of a new escalation in the Israeli offensive.

On 29 December, Barak, announces in the Knesset (Parliament) the implication of Israel in an all out war with Hamas. Signalling a possible raid on Gaza, the surrounding area of the Strip is declared a “closed military zone.”

On 29 December an air strike is carried out on Gaza City targeting the presidential offices, the Interior Ministry and the Islamic University. The Israeli Navy is also involved in the attack, bombing Hamas boats in the area. In response, Hamas and other Palestinian factions launch 60 rockets into Israeli territory, causing the death of one citizen and injuring several others. Medical sources from Gaza set the figure of deaths over the three days of attacks on the Strip at 335, and the United Nations declares that 62 women and children are among the victims.

On 30 December a new air offensive targets several governmental buildings while Palestinian militants continue to launch rockets into Israel. According to the Israeli army, one hits the city of Beersheba, some 40 km from Gaza, reaching further from the Strip than any other previous rocket launch.

**Peace Negotiations**

On 12 December the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1848 (2008), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) over Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights for a further six months.

On 16 December the Security Council adopts resolution 1850 (2008) which states its commitment to bilateral peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians in which it offers support for “efforts to reach a peace agreement.” The resolution is approved by 14 votes to 0, with an abstention from Libya, for whom the resolution is deliberately ambiguous and does not deal with procedures in case of breaches of illegality.

On 27 December the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, makes an appeal in which he expresses his concern over the “serious situation of violence and bloodshed taking place in Gaza and the ceaseless violence in southern Israel.” On 28 December the Security Council expresses its “concerns for a possible increase in violence in Gaza and demands an immediate end to the violence.”

On 27 December a statement issued by the White House on behalf of George W. Bush describes the launching of Hamas rockets against Israel as “completely unacceptable.” France, which assumes presidency of the European Union for this last semester, condemns the disproportionate use of violence by both sides and asks for an immediate end to the Hamas rocket launches and a lifting of the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip. On 28 December Hezbollah’s Secretary General, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, urges the Egyptian people to protest against the Egyptian government and demand that they open the Gaza border. According to Nasrallah, by not opening its borders the Egyptian government will be considered accomplices in the Israeli massacre of civilians.

On 30 December the members of the Quartet (the United States, the European Union, United Nations and Russia) call for “an immediate ceasefire that is fully respected by both sides.” However, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, states that first Israel must “achieve all its objectives.” In a televised debate the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, accuses the Israeli leader of “barbarian aggression against the Palestinians” and warns that “blood-stained hands provoke feelings of intense anger.”
The chronology that follows includes the most relevant events that took place in 2008 related to the Barcelona Process.

**January 2008**

1 January 2008
**Slovenian Presidency**
Brussels: Slovenia begins its presidency of the EU on 1 January 2008. Among the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency are the implementation and application of the Lisbon Treaty in the EU to strengthen member countries, the adoption of a common position on post-Kyoto climate change solutions, the maintenance of stability in the Balkans, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue among European countries and between Europe and the Mediterranean region.

www.medawater-rmsu.org

16 January 2008
**Alliance of Civilizations**
Madrid: During a speech given at the First Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, the European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, Ferrero-Waldner, expresses the desire to make the Mediterranean region one of the pillars of the Alliance of Civilizations and stresses the importance of promoting dialogue. The Commissioner refers to the strategic relation between the EU and the Mediterranean region and names numerous projects of this nature funded by the European Commission (EC). She adds that 2008 is not only the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue but also the Euro-Mediterranean Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and refers to the programme drawn up by the Anna Lindh Foundation, “1001 Actions for Dialogue.”

www.eu2008.si

17 January 2008
**Politics and Security**
Brussels: Economic and social development, energy and climate change, civil protection, countering terrorism and extremism, the European Neighbourhood Policy, and intercultural dialogue are among the leading priorities of the Barcelona Process during the Slovenian Presidency, according to a press release issued on completion of the Euro-Med Senior Officials and Committee Meeting. These priorities and activities are presented and analysed during the meeting, which brings together 39 countries (27 EU Member States + 12 partners from the southern Mediterranean, including Albania and Mauritania, which participate in their first meeting after joining the Barcelona Process).

www.euromedtransport.org

21 January 2008
**EU-Morocco**
Rabat: European Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner describes Morocco as a “privileged partner” of the EU, making special reference to its reinforced political dialogue with the EU, economic integration, sectoral cooperation, and exchanges on the people-to-people level. The Commissioner also declares that these advances would not have been possible without the ambitious reform and modernisation programme launched by the King Mohammed VI.

22 January 2008
**EU-Arab Maghreb Union**
Rabat: After the meeting between the
EU, Troika and the Arab Maghreb Union, the president of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) stresses the importance of cooperation between the EU and the coastal countries in the southern Mediterranean region. A competitive, stable, and democratic Maghreb is the interest of the EU, as is any region that can participate actively in the efforts to safeguard the Mediterranean, protect the environment and fight against extremism and terrorism.

23 January 2008
Human Rights
Rabat: Launching of a new project within the framework of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. The project, called “Promotion of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” is allocated 52,250 euros, and scheduled to last for 24 months. The aim of the project is to promote the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Morocco to encourage Morocco to ratify the convention and promote the application of its inclusive principles.
www.delmar.ec.europa.eu/fr/communiques/20080116b.htm

28 January 2008
PEGASE
Brussels: The EC launches a new instrument designed to facilitate the channeling of community and international aid to the Palestinians. The mechanism, called PEGASE, is to be implemented over the course of three years. Its aim is to contribute to the creation of a Palestinian state and to substitute the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM). PEGASE will provide support in four key areas: governance, social development, economic and private sector development, and public infrastructures.
www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu

28 January 2008
EMPA
Brussels: Divergent views on the situation in Gaza dominate the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) Committee on Political Affairs, Security, and Human Rights. The committee calls for respect of international law by all parties and for an immediate end to any action that endangers civil lives; it calls on Israel to urgently cease all military action and to immediately lift its blockade to allow supplies to reach the Gaza Strip and to enable the free movement of people and goods; it also calls on Hamas to put an immediate end to the shooting of rockets at Israeli civilians.
www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

28-29 January 2008
Women
Tunis: The EuroMed Role of Women in Economic Life Programme, in cooperation with the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), organises a regional seminar on structures with mandated responsibility for operationalising a state’s commitment to gender equality. The seminar brings together over 80 participants representing MEDA authorities, experts, civil society activists, research institutions and regional and international organisations concerned with the gender issue in Arab Mediterranean countries.
www.roleofwomeneconomiclife.net

28 January-1 February 2008
Training
Barcelona: A seminar on training development and management is organised within the framework of the Euromed Training of Public Administrations programme, which is designed to provide training on European affairs to civil servants from the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. It also foresees the creation of a network of public administration training centres among Euro-Mediterranean partners.
www.eipa.eu/en/topics/show/&tid=158

30-31 January 2008
FRONTEX
Geneva: This joint conference of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX)-International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)-Europol project entitled “Towards a Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flow” brings together senior government officials from Arab and European countries, ICMPD, Europol, FRONTEX, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the African Union, the EC, as well as international organisations to identify activities for enabling cooperative projects between Arab and European partner states on the management of mixed migration, with the support of relevant international agencies.

February 2008

4 February 2008
Fishing
Zaragoza: During the ministerial conference of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Joe Borg, states that to achieve the goal of sustainable fishing in the Mediterranean, it is necessary to strengthen coordination efforts to meet the growing pressures facing fishing resources, particularly in terms of fishing, pollution, and climate change.

4 February 2008
EU-Algeria
Algiers: The European Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, and the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in a series of meetings held in Algiers, discuss the progress made with regard to Algeria’s membership of the World Trade Organization, its role in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the need to improve the investment climate for European companies. The Commissioner stresses the acceptance of the Pan-European protocol on cumulation of origin, which helps Mediterranean countries produce goods in regional supply chains and still benefit from preferential access to the EU market.
http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/algeria/pr040208_en.htm

7 February 2008
Maritime security
Brussels: The participants of the 4th meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Security review cooperation in the area of transport with particular attention paid to the adoption of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) by all the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries. The RTAP consists
18 February 2008
Neighbourhood
Brussels: During the GAERC session, EU Foreign Ministers conclude that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has proven to be an important instrument for promoting reforms in partner countries. The ministers add that considerable progress has been made in the area of financial cooperation and that the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has already led to an increase in the financial support provided to partners. It stresses the importance of interpersonal contacts and the role of civil society in the framework of the ENP.

19 February 2008
EU-Lebanon
Brussels: The EU-Lebanon Association Council meeting deals with relations between the EU and Lebanon, matters of common interest and regional and international affairs. The EU conveys its concern about the rising tensions in Lebanon and calls for all parties to return to dialogue in a spirit of commitment.

19-21 February 2008
SMAP
Istanbul: Regional workshop on sustainable tourism within the framework of the EU Short and Medium-Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP III). Over 100 participants from the Mediterranean region and the EC come together to discuss sustainable tourism and the management of coastal areas.

20-21 February 2008
Economic Transition
Brussels: Over 200 government representatives, members of civil society, researchers and academics, senior representatives of EU Member States and the EC concerned about economic aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership participate in the 12th Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Economic Transition dealing with the theme “Financial and Banking Services at the Heart of Economic Transition.” A large number of representatives from central banks and banking and financial establishments from the Euro-Mediterranean region attend the conference for the first time.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/etn/12mtg_0208/index_en.htm

20-21 February 2008
Aviation
Paris: The participants in a two-day seminar organised by the Euromed Aviation project conclude that it is necessary to have equivalent safety measures in order to guarantee maximum safety levels in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The seminar is attended by 25 representatives from eight Mediterranean partner countries together with representatives of the European Commission, the European Civil Aviation Conference and other organisations.

www.euromedtransport.org

24-25 February 2008
Euromed Heritage
Thessaloniki: Final conference of the Euromed Heritage III project “Byzantium Early Islam.” This project is designed to bring to the fore and protect Byzantine and Islam culture in the Mediterranean region and to improve the region’s ability to manage this intelligently through cooperation.

www.byzantiumearlyislam.net/

25 February 2008
Aviation
Brussels: The EU and Jordan sign an agreement in the aviation sector authorising EU airline companies to operate flights between Jordan and any EU Member State. This agreement removes nationality restrictions in bilateral airline services agreements, allowing any European airline company to operate flights between Jordan and any European Member State in which it is established.

www.europarl.europa.eu

27 February 2008
Human Rights
Brussels: The members of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights express serious concerns about the conditions in which Palestinians are being held in Israeli prisons. Several deputies conclude that the European Parliament should send an information-gathering mission to Israel.

www.europarl.europa.eu
2009 Information Society
Cairo: Ministers at the second Euromed Ministerial Conference on Information Society called “Building an Enabling Environment for the Euromed Information Society” emphasise the important role played by the information society, research and innovation in business competitiveness, job creation and overcoming the challenges of globalisation. The aim of the conference is to discuss the implementation of a competitive Euro-Mediterranean information society based on win-win partnerships and public-private investments and to encourage the strengthening of dialogue between Euro-Mediterranean partner countries.
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/conf

March 2008

7 March 2008 Neighbourhood
Brussels: EU Commissioner, Ferrero-Waldner, and the Egyptian Minister for International Cooperation, Fayza Aboulenna, sign a memorandum of understanding for the National Indicative Programme 2007-2010. The aim of the programme, which consists of an aid package totalling 558 million euros, is to support the reform process and implementation of the EU-Egypt ENP Action Plan. Egypt is one of the main beneficiaries of EU support in the region and the EU is the second largest donor of support to Egypt.
www.eu-delegation.org.eg

10 March 2008 EU-Algeria
Brussels: During the EU-Algeria Association Council, the chair of the session, Slovenian Foreign Minister Rupel, stresses that Algeria was a strategic partner of the EU and played a key role in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in the Arab League and in Africa in general. He says that the EU understands that reform processes are difficult and lengthy but that it nonetheless wishes to establish a genuine partnership with Algeria that will be of mutual benefit.

10-11 March 2008 Media
Ljubljana: The Euromed and the Media Task Force meet to discuss its work programme and to prepare its contribution to the Euromed Ministerial Meeting on Culture and Cultural Dialogue. The participants in this two-day meeting also take part in a public information session and debate with the local media and diplomatic corps.

10-13 March 2008 Medibtikar
Casablanca: The second seminar on business innovation organised within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Medibtikar programme brings together participants from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to study how to implement and finance innovation projects. The Medibtikar programme offers partner Mediterranean countries novel, improved instruments to stimulate innovation in private and public companies and to promote networking.
www.medibtikar.eu

13-14 March 2008 UIM
Brussels: The European Council approves of the principal of the Union for the Mediterranean, which would include EU Member States and non-EU Mediterranean coastal states. In a declaration included in the presidency conclusions, EU Heads of State and Government invite the European Commission to present to the Council the necessary proposals for defining the modalities of what will be called ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean’ with a view to the summit which will take place in Paris on 13 July 2008.

27-28 March 2008 EMPA
Athens: The fourth plenary session of the EMPA welcomes the proposal for a Union for the Mediterranean, describing it as a “fresh impetus given to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.” Recommendations are adopted in the following areas: ways for parliaments to contribute to the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict; monitoring of the implementation of the code of conduct for the fight against terrorism; the promotion of environment-friendly forms of energy; the promotion of investment through education and job creation; the strengthening of intercultural dialogue, freedom of expression and respect for religions; the role of media in education; dialogue between cultures and the impact of radical climate change in the Mediterranean Basin. Since Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, the EMPA has grown from 240 to 260 members.
www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

April 2008

3 April 2008 Tourism
Fez: Ministers at the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Tourism issue a series of conclusions on future economic, environmental and cultural cooperation between the EU and its southern partners with regard to the further development of sustainable tourism. They decide that the conference of ministers responsible for tourism should be held every two years, which will allow working groups of senior officials to prepare further action plans for future cooperation in the area of tourism in the Mediterranean.
www.eu2008.si

8 April 2008 Agadir Agreement
Brussels: The Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) organises the First Agadir Member States Investment Forum in cooperation with the EC, the European Parliament (EP) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The four states that sign the Agadir Agreement are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The EU finances a project that supports the Agadir Agreement, designed to reinforce south-south cooperation and to work towards a free
trade area by 2010. The forum focused in particular on the improvement of legal frameworks surrounding investments, the encouragement of partnerships between EU and southern Mediterranean companies and the development of EU investment in the region.

10 April 2008
Environment
Brussels: The EC and the EIB present the results of a study on potential investments aimed at reducing pollution in a number of sensitive areas in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. The study, conducted within the framework of the Horizon 2020 initiative, recognises the need to establish a programme to help these countries to reduce their waste disposal at sea.

11-13 April 2008
Politics and Security
Malta: The 24th Information and Training Seminar for Euro-Med Diplomats focuses on progress made in the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Five-Year Work Programme and recent developments. The seminar brings together diplomats from the 27 EU Member States and 12 Mediterranean partner countries, including Mauritania and Albania. The main objective of the Malta seminars is to help participants to become familiar with the Euro-Mediterranean process. www.euromed-seminars.org.mt/seminar24/programme.htm

14-17 April 2008
Euromed Market
Bucharest: Meeting of the Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Fight Against Counterfeiting Piracy in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The aim of the meeting is to share knowledge and experiences and to promote a common approach in the Euro-Mediterranean region regarding legislation, procedures, and their application to facilitate trade between Euro-Mediterranean partners. www.euromedmarket.org

15 April 2008
Politics and Security
Brussels: Senior officials from the Euro-Mediterranean region meet to discuss political dialogue and technical cooperation in various areas such as combating terrorism, culture, intercultural dialogue, tourism, the information society, the role of women in society and higher education.

17-18 April 2008
Industry
Brussels: Meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Task Force on Industrial Cooperation, which includes representatives of all the Mediterranean partner countries, EU Member States and Turkey, as well as representatives from different business organisations, international organisations and varying European Commission departments. The aim of the meeting is to prepare the work programme for 2009-2010, which focuses on five key areas: the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise, access to markets, investment, innovation and textiles/clothing.

28 April 2008
EU-Egypt
Luxembourg: During the fourth EU-Egypt Association Council meeting, the Slovenian Secretary of State declares, on behalf of the Slovenian Presidency, that the meeting has been conducted in a spirit of openness and friendship. He adds that Egypt is a key partner of the EU in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East and as such receives a lot of attention from the EU. Discussions also focus on bilateral issues and the situations in the Middle East, Lebanon, and Kosovo.

28-30 April 2008
Water
Marrakech: The Second MEDA Water Regional Event is organised within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Programme for Local Water Management. The discussion focuses on important topics such as irrigation water management, drought management, water information, improvement of decision-making in rural water supply and wastewater reuse. www.medawater-rmsu.org/meetings/2nd_MWP_conference.htm

May 2008

5 May 2008
Energy
Brussels: The European Commissioner for External Relations and the ENP, Ferrero-Waldner, and the European Commissioner for Energy, Piébalgs, meet representatives from the Mashreq countries, Iraq and Turkey to discuss improving security in the region and in the EU, in particular by deepening cooperation on natural gas.

5 May 2008
FEMIP
Tunis: Conference organised by the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) and Sanabel, the network of microfinance institutions in Arab countries, entitled “Microfinance in the Mediterranean: What Impact?” The conference brings together almost 400 participants to discuss, with some 30 speakers, issues related to micro-credit institutions, the banking sector, finance institutions, academia and civil society. According to the conclusions of a study published during the conference, microfinance represents a potential market for 40 million beneficiaries.

7-8 May 2008
Tempus
Cairo: Launching of the fourth phase of the Tempus programme designed to support modernisation efforts in higher education in 28 partner countries from the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. The conference also provides a platform for dialogue between university experts and students from the 27 EU Member States and 28 partners of the Tempus programme.

19 May 2008
Neighbourhood
Brussels: During the first meeting of the Governing Board of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility, European Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner declares that the ENP was already bearing fruit for both the EU and its partners. The Commissioner states that the new Neighbourhood Investment Facility is a clear political message to neighbouring countries that the EU is serious about achieving closer relations and shared prosperity. The facility will mobilise additional funds to finance infrastructure projects mainly in areas such as energy, transport and the environment.
20 May 2008

UfM
Brussels: The EC adopts a communication containing proposals aimed at strengthening relations with its Mediterranean partners thanks to the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.” The main proposal is the creation of a secretariat and standing committee of European and Mediterranean representatives. The policy paper also outlines ideas for the kind of projects that would constitute viable and tangible efforts to improve the lives and livelihoods of citizens in the region.

22 May 2008

Dialogue Night
Dialogue Night aims to bring together civil society groups working in the area of dialogue and the general public to build on the common cultural heritage of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a crossroad of civilisations. Major events and actions take place in towns and cities on both shores of the Mediterranean, including Alexandria, Barcelona, Palermo and Rabat. A variety of events are organised, ranging from food festivals organised by immigrant communities to concerts open to the general public. The events also include a dimension of public debate and discussion on issues regarding coexistence in the region. Dialogue Night is organised to take place exactly one week before decision-makers arrive in Athens for the Euromed Ministerial Conference on Culture and Cultural Dialogue.

www.dialogueinaction.net/dialoguenight

26 May 2008

Financial Cooperation
Brussels: The EIB and the EC sign a memorandum of understanding aimed at improving the coordination of the EU’s external lending policies. The aim of the initiative is to facilitate coordination, coherence and synergies between EU assistance instruments and EIB financing, thus increasing the efficiency and visibility of EU action towards third countries.

26 May 2008

Euromed Migration II
Brussels: More than 76 participants from both MEDA and EU countries participate in the opening conference of the Euromed Migration II project. This new regional project will strengthen EU cooperation with its Mediterranean partners on migration issues and reinforce partners’ capabilities. Cooperation will cover issues such as mechanisms to promote legal immigration opportunities, the fight against human trafficking and illegal immigration, and the correlation between migration and development. Four working groups will formulate recommendations respectively on regulatory convergence, the job market, the fight against illegal immigration and money transfers from migrants.

www.euromed-migration.eu

29-30 May 2008

Culture
Athens: The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Culture and Intercultural Dialogue, which is a platform for promoting dialogue between cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region, focuses on analysing actions necessary to reinforce cooperation in the area of culture. In order to accelerate the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean culture strategy, the ministers agree to implement a monitoring mechanism that foresees the establishment of a group of culture experts who would meet regularly before each ministerial conference.

June 2008

4 June 2008

Principality of Monaco
Brussels: Prince Albert of Monaco, during a meeting with Dimitrij Rupel, the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the GAERC, voices Monaco’s wish to join the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and also participate in the Union for the Mediterranean initiative. The Slovenian Minister informs Prince Albert that the Committee of High Representatives has already given a favourable opinion on the Principality of Monaco’s membership of the Euromed. He also recalls that the representatives of Monaco are invited to participate as guests at the meeting of high representatives programmed for the following week.

5-6 June 2008

FRONTEX
Luxembourg: EU Justice and Home Affair Ministers reaffirm the need for better management of external borders with better use of technology. In their conclusions on the management of EU external borders, the ministers stress the need to reinforce the role of FRONTEX within the framework of the global approach to migration and the relevant external financial instruments.

6 June 2008

EMPA and UfM
Brussels: Members of the EP express their support for the “fresh political and practical impetus” given to the Barcelona Process in order to raise its profile and highlight its tangible benefits for citizens, in particular, those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. They, nevertheless, ask for concrete projects such as solar electricity and water desalination to be promoted. According to a joint resolution adopted at a plenary session, the EMPA should become the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.

9 June 2008

EMUNI
Portoroz: EU representatives, rectors and other academic representatives par-
participate in the inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI). The Slovenian Prime Minister and President of the European Council states that the EMUNI would not have been possible without the solidarity demonstrated, throughout the set-up process, by a great many academic institutions from all over the Euro-Mediterranean region.

www.emuni.si

12 June 2006
Gender Equality
Brussels: Launch of the new regional programme “Enhancing equality between men and women in the EuroMed region.” The aims of the programme are to support and reinforce current dynamics that favour both de jure and de facto gender equality, to improve understanding and knowledge of the various forms of violence against women, and to ensure that the Istanbul ministerial conclusions on strengthening the role of women in society are being followed up.

www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net/

16 June 2008
Environment
Tunis: Representatives of Euromed ministries for the environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), financial institutions, EC departments, and representatives of civil society participate in the second meeting of the steering group of the Horizon 2020 initiative, which aims to reduce the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. The participants agree on the next steps that should be undertaken and on the need to look for synergies with initiatives in the region.


16 June 2008
Migration
Luxembourg: EU Foreign Ministers underline the importance of continuing the dialogue, partnership and cooperation with third countries on migration issues. In its conclusions on “Enhancing the Global Approach to Migration,” the General Affairs Council recalls the measures envisaged within the framework of this approach in terms of priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean.

17 June 2008
Migration
Brussels: The European Commission adopts a communication entitled “A Common Immigration Policy for Europe: Principles, Actions and Tools” and a “Policy Plan on Asylum: an Integrated Approach to Protection Across the EU.” The communication puts forward 10 common principles on which to base the common immigration policy. These principles are linked to the three main strands of EU policy: prosperity, solidarity and security. The Policy Plan on Asylum provides for the architecture of the second phase of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

19-20 June 2008
UfM
Brussels: The Heads of State or Government state in their conclusions adopted at the European Council that the EU will conduct the necessary consultations with all Euro-Mediterranean partners with a view to preparing a joint declaration to be adopted at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean on 13 July 2008.

22-30 June 2008
Youth
Ajloun: 24 youth workers and youth leaders representing 14 countries (seven MEDA and seven European) meet to discuss the interactions between religious, spiritual and humanistic traditions, as well as the need to promote understanding and mutual respect of other people’s beliefs. Euromed Youth III is an EU-funded regional programme aimed at fostering mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue among young people in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

www.euromedyouth.net/spip.php?breve45

23-24 June 2008
EUPOL COPPS
Luxembourg: The EU adopts a decision on its police mission for the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS) with which it increases the financial reference amount for this mission to six million euros for the period from 1 March 2008 to 31 December 2008 in order to allow for the reinforcement of its activities. The mission is expanded to cover the criminal justice system.

24 June 2008
Committee of the Regions
Marseille: The President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) presents an initiative aimed at establishing a permanent institutional framework for the partnership between the regions and cities of the EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries that will allow them to enter into direct dialogue with the European institutions. The EU’s regional programme funds a project named MED-PACT that encourages dialogue and cooperation between cities and their civil societies on both sides of the Mediterranean with the aim of improving mutual understanding.

www.cor.europa.eu

30 June 2008
Justice
Brussels: Opening Conference of the Euromed Justice II project attended by over 60 participants, eight MEDA countries and 17 EU Member States. The global objective of the project is to consolidate the rule of law based on common values, the strengthening of democracy and good governance. The project will sustain the development of institutional capacities of the MEDA partners in the field of justice as well as the modernisation of the legal systems and the improvement of access to justice for the most vulnerable persons.

30 June-1 July 2008
Women
Cairo: Regional Seminar on Women’s Economic Participation. The participants debate key challenges facing women in terms of labour force participation and entrepreneurship in the region. Examples are social protection and the right to property.

www.roleofwomenineconomiclife.net

July 2008

July 1 2008
French Presidency
Brussels: France takes up the six-month rotating presidency of the EU Council. The President of the Republic and Prime Minister identify four priorities that France would like to see dealt with: overall and consensual management of migration, energy policy and sustainable develop-
Trade Ministers from 27 EU countries and 13 Mediterranean partner countries (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Turkey, and Libya as an observer) come together for the seventh Euromed Trade Ministerial Conference. The ministers make progress on the ways to enhance economic integration and diversification and boost Euro-Mediterranean trade and investment with the objective of achieving a genuine Free Trade Area by 2010.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barrosostor-speeches_articles/sppm210_en.htm

2-3 July 2008
Aviation
Cyprus: Workshop on safety requirements within the framework of the Euromed Aviation project. The workshop is focused on laying the foundation, mechanisms and working arrangements for the extension of the Single Sky initiative to the countries of the Europe-Middle East Air Traffic Management Cooperation.

www.euromedtransport.org/index.php?id=462&L=0

4 July 2008
EU-Egypt
Brussels: Negotiators reach a preliminary agreement to further liberalise trade in agricultural, processed agricultural and fish and fishery products between the EU and Egypt. This agreement will form the basis of a future agreement, subject to completion of both sides’ internal procedures. The agreement will give the EU free and immediate access to the Egyptian market for around 90% of agriculture and fisheries exports. In return, the EU market will be liberalised for all products except for certain products where current arrangements will continue to apply.

9 July 2008
Galileo
Strasbourg: In a ceremony at the EP, President Hans-Gert Pöttering and the French Presidency of the Council officially sign into law an important regulation on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), including the Galileo programme. The Galileo project is a global constellation of 30 satellites and ground control infrastructure. The EuropeAid regional programme finances the project METIS, which aims at defining a common, shared European Mediterranean policy on the implementation of GNSS services and at paving the way for the introduction of EGNOS and GALILEO services in the Mediterranean region.

www.euromedinfo.eu/site/168/news.en.4164.html

9-13 July 2008
A Sea of Words
Barcelona: Meeting of winners of the competition “A Sea of Words.” The competition is organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) within the framework of the 1001 Actions for Dialogue programme launched by the Anna Lindh Foundation. The project is aimed at the exploration of new approaches in matters of intercultural dialogue that can lead towards an opening of our social environment, contributing to fostering a more dynamic and varied society in which young people can play an important role in the learning process implicit in the mutual understanding of different cultures that live together in the same space made up by the Euro-Mediterranean region.


10 July 2008
Migration
Strasbourg: French President and EU Council President Nicolas Sarkozy, and EC President Jose Manuel Barroso, both state that Europe needs to discuss ways of managing immigration. President Sarkozy, on addressing the EP to present the priorities for the French six-month rotating presidency, asks, “is it reasonable for each country to have its own immigration rules without taking into account the impact on others?” He believes immigration and asylum must be debated at European level, citing the problem of asylum seekers who can lodge 27 separate applications throughout the EU.

10 July 2008
ENPI
Brussels: The EP approves the EC proposal for a regulation laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Since 2007, financial support for the ENP and ENP countries is provided through this instrument, which replaces the MEDA and TACIS and other existing instruments. The ENPI is a “policy-driven” instrument operating in the framework of the existing bilateral agreements between the Community and neighbouring countries. It will focus in particular on supporting the implementation of the ENP Action Plans.

11 July 2008
Statistics
Brussels: The EC and Israel sign a memorandum of understanding establishing the basis for a sustainable exchange of data between the Israeli statistical office and Eurostat within the context of the ENP. Israel is the first Mediterranean partner country to sign such a memorandum. The statistical offices of Morocco and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are expected to follow. Negotiations with other Mediterranean partner countries on similar memoranda are being carried out.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu

11 July 2008
EESC
Brussels: The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) underlines the importance of “a strong involvement of civil society organisations and economic and social partners in the institutional framework of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean” and expresses “full support” to the initiative, which aims to give new impetus to the process.

http://eesc.europa.eu

12 July 2008
EMPA
Brussels: On the eve of the Summit for the Mediterranean, Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the EP and the EMPA, presides an extraordinary meeting of the
The EC will provide a total of 42 million euros in assistance to Lebanon under the ENP. Core sectors for this assistance are the development of the private sector, local development in northern Lebanon and the modernisation of the justice system. The Commissioner for External Relations and ENP comments that the improvement of rule of law, a stronger private sector and reconstruction in northern Lebanon would all contribute to the political and economic stabilisation of the country.

16 July 2008
Education
Brussels: The European Commissioner in charge of education and the Israeli Minister of Education sign a joint declaration on cooperation and dialogue in education and training. The declaration will be an effective tool to contribute to the objectives of the 2005 Action Plan under the ENP. The move intensifies cooperation on education and training matters with Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israeli and Palestinian universities now fully profit from participation in the EU’s external cooperation programmes in higher education, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus.

16 July 2008
Transport
Brussels: Meeting of the Working Group for Infrastructure and Land Transport Regulatory Issues within the framework of the Euromed Transport programme. The main topic of the discussion is the monitoring of the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) and the next steps toward fulfilling the aims of the RTAP. The experts agree to propose a list of priority projects that can be funded within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean or other programmes.

www.euromedtransport.org/index.php?id=48&L=0

17 July 2008
Lebanon
Brussels: The EC will provide a total of 42 million euros in assistance to Lebanon under the ENP. Core sectors for this assistance are the development of the private sector, local development in northern Lebanon and the modernisation of the justice system. The Commissioner for External Relations and ENP comments that the improvement of rule of law, a stronger private sector and reconstruction in northern Lebanon would all contribute to the political and economic stabilisation of the country.

24-25 July 2008
Migration
Brussels: EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs discuss the state of progress made with the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum. The Council also holds a policy debate on two draft directives: one relating to the conditions of entry and residence for third country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment; the other concerning sanctions that may be taken against undocumented migrants.

27 July-1 August 2008
Journalism
Malta: The European Neighbourhood Journalist Network (ENJN) organises its first training session, in which a team of reporters from the Middle East delves into the thorny issue of illegal immigration on the island of Malta. Reporters from Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Syria spent the week working on their journalistic skills. The ENJN is a regional project aimed at training journalists from southern Mediterranean, Eastern European and southern Caucasus countries and facilitating networking between journalists from these regions.

www.journalismnetwork.eu

August 2008

1 August 2008
EU-Israel
Brussels: The EU and Israel reach a preliminary agreement to further liberalise trade in agricultural and processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products. This will form the basis of a future agreement, subject to completion of both sides’ internal procedures. Once adopted, the agreement will create new trade opportunities for EU exporters in a large range of products that could not previously reach the Israeli market. Israel’s major export sectors will benefit from better access to the EU market.

20 August 2008
PEGASE
Brussels: The EU provides an additional 40 million euros to the Palestinian Authority to help meet its recurrent expenditures and ensure the continued delivery of public services. The funds will be used to help pay for salaries and pensions, social allowances to vulnerable Palestinian families and fuel for the power plant to provide electricity to the people of Gaza. The funds are channelled through PEGASE, the EU assistance mechanism for the Palestinians.

www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu

September 2008

15-17 September 2008
Migration
Brussels: In the framework of the programme Euromed Migration II, the first session of the working group is dedicated to travel documentation and identification of migrants. It deals with the prevention of falsification and forgery of travel and other documents and the use of information technologies for efficient immigration control. The working group is composed of high level officials from the EU and Mediterranean countries.

www.euromed-migration.eu

19 September 2008
Human Rights
Brussels: In a written statement released by the French EU Council Presidency, the EU expresses its concern with the situation regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria. The EU
condemns the recent arbitrary arrests and says it is deeply troubled by the restrictions on freedom of expression. It calls on Damascus to abide by the international commitments it has freely entered into.


22-23 September 2008
Justice
Barcelona: Meeting of Working Group on Access to Justice and Legal Aid within the framework of the Euromed Justice programme. Participants at the first meeting on “The Universal Meaning of Access to Justice” present and discuss the current situation in their countries. The working group will make proposals on how to improve access to justice, practical tools to implement, access to justice for more vulnerable people, justice efficacy and means to accelerate procedures.

www.euromed-justice.eu

24-26 September 2008
Drug trafficking
Toulon: The French Presidency of the EU Council organises a seminar on the fight against drug trafficking in the western Mediterranean. The meeting follows up on a previous meeting held in Paris that brought together officials from the relevant national and international bodies for combating drug trafficking (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, Europol, Interpol, the European Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) to take stock of drug trafficking in the western Mediterranean Basin. The conclusions of the meeting set forth the need to set up an operational centre for the analysis of maritime intelligence on narcotics in the Mediterranean.

October 2008

6-10 October 2008
Journalism
Beirut: Around 20 French-speaking journalists from Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia are invited to participate in the second seminar organised within the ENJN programme on “Conflict Resolution in the Middle East with Assistance from the EU.” Following exchanges and meetings, the journalists produce television and radio reports and publish articles in their countries.

www.journalismnetwork.eu

7 October 2008
Finance
Luxembourg: The Euro-Mediterranean Finance Ministers move forward on the financing of specific projects for the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean and affirm their determination to continue their work in favour of economic growth despite the financial, energy and food crisis. According to a press release issued by the French Presidency of the EU Council, the ministers emphasise the role played by the FEMIP in three of the projects: the depollution of the Mediterranean, motorways of the sea and the Mediterranean solar plan. Lastly, the ministers express their support for the approach adopted by Italy and Spain to implement the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative.

7 October 2008
Energy
Brussels: The expert group of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum meets to discuss the 2008-2013 Priority Action Plan for Energy Cooperation and other topics such as the state of play of cooperation in the area of market integration and regulatory harmonisation, sustainable development, and developments in energy interconnections and infrastructure projects of common interest in the region.

9-10 October 2008
Aviation
Luxembourg: The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council adopts a decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Lebanon to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Air Agreement. This move is based on the Commission’s opinion on the need to establish a general aviation policy vis-à-vis the EU’s neighbouring countries. The purpose of this agreement will be to align legislative provisions and establish cooperation on security, safety and environmental standards. It will also be aimed at ensuring the gradual opening of markets between the EU and Lebanon.


10-11 October 2008
Youth
Amman: Conclusion of the 3rd phase of the Euro-Med Youth programme promoting the mobility of young people. The last meeting brings together representatives of the Euromed Youth Units, national agencies for the Youth in Action Programme, the EC, and some partner institutions. The meeting is an opportunity to provide an update on the last two years of cooperation, to present the main outcomes and share perspectives for future cooperation in a new phase to be launched in 2009.

www.euromedyouth.net

12-13 October 2008
EMPA
Jordan: During the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) recommends that the EMPA become the parliamentary institution of the process. The EMPA wishes to see a legal base created and a formal link established between the executive branch and the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. The recommendation, adopted during the extraordinary plenary session defined the role of the EMPA as a consultative body.

www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

13 October 2008
EU-Morocco
Brussels: During the 7th meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council, the EU approves a package of measures designed to grant Morocco “advanced status” within the framework of the ENP and to strengthen its ties with Europe. These measures concern in particular cooperation in political and security matters, the preparation of a comprehensive and deeper free trade agreement, the gradual integration of Morocco into a number of EU sectoral policies, and the development of people-to-people exchanges.

www.delmar.ece.europa.eu/fr/maroc_home/index.htm
14-16 October 2008
EESC
Rabat: Euro-Mediterranean civil society organisations call for a greater implication of civil society organisations in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. This declaration is made at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils and similar Institutions organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in conjunction with Moroccan civil society organisations, with the support of Morocco’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EC.
http://eesc.europa.eu

16 October 2008
Migration
Brussels: The European Council adopts the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, which expresses the commitment of the EU and its Member States to conduct a fair, effective and consistent policy for dealing with the challenges and opportunities that migration represents. The pact will form the basis, for the EU and its Member States, of a common immigration and asylum policy, guided by a spirit of solidarity between Member States and cooperation with third countries. The Council also reaffirms the objective of an overall agreement on issues regarding energy and climate change by the end of the year.

16-17 October 2008
EuroMeSCo
Amman: Annual EuroMeSCo Conference, entitled “Euro-Mediterranean Relations Between Continuity and Reinforced Cooperation. Quo Vadis Barcelona?” The choice of topic for this conference corresponds to the current concern about Euro-Mediterranean relations. The French initiative designed to re-dynamise the somewhat languishing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, forcibly introduces into the agenda the re-evaluation of the Process launched in Barcelona in 1995. The experts at the conference also discuss the dimensions and objectives of the Barcelona Process and the soundness of its foundations.
www.euromesco.net

31 October-2 November 2008
Euromed Civil Forum
Marseille: Civil society actors gather at the 2008 Euromed Civil Forum to identify recommendations and proposals to send to Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. The final statement insists particularly on the need to respect human rights and the rights of migrants on both the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. A range of proposals are presented; for example, the elimination of short-term visas, which according to the declaration, hamper family ties and people-to-people exchanges and also affect artistic, scientific, and educational exchanges.
www.euromedplatform.org

November 2008

3-4 November 2008
Ministerial Meeting
Marseille: The Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers adopt a final declaration on the following areas: the institutional structures of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, their work programme for 2009, the fields of cooperation to be pursued and the state of progress in the implementation of projects that have already got the green light. The ministers propose renaming the process “Union for the Mediterranean” (UM). They decide that the League of Arab States should participate in all meetings to contribute positively to the objectives of the process, i.e., the establishment of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region. On the structure of the UMF, it is decided that the co-presidency should apply to summits and meetings and that one of the co-presidents will be from the EU and the other from the Mediterranean partner countries. Barcelona was chosen as the seat of the Secretariat.

3-4 November 2008
Euromed Audiovisual II
Marseille: The Euromed Audiovisual II programme is featured in the Mediterranean Cultural Forum (EGCM). Eight thematic seminars are organised following the Civil Forum and the Interministerial Conference, which gather the 43 countries of the UMF, on themes spanning the entire cultural action (heritage, arts, education, etc.) in order to develop this new entity’s cultural policies. The programme presents to an audience of European and Mediterranean audiovisual representatives the strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual cooperation produced by a reflection group.
www.euromedaudiovisuel.net

5 November 2008
Arab League
Brussels: Secretary General of the League of Arab States Amr Moussa meets the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee as part of the Arab Week at the European Parliament. Moussa states that he hopes for a change of method in the Middle East with the arrival of the new American government and recalls that they need the EU’s commitment in the peace process. He says that it is necessary to put an end to the settlements in the occupied territories and welcomes the fact that it has been decided at the Ministerial Summit in Marseille that the Arab League should participate in the Union for the Mediterranean at all levels.
www.europarl.europa.eu

5-6 November 2008
Industry
Nice: Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Industry Ministers to decide further measures to deepen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on enterprise and industry policies for the subsequent two years (2009–2010). The ministerial meeting adopts a report of an analysis of the business environment in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian territories, Syria and Tunisia. The report underlines the efforts made to promote enterprise creation but mentions that more work is needed to effectively promote entrepreneurship, in particular among women and young graduates.

6 November 2008
Neighbourhood
Brussels: The EP Foreign Affairs Committee gives its assent for increased participation by Israel in community programmes as part of the ENP. An accompanying resolution links this participation to respect for the commitments given by Israel at the Annapolis summit. The members of Parliament state that
companies and organisations based in the settlements in the occupied territories should not be eligible to take part in the process.  
www.europarl.europa.eu

9-10 November 2008
Employment
Marrakesh: The employment and labour ministers from the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries meet at their first ministerial conference on employment and work, which focuses on the human potential of the Euro-Mediterranean area. The conference provides the opportunity to examine various aspects of human development and to advance specific proposals aimed at fostering job creation, the modernisation of labour markets and decent work. The ministers also discuss the resources and tools to implement to give the Euro-Mediterranean project a social dimension.
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/conf

10 November 2008
EU-Jordan
Brussels: The 7th EU-Jordan Association Council provides the occasion to conduct a general review between the EU and Jordan. The EU is conscious of the determined commitment by this country to work for regional development and stability. Jordan, a founding member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, is one of the very first countries to enter into relations with the EU through an Association Agreement and later a Neighbourhood Action Plan. The launch of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean will give fresh impetus to relations.

11 November 2008
EU-Tunisia
Brussels: The 7th EU-Tunisia Association Council provides the EU and Tunisia with the opportunity to take stock of their cooperation and economic and trade relations. Tunisia is the first southern Mediterranean country to form a free-trade area on industrial goods with the EU. Within this context, the EU says that it is willing to study the Tunisian proposal for an enhanced partnership along the lines of the “advanced status” enjoyed by Morocco.

12 November 2008
EU-Libya
Brussels: Libya and the EU start negotiations with a view to closing the EU-Libya framework agreement. The agreement will provide for political dialogue and cooperation on foreign policy and security issues, for a free trade area, and for cooperation in key areas of common concern such as energy, transport, migration, visas, justice and home affairs, the environment, maritime policy, fisheries, education and public health. Fundamental principles underpinning the agreement will be the respect for human rights and democracy, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and commitment to the rules of the market economy.

16-17 November 2008
Health
Cairo: Health Ministers of the 27 EU Member States and their counterparts from 16 Mediterranean partner countries meet to make health one of the priorities of the UfM. The ministers discuss improving regional cooperation in the area of monitoring and surveillance of communicable diseases, the sharp growth in chronic diseases in partner countries and strengthening national healthcare systems.

17 November 2008
EuroMedScola
Strasbourg: The first meeting of EuroMedScola enables 250 young people aged 16 to 18 to debate key issues facing the Mediterranean region, such as migration, education, energy and transport. The students call for exchange programmes between students from all the partner countries of the Union for the Mediterranean to be set up. They also advise governments in the Euro-Mediterranean region to promote educational reforms that will allow the diffusion of the idea of equal opportunity at all levels.
www.europarl.europa.eu

20 November 2008
Medibtikar
Marseille: The aim of the conference entitled “Towards the Creation of a Regional Innovation Financing Instrument for the Mediterranean” is to examine with interested partners an action plan for setting up a financing and accompanying instrument for innovative start-ups in the Mediterranean region. Medibtikar aims at providing Mediterranean Partner Countries with new instruments designed to reinforce existing SME supporting structures in order to stimulate the innovation chain.
www.animaweb.org

25 November 2008
Energy
Istanbul: Representatives of the national energy agencies of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey attend a Power Breakfast organised by the EU-funded project Euro-Mediterranean Energy Market Integration Project (MED-EMIP). Among the issues presented is the development of a tool to rationalise the allocation of financial resources to renewable energy projects within the different countries taking account of local conditions. It is stated that a team of national expert institutions is to be formed and supported by regional and international experts in order to help allocate scarce limited local budgets most efficiently. The parties also agree on the need and importance of south-south and north-south cooperation.
www.medemip.eu

28 November 2008
Tempus Programme
Brussels: The EC gives its approval to 63 university cooperations and 13 other high-quality projects under the new phase of the Tempus programme, selected from 530 applications. In total, 900 universities (600 from partner countries and 300 from EU Member States) will participate in these projects. The aim of the Tempus programme is to support the modernisation of higher education and to create an area of cooperation in countries outside the EU.
www.animaweb.org

December 2008
2 December 2008
Energy
Brussels: The EC and the Arab Republic of Egypt sign a memorandum of understanding to enhance EU-Egypt energy cooperation. The areas covered
by the memorandum are energy market reforms and convergence of Egypt’s energy market with that of the EU, promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, development of energy networks as well as technological and industrial cooperation.

2 December 2008
Neighbourhood
Brussels: The Palestinian Authority and the EC hold the first ever meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Good Governance and the Rule of Law within the framework of the ENP. 40 participants from Palestinian Authority ministries, the EC and EU Member States convene to review progress and agree on steps for further action in the area of cooperation.

8-9 December 2008
Association Agreements
Brussels: The European Council welcomes the deepening cooperation with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan. It also welcomes the willingness of Algeria to fully apply the Association Agreement signed with the EU, as well as the re-initiation of negotiations with Libya and the willingness of Egypt to deepen its cooperation with the EU. The Council also announces the future start of the establishment of an Association Agreement between the EU and Syria and recalls the deepening of bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority.

9 December 2008
Aviation
Brussels: The EC and Israel sign an aviation agreement to remove nationality restrictions in bilateral air service agreements between EU Member States and Israel. The agreement will allow any EU airline to operate flights between any EU Member State and Israel where a bilateral agreement with Israel exists and where traffic rights are available.

12 December 2008
Transport
Brussels: The 9th meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum is held in Brussels with the participation of high representatives of the European Commission, Mediterranean countries, EU Member States, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank. The participants analyse future activities to define a Euro-Mediterranean transport network and to submit finalised proposals to the next forum and to the Ministerial Conference on Transport for approval in 2009.

15-17 December 2008
Migration
Brussels: Second working group session on legislative convergence and institutional reform dedicated to the topic of “International Legislation on Migration and International Institutions.” The aim of the meeting is to present the content of the international law on migration and discuss its application in MEDA countries compared to in EU countries.

18 December 2008
Vocational Training
Paris: Euro-Mediterranean Forum on technical and vocational education and training. The topics discussed by approximately 200 participants are what is at stake for the Maghreb and Mashreq countries in developing vocational training and strengthening its effectiveness; an overview of the various vocational training systems in the region and their characteristics; an identification of the most important needs in terms of vocational training; and an exploratory discussion of ways and means to deepen vocational training cooperation.

22 December 2008
Water
Amman: The Euromed Ministerial Conference on Water has two goals: to set the guidelines for a long-term strategy on water in the Mediterranean, and to announce the first concrete projects that are coherent with this strategy. As the problem of water is of interest to all stakeholders (local authorities, companies, non-government associations, researchers, etc.), civil society actors are also invited to meet in order to make an important contribution to this conference.
Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Through the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), NATO is developing closer security partnerships with countries whose security and stability are closely linked to Euro-Atlantic security. The Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are two different but complementary initiatives addressed respectively to the countries of the Mediterranean region and of the broader Middle East. Many of the security challenges these countries must face are common to NATO Member States and, consequently, require common responses. Besides recognizing the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to the stability of the broader Middle East, other important concerns to underpin NATO involvement in these initiatives are political instability, social and economic issues, as well as energy security (with as much as 65% of Europe’s oil and natural gas imports passing through the Mediterranean).

The Mediterranean Dialogue is launched in 1994 by the North Atlantic Council with the aim of contributing to regional security through improved mutual understanding. Initially the MD is conceived as a forum for confidence-building where Allies can learn more about the security concerns of Dialogue countries and at the same time dispel misperceptions about NATO’s aims and policies. Five non-NATO countries join the MD at the beginning (Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The MD is progressive in terms of participation (Jordan joined in 1995 and Algeria in 2000), and content is evolving over time.

Since 1994, political discussion has become more frequent. In the 1997 Madrid Summit, an Annual Work Programme is established; it lays out different areas of practical cooperation with a number of issues and activities including military cooperation, civil emergency planning, and scientific and environmental cooperation. During the same summit, a Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) is created as a steering body having the overall responsibility of the MD and a forum within which political discussions take place either bilaterally or multilaterally.

Through the Washington Summit (1999) and the Prague Summit (2002), a package of measures increase the political and practical dimension of the Dialogue, but it is with the Istanbul Summit (2004), on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Dialogue, that a more ambitious and expanded framework is established. The aim is to elevate the MD to a genuine partnership with the following objectives: enhancing the existing political dialogue through the possibility to meet at the level of ambassadors as well as of ministers and Heads of State and Government; achieving interoperability through the participation in selected military exercises and training activities; developing defence reform; and contributing to the fight against terrorism. The guiding principles of the MD can be summed up as follows: joint ownership (the Dialogue is about taking into account the specific regional, cultural and political context of respective partners and mutual interest), non-discrimination and self-differentiation (all partners are offered the same basis for cooperation but the level of participation is tailored to each country’s needs and interests), complementarity (the MD complements other international initiatives such as the Barcelona Process and the OSCE, Mediterranean Partner Countries for Cooperation), progressiveness (allowing its political and practical dimension to be enhanced regularly and the number of participants to grow).

The political dimension of the MD is based on regular meetings at different levels and formats between NATO and MD countries. Political consults on a bilateral basis (NATO+1 MD country) are held regularly both at ambassadorial and working levels. Since the June 2004 Summit, with the upgrading of the relationship, regular multilateral (NATO+7 MD countries) meetings at the ministerial level have been held: the first ever MD Foreign Ministers’ meeting is held in December 2004 (Brussels), followed by two MD Defence Ministers’ meetings in 2006 (Taormina) and 2007 (Seville), and a Foreign Ministers’ meeting in December 2007 (Brussels). These meetings are usually held following NATO ministerial meetings, summits of Heads of State and Government, and other major NATO events. These meetings are the occasion for NATO’s Secretary General to brief Mediterranean Dialogue Ambassadors on the Alliance’s current agenda. Finally, the political dimension also includes visits by NATO Senior Officials to MD countries in order to meet relevant host authorities and exchange views on the Mediterranean Dialogue, besides getting a better appreciation for each partner’s specific objectives and priorities.

Measures of practical cooperation are laid down in the Annual Work Programme, which includes seminars, workshops, and other practical activities in the fields of public diplomacy, civil emergency planning, crisis management, border secu-
rity, defence reforms and consultations on terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). There is a military dimension of the Annual Work Programme (85% of the activities) that enables MD countries to observe and/or participate in NATO military exercises, attend courses and other academic activities in NATO School, and visit NATO military bodies. At the Istanbul Summit, proposals are made to strengthen the practical dimension of the Dialogue in some priority areas: military-to-military cooperation (to improve the ability of the Alliance and Dialogue countries to operate together in future NATO-led operations), combating terrorism and new security threats (through more effective intelligence-sharing, participation in Operation Active Endeavour and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction), border security (providing tailored advice in the field of tackling terrorism and illegal trafficking), civil emergency planning (enhancing the cooperation in disaster-preparedness) and defence reform (promoting democratic control of armed forces and transparency). In addition to the Annual Work Programme, the practical dimension has been improved through the possibility of finalising Individual Co-operation Programmes (ICPs) offering a tailored cooperation to strategic national needs. So far, Israel and Egypt have completed ICPs with NATO, while Jordan and Mauritania have submitted draft ICPs to Allies. Also, NATO’s Public Diplomacy activities for MD countries have been progressively reinforced since the 2004 Summit. They consist of tailored visit programmes bringing parliamentarians, policy makers, opinion leaders and journalists from MD countries to NATO headquarters; international conferences and seminars; and press tours of journalists from all MD countries. Other initiatives are introduced to the MD countries, such as the Training Co-operation Initiative to share NATO expertise in training and education with MD partners (ICI countries can also apply). Another field of collaboration concerns scientific and environmental cooperation: more than 800 scientists from MD countries have participated in activities regarding environmental security, management of natural resources, water resources, desertification and measures to protect against eco-terrorism. With a view to responding to new challenges, NATO launches the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative (ICI) at the Alliance’s Summit in the Turkish city. It is addressed to the countries of the broader Middle East region, offering them practical bilateral security cooperation to further contribute to long-term global and regional security. It started with individual members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, but it is open to all the countries in the region that subscribe to the aims and contents of the initiatives, including the fight against terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction. By mid-2005, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates had joined, while Oman and Saudi Arabia had shown interest. Priority areas of the Initiative are providing tailored advice on defence reform, budgeting and planning; promoting military-to-military cooperation; fighting against terrorism; addressing threats imposed by weapons of mass destruction; advising in the field of border security and civil emergency planning. The development and planning of these activities is granted by the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Group (ICIG) in cooperation with the concerned country. The ICIG consists of political counsellors from the 26 NATO Member countries and defines individual work plans with the interested country ensuring the follow-up for their implementation. Also, ICI countries can finalise an ICP programme with NATO according to the Istanbul document and to the discretion of the interested country. Though ICI and MD have almost the same aims and are governed by the same principles, they are different, the first one meant to promote only practical cooperation on a bilateral basis with the countries of the broader Middle East and the second one being a forum for political consultations and practical cooperation, on a bilateral and multilateral level and involving Mediterranean countries.

In order to better outline the framework of NATO initiatives in the Mediterranean, it is worth mentioning the role and action of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM). It provides a forum for parliamentarians from NATO and the MENA region to discuss political and security issues. As a formal mechanism to address regional challenges, the GSM was launched in 1996, but North Atlantic Assembly started a dialogue with MENA countries in the early nineties. This dialogue consisted of visits, seminars, and ultimately the granting, in 1994, of the status of parliamentary observer to the parliaments of Israel and Morocco. The GSM organises two seminars a year and a visit to one of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries in order to improve mutual understanding. In addition, GSM produces informative reports dealing with the most pressing security and political issues of the region. Originally six countries started up with GSM, namely Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, but it then also included Malta, Cyprus, Algeria and the Palestinian Authority. During the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA) session of 2004, members, acknowledging that the observer status no longer provided conditions for cooperation that matched the ambitions of the Dialogue, decide to create the status of “Mediterranean Associate Member.” This status further integrates the Mediterranean partners into Assembly activities, allowing them to participate in most NATO PA meetings and introduce amendments to the Assembly’s reports. Reflecting the strategic importance of the Gulf Region and the launching of the ICI, the NATO PA also started to establish links with parliamentary institutions and advisory councils in the Gulf region. Several MD countries have made significant contributions to the NATO peace-keeping operations in the Balkans. Peacekeepers from Egypt, Jordan and Morocco have served in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Jordan, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have contributed to the force in Kosovo.

Chronology January 2008-December 2008

• 28 January, Doha (Qatar): NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Qatar Centre for Military Studies co-organise a conference on “NATO’s Role for Stability and Peace.” Participants include high-level academics, government officials, opinion leaders and journalists.
from Gulf countries. They take stock on
Qatar-NATO cooperation, which has in-
tensified in participation and fields of
cooperation.
• 24 January, Dubai (United Arab Em-
irates): NATO Secretary General pays
his first official visit to UAE. Cooperation
with UAE is intensifying in terms of num-
er of activities and fields covered (par-
ticularly in training and education).
• 5 March, Beer Sheva (Israel): NATO
Public Diplomacy Division and Ben-Gu-
or University co-organise a seminar on
“NATO in the 21st Century and the
Mediterranean Dialogue.” The event rep-
resents an opportunity to provide a
better understanding of NATO and MD
to high-level academics, scholars and of-
icials. The seminar focuses on NATO
transformation, environmental change and
security.
• 10-12 March, Brussels (Belgium): Bahrain’s Chief of Public Security visits
NATO headquarters to hold talks with se-
nior officials from the Alliance on issues
of common concerns in the area of ci-
vil emergency planning and crisis ma-
agement.
• 3 April, Bucharest (Romania): at the
North Atlantic Council meeting, Heads of
State and Government note the pro-
gress achieved in the framework of the
MD and ICI: political consultations have
gained in substance and frequency, the
NATO Training Cooperation Initiative
has been implemented as well as the first
ever Mediterranean Trust Fund to as-
sist Jordan and a feasibility study to as-
sist Mauritania has been launched.
• 14-16 May (Egypt): Visit to Egypt
by the members of the GSM. The main
items on the agenda are: the situation in
the Middle East, intercultural dialogue
and Egypt-NATO relations. The visit also
provides a good opportunity for mem-
er of the group to get a sense of the
latest political and economic develop-
ments in Egypt.
• 25 May, Cairo (Egypt): NATO De-
puty Secretary General delivers a key-
note address at the conference “NATO-
Egypt: A Dialogue” with the opening
speech of the Egyptian Minister of For-
eign Affairs. The conference brings to-
gether leaders, academics, parliamen-
tarians, journalists and officials.
• 2 June, Brussels (Belgium): important
step forward in the NATO-Morocco co-
operation. The representatives of NATO
and of the Kingdom of Morocco proce-
ed to exchange letters for the contribu-
tion of Morocco to Operation Active En-
deavour. This participation is foreseen for
all MD countries according to the en-
hanced MD launched at the Istanbul
Summit in 2004.
• 6 June, Belgium (Brussels): visit to
NATO headquarters by high-level mem-
ers of the Mauritanian Parliament. Dur-
ing the briefings, NATO officials cover
different topics: military cooperation un-
der MD, ICI and the fight against terro-
rism.
• 16-17 June, Algiers (Algeria): NATO
Public Diplomacy Division and the Par-
lament of Algeria co-organise a semi-
nar on “Security through Dialogue: The
Role of Parliamentary Institutions in
Strengthening the Mediterranean Dia-
louge.” Senator Cabras, Vice-Chairman
of the GSM, gives a speech on the ori-
gins and evolution of the group in the fra-
mework of the Dialogue.
• 4-5 July, Rome (Italy): over 80 dele-
gates meet for the first annual GSM se-
minar, which is aimed at evaluating the
state of Euro-Mediterranean relations
against the backdrop of new and exis-
ting regional policy initiatives and per-
sisting challenges.
• 8-9 October, Abu Dhabi (United Arab
Emirates): second seminar of the GSM
group and the first NATO Parliamentary
Assembly seminar in a Gulf country. It
tackles political reform in the Middle
East, global energy security and the sta-
tle of the play of NATO GCC coopera-
tion.
• 19-20 October, Doha (Qatar): Work-
shop on “Exchange of Experience on
Security Aspects of Energy Infrastruc-
ture” co-organised by NATO and Qatar.
It is the first NATO event in ICI frame-
work to focus on energy security in the
region. The workshop provides a valu-
able opportunity to explain NATO’s role
in energy security, the political and eco-
nomic situation of the region and its im-
pact on energy supply. Participants agree
that energy security necessitates inter-
national cooperation addressed in a com-
prehensive manner.
• 27 October, Rome (Italy): 3rd NATO
Regional Cooperation Course at the
Defence College with the participation of
MD countries.
• 24-26 November, Tel Aviv (Israel):
international seminar on security dialo-
gue and cooperation in the Middle East
co-organised by NATO Public Diplom-
acy Division and Tel Aviv Institute for
National Security Studies. Participants
include academics, policy makers, and
diplomats, besides civil society repre-
sentatives from many MD countries.
• 1-3 December, Brussels (Belgium):
three-day press tour at NATO head-
quarters for journalists from the MD and
ICI countries and invited from Oman
and Saudi Arabia. The journalists cove-
ered the meetings of the Foreign Minis-
ters of NATO and MD countries.
• 2 December, Brussels (Belgium):
third meeting of the NATO Foreign Mi-
isters with their counterparts of the
MD. Participants agree to deepen their
relationship through political dialogue
and practical cooperation, including the
NATO Training Cooperation Initiative
and trust fund mechanisms. Ministers
also stress the need for a much more
comprehensive international approach to
the piracy issue.
• 10 December, Brussels (Belgium):
vi-
sit of high-level opinion leaders from ICI
to NATO Headquarters. Among the top-
ics discussed: NATO’s transformation
and outreach to the Mediterranean and
broader Middle East region, NATO’s re-
lation with Russia, military cooperation
under ICI and the role of the Civil Emer-
gency Plan.
• 11-12 December, Brussels (Bel-
gium): visit to NATO headquarters of
policy-makers from Morocco. The talks
included the Alliance’s transformation,
NATO’s operations and cooperation in
science and environment. 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 the OSCE

The relationship between the OSCE
and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-
operation (currently Algeria, Egypt, Israel,
Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) goes back
to the Helsinki Final Act, which estab-
lished a number of key commitments on
political-military, economic, and envi-
ronmental and human rights issues. Con-
sidering that some OSCE participating
states border the Mediterranean and that there are strong historical, cultural, economic and political ties between the Mediterranean region and the OSCE area, it is clear that there is an interlinkage between security in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Since the beginning, OSCE Member States have declared their intention to develop good-neighbourly relations with Mediterranean partners and mutually beneficial cooperation in the various fields of economic activity. After Helsinki, a number of OSCE meetings were held on Mediterranean issues to which Mediterranean States were invited to participate. It is in 1994 when OSCE states decide to invite the Mediterranean countries to a series of OSCE activities to forge a closer relationship. These include: Ministerial Council meetings, OSCE conferences, OSCE-troika meetings and seminars, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Furthermore, within the framework of the Permanent Council, a Contact Group for the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation is established: it is an informal group that meets periodically "to facilitate the interchange of information and the generation of ideas." The OSCE has been able to share its experience with Mediterranean Partners on a number of topics: confidence-building; fostering norms of behaviour; providing a security model to face new challenges; and commitments to the human, economic and environmental dimensions, on media and new technologies, migration and integration policies.

In the course of 2008, under the Finnish Chairmanship of the OSCE, some important events have taken place: the Palestinian National Authority has presented an application to become a Mediterranean partner and informal consultations with delegations of the OSCE participating states have started; the Partners for Cooperation have been invited to all the OSCE’s main events, and have regularly attended meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation; the participating states and the Mediterranean partners have exchanged views and concerns in the framework of the Contact Group; and finally, in the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the OSCE (whose aim is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue), a Forum on the Mediterranean has taken place with the goal of developing stronger ties with the OSCE PA and the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation.

**2008 Mediterranean Conference**

27-28 October, Amman (Jordan): after 14 consecutive OSCE seminars, this event is upgraded to a Mediterranean conference in order to underline the aim of adding more weight to the discussions. The Jordan Government invites the Palestinian National Authority as a guest of the host country. The annual OSCE Mediterranean conference gathers representatives of the participating states and the Mediterranean partners, besides international organizations and civil society, to discuss a relevant issue for security in the Mediterranean and in the OSCE broader region. The 2008 conference, under the title "The OSCE Approach to Regional Security – a Model for the Mediterranean," takes into account the further cooperation in countering terrorism, linkages between environment and security, assessing economic activities’ impact on the environment and the OSCE’s human rights and tolerance commitments and their relevance to the Mediterranean region. Concerning this last session, it is worth pointing out the recommendations of the civil society representatives presented during the conference and claiming for the implementation of the OSCE commitments in respect of tolerance and non-discrimination. These recommendations were prepared during the civil society side event that took place before the conference.

**Civil Society Side Event**

26 October, Amman (Jordan): OSCE participating states decide to hold a meeting on the eve of the 2007 Mediterranean seminar on the role of civil society in combating intolerance and discrimination. Following this practice, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) organizes the side event "Cooperation with the Mediterranean Civil Society and NGOs in Promoting Tolerance and Non-Discrimination" in order to enable civil society representatives to prepare recommendations to be presented at the 2008 conference. The side event is also a chance to exchange information on best practices to facilitate coalition-building across diverse cultural and religious communities throughout the OSCE region. Three parallel working groups deal with: empowerment of women as actors in peace building and democratization, migration as an opportunity to improve tolerance and understanding and intercultural dialogue as a conflict prevention tool.

**OSCE Parliamentary Assembly – Forum on the Mediterranean**

18-21 September, Toronto (Canada): in the course of the OSCE PA fall meetings, the Forum on the Mediterranean is organised. It focuses on multilateral initiatives to promote integration and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, including the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension. It is the best attended Forum since Rome 2003. Other relevant issues are: the importance of economic cooperation and free trade to promote stability; the potential of the OSCE model for the Mediterranean as an inclusive security organization; and the value of promoting the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension at the parliamentary level, as observed by the Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, Alcee L. Hastings.

For further information:

### 3. Mediterranean Forum (Foromed)

Initiatives and proposals for the establishment of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation have always faced obstacles imposed by the development of the conflicts in the Middle East. The Mediterranean Forum, born in 1994 in Alexandria following a French-Egyptian initiative, gathers 11 "like-minded" countries of the Mediterranean Basin, namely: Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia.
4. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)

The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative was presented by the Italian Government during the Finnish EU Summit held in Tampere in October 1999. It saw the light in the framework of the “Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe” regarding all south-eastern European countries aspiring to join the EU in the future. The AII was officially established at the Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas held in Ancona in May 2000. The Foreign Ministers of the participating countries (Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia) signed the “Ancona Declaration” in order to strengthen regional cooperation, thus helping to promote political and economical stability in order to create a solid base for European integration. Later, the AII was extended to Serbia and Montenegro, which remained in the Initiative as separate countries after the referendum in Montenegro.

The decision-making body of the initiative is the Council of Foreign Ministers (Adriatic-Ionian Council). Its agenda is prepared by periodical meetings of the Senior Officials. They represent the executive body of the initiative and they meet at least three times a year at the level of national coordinators.

The Chairmanship rotates every May/June according to an alphabetical criterion. During 2008 two countries chair the AII: Croatia for the first half of the year and Greece in the second half. A Permanent Secretariat (AII-PS) is inaugurated in Ancona in June 2008 and its main task is to strengthen cooperation among the states, grant coordination, provide any possible support to participating states and assist participants and local authorities in implementing projects. The AII is connected with several organizations in the south-east European region and through the AII-PS, new periodical meetings are foreseen to take place with the Forum of A&I Chamber of Commerce, UniAndror, and the Forum of the Cities and Towns of A&I. After eight years since the establishment of the Initiative, the political framework when it was conceived has deeply changed: Slovenia entered the EU in 2004, while the other countries are involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process, which is the framework for EU negotiations with Western Balkan countries as a prelude to their eventual accession. Nevertheless, the need for cooperation and concerted solutions on common problems affecting the Adriatic region still persists. The last Council of the AII in Zagreb (27 May 2008) underlines the determination to improve cooperation among local and regional authorities. The current fields of action of the AII are divided into four round tables: small and medium sized enterprises; transport and maritime cooperation; tourism, culture and inter-university cooperation; and environment and protection against fire (the four round tables gathered in Split on 2-4 April 2008 under the Croatian Chairmanship of the AII). Currently, with the Croatian Chairmanship, a new rotating cycle begins: the assessment of the past seven years is positive considering the constant engagement in enhancing good-neighbourly relationships, the exchange of experiences on mutual problems such as illegal immigration and other forms of organized crime; environmental protection gained importance and the cross-border cooperation in the field of SMEs improved. During the Senior Officials’ meeting in Ancona (20 June 2008), a proposal to invite regional institutions established in the AII region is approved. The Greek Chairmanship also proposes to convene a general coordination meeting in Greece of all the Organisations and Chambers with activities in the region. As per future round tables, the Chairman expresses the idea of presenting regional tourism as a general idea to be promoted in each round table. The other two priorities underlined by the Chairmanship are the improvement of existing ferry and air links in the AII region.

For further information: www.seadiatrič.net/aii/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=3

5. 5th and 6th Informal Meetings of Foreign Ministers of European Mediterranean States

The Foreign Ministers of the Mediterranean EU Member States, the so-called “Olive Group,” gather twice in the course
of 2008 to hold informal meetings. The aim of these meeting is to discuss in depth issues of particular interest for the countries forming the southern border of the European Union also in view of the Czech Presidency programme. Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania have taken part in these meetings since 2007. Generally, the discussions focus on working documents the host country prepares to steer the discussions.

- 17-18 January, Paphos (Cyprus): Foreign Ministers of the Mediterranean EU Member States conclude their 5th informal meeting. They hold and open exchange of ideas in an informal atmosphere on various issues concerning the Mediterranean region and the EU in general. In the concluding remarks they reaffirm their support to all efforts aimed at strengthening the cooperation between European and Mediterranean countries and reiterate the importance of the Mediterranean region for the prosperity, security and stability of the EU. In this perspective they affirm their support to the creation of a Union for the Mediterranean. Ministers pledge their support to the Arab League Initiative to overcome the political impasse the country is living in. On Kosovo they express the need to maintain a unified EU position. They also recall the need for a comprehensive approach to migration underlying the need for cooperation and solidarity between all Member States on the issue of illegal immigration.
- 15-16 December, Taormina (Italy): in order to enhance the coordination and visibility of the group, ministers agree to improve their working methods while still preserving the informal character of the group. During the debate on the future perspectives for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), they reiterate their support for the eastern Partnership and stress the importance of developing cooperation with the Black Sea Synergy. They recognize the crucial role of the UfM and consider that essential steps will be the quick establishment of well-functioning institutions and implementation of priority projects. They reiterate their support for the Western Balkans’ European perspective and the promotion of reforms and democratization in the region. In the field of immigration they consider that the Mediterranean represents a fundamental test case of EU willingness to implement a true immigration policy. Finally the discussion focuses on energy security. They debate the modalities according to which the EU could speak with a single voice vis-à-vis its suppliers and on the interests of the EU Mediterranean states in the development of the EU energy network. They underline the importance of the southern corridors within the EU energy priorities.

Portugal has offered to host the next informal meeting of the Olive Group during the first half of 2009.

For further information: www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/All/BA35403E200B5B5FC22573D40044C579?OpenDocument

6. The 5+5 Dialogue

The cooperation process among Western Mediterranean countries, known as the 5+5 Dialogue, was launched in 1990 at a ministerial meeting in Rome. The Dialogue involves five North Mediterranean countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta) and five South Mediterranean ones (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania), that is, the five countries comprising the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). It should be kept in mind that the 5+5 Dialogue is the only forum in which Libya participates with full partnership status, having only observer status in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Moreover, the fact that the Dialogue is geographically limited to the Western Mediterranean area means that issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the European rivalry to prioritise neighbours either to the south or the east of Europe does not affect its development. It is a forum for debating ideas and proposals for cooperation of a concrete, informal nature. According to its founding declaration, the goal of the 5+5 Dialogue is to foster efficient consultation among foreign affairs ministers of the countries concerned on the political, economic and socio-cultural levels. During the 1991-2001 period, there were no meetings at any level due to the Franco-Libyan crisis (relating to the Lockerbie case) and the Western Sahara conflict. Only in 2003 did the first and only conference of Heads of State and Government take place, namely in Tunisia. Over the course of time, however, the 5+5 Dialogue has used its informal, flexible nature to promote operative, concrete cooperation in a number of domains: apart from foreign minister conferences, there have also been meetings of ministers of the interior, defence, labour, tourism and transport, as well as meetings concerning inter-parliamentary relations. The 5+5 Dialogue constitutes a discussion forum that efficiently contributes to fostering integration among Maghreb States, in addition to cooperation between the North-South shores of the Western Mediterranean.

Primary Meetings Held in 2008

- 20-21 January, Rabat (Morocco): 6th Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean, with the theme of “Subregional Integration and Increased Cooperation as Instruments of Stability and Prosperity.” Attending the meeting as observers were EU Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, the Secretary of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the representative of the Council of the European Union. The Commissioner placed an emphasis on the Dialogue’s facet as a think tank for improved cooperation ideas as within the 5+5 framework, which could serve as inspiration for other EU-Mediterranean cooperation partners. The Ministers reaffirmed the political and informal nature of the 5+5 Dialogue and discussed various topics: the need for real regional integration with a pragmatic, progressive approach; the importance of improved cooperation over a broader territory (fostering partnership among the regions of the 5+5 Dialogue Member States); the recommendation of organising a Conference of Interior Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (CIMO) focussing on migratory issues, improving 5+5 work methods (establishing co-presidency by a northern and a southern country); an exchange of views on the Middle East peace process (emphasising concern for the embargo on Gaza and the instability of the political situation in Lebanon); and finally, regarding security issues, impro-
The Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) dates back to the early seventies and was conceived as a discussion forum between the member countries of the European Community and the League of Arab States. The main subjects at stake were, on one hand, the Arab states’ interest in European support in the Arab-Israeli conflict; on the other hand, the main European concern was to have oil supplies granted. Over the course of time the Dialogue suffered many setbacks that slowed down the initiative, but it has always been resumed. Furthermore, the main objectives of the coop-
eration focused on different issues: economy, trade, technology and culture. 2008 has been a very profitable year since many events have taken place, starting with the EU-Arab League Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting in Malta on 11–12 February. This first ever high-level meeting gathers ministers and representatives from the 42 EU and Arab League countries with EU Commissioner for External Relations Ferrero-Waldner and Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa, respectively, heading the delegations. The first part of the meeting is focused on the situation in the region with particular emphasis on the Middle East crisis. In the Malta Communiqué issued at the end of the two-day meeting, Ministers reaffirm their commitment to peace, respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms that remain central in a dialogue led by the principle of mutual respect. Ministers reaffirm their commitment to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict; at the same time they express their concern about the situation in Gaza, reiterate their denunciation of all attempts to undermine security, stability and national unity in Lebanon and stress the importance of respecting the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Iraq. Finally, they affirm their concern about the consequences of climate change and their firm condemnation of terrorism. The second EU-Arab League ministerial meeting will be held during 2009 in Egypt. Nearly at the end of the year three other important events take place, thus giving a new thrust to the Euro-Arab relations. In the course of the Marseilles Conference, observer status is granted to the Arab League in the Union for the Mediterranean. As a way to boost the channel of communication between the EU and the Arab world and to carry out regular high-ranking dialogues, a liaison office for Euro-Arab Dialogue is set up in Malta, jointly sponsored by the European Commission and the League of Arab States (LAS). Finally, a conference is held in Vienna on 17–19 December, gathering ministers as well as political, social and academic delegates from the 27 EU countries and the 22 LAS countries. The conference “Europe and the Arab World – Connecting Partners in Dialogue” is based on the ministerial meeting in February in Malta and is intended to strengthen relations and the partnership between the European Union and the League of Arab States. Three workshops are organized in the framework of the conference: on strengthening women in society, public life and dialogue; on the development of civil society, pluralism and diversity management; and on promoting inter-cultural dialogue and youth participation in politics and society. In her speech at the conference, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stresses the greatest common challenge to achieving mutual prosperity and peace in the region, which is securing a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict. The only peace possible is one with an independent Palestinian state underpinned by broader peace between Israel and the whole Arab world. With Amr Moussa, they mention five initiatives for joint work: the establishment of a Crisis Response Centre and Early Warning System, a seminar on electoral assistance, Commission assistance in setting up an Arabic-language database and glossary and a joint cultural event in collaboration with the Anna Lindh Foundation to be celebrated in Alexandria.

For further information:
This chapter provides details of the results of presidential and legislative elections that took place in 2008 in independent states, presented in circum-Mediterranean order. The list also includes referenda and those elections held in autonomous entities or in any other relevant territory that are of particular political significance.

Spain

Legislative Elections

9 March 2008

Previous elections: 14 March 2004

Parliamentary Monarchy with bicameral legislature. Elections were held based on proportional representation to elect the 350 members of the Congress of Deputies. Additionally, 208 members of the Senate were elected in four-seat constituencies. Another 56 members of this chamber were appointed by autonomous legislatures. The term of office lasts for four years.

Congress of Deputies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE, social democrats)</td>
<td>43.6 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Party (PP, conservative)</td>
<td>40.1 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence and Union (CiU, conservative nationalist regional)</td>
<td>3.0 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Nationalist Party (PNV, conservative nationalist regional)</td>
<td>1.2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC, social democrats independent regional)</td>
<td>1.1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Left (IU, left wing)</td>
<td>3.8 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 75.3%

Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG, left wing independent regional) 0.8 2
Canarian Coalition (CC, conservative regional) 0.6 2
Union, Progress and Democracy (UPD, liberal) 1.2 1
Navarra Yes (NaBai, left wing Basque minority in Navarra regional) 0.2 1
Others 3.0 -

Senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People’s Party (PP, conservative)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE, social democrats)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalan Agreement of Progress 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialists’ Party of Catalonia (PSC, social democrats regional)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC, social democrats independent regional)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative for Catalonia Greens-United and Alternative Left</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence and Union (CiU, conservative nationalist regional)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque National Party (PNV, conservative nationalist regional)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canarian Coalition (CC, conservative regional)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 75.3%

Italy

Legislative Elections

13-14 April 2008

Previous elections: 9-10 April 2006

Parliamentary Republic with bicameral legislature. The Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei Deputati), has 630 directly elected members. The Senate of the Republic (Senato della Repubblica) has 322 members: 315 members elected through a simple majori-

Chamber of Deputies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silvio Berlusconi Coalition</td>
<td>46.8 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The People of Freedom (PdL)</td>
<td>37.4 276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North League (LN)</td>
<td>8.3 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for Autonomies (Mpa)</td>
<td>1.1 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Veltroni Coalition</td>
<td>37.5 246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (PD)</td>
<td>33.1 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy of Values (IDV)</td>
<td>4.3 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of the Centre (UDC)</td>
<td>5.6 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 80.4%

Senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silvio Berlusconi Coalition</td>
<td>47.3 174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The People of Freedom (PdL)</td>
<td>8.1 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North League (LN)</td>
<td>8.0 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for Autonomy (Mpa)</td>
<td>1.0 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Veltroni Coalition</td>
<td>38.0 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (PD)</td>
<td>33.7 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy of Values (IDV)</td>
<td>4.3 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of the Centre (UDC)</td>
<td>5.6 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8.9 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 80.4%

Malta

Legislative Elections

8 March 2008

Previous elections: 12 April 2003

Parliamentary Republic with unicameral legislature. Elections were called based on a system of proportional representation to elect the 65 members of the House of Representatives (Il Karma tad Deputati). Term of office is for five years.
Slovenia

Legislative Elections

21 September 2008

Previous elections: 3 October 2004

Parliamentary Republic with bicameral legislature, the Assembly of Slovenia (Skupscina Slovenije). The National Council (Drzavni Svet) has 40 members, which represent local and business interests, among other duties. Their terms of office last for five years. Elections were called to elect the 90 members of the National Assembly (Drzavni Zbor). 88 were elected based on a system of proportional representation. The two remaining seats were reserved for members from ethnic minority groups. Term of office lasts for four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Democrats (SD)</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS, conservative)</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zares-New Politics</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenian National Party (SNS, nationalist)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenian People’s Party/Youth Party of Slovenia (SLS/SMS conservative)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian and Italian National Community</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 63.1%

![Candidates list](#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
<th>% 2nd round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boris Tadic (Democratic Party, DS; centrist)</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomislav Nikolic (Radical Party, SRS; ultranationalist)</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velimir Ilic (New Serbia, NS)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milutin Mkonicj (Party of Serbia, SPS)</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedomir Jovanovic (Liberal Democratic Party, LDP)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istvan Pastor (Hungarian Coalition, MK)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milanka Carric (Serbian Strength Movement, PSS)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 61.4% (1st round), 68.1% (2nd round)

Legislative Elections

11 May 2008

Previous elections: 21 January 2007

Presidential Republic with unicameral legislature; the National Assembly of Serbia (Narodna Skupstina Srbije). Early elections were called to elect the 250 members of the Assembly based on a system of proportional representation for a four-year term. The OSCE electoral observation mission, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concluded that the electoral process was clean and fair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For a European Serbia</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian Advanced Party (SRS, xenophobic)</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia (DSS-NS, conservative)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS, authoritarian)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, coalition)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Coalition (MK)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List for Sandzak</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian Coalition from Presveo Valley</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 61.3%

Montenegro

Presidential Elections

6 April 2008

There were no previous presidential elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coalition for a Better Macedonia (ZpM)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM, Albanian minority)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Union (DS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Renewal of Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Turks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Serbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Party of Roma in Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cyprus

Presidential Elections

17 and 24 February 2008
Previous elections: 16 February 2003
Presidential Republic. Elections were called to elect the President for a five-year term. Voting was compulsory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
<th>% 2nd round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimitris Khristofias (Progressive Party for Working People, AKEL; communist)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioannis Kasoulides (Democratic Rally, DISY; conservative)</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tassos Papadopoulos (Democratic Party/ Movement of Social Democrats, DIKO/EDEK; liberal)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 89.6% (1st round) and 90.8% (2nd round)

Sources

- Adam Carr’s Electoral Archive
  http://psephos.adam-carr.net
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  www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook
- CNN
  www.cnn.com/WORLD/election.watch
- Elections Around the World
  www.electionworld.org
- Freedom House
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- IFES Electionguide
  www.electionguide.org/index.php
- Keesing’s World Record of Events
  www.keesings.com
- Observatorio electoral TEIM
  www.uam.es/otroscentros/TEIM/observatorio/Observatorio_presentacion.htm
- Parline Database
  www.ipu.org/parline-e/parline-search.asp
### TABLE A1

Official Aid to Mediterranean Countries Financed under the European Commission Budget and the European Development Fund (EDF) in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(in millions of euros)</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
<th>Payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian National Authority</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### CHART A1

EU Cooperation 2007

- **Commitments**
- **Payments**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Commitments under ENPI (in millions of euros)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank and Gaza*</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total ENPI Bilateral</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,021</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The data for the West Bank and Gaza include the ENPI, humanitarian aid, UNRWA and the Instrument for Stability.


### TABLE A3  Mediterranean Candidate Countries for Accession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) 2007</th>
<th>Millions of euros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Croatia</strong></td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Political criteria</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assumption of the obligations of membership</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Economic criteria</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supporting programmes</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macedonia</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good governance and the rule of law</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Programming support</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
<td>435.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Copenhagen political criteria and justice, liberty and security issues</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harmonisation with the acquis communautaire</td>
<td>153.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Civil society dialogue and support for European integration</td>
<td>256.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE A4  Provisions for 2008 under the IPA (Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>(in millions of euros)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo (Res. 1244 of the UNSC)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-beneficiary programme</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# European Investment Bank Loans to Mediterranean Countries in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loans by Sector</th>
<th>Millions of euros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Croatia</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion and modernisation of Croatia’s gas pipeline network</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of new ferry port infrastructure in Gazenica, south of Zadar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia and Herzegovina</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of hydropower plants and distribution facilities</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of pavement on a number of sections of main and regional roads in the national road network</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-end microfinance fund aimed at fostering economic development in South-East Europe through the provision of loans to micro and small-sized enterprises and private households</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale infrastructure projects</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serbia</strong></td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of roads and bridges</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of the E70/E75 motorway crossing Belgrade and of the R251 ring road</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of a 47-kilometre bypass (27 km of motorway and 20 km of road) on Pan-European Transport Corridor X, west and south of Belgrade</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-end microfinance fund aimed at fostering economic development in South-East Europe through the provision of loans to micro and small-sized enterprises and private households</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Montenegro</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-end microfinance fund aimed at fostering economic development in South-East Europe through the provision of loans to micro and small-sized enterprises and private households</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macedonia</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-end microfinance fund aimed at fostering economic development in South-East Europe through the provision of loans to micro and small-sized enterprises and private households</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albania</strong></td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of a new expressway between Levan and Vlorë</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-end microfinance fund aimed at fostering economic development in South-East Europe through the provision of loans to micro and small-sized enterprises and private households</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
<td>2,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrading of an 80-kilometre section of the suburban railway network to a surface metro linking Izmir centre to Aliaga (north) and Cumovaasi (south)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of a high-speed railway line between Istanbul and Ankara</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleet renewal and expansion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the first line of the modern tramway system in Antalya</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of float glass production and coating lines and associated R&amp;D in Bursa Province, south-east of the Marmara Sea</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion and upgrading of the household appliance production facilities in Cerkkeskoy</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening of Turkey’s science and research capabilities</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morocco</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro-electric schemes and creation of a supervision, control and data-acquisition system.</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the Fez-Taza section of the toll motorway linking Fez to Oujda</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity participation in a private equity fund aimed at investing in SMEs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Algeria</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation of a fruit juice production and distribution company in Rouiba, east of Algiers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tunisia</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of the capacity of the Transmed gas pipeline connecting Algeria to Italy via Tunisia</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local currency loan to the Tunisian microfinancing association Enda Inter Arabe to finance its growth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egypt</strong></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of two combined-cycle power generation units in El Atf and Sidi Krir</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lebanon</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private equity fund specialising in supporting the development of technology and service sector SMEs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing, through Banque de Liban, of investments aimed at supporting SMEs affected by the recent conflict</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syria</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-financing of investment projects implemented by private sector SMEs</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jordan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing of small- and medium-scale projects</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and operation of the desalination plant in Hadera on the Mediterranean coast about 50 kilometres north of Tel Aviv</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A7: EU Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

#### Financial Decisions in Mediterranean Areas in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Millions of euros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria (Saharawi refugees)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East (Palestinian and Lebanese refugees)</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Data for 2006. In the 2nd Quarterly Report for 2006, data are only provided through 2006, except for Kosovo.

Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean

TABLE B1  Budget Implementation by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maghreb and Middle East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>22,368,790</td>
<td>23.12</td>
<td>26,315,958</td>
<td>24.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>26,238,170</td>
<td>27.12</td>
<td>27,147,385</td>
<td>25.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>7,690,377</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>10,076,771</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>4,426,666</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>3,852,580</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>4,268,102</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4,284,023</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahrawi Refugees</td>
<td>8,607,237</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>9,497,854</td>
<td>8.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3,501,135</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3,409,920</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>3,395,702</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>4,505,222</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>4,694,869</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>5,987,845</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1,876,724</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>3,477,860</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1,479,392</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2,064,970</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Prog. and Other</td>
<td>8,200,552</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>6,518,057</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>96,747,715</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>107,138,445</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>4,891,492</td>
<td>42.99</td>
<td>4,228,895</td>
<td>41.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>2,511,421</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>2,812,641</td>
<td>27.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>1,937,911</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>1,624,730</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>120,461</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Prog. and Other</td>
<td>1,917,892</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>1,445,913</td>
<td>14.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>11,379,177</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>10,112,179</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AECID, Department of Cooperation with the Mediterranean and Arab World and Department of Cooperation with Asia and Eastern Europe. Provisional data (August 2009).

CHART B1  Distribution of Spanish Cooperation in Maghreb & Middle East by Sector (2007)

Source: AECID, Seguimiento del PACI 2007, Department of Cooperation with the Mediterranean and Arab World and Department of Cooperation with Asia and Eastern Europe.
**CHART B2**

Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe by Sector (2007)

- Productive Sectors: 4%
- Multi-sector: 11%
- Population and Reproductive Health Prog./Pol.: 0%
- Education: 5%
- Health: 1%
- Water Supply and Purification: 2%
- Governance and Civil Society: 13%
- Other Social Services and Infrastructure: 11%
- Financial Infrastructure and Services: 53%

Source: AECID, Seguimiento PACI 2007, Department of Cooperation with the Mediterranean and Arab World and Department of Cooperation with Asia and Eastern Europe.

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**TABLE B2**

Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean by Instrument (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Projects / Programmes</th>
<th>Development NGOs</th>
<th>Humanitarian Action Office</th>
<th>Multilateral</th>
<th>Cultural DGs</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maghreb and Middle East</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>10,186,158</td>
<td>9,944,078</td>
<td>1,686,183</td>
<td>4,499,538</td>
<td></td>
<td>26,315,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>9,569,704</td>
<td>5,165,912</td>
<td>11,273,471</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>538,299</td>
<td>27,147,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>3,902,848</td>
<td>4,315,074</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1,230,000</td>
<td>128,850</td>
<td>10,076,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1,425,000</td>
<td>805,957</td>
<td>133,333</td>
<td>1,488,290</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,852,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1,648,661</td>
<td>1,411,979</td>
<td>133,333</td>
<td>1,090,050</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,284,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahrawi Refugees</td>
<td>330,000</td>
<td>3,185,241</td>
<td>5,534,273</td>
<td></td>
<td>448,340</td>
<td>9,497,854</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1,769,994</td>
<td>578,456</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,061,470</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,409,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2,045,500</td>
<td>1,150,482</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>309,240</td>
<td>4,505,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1,514,363</td>
<td>3,767,112</td>
<td>675,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>31,370</td>
<td>5,987,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1,292,327</td>
<td>729,535</td>
<td>1,386,347</td>
<td>69,650</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,477,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1,185,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>79,970</td>
<td>2,064,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Prog. and Other</td>
<td>2,267,183</td>
<td>720,000</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,630,874</td>
<td>6,518,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Maghreb/Middle East</td>
<td>37,136,739</td>
<td>31,053,825</td>
<td>20,889,091</td>
<td>5,682,849</td>
<td>12,375,941</td>
<td>107,138,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>34.66%</td>
<td>28.98%</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>11.55%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Central and Eastern Europe** |                       |                  |                            |              |              |                  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2,084,325             | 1,530,000        | 450,000                    | 164,570      |              | 4,228,895        |
| Albania              | 1,000,000             | 950,754          | 775,007                    | 86,880       |              | 2,812,641        |
| Serbia               | 605,000               | 784,290          |                            | 235,440      |              | 1,624,730        |
| Regional Prog. and Other | 849,523               |                  |                            |              | 566,390      |                  |
| Total                | 4,538,848             | 3,265,044        | 1,225,007                  | 1,083,280    |              | 10,112,179       |
| Percentage           | 44.88%                | 32.29%           | 0.00%                      | 12.11%       | 10.71%       | 100.00%          |

Source: AECID, Department of Cooperation with the Mediterranean and Arab World and Department of Cooperation with Asia and Eastern Europe. Provisional data (August 2009).
# Migrations in the Mediterranean

## TABLE C1: Number of Foreign Nationals from MPCs in the European Union by Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (2007)</td>
<td>9,157</td>
<td>80,588</td>
<td>3,656</td>
<td>1,103</td>
<td>2,297</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>2,156</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1,661</td>
<td>2,014</td>
<td>143,162</td>
<td>1,046,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria (2001)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>25,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (2007)</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>2,991</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>4,537</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>29,160</td>
<td>40,642</td>
<td>298,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (2007)</td>
<td>13,217</td>
<td>67,989</td>
<td>23,228</td>
<td>21,127</td>
<td>28,161</td>
<td>7,840</td>
<td>38,613</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,742</td>
<td>1,713,551</td>
<td>1,913,558</td>
<td>6,744,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (2000)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>274,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (2006)</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>9,461</td>
<td>5,747</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>18,795</td>
<td>695,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain (2007)</td>
<td>45,825</td>
<td>648,735</td>
<td>1,561</td>
<td>2,572</td>
<td>2,029</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>7,05,894</td>
<td>3,979,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (2005)</td>
<td>483,000</td>
<td>469,000</td>
<td>146,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>222,000</td>
<td>1,320,000</td>
<td>3,263,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy (2006)</td>
<td>21,519</td>
<td>343,228</td>
<td>88,932</td>
<td>65,667</td>
<td>3,348</td>
<td>2,737</td>
<td>3,450</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>2,282</td>
<td>15,352</td>
<td>544,953</td>
<td>2,938,922</td>
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<td>Cyprus (2001)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3,469</td>
<td>64,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (2006)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>456,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (2006)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>32,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg (2006)</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>191,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (2006)</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>3,523</td>
<td>156,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (2007)</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>2,976</td>
<td>12,634</td>
<td>2,435</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>154,705</td>
<td>179,837</td>
<td>1,236,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland (2002)</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td>700,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (2002)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>224,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania (2006)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>2,188</td>
<td>5,379</td>
<td>25,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (2006)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>48,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia (2006)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>25,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (2006)</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>5,095</td>
<td>121,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (2007)</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>1,615</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>3,104</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>2,349</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>10,026</td>
<td>21,112</td>
<td>524,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (2004)</td>
<td>7,482</td>
<td>5,797</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>3,514</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,912</td>
<td>36,093</td>
<td>66,686</td>
<td>3,066,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>592,248</td>
<td>1,953,873</td>
<td>278,407</td>
<td>129,405</td>
<td>62,668</td>
<td>18,068</td>
<td>70,366</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>34,813</td>
<td>2,601,061</td>
<td>5,742,679</td>
<td>30,048,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own production. Source: For DE, AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, GR, ES, NL, IE, IT, PT, and SE, data from the national statistics offices; for BG, SK, SI, HU, LI, LT, PL, CZ, UK, CY and RO, Eurostat data; for FR, INSEE estimates for 2005; and for LU, estimates based on STATEC data for 2002-2006. Last data available for each source.
### TABLE C2: Immigrants in SEM Countries by Status and Origin (2000s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Regular Status</th>
<th>Irregular Status (minimum)</th>
<th>Main Origin of Irregular Migrant Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>80,238</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Mali, Niger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>115,589</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>392,273</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>Egypt, Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>302,315</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>449,065</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>62,348</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>422,000</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>35,192</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>272,943</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>Moldavia, Romania, Ukraine, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total SEM</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,001,963</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,662,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A: Not available.


### TABLE C3: Refugees in SEM Countries, Early 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Asylum</th>
<th>UNHCR Refugees and Asylum Seekers</th>
<th>UNRWA Refugees</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>95,121</td>
<td></td>
<td>95,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>104,390</td>
<td></td>
<td>104,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>519,477</td>
<td>1,858,362</td>
<td>2,377,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>22,743</td>
<td>408,438</td>
<td>431,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>861</td>
<td></td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,739,266</td>
<td>1,739,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>707,422</td>
<td>442,363</td>
<td>1,149,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>8,852</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,467,359</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,448,429</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,915,788</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE C4: Dead and Missing Persons on Sea Routes for Irregular Immigration between SEM Countries and Europe, 2000-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year / Route</th>
<th>Sicilia + Sardinia</th>
<th>Gibraltar + Ceuta and Melilla</th>
<th>Canary Islands</th>
<th>Aegean Sea</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>475</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,925</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,281</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,558</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,021</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,785</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements

• To enter into force, each Association Agreement must be ratified by the European Parliament, the Parliament of the Partner Country and the Parliaments of the 25 Member States of the European Union.
• Until its accession to the EU, Turkey shall be governed by the Customs Union Agreement, which entered into force in January 1996 and is based on the first-generation Agreement of 1963.
• In 2008, the Association Agreement with Syria was revised and updated. It is expected to be ratified during the course of 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start of Negotiations</th>
<th>Agreement concluded</th>
<th>Agreement signed</th>
<th>Entry into Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>May 1996</td>
<td>December 1996</td>
<td>February 1997</td>
<td>July 1997*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>March 1995</td>
<td>June 1999</td>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td>June 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>June 1997</td>
<td>December 2001</td>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>March 1998</td>
<td>October 2004/December 2008</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Interim Agreement signed by the EU and the PLO (to the benefit of the Palestine Authority).

• EU relations with the Western Balkan Countries are regulated by the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The SAP serves as a framework for the deployment of various instruments and helps each country to carry out the political and economic transition preparing them for a new contractual relationship with the EU: the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAAs), under which they aim to progress towards closer association with the EU.

• Negotiations with Serbia were interrupted in May 2006 due to lack of progress in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In early 2007, the new administration in
Belgrade launched a plan and constituted a National Council for Cooperation with the ICTY, a measure which allowed negotiations to resume on 13 June 2007. In April 2008, the SAA between the EU and Serbia was signed. The Interim Agreement, however, will not take effect until the EU Council considers that Serbia is fully cooperating with the ICTY.

- After its declaration and the EU’s acknowledgement of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent State, the EU has maintained relations with independent Montenegro. After the approval, in July 2006, of the negotiation directives in view of an SAA with Montenegro, negotiations concluded in April and the Agreement was signed on 15 October 2007. The entrance of the Interim Agreement into effect in January 2008 represents progress towards the national ratification process and closer relations with the EU.

- Three years after the start of negotiations between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005, the SAA was signed and the Interim Agreement took effect. Despite real progress in collaboration with the ICTY, the Commission still notes numerous dysfunctions in the institutional and judicial spheres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE D3</th>
<th>European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The ENP Action Plans allow the European Union to maintain a progressive, differentiated policy towards its neighbouring countries thanks to the different degrees of cooperation they establish.

- An Action Plan, developed after the signature of an Association Agreement, establishes priorities and a timetable for political and economic reform. Action Plans are the operative tools of the legal framework represented by the Association Agreements.

- Every year, evaluation reports analyze the progress made. Depending on the degree of progress established, strengthened cooperation and greater access to the European Market are decided.
Signature of Multilateral Treaties and Conventions

TABLE E1 Multilateral Treaties on Human Rights and Penal Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Ratification, acceptance, approval, accession or succession</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>International Criminal Court</th>
<th>Financing of terrorism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO ILO ILO ILO ILO ILO ILO ILO OHCHR

  Abolition of Forced Labour Convention.  
  Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.  
  Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

TABLE E2 Multilateral Treaties on Labour Rights (Year of ratification)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom of association and collective bargaining</th>
<th>Elimination of forced or obligatory labour</th>
<th>Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation</th>
<th>Abolition of child labour</th>
<th>Rights of workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention 87a</td>
<td>Convention 98b</td>
<td>Convention 29c</td>
<td>Convention 105d</td>
<td>Convention 100e</td>
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### Table E3: Multilateral Treaties in the field of the Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Agenda 21 process</th>
<th>National Strategy for Sustainable Development</th>
<th>Number of municipalities involved in Agenda 21</th>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>in process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>in process</td>
</tr>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
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<td>2004</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1995</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2005</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: UN UN UN UN CITES UN UN UN WRI


### Table E4: Multilateral Disarmament Treaties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Geneva Protocol</th>
<th>Nuclear weapons</th>
<th>Bacteriological weapons</th>
<th>Conventional weapons</th>
<th>Chemical weapons</th>
<th>Nuclear testing</th>
<th>Antipersonal mines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sources: UN UN UN UN CITES UN UN UN WRI

TABLE F1  Human Development Index (HDI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate age 15</th>
<th>Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio</th>
<th>GDP per capita</th>
<th>Human development index</th>
<th>Position in HDI ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2003/07a</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>94.9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>20,410</td>
<td>0.897</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>27,169</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>13</td>
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Own production. Source: UNDP, UNESCO, UNDP.

a. Data from 2005. b. Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

CHART F1  Positive evolution of the HDI (1975-2005)

(1) Data for Albania, Cyprus and Jordan are from 1980.

Own production. Source: UNDP.
### TABLE F2 Population: demography

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<th>Total fertility rate</th>
<th>Immigrants thousands</th>
<th>Net number of migrantsa</th>
<th>Net migration rateb per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
<th>Net number of migrants thousands</th>
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Own production. Source: UNPOP, WB.  
a. Net annual average of migrants: the annual number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants.  
b. Net number of migrants divided by the average population of the receiving country for the period under consideration.

### CHART F2 Migration in the Mediterranean (2005)

The 10 countries with the largest stock of immigrants (2005):
- United States: 38,350,000
- Russia: 12,080,000
- Germany: 10,144,000
- Ukraine: 8,833,000
- France: 6,471,000
- Saudi Arabia: 6,361,000
- Canada: 6,108,000
- India: 5,700,000
- United Kingdom: 5,408,000
- Spain: 4,790,000

(*) Net annual average of migrants for the 2000-2005 period: the annual number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants.  
Own production. Source: UNPOP.
### TABLE F3 Population: structure and distribution

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<th>Rural population</th>
<th>Population in urban agglomerations of more than 750,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Population located on the Mediterranean coastline</th>
<th>Urban population living in slums</th>
<th>Population densityb</th>
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<td>Own production. Source: WB and UNDP.</td>
<td>(*) OECD countries and non-OECD countries are included.</td>
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**CHART F3** Evolution of the rural population (1975-2006) (% of population)

- **Rural population by region (2006) (% of population)**
  - Southern Asia: 6.7%
  - Sub-Saharan Africa: 6.4%
  - East Asia and Pacific: 5.6%
  - Eastern and South Asia: 4.6%
  - Middle East and North Africa: 4.2%
  - Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 3.6%
  - High-income countries*: 2.4%
  - Latin America and the Caribbean: 2.3%

- World average: 50.9%

Own production. Source: WB and UNDP.

(*1) OECD countries and non-OECD countries are included.

Own production. Source: WB and UNDP.

Data for Cyprus and Malta are from the UNDP, 2007/08.

Data for Cyprus, Malta, Montenegro and Serbia are calculated from The World Factbook, CIA.

(..) Data unavailable.
### TABLE F4  Education and training of human capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Net enrolment rate</th>
<th>Primary pupil-teacher ratio</th>
<th>Duration of compulsory education</th>
<th>Scientists and technicians in R&amp;D</th>
<th>R&amp;D expenditure per million people</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
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</table>

Own production. Source: UNESCO. Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F4  Literacy (2007)

Countries are ordered based on gender differences in literacy. Thus, countries with higher literacy rates for women than men are located further to the left, whilst countries with higher literacy rates for men than women are located further to the right.

Own production. Source: UNESCO.

(*) OECD countries and no-OECD countries are included.
### TABLE F5  
**Health and survival**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Infant mortality rate</th>
<th>Maternal mortality ratio</th>
<th>People living with HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>Prevalence of smoking</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>per 1,000 live born alive</td>
<td>under-five per 1,000 live born alive</td>
<td>per 100,000 born alive</td>
<td>low estimate</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>92</td>
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</table>

*Own production. Source: WHO and UNICEF.*

### CHART F5  
**Infant mortality (2006)**

![Infant mortality by income level](chart.png)

*Own production. Source: WHO and UNICEF.*
## TABLE F6: Nutrition and food security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dietary energy consumption kcal/person/day</th>
<th>Cereal trade</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Children under weight for their age % children &lt; age 5</th>
<th>Own production. Source: FAO</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>–</td>
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</table>

*Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable


- **Consumption by region** (kcal/person/day)
  - High-income countries: 3,380
  - Middle East and North Africa: 2,950
  - Latin America and the Caribbean: 2,900
  - Asia and Pacific: 2,830
  - Sub-Saharan Africa: 2,170
- **Protein consumption** (g/person/day)
  - World average: 50
- **Fat consumption** (g/person/day)
  - World average: 65

Own production. Source: FAO.
### TABLE F7: Access to health resources

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<th>Population with sustainable access to an improved water source</th>
<th>Population with access to improved sanitation</th>
<th>Births attended by skilled health personnel</th>
<th>Contraceptive prevalence rate</th>
<th>Adolescent fertility rate</th>
<th>Births per 1,000 women ages 15-19</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>75</td>
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- ^a Latest data available from this period.
- ^b UNDP, 2007/08.
- ^c Data from 2005.
- ^d Includes the contributions of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
- ^e Excluding Kosovo.
- ^f Data unavailable.

### CHART F7: Medical care (2002/06)^a (number of physicians per 10,000 inhabitants)

![Chart showing medical care (2002/06) (number of physicians per 10,000 inhabitants)](chart)
### TABLE F8  
**Gender: social development**

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<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate ≥ age 15</th>
<th>Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio</th>
<th>Year women received right to vote</th>
<th>Year women elected or appointed to Parliament</th>
<th>Seats in Parliament held by women*</th>
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**Own production.** Source: UNDP, UNESCO, IPU

* Referring to the first year appointed in the current parliamentary system.  
* The date refers to the first year in which a woman was nominated to Parliament.  
* First partial recognition of the right to vote or stand for election.  
* Situation as of 28 February 2009.  
* For bicameral parliaments, the values shown are averages for both chambers.  
* Latest data available from this period.  
* Data unavailable.

---

**CHART F8  
Life expectancy (2005) (years)**

![Live expectancy by region](chart.png)

* Own production. Source: UNDP.

* OECD countries and non-OECD countries are included.
### TABLE F9 Technology and communication

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<th>Daily newspapers</th>
<th>Households with television</th>
<th>Telephone mainlines</th>
<th>Outgoing international calls</th>
<th>Incoming international calls</th>
<th>Mobile phones</th>
<th>Personal computers</th>
<th>Internet users</th>
<th>Annual investment in telecommunication technology expenditures</th>
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<th>% of GDP</th>
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Own production. Source: WB/ITU UNCTAD

\(^a\) Latest data available from this period.  \(^b\) Data unavailable.

### CHART F9 Growth in internet users (2002-2007) (Number of users per 100 inhabitants)

![Chart showing growth in internet users from 2002 to 2007](chart.png)

Countries with the largest percentage of Internet users (2002-2007)

- 90% Iceland
- 85% Norway
- 84% The Netherlands
- 81% Denmark
- 80% Sweden
- 79% Finland
- 78% Luxembourg
- 77% Switzerland
- 76% Korea
- 73% Canada
- 62% Turkey
- 59% Syria
- 55% Lebanon
- 54% Tunisia
- 50% Morocco
- 40% Israel
- 35% Jordan
- 30% Egypt
- 25% Palestine
- 20% Algeria
- 15% Syria
- 10% Lebanon
- 5% Tunisia

Own production. Source: ITU.
### TABLE F10  Security and military expenditure

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<th>Refugees by country of asylum</th>
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Own production: Source: UNDP, UNDP, UNDP, SIPRI, SIPRI, SIPRI, SIPRI, SIPRI.

a. Paramilitary forces not included.
b. Military pensions not included.
c. Includes $3.34 billion in US military aid.
d. Total exports or imports for the entire period.
e. Amounts refer to recurrent expenditures only. In July 2008, the Government of Algeria increased its spending budgets by 35%, but did not specify whether part of this increase was allocated to military spending.
f. Data refer to the approved budget, not real spending.
g. Does not include expenditures for arms imports.
h. According to the Government of Algeria, there are some 165,000 Saharawi refugees in the Tindouf camps. Some of these imports should be attributed to non-governmental or rebel groups.
i. Includes civil defence spending, which usually accounts for about 4.5% of the total.
j. Includes part of the military pensions.

( ) Less than half of the unit shown.
( ..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F10  Conventional arms transfer (2003/07)$^*$

![Chart of Major world importers and exporters](chart.png)

**Major world importers**
- United Arab Emirates: 6.7%
- China: 12.1%
- India: 8.2%
- Other countries: 42.4%
- Chile: 2%
- Pakistan: 2.1%
- United States: 2.3%
- Turkey: 2.6%
- Australia: 3.1%
- Egypt: 3.4%
- Israel: 3.8%
- Korea: 3.8%
- Greece: 6.4%
- Other countries: 6.7%

**Major world exporters**
- United States: 30.9%
- China: 12.1%
- India: 8.2%
- Other countries: 6.7%
- Israel: 1.5%
- Spain: 1.5%
- Ukraine: 1.6%
- Germany: 9.9%
- France: 8.6%
- The Netherlands: 4.3%
- United Kingdom: 4.3%

Own production. Source: SIPRI.

(*) Total exports or imports for the entire period.
### TABLE F11  Economic structure and production

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP millions $</th>
<th>GDP annual growth rate 2006</th>
<th>Share in GDP by sector 2006</th>
<th>Consumer price index average annual growth 2000/06</th>
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### CHART F11  Annual percentage change in GDP (2007-2010)

![Annual change in GDP (2007-2010)](chart.png)

Own production. Source: IMF.
### TABLE F12  Agriculture

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<th>Agricultural area</th>
<th>Arable and permanent crops</th>
<th>Permament pasture</th>
<th>Irrigated land</th>
<th>Land under cereal production</th>
<th>Cereal production</th>
<th>Cereal yield</th>
<th>Fertilizer consumption</th>
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<td></td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>% of total crops</td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>thousands ha</td>
<td>kg/ha</td>
<td>kg/ha</td>
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*Own production. Source: FAO. FAO data.

### CHART F12  Fertilizer use (2006)

**Own production using FAO data. Source: FAO.**

- Agricultural area is divided into ‘arable land and permanent crops’ and ‘prairies and permanent pastures’. (..) Data unavailable.
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Own production. Source: FAO.
### TABLE F14  Fisheries

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<th>Aquaculture production</th>
<th>Trade in fish and derivate products</th>
<th>Annual consumption of fish and fish derivatives</th>
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Own production. Source: FAO. Data unavailable.

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### CHART F14  Importance of Mediterranean fisheries (2007) (tonnes and percentages)

![Chart showing the importance of Mediterranean fisheries (2007) in tonnes and percentages](chart_f14)

- **Maritime fisheries (2007)**
  - Mediterranean and Black Sea: 2,072,242 tonnes (11.4%)
  - Other seas: 18,641,624 tonnes (98.6%)

- **Other seas (2007)**
  - Indian Ocean: 11,052,514 tonnes (9.6%)
  - Indian Ocean: 11,052,514 tonnes (9.6%)
  - Atlantic Ocean: 31,994,856 tonnes (26.1%)

- **Maritime fisheries (2007)**
  - Mediterranean and Black Sea: 2,072,242 tonnes (11.4%)
  - Other seas: 18,641,624 tonnes (98.6%)

Own production. Source: FAO,
### Employment and Unemployment

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#### Notes
- Own production. Source: ILO and Eurostat.
- Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

### Unemployment (2008)

**CHART F15**

Unemployment in the EU and other countries

(February-March 2009*)

- The three EU countries with the lowest unemployment
- The three EU countries with the highest unemployment
- Countries outside the EU

No Mediterranean country for which sufficient data are available saw its unemployment rate drop between the third and fourth quarters of 2008.

(*) Latest data available from this period.

Owen production. Source: ILO and Eurostat.
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Income distribution

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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>2004/05</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: WB.

(*) Data unavailable.

### CHART F16  
Population below national poverty line (2003-2007)* (%)

Only those countries for which data are available are shown. The decision was taken not to include Palestine (with 46% in the West Bank and 80% in the Gaza Strip) so as not to visually distort the chart.

(\*) Latest data from this period.

### TABLE F17  Gender: economic activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female economic activity rate</th>
<th>Employment by economic activity</th>
<th>Estimated earned income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of male age 15</td>
<td>% of female employment</td>
<td>% of male employment</td>
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<td>2003/06b</td>
<td>2003/06c</td>
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Own production. Source: UNDP. (*) OCDE countries and non-OCDE countries are not included.

### CHART F17  Progress and setbacks in women's participation in economic activity (1990-2005)

![Progress and setbacks in women's participation in economic activity (1990-2005)](chart_f17.png)
### Production and energy consumption

<table>
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<th>Energy production</th>
<th>Energy consumption</th>
<th>Energy consumption per capita</th>
<th>GDP per unit of energy use</th>
<th>Net energy import</th>
<th>Energy consumption by source</th>
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<td>millions kg oil eq</td>
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<td>% 2003</td>
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<td>94.5</td>
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Own production. Source: WB. (a) Negative values indicate that the country is a net exporter. (..) Data unavailable.

### Energy consumption per capita and percentage change (1990-2005)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Energy consumption per capita (kg oil equivalent)</th>
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<th>2005</th>
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<td>+42.8</td>
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<td>+27.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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World average: 1,796; Variation: +6.8%
TABLE F19  Production, consumption and access to electricity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population with access to electricity</th>
<th>Electricity production</th>
<th>Electricity consumption per capita</th>
<th>Sources of electricity*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>billion kWh</td>
<td>kWh</td>
<td>carbon</td>
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</table>

Own Production. Source: WB

* The percentages do not always add up to 100% because some electricity sources (solar, wind and geothermal) are not included. (..) Data unavailable.

CHART F19  Share of oil in electricity generation* (1990-2005) (%)

World evolution of electricity sources (1990-2005)

(*) Mediterranean countries (with the exception of Spain and Lebanon) have reduced their dependence on oil for electricity generation.

Own production. Source: WB.
### TABLE F20  CO₂ Emissions

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<td></td>
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<td>mt</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>mt CO₂ per million PPP $</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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- Own production. Source: UNDP/UNPOP UNDP UNDP WRI WRI WRI WRI Blue Plan

### CHART F20  Intensity of CO₂ emissions (2003) (metric tons of CO₂ emitted per million dollars PPP produced)

- Own production. Source: WRI.
For a better understanding of the chart, representation of Libya has been excluded (with resource exploitation greater than 75%).

Own production. Source: FAO and UNPOP.

**TABLE F21**

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<th>Water resources</th>
<th>Desalinated water production millions</th>
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<th>Water availability (m³/inhabitant/year)</th>
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</table>

Own production. Source: FAO

**CHART F21**

Availability, use and consumption of water resources (2007)

Water availability (m³/inhabitant/year)

- ≥ 1,700 m³
- 1,000 m³ - 1,700 m³ (water stress; 745 million people in the world, 41% of the Mediterranean population)
- 500 m³ - 1,000 m³ (water shortages; 279 million, 36%)
- < 500 m³ (absolute shortages, 125 million, 13%)

For a better understanding of the chart, representation of Libya has been excluded (with resource exploitation greater than 75%).

Own production. Source: FAO and UNPOP.
### TABLE F22  Environment

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<th></th>
<th>Total area</th>
<th>Forest area</th>
<th>Deserts and dry lands</th>
<th>Wood fuel production</th>
<th>National protected areas</th>
<th>Ecological footprint</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thousands km²</td>
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<td>%</td>
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Own production. Source: FAO, FAO, FAO, FAO, FAO, WRI, WRI, WRI, IUCN, WWF.

- The continental platform up to 200 meters depth is included. 
- According to categories I-V of the IUCN.
- Only mammals and birds are included. 
- (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F22  Ecological deficit (2005) (global hectares per capita)

Countries are ranked from highest to lowest ecological deficit. All Mediterranean countries have an ecological deficit. This means that their footprint exceeds the productive capacity of their territory or biocapacity, so to offset the deficit, they import resources from other countries, thereby extending their footprint.

Own production. Source: WWF.
### TABLE F23 International trade

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<th>Coverages</th>
<th>Trade balance</th>
<th>Current account balance</th>
<th>Workers' remittances</th>
<th>Foreign direct investment</th>
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Own production. Source: UNCTAD. Own production using UNCTAD data. Workers remittances, salaries paid and transfer of capital are included. Of good and services. Data from 2005. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F23 Share of Mediterranean Exports/Imports (2007)

**Share of Mediterranean Exports (2007)**

- **Other countries 5.8%**
- **GR 1.9%**
- **SI 1.7%**
- **LY 2.5%**
- **PT 2.9%**
- **DZ 3.1%**
- **L 3.1%**
- **TR 6.1%**
- **ES 13.8%**
- **IT 28%**
- Total Mediterranean exports: $1,843,015 million
- **FR 31.6%**

**Share of Mediterranean Imports (2007)**

- **Other countries 8.3%**
- **DZ 1.3%**
- **MA 1.4%**
- **LI 1.2%**
- **GR 3.5%**
- **PT 3.6%**
- **TR 7.9%**
- **IT 23.6%**
- Total Mediterranean imports: $2,304,780 million

Economies in transition
- Mediterranean economies
- Developing economies
- Developed economies

Mediterranean economies are involved in 13.3% of world exports and 16.4% of global imports.

Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
Fuel exports from Mediterranean countries in 2005 represented an amount of 122,371 million dollars, 9.3% of total exports from the territory. For some countries, like Egypt, Syria, Libya or Algeria, however, these exports amount to represent very high percentages (43.2%, 67.6%, 95.3% and 98.2%, respectively).

(*) OCDE countries and non-OCDE countries are included. No data for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Own production. Source: UNCTAD and WB.
### TABLE F25

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<th>Imports</th>
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<th>Fuels</th>
<th>Minerals and metals</th>
<th>Manufactured products</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Import concentration index</th>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>65.9</td>
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<td>72.9</td>
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<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
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<td>70.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.072</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Own production. Source: UNCTAD.

(1) Data unavailable.

### CHART F25

Fuel imports (2005) (% of total imports)

Fuel imports of Mediterranean countries in 2005 represented an amount of 213,795 million dollars, 13.3% of total imports of the territory.

(1) OCDE countries and non-OCDE countries are included.

Own production. Source: UNCTAD and WB.
### TABLE F26: Tourism in the Mediterranean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inbound tourists</th>
<th>Outbound tourists</th>
<th>Tourists’ overnight stays</th>
<th>International tourism receipts</th>
<th>Tourism expenditure in other countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exchange rate % in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>thousands</td>
<td>thousands</td>
<td>millions $ of exports</td>
<td>% of exports</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>12,321</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>18,378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>59,193</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>81,900</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>22,466</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>43,654</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>25,697</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,751</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2,680</td>
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<td>9,307</td>
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<td>..</td>
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<td>19.8</td>
<td>306</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serbia / Montenegro</td>
<td>48.5 / 160.5</td>
<td>696 / 984</td>
<td>0.2 / 0.3</td>
<td>.. / ..</td>
</tr>
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<td>230</td>
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<td>1,628</td>
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<td>3,713</td>
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<td>10,810</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.3</td>
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<td>7,408</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: UNWTO, WB, UNCTAD.

a. Own production using UNWTO data.

(••) Data unavailable.

### CHART F26: Tourism in the Mediterranean (2006-2007*)

(*) Latest data available from this period.

Of the 903 million tourist arrivals around the world, Mediterranean countries receive 32% of the total.

Own production. Source: WB and UNWTO.
## Official Development Assistance (ODA)

**TABLE F27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Official Development Assistance by donor countries</th>
<th>Official Development Assistance in recipient countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions $</td>
<td>% of GNI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>5,140</td>
<td>0.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9,884</td>
<td>0.38</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>3,971</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia / Montenegro</td>
<td>834 / 106</td>
<td>2.04 / 2.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>2.80</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>3.03</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>1,083</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>1.51</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: OECD

*a* Own production using OECD data.

---

**CHART F27**

*Official Development Assistance from DAC Members (2003-2007)*

*Participation in the Official Development Assistance (2007) (millions $)*

- Norway
- Sweden
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Austria
- Belgium
- Finland
- France
- Switzerland
- Spain
- Germany
- United Kingdom
- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Italy
- Japan
- Greece
- United States
- Other DAC countries
- Spain
- Japan
- France
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- United States
- Germany
- Australia
- United Kingdom
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Italy
- Japan
- Greece
- United States

Own production. Source: OECD.
### TABLE F28  
**External debt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions $</td>
<td>% of GNI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>37,480</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>5,669</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia / Montenegro</td>
<td>13,831</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>2,661</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2,340</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>51.7</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
<td>6,502</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<td>23,963</td>
<td>107.0</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>54.5</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

Own production. Source: WB

---

### CHART F28  
**External debt (2006)**

![External debt chart](chart.png)

- **% of GNI**
- **Millions $**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of GNI</th>
<th>Millions $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>107%</td>
<td>23,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>37,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>18,480</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>207,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>13,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>2,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6,502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adolescent fertility rate
Number of births per thousand women aged between 15 and 19.

Adult literacy rate
Percentage of people over 15 years of age who can read, write and understand a short, simple text about their daily life.

Agricultural land area
Land surface area made up of arable and permanently cultivated lands and by permanent meadows and pastures.

Agricultural population
Persons who depend on agriculture, hunting, fishing or forestry for their subsistence. This category includes all those who carry out an agricultural activity and all this entails without official employment.

Annual consumption of fish and derivative products
Value of all exports and imports of live, fresh, frozen, chilled, dried, salted, smoked and tinned fish and derivative products. Includes fresh water, salt water and aquaculture fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

Annual population growth rate
Exponential change in the growth of the population during the period indicated.

Aquaculture production
Includes marine, freshwater and diadromous fish, molluscs and crustaceans cultivated in marine, inland or brackish environments.

Arable lands and permanent crops
Agricultural surface area that groups the data on arable or farm land and land used for permanent crops. Arable and farm land is land given over to temporary crops (those giving two yields are only counted once); temporal meadows for cutting or grazing; land dedicated to commercial vegetable gardens or orchards; and land temporarily fallow for a period of less than five years. The term does not include land that has been abandoned as a result of migratory cultivation. Land destined for permanent crops refers to land dedicated to crops that occupy the terrain during long periods and that do not need to be replanted after each harvest, such as cacao, coffee and rubber. It includes land occupied by bushes destined to flower production, fruit trees, walnut trees and vineyards, but excludes land planted with trees destined to the production of firewood or wood.

Armed forces
Strategic, land, naval, aerial, command and support forces. It also includes paramilitary forces, such as the gendarmerie, the customs services and the border guard if they are trained in military strategy.

Carbon dioxide \((\text{CO}_2)\) emissions
The emissions of carbon dioxide produced in the burning of all fossil fuels used by a country.

Carbon dioxide \((\text{CO}_2)\) emissions by sector
Shows the proportion of carbon dioxide emissions produced by the burning of fossil fuels in the sectors of transport, industry and electricity production. The transport sector includes emissions produced by all forms of transport by road, rail and air, including agricultural vehicles travelling by road. International journeys by boat or aeroplane are excluded. The industrial and construction sector includes emissions produced by all types of industry and construction. The electricity sector includes emissions produced by the generation of electricity for public use, including thermal power stations.

Cereal production
The figures for cereal production only refer to harvests of dry grain. Crops harvested for hay, unripe foodstuffs, forage and silage, or are used for grazing, are therefore excluded.

Cereal production yield
The outputs per hectare have been calculated using the data on surface area and production.

Cereal trade
The figures obtained by the FAO, have been supplied by the respective governments in the questionnaires sent out by the FAO.
**Children under weight for their age**  
Percentage of children under five whose weight and height, for their age, is less than twice the standard deviation in comparison with the average for the relevant age group. The population of reference is the child population of the USA, which is assumed to be well nourished.

**CO₂ emissions intensity by GDP**  
Average quantity of CO₂ emitted per unit of incomes generated by a particular economy.

**Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools**  
Number of students registered in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the population having the official age to receive education at the three levels.

**Consumer price index**  
Reflects changes in the cost, for an average consumer, in the acquisition of a basket of goods and services that can be fixed or can change at specific intervals; for example annually. The Laspeyres formula is normally used.

**Contraceptive prevalence rate**  
Percentage of married women (including couples living together) between 15 and 49 years of age, who use, or whose partners use, contraception of any type, modern or traditional.

**Conventional arms transfer**  
Refers to the voluntary transfer of weapons, on the part of the supplier (excluding, therefore, captured weapons and weapons obtained from deserters), with military purposes destined for the armed forces, paramilitary forces or intelligence services of another country. They include conventional weapons or large scale systems, classified in six categories: ships, aircraft, missiles, artillery, armoured vehicles and guidance and radar systems (excluding lorries, services, munitions, small arms, support items, components and component technology and towed or naval artillery under 100 millimetre calibre).

**Coverage ratio**  
Relation between the exports and imports of an economy, expressed as a percentage.

**Crude birth rate**  
Number of births per year per thousand inhabitants. An estimate is made in the middle of the current year.

**Crude death rate**  
Number of deaths per year per thousand inhabitants. An estimate is made in the middle of the current year.

**Current account balance**  
The sum of the net exports – exports minus imports – of goods and services, incomes and net transfers.

**Daily newspaper circulation**  
Refers to those newspapers published at least four times a week.

**Debt service**  
The sum of the main payments and interest payments made for long-term debts, interest paid on short-term debts and repayments (redemption and charges) to the IMF.

**Desalinated water production**  
Amount of water produced by elimination of salt from salt water using a variety of techniques, including inverse osmosis. Most of this water is used for domestic purposes.

**Deserts and drylands areas**  
Total area of semiarid land (dry lands), barren and hyperborean (desert) that make up a country.

**Dietary energy consumption**  
Amount of food, in kilocalories per day, available for each person in the population.

**Duration of compulsory education**  
Number of years, within a determined age group, that children and young people are legally obliged to attend school.

**Earned income**  
Approximate calculation based on the relation between female non-agricultural salaries in respect to male non-agricultural salaries, the proportion of women and men in the economically active population, the total of the female and male population and the GDP per capita (PPP in USD).

**Ecological footprint**  
Measurement of the use of renewable natural resources by humanity. For a given population it is defined as the total area of biologically productive land and water required to produce the resources consumed, to maintain energy consumption, to make way for infrastructure and to absorb the waste generated by the population. The unit used to measure the ecological footprint is the global hectare and is defined as a hectare of biologically productive space, equal to the world average.

**Economic activity rate**  
The proportion of the population over 15 years of age that contributes, or is able to contribute, labour in the production of goods and services.

**Electricity consumption per capita**  
Refers to the gross production per inhabitant and includes the consumption of auxiliary stations and the losses in the transformers considered an integral part of the central station. It also includes the total electricity produced by pumping stations, without deducting the electricity absorbed by the pumps.

**Electricity production**  
Measured in the alternating equipment terminals of electric power stations. Also includes hydroelectric, coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy sources and generation by geothermal, solar, wind, tidal and ma-
Mere energy, as well as renewable residues and fuels.

**Electricity sources**
Refers to the energy sources used to generate electricity: hydroelectric, coal, oil, gas and nuclear.

**Employed population**
Proportion of the economically active population that is employed. When adding the employed population to the unemployed the result is the whole economically active population or labour force.

**Employment by sector**
According to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the Agriculture category also includes hunting, fishing and forest exploitation; the Industry category includes mining, extraction activities (including oil production), manufacturing, construction and public services (electricity, water and gas); the Services category includes the wholesale and retail trades, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage services, communications, financial services, insurance, real estate, business services, as well as community, social and personal services.

**Employment rate**
Percentage of population in work relative to the total population of working age.

**Energy consumption**
Consumption equals the local production plus imports and changes in stock levels, less exports and fuel destined to boats and aeroplanes used for international transport. Shown is the consumption per inhabitant, as well as the origin of the source. By origin, the fossil fuels include the power consumption of petroleum, natural gas, coal and its derivatives. In the case of nuclear energy, an efficiency of 33% is assumed (European average). Hydroelectricity excludes consumption from pumping. The modern renewable sources include (wind, tidal, waves, photovoltaic and thermal solar, biogas and geothermal and fuels coming from the biomass, such as ethanol) and traditional ones (solid biomass, including wood, vegetable and animal waste, among others).

**Energy production**
Primary energy forms – oil, natural gas, coal and its derivatives and renewable fuels and residues – and primary electricity, all converted into equivalents of oil. The renewable fuels and residues refer to solid and liquid biomass, biogas and industrial and municipal residues.

**Export/Import concentration index**
The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index is used, in a normalised version, to obtain values between zero and one (maximum concentration). It measures the degree of market concentration and the calculation takes into account the different product groups exported, according to the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

**Exports**
The value of all goods supplied by an economy to the rest of the world. It excludes labour and income in concept of property, as well as transfer payments.

**External debt**
The sum of the national debt, with public guarantee, private unsecured long-term debt, credit from the IMF and short-term debt.

**Fertility rate**
Number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age specific fertility rates.

**Fertilizer consumption**
Amount of vegetable nutrients used per unit of cultivatable land. The fertilisers considered are nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Consumption is calculated as production plus imports minus exports, and traditional nutrients (animal and vegetable fertilisers) are not included. The data obtained is the result of dividing the consumption of fertiliser of each country by the surface area of arable and permanently cultivated land.

**Fishermen**
Includes the number of people employed in commercial and subsistence fishing (both personnel on land and at sea), who work in fresh water, brackish water, marine area or in aquaculture activities.

**Foreign direct investment**
Net direct investment that is made in order to achieve a lasting participation in the management of a business company operating in a country other than that of the investor. It is equal to the sum of the equity capital, the reinvestment of earnings and other long-term and short-term capital.

**Forest area**
Understood as all land with natural or artificial plots of trees, whether productive or not.

**GDP (see Gross Domestic Product)**

**GDP per capita (see Gross Domestic Product per capita)**

**GDP growth rate**
Measurement of growth of an economy, obtained through the change in GDP over a period of time, calculated at constant prices.

**GDP per unit of energy use**
Indicator of energy efficiency. The temporary differences and entire countries partly reflect, structural economic changes, changes in the efficiency of particular sectors and differences in the use of fuels.

**Gini index**
Measure of greater or lesser inequality in the distribution of income and consumption, considering a state of per-
fectly equal distribution. A value of zero represents perfect equality and a value of one hundred total inequality.

**GNI (see Gross National Income)**

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**
The sum of the added value by all the resident producers in an economy, plus any tax on the product (without taking into account the subsidies). The added value is the net profit of an industry after adding together all the profits and subtracting the intermediate contributions.

**Gross Domestic Product by sector**
The contribution of the distinct economic sectors in the GDP is determined according to the added value determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).

**Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP per capita)**
Using the official exchange rates to convert the figures in national currency into USA dollars does not measure the relative internal acquisition powers of each currency in each country. The International Comparison Project of the UN and the WB develop measures of the GDP on an internationally comparable scale using as conversion factors, the Purchase Power Parities (PPP) in respect to each country.

**Gross National Income (GNI)**
The sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad. The added value of the net profit of an industry after having summed up all profits and deducted international contributions.

**HDI (see Human Development Index)**

**Households with television**
Percentage of homes with a TV set.

Data provided for some countries refer only to homes with colour television so values shown may be lower than actual figures.

**Human Development Index (HDI)**
The UNDP prepares the Human Development Index (HDI) by relating three indicators: level of incomes (GDP per capita), health (life expectancy at birth) and level of education (literacy rate and a combination of registration in primary, secondary and higher education).

**Immigrants**
Refers to the people born outside of a given country at the mid point of the year. The data is given in absolute figures and as a percentage in respect to the population of the receiving country.

**Imports**
Value of all goods received by an economy from the rest of the world. It excludes labour and income in concept of property, as well as transfer payments.

**Inbound tourists by destination country**
Number of tourists who travel to a country other than that in which they have their usual residence, for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose in visiting is other than an activity remunerated from within the country visited.

**Infant mortality rate**
Shows the number of deaths of infants under one year of age per thousand live births.

**Information and communications technology expenditures**
Includes internal and external spending on information technology, as well as telecommunications and other office infrastructures.

**Internally displaced people**
As a result of armed conflicts or human rights abuses, some 25 million people live as internally displaced population. These people were forced to flee from their homes for fear of losing their lives, but unlike refugees, they were displaced within their country’s borders. Even though internally displaced people are twice as many as refugees, their situation receives less international attention.

**International tourism receipts**
Income received in a given country from visitors, including payments made to national freight companies for international freight. It also includes the prepayment of goods and services received in the destination country. It can include the income from single day visitors. The percentage it represents in respect to exports is calculated as a ratio of the exports of goods and services.

**Internet users**
Defined as the computers within an economy that are directly linked to the worldwide Internet. These statistics are based on the country codes of the addresses of the users and do not always correspond to the physical location of the computer.

**Investment in telecommunications**
Includes expenses associated with the acquisition of telecommunications equipment and infrastructures (including land, buildings, intellectual property and others). These expenses refer both to the initial installations and to all the reforms undertaken in the existing installations.

**Irrigated lands**
Irrigation data refers to the areas equipped with hydraulic infrastructure to supply water to crops. Areas with partial or total control of the distribution, surface areas irrigated by diversion of rises in level and low and flood- ed areas where available water is controlled are included.

**Known species**
Refers to the total number of species in...
a given country. Only mammals and birds have been taken into account.

**Land area**

Refers to the total surface area minus the surface covered by inland waters. Inland waters are defined in general as rivers and principle lakes.

**Land under cereal production**

The figures related to cultivated crop surface areas generally refer to the area harvested, although those corresponding to permanent crops can refer to the total planted area. The figures for the cultivated cereal area only refer to harvests of dry grain. Crops harvested for hay, unripe foodstuffs, forage and silage, or used for grazing, are therefore excluded.

**Life expectancy at birth**

The number of years that a new-born infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.

**Live animal stock**

The data on stock covers all domestic animals regardless of age, location or final purpose. Estimates have been made for countries that have not supplied data, as well as for countries supplying partial statistics.

**Live animal trade**

Enormous quantities of unregistered animals cross the borders of some countries. In order to obtain more representative international trade figures of live animals, the FAO has incorporated estimates of the unregistered trade.

**Maternal mortality ratio**

Annual number of deaths of women owing to causes related to pregnancy, for every 100,000 live births.

**Mediterranean and the Black Sea catches**

Fishing catches for commerce, industry or subsistence (including recreational catches where the data is available). The data refers to the catch by the fleet of a country in the Mediterranean and/or in the Black Sea.

**Military expenditure**

Total expenses effected by the Ministry of Defence and other ministries on the recruitment and training of military personnel, as well as the manufacture and acquisition of military supplies and equipment. Military assistance is included in the expenses of the donor country.

**Mobile phones**

Mobile telephone users subscribed to a public, mobile and automatic service providing access to the public telephone network using cellular technology.

**Motor vehicles**

Includes cars, buses and loading vehicles, but not mopeds or motorcycles.

**National protected areas**

Areas of land or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biodiversity, natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal and other instruments. According to The World Conservation Union (IUCN) it includes the total area of all natural reserves, virgin areas, national parks, natural monuments, management areas of habitats and species, as well as protected land and sea areas in each country.

**Net energy import**

Shows the amount of energy use by an economy and to what extent it exceeds its domestic production.

**Net migration rate**

Net number of migrants divided by the average population of the receiving country within the period considered.

**Net number of migrants**

The entry of immigrants into a given country minus the outgoing emigrants of the same country.

**Official Development Assistance (ODA)**

The net payment of donations and loans granted under advantageous financial terms by official boards of partner countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, as well as international organisations, with a view to promoting economic development and wellbeing, including co-operation and technical assistance.

**Oil equivalent**

All the values of energy production and consumption presented in this classification are calculated and published by the International Energy Agency which uses the equivalent metric tonne of oil based on the calorific content of the energy products as the unit of measurement. An equivalent metric tonne of oil is defined as \(10^7\) kilo calories or 11,628 GWh. This amount of energy is practically equal to the amount of energy contained in a tonne of crude oil.

**Outbound tourists by country of origin**

Number of trips that travellers make to a given country from their normal country of residence, for a period of less than one year, for any other reason than to undertake a paid activity in the country visited.

**Permanent pasture**

Refers to land used permanently (five years or more) for herbaceous fodder, whether cultivated or uncultivated (meadows or uncultivated land for grazing).

**Personal computers**

Independent computers in use, intended for use by one single user at a time.
Population density
The result of dividing the average annual population of a country by its land surface area expressed in square kilometres.

Population in urban agglomerations of more than 750,000 inhabitants
Percentage of the population of a country living in metropolitan areas, that in 2005 had a population of more than 750,000 people.

Population on the Mediterranean coast
Estimates of the percentage of the population that lives in the coastal area.

Population living with HIV/AIDS
Estimated number of people of any age infected with HIV or AIDS. Includes the whole living infected population at the end of 2003, regardless of whether or not they have developed the disease. It shows the actual figure and the percentage in respect of the population of the country.

Population per physician
The figure is obtained by dividing the number of inhabitants of a country by the number of physicians in its health system.

Population with access to electricity
Refers to the number of people with access to electricity as a percentage of the total population.

Population with access to improved sanitation
Percentage of the population with access to adequate installations for the elimination of excrement, such as connection to drains or systems of septic tanks, flush latrines, pour flush latrines or ventilated improved pit latrines. A system of elimination of excrement is considered adequate if it is private or shared (but not public) and if it allows the efficient avoidance of people or animals entering into contact with the excrement.

Population with sustainable access to an improved water source
The percentage of the population that has reasonable access to any of the following sources of drinking water: household water connections, public standpipes, bore holes, protected dug wells, protected springs and rainwater deposits. Reasonable access is defined as the availability of at least twenty litres per person per day, from a source located within a radius of one kilometre from the home of the user.

Prevalence of smoking
The percentage of men and women who smoke cigarettes. The age range varies between countries, but in general it is 15 years of age or above.

Primary pupil-teacher ratio
Number of pupils registered in primary schools divided by the number of teachers in primary schools.

Public expenditure on education
Composed of capital expenses (construction, renovation, major repairs and purchase of heavy equipment or vehicles) and running costs (goods and services consumed during the current year and that need to be renewed the following year). It covers expenses such as salaries and rendering of services, contracted or acquired services, books and didactic material, social welfare services, furniture and equipment, minor repairs, fuel, insurance, rent, telecommunications and travel.

Public health expenditure
Refers to the recurring and capital expenses in government budgets (central and local), loans and external concessions (including donations by international agencies and non-governmental organisations) and social or compulsory medical insurance funds.

R & D expenditures
The current and capital expenses of creative and systematic activities that increase the stock of knowledge. Includes basic and applied research and experimental development work that leads to new devices, products or processes.

Refugees
People who have been forced to flee their country for fear of persecution owing to reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinions or membership of determined social groups and who are unable or unwilling to return. The asylum country is the country in which the refugee has requested asylum, but has not yet received a response, or where he or she has been registered as an asylum seeker. The country of origin refers to the nationality of the seeker or to the country in which he or she is a citizen.

Rural population
The estimated population at the mid-point of the year in areas defined as rural, as a percentage of the total population of the country.

Scientists and technicians in R&D
Professionals that have received further training to work in any scientific field.

Sectorial distribution of the active population
Shown by the percentages of the workforce employed in the different economic sectors: agriculture, industry and services.

Share of income or consumption
In the questionnaires carried out in homes in diverse countries to determine the distribution of income, they make five divisions (or quintiles) from the lowest to the greatest incomes. The two lower quintiles (40%) are considered the poorest. A relation is also made between the richest 10% and the poorest 10%, in order to establish the degree of inequality in incomes.

Surface area
Refers to the extension of the country in its totality, including the surface area occupied by inland waters.
Definitions

**Trade in fish and derivative products**
Expresses the value associated to the exports and imports of live, fresh, frozen, chilled, dried, salted, smoked and tinned fish and derivative products. Includes fresh and salt water and aquaculture fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

**Total catches**
Fishing catches for commerce, industry or subsistence (including recreational catches where the data is available). The data refers to the catch by the fleet of a country in any part of the world. Marine fishing is practiced in seas or oceans, while freshwater fishing takes place in rivers, wetlands and inland lakes.

**Total population**
Includes all of the residents of a country or territory with the legal status of citizen, except refugees settled in a country of asylum, who are generally considered as part of the population of their country of origin. Values for 2005 and projections for 2050 are shown.

**Tourism expenditure in other countries**
The expenditure in other countries of travellers from a given country, including the payments to national freight companies for international freight. It can include the expenses of single day travellers. The percentage it represents in respect of the exports, is calculated as a ratio of the exports of goods and services.

**Tourists’ overnight stays**
Number of nights that non-resident tourists spend within the country visited, regardless of the type of tourist establishment.

**Trade balance**
Account that holds the imports and exports of an economy during a certain period of time with the purpose of reflecting the corresponding balance. The negative values indicate a deficit in the trade balance.

**Threatened species**
Includes all the species classified by IUCN, as “vulnerable, in danger, or in critical danger”, but excludes all introduced species, species whose status is not sufficiently known, extinguished species and those still without an assigned status. Only mammals and birds have been taken into account.

**Under-five mortality rate**
Probability of death between birth and becoming five years old, expressed per thousand live births.

**Unemployment rate**
Percentage of the active population without work, but available for and seeking employment.

**Urban population living in slums**
A place of precarious settlement is a group of individuals who live under the same roof and lack one or more of the following conditions: secure tenure (State protection against illegal eviction), access to drinking water, access to basic healthcare, structural dwelling quality and sufficient vital space. In accordance with the situation of the city in which the precarious settlement is found, this concept can be locally adapted.

**Water consumption**
Total water used by humans in a year, without taking into account the losses due to evaporation in reservoirs. Includes water from non renewable underground sources, from rivers coming from other countries and from desalinated plants.

**Water dependency**
Percentage of water available in one country, coming from another.

**Water resources**
Refers to the total renewable resources, covering the watercourses of the country (rivers and underground rain water reserves) and the watercourses originating in other countries.

**Wood fuel production**
Includes wood from trunks and branches, used as fuel for cooking, heating or producing energy.

**Workers’ remittances**
According to the definition of the IMF Balance of Payments Manual, workers’ remittances are goods and financial assets transferred by immigrants living and working in an economy (where they are considered residents) in favour of the residents of their former country of residence. An immigrant must live and work in the new economy for more than one year to be considered a resident there. The transfers made to the immigrants own accounts abroad are not considered transfers. Moreover, all those derived from the possession of a business by an immigrant are only considered to be normal transfers to the country of origin.

**Year when women obtained the right to stand for election**
The dates refer to the year when the universal and equal right to stand for election was recognised. In the cases when two years appear, the first refers to the first partial recognition of the right to stand for election.

**Year when women obtained the right to vote**
The dates refer to the year when the universal and equal right to vote was recognised. In the cases when two years appear, the first refers to the first partial recognition of the right to vote.
List of the Organisms Consulted for Drawing Up Tables, Charts and Maps

Atlas of International Freshwater Agreements
www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/publications/atlas/

CITES, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
www.cites.org

EFFIS, European Forest Fire Information System
effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu

EUROSTAT, Statistical Office of the European Commission
europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat

FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
www.fao.org

IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency
www.iaea.org

IDMC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
www.internal-displacement.org

ILO, International Labour Organization
www.ilo.org

IPU, Inter-Parliamentary Union
www.ipu.org

ITU, International Telecommunication Union
www.itu.int

IUCN, World Conservation Union
www.iucn.org

NEA, Nuclear Energy Agency
www.nea.fr

NTI, Nuclear Threat Initiative
www.nti.org

OECD, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
www.oecd.org

Plan Bleu
www.planbleu.org
SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
www.sipri.org
UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
www.unaids.org
UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
www.unctad.org
UNDP, United Nations Development Program
www.undp.org
UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme
www.unep.org
UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
www.unesco.org
UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund
www.unfpa.org
UNHCR, United Nations Refugee Agency
www.unhcr.ch
UNICEF, United Nations Children’s Fund
www.unicef.org
United Nations Treaty Collection
untreaty.un.org
UNPOP, United Nations Population Division
www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm
UNSTAT, United Nations Statistics Division
unstats.un.org
UNWTO, World Tourism Organization
www.unwto.org
WB, World Bank
www.worldbank.org
WEF, World Economic Forum, Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2008
WHO, World Health Organization
www.who.int
WNA, World Nuclear Association,
www.world-nuclear.org
WRI, World Resources Institute
www.wri.org
WWF
www.wwf.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Abbreviations in Tables, Charts and Maps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL  Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT  Austria</td>
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<td>BA  Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>BE  Belgium</td>
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<td>BG  Bulgaria</td>
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<td>CS  Serbia and Montenegro</td>
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<td>CY  Cyprus</td>
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<td>CZ  Czech Republic</td>
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<td>LU  Luxembourg</td>
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<td>LV  Latvia</td>
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<td>LY  Libyan Arab Jamahiriya</td>
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<td>MA  Morocco</td>
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<td>ME  Montenegro</td>
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<td>MK  Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic</td>
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<td>MT  Malta</td>
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<td>NL  Netherlands</td>
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<td>PL  Poland</td>
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<td>PS  Palestinian Territory, Occupied</td>
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<td>PT  Portugal</td>
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<td>RO  Romania</td>
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<td>RS  Serbia</td>
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<td>SI  Slovenia</td>
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<td>SK  Slovakia</td>
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<td>SY  Syrian Arab Republic</td>
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<td>TN  Tunisia</td>
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<td>TR  Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK  United Kingdom</td>
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<td>US  United States</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA  Association Agreement
AC  Association Council
ACAA  Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance
ACP  Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADFM  Democratic Association of Women in Morocco
ADIA  Abu Dhabi Investment Authority
AECID  Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AFAEMME  Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen
AFD  Agence Française de Développement
AFEM  Association des Femmes de l'Europe Méridionale
AGDP  Agricultural Gross Domestic Product
AHDR  Arab Human Development Report
AI  Amnesty International
AIDS  Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AII  Adriatic-Ionic Initiative
AKEL  Progressive Party of Working People (CY)
AKP  Justice and Development Party (TR)
ALF  Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures
AME  Arab Middle East
AMU  Arab Maghreb Union
ANIMA  Euro-mediterranean Network of Investments Promotion Agencies
AQIM  al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASBU  Arab States Broadcasting Union
ASCAME  Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry
ASEAN  Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEMP  Arab South and East Mediterranean Partners
ASMCs  Arab South Mediterranean countries
ATU  Agadir Technical Unit
AU  African Union
BBC  British Broadcasting Corporation
BP  Barcelona Process
BP: UfM  Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean
CAFÉ  Franco-Egyptian Business Club
CAN  Andean Community
CAP  Common Agricultural Policy
CARIFORUM  Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States
CARIM  Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration
CASE  Center for social and economic research (Pl)
CAWTAR  Center for Arab Women Training and Research
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cross-Border Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEAS</td>
<td>Common European Asylum System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEMI</td>
<td>Centre Études Méditerranéennes Internationales</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>United States Central Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEPS</td>
<td>Center for European Policy Studies</td>
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<td>CETMO</td>
<td>Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean</td>
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<td>CFI</td>
<td>Canal France International</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>Republican People’s Party (TR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency (US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIES</td>
<td>Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIGEM</td>
<td>The Migration Information and Management Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIHEAM</td>
<td>International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMO</td>
<td>Conference of Interior Ministers of the Western Mediterranean</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP</td>
<td>Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
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<td>CNRS</td>
<td>Centre national de la recherche scientifique (FR)</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties</td>
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<td>COPEAM</td>
<td>Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators</td>
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<td>CoR</td>
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<td>CSCP</td>
<td>Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform</td>
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<td>European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</td>
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<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<td>EPA</td>
<td>Enhanced Partnership Agreement</td>
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<td>Algeria’s Entreprise Publique de Television</td>
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<td>ESCWA</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
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<td>Islamic Salvation Front</td>
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<td>FRG</td>
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<td>GAERC</td>
<td>General Affairs and External Relations Council</td>
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<td>GAFTA</td>
<td>Greater Arab Free Trade Area</td>
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<td>GATS</td>
<td>General Agreement on Trade in Services</td>
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<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
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<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Cooperation Council for Arab States of the Gulf/Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GDR</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Germany</td>
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<td>GIA</td>
<td>Armed Islamic Group</td>
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<td>GICM</td>
<td>Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group</td>
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<td>GIH</td>
<td>Gulf Investment House</td>
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<td>GIS</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>GNSS</td>
<td>Global Navigation Satellite Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSP</td>
<td>generalized system of preferences</td>
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<td>GSPC</td>
<td>Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat</td>
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<td>GTMO</td>
<td>Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean</td>
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<td>HBD</td>
<td>Association of the Union of Jurists (TR)</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<td>ICATU</td>
<td>International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas</td>
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<td>International Confederation of Free Trade Unions</td>
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<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice</td>
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<td>ICMPD</td>
<td>International Centre for Migration Policy Development</td>
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<td>Official Credit Institute (SP)</td>
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<td>ICO/EUSR</td>
<td>International Civilian Office/ European Union Special Representative Office</td>
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<td>ICP</td>
<td>International Comparison Project</td>
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<td>ICP</td>
<td>Individual Cooperation Programmes</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>IDF</td>
<td>Israel Defense Forces</td>
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<td>IDMC</td>
<td>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced People</td>
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<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
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<td>IER</td>
<td>Equity and Reconciliation Commission (MA)</td>
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<td>IFRI</td>
<td>French Institute of International Relations</td>
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<td>IFSTEM</td>
<td>International Freight Simultaneous Transport Equilibrium Model</td>
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<td>IHRL</td>
<td>International Human Rights Law</td>
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<td>IHT</td>
<td>International Herald Tribune</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INFO/RAC</td>
<td>Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication of the Barcelona Convention</td>
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<td>INSS</td>
<td>Institute for National Security Studies (Israël)</td>
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<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Investment Promotion Agency</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance</td>
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<td>IPR</td>
<td>Intellectual Property Rights</td>
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<td>IPU</td>
<td>Inter-Parliamentary Union</td>
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<td>ISCTE</td>
<td>Institut Supérieur de Sciences du Travail et de l'Entreprise</td>
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<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization</td>
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ITC  Information and Communication Technologies
ITSAM  Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq
ITU  International Telecommunication Union
ITUC  International Trade Union Confederation
IUCN  The World Conservation Union
KIW  Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (DE)
KPA  Kosovo Property Agency
KRG  Kurdish Regional Government
LAS  League of Arab States
LDK  Democratic League of Kosovo
LIFG  Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LNG  Liquefied Natural Gas
MAP  Maghreb Arabe Presse (MA)
MAP  Mediterranean Action Plan
MCG  Mediterranean cooperation group (NATO)
MD  Mediterranean Dialogue
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
MED POL  Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean Region
MEDAC  Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies
MEDREG  Mediterranean Gas and Energy Regulators Assembly
MeHSIP  Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme
MENA  Middle East & North Africa
MEPI  Middle East Partnership Initiative (US)
MFN  Most-Favoured-Nation
MHP  Nationalist Action Party (TR)
MINURSO  United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MIPO  Mediterranean Investment Project Observatory
MNCs  Mediterranean non-member countries
MOU  Memorandum of Understanding
MPCs  Mediterranean Partner Countries
MPs  Members of Parliament
MU  Mediterranean Union
MUR  Movement for Unification and Reform
NAMA  non-Agricultural Market Access
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NESTEAR  Nouveaux Espaces de Transport en Europe -Application de Recherche
NGO  Non-Governmental Organizations
NIF  Neighbourhood Investment Facility
NIP  National Indicative Programme
NOHR  National Organization for Human Rights (Syria)
NPT  Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NTB  Non-Tariff Barriers
NTTFC  The National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee
OAPEC  Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
ODA  Official Development Assistance
ODIHR  OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD  Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC  Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE  Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PA  Palestinian Authority
PALOP  Portuguese speaking countries
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>PAM</td>
<td>Authenticity and Modernity Party</td>
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<td>PCA</td>
<td>Partnership and Cooperation Agreement</td>
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<td>PDK</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Kosovo</td>
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<td>PdL</td>
<td>People of Freedom (IT)</td>
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<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
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<td>PJAK</td>
<td>Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan</td>
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<td>PJD</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party (MA)</td>
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<td>PKK</td>
<td>Kurdistan Workers’ Party (TR)</td>
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<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Organization</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
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<td>PNGO</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>People’s Party (ES)</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Purchasing Power Parity</td>
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<td>PPPP</td>
<td>Public-private partnership</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
<td>Party of Progress and Socialism</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
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<td>Spanish Socialist Workers Party (EN)</td>
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<td>Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre</td>
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<td>Renovated Mediterranean Policy</td>
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<td>RTA</td>
<td>Regional Trade Agreements</td>
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<td>RTAP</td>
<td>Regional Transport Action Plan</td>
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<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement</td>
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<td>SADR</td>
<td>Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
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<td>Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (ME)</td>
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<td>SEMCs</td>
<td>Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries</td>
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<td>SESAR</td>
<td>Single European Sky ATM Research</td>
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<td>SIPRI</td>
<td>Stockholm International Peace Research Institute</td>
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<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises</td>
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<td>SOFA</td>
<td>Status of Forces Agreement</td>
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<td>SOPEMI</td>
<td>Continuous Reporting System on Migrations (OECD)</td>
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<td>sanitary and phytosanitary measures</td>
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<td>Self-Sufficiency Ratio</td>
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<td>Sovereign Wealth Funds</td>
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<td>TAIEX</td>
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<td>Tampere Peace Research Institute</td>
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<td>Trans-European Transport Network</td>
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<td>TEU</td>
<td>Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit</td>
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<td>TIM</td>
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<td>United Cities and Local Governments</td>
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<td>UGTA</td>
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<td>Union marocaine du travail</td>
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<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>United States Africa Command</td>
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<td>World Economic Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Index of Boxes

### Dossier: From the Barcelona Process to the Union for the Mediterranean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Euromed Programmes and Projects: Political and Security Dialogue</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Euromed Programmes and Projects: Economic and Financial Partnership</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Appeal to Trade Union Leadership in the Arab Region, Peter Seideneck</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Euromed Programmes and Projects: Social, Cultural and Human Partnership</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Panorama: The Mediterranean Year

#### Economy and Territory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Territory and Transport</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CETMO</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTMO 5+5</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Culture and Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrations</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Dialogue</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Cultural Intermediaries of the EMP and the UfM, Paul Balta</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Selection of Important Publications, Paul Balta</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index of Tables

Table 1. Gender Gap Rankings per Category for Euro-Mediterranean Countries 142
Table 2. EU Trade Initiatives 179
Table 3. State of Play of Trade Negotiations During the Term of the Current Commission 179
Table 4. Political Values According to Level of Education 193
Table 5. Evolution of FDI Inflows by Sub-Region of Destination (annualised flows, in million euros, 2003-2008) 204
Table 6. GCC: Main Economic Indicators 205
Table 7. GCC Current Account Surplus (in billion dollars) 205
Table 8. Estimated Geographical Distribution of GCC Capital Outflows, June 2003-June 2008 (billions of dollars) 206
Table 9. Origin-Destination Cross Table 2003-08 (foreign share in gross budgets as announced) 208
Table 10. The “Realist Scenario” for EU Accession 227
Table 11. Number of Countries to Which Passport Holders Can Travel without a Visa 227
Table 12. Unemployment by Age and Sex (last year available) 230
Table 13. Evolution and Trade Integration of the ASEMPs 239
Table 14. Share of Services in GDP of ASMCs (%) 243
Table 15. Trade in Services as a Percentage of GDP 243
Table 16. Number of GATS Commitments of Arab Countries 243
Table 17. Results of Application of Commitments Made by Annex 1 Mediterranean Countries 250
Table 18. Volumes of Traffic for Maritime Transport in the Mediterranean for ‘Non-Bulk’ Products 258

APPENDICES

Table A1. Official Aid to Mediterranean Countries Financed under the European Commission Budget and the European Development Fund (EDF) in 2007 381
Table A2. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). 2007, 2008 382
Table A3. Mediterranean Candidate Countries for Accession 382
Table A4. Provisions for 2008 under the IPA (Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries) 382
Table A5. European Investment Bank Loans to Mediterranean Countries in 2007 383
Table A6. European Agency for Reconstruction 384
Table A7. EU Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) 384
Table A8. Budget Implementation by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) 385
Table C1. Number of Foreign Nationals from MPCs in the European Union by Nationality 387
Table C2. Immigrants in SEM Countries by Status and Origin (2000s) .................. 388
Table C3. Refugees in SEM Countries, Early 2007 ........................................ 388
Table C4. Dead and Missing Persons on Sea Routes for Irregular Immigration between SEM Countries and Europe, 2000-2008 .................................................. 388
Table D1. Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements ..................................... 389
Table D2. Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the Western Balkan Countries ................................................................. 389
Table D3. European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans ................................. 390
Table E1. Multilateral Treaties on Human Rights and Penal Matters ................ 391
Table E2. Multilateral Treaties on Labour Rights (Year of ratification) .............. 391
Table E3. Multilateral Treaties in the field of the Environment ....................... 392
Table E4. Multilateral Disarmament Treaties .................................................. 392
Table F1. Human Development Index (HDI) .................................................. 393
Table F2. Population: demography ................................................................. 394
Table F3. Population: structure and distribution ............................................. 395
Table F4. Education and training of human capital ......................................... 396
Table F5. Health and survival .......................................................... 397
Table F6. Nutrition and food security ......................................................... 398
Table F7. Access to health resources ............................................................ 399
Table F8. Gender: social development ......................................................... 400
Table F9. Technology and communication ................................................... 401
Table F10. Security and military expenditure ................................................. 402
Table F11. Economic structure and production ............................................. 403
Table F12. Agriculture .......................................................... 404
Table F13. Livestock .......................................................... 405
Table F14. Fisheries .......................................................... 406
Table F15. Employment and unemployment ................................................ 407
Table F16. Income distribution ................................................................. 408
Table F17. Gender: economic activity ......................................................... 409
Table F18. Production and energy consumption .......................................... 410
Table F19. Production, consumption and access to electricity ....................... 411
Table F20. CO₂ Emissions ......................................................... 412
Table F21. Water .......................................................... 413
Table F22. Environment .......................................................... 414
Table F23. International trade ................................................................. 415
Table F24. Exports .......................................................... 416
Table F25. Imports .......................................................... 417
Table F26. Tourism in the Mediterranean .................................................... 418
Table F27. Official Development Assistance (ODA) ..................................... 419
Table F28. External debt .......................................................... 420
| Chart 1. | Real GDP Growth | 52 |
| Chart 2. | Share of EU Import From and EU Export To Euro-Mediterranean Countries | 53 |
| Chart 3. | Evolution of the Relationship between GDP per Capita (PPP) in Southern Mediterranean Countries and the EU-15 between 1995 and 2007 | 110 |
| Chart 4. | Evolution of the Relationship between GDP per capita (PPP) in Two Groups of Southern Mediterranean Countries and the EU-15 between 1995 and 2007 | 111 |
| Chart 5. | Evolution of the Relationship between GDP per capita (PPP) in Southern Mediterranean Countries and the EU-27 between 1995 and 2007 | 112 |
| Chart 8. | Beta-convergence of Member States of the EU-27 and Southern Mediterranean Countries between 1995 and 2007 | 114 |
| Chart 9. | Dispersion of GDP per capita between the EU-15 and Southern Mediterranean Countries between 1995 and 2007 | 115 |
| Chart 10. | Dispersion of GDP per capita between the EU-27 and Southern Mediterranean Countries between 1995 and 2007 | 115 |
| Chart 12. | Evolution of Unemployment in the EU-25 and Southern Mediterranean Countries between 2004 and 2006 | 117 |
| Chart 13. | Evolution of Inflation in the EU-27 and Southern Mediterranean Countries between 1998 and 2007 in Relation to the European Economic and Monetary Union’s Convergence Criteria | 118 |
| Chart 15. | The Gender Gap in the Euro-Mediterranean Region | 146 |
| Chart 16. | Presence of Women and Men in Upper Parliamentary Chambers or Senates of Countries in the Euromed Region with a Bicameral System | 146 |
| Chart 17. | FDI Inflows for Med Regions and Med Share of World FDI (in million dollars) | 204 |
| Chart 18. | Current Account Surpluses Remain Strong | 205 |
| Chart 19. | GCC Current Account (billion dollars) | 206 |
| Chart 20. | Sovereign Wealth Funds by Region | 206 |
| Chart 22. | Relative Contribution of the Main FDI Emitting Regions into the Med Region (Med 13, in % of annualised declared amounts) | 207 |
Chart 23. Main FDI-Emitting Regions towards the Mashreq since 2003
   (in % of annualised declared amounts, 2003-08) .................................................. 207
Chart 24. Main FDI-Emitting Regions towards the Maghreb since 2003
   (in % of annualised declared amounts, 2003-08) .................................................. 207
Chart 25. Non-Oil Sector Direct Foreign Investments in Egypt 2007-08
   (percent of total) ........................................................................................................ 209
Chart 26. Skill Mismatch with and without Policy Reform in Middle Eastern and North
   African Countries. .......................................................................................................... 231
Chart 27. Recorded Emissions Credits Sold (situation at 1 June 2008) .............................. 249
Chart 28. Components of Mediterranean Maritime and Terrestrial Traffic ................. 256
Figure 1. Road Sign for the International Roads in the Arab Mashreq ........................... 264
Chart 29. The National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) ............ 265

APPENDICES
Chart A1. EU Cooperation 2007 ................................................................. 381
Chart B1. Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in the Maghreb and Middle East
   by Sector (2007) ....................................................................................................... 385
Chart B2. Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe
   by Sector (2007) ....................................................................................................... 386
Chart F1. Positive evolution of the HDI (1975-2005) .................................................... 393
Chart F3. Evolution of the rural population (1975-2006) (% of population) ............... 395
Chart F4. Literacy (2007) ......................................................................................... 396
Chart F5. Infant mortality (2006) ................................................................................ 397
Chart F7. Medical care (2002/06) (number of physicians per 10,000 inhabitants) ....... 399
Chart F8. Life expectancy (2005) (years) .................................................................... 400
Chart F9. Growth in internet users (2002-2007) (Number of users per 100 inhabitants) . 401
Chart F10. Conventional arms transfer (2003/07) ....................................................... 402
Chart F11. Annual percentage change in GDP (2007-2010) ........................................ 403
Chart F17. Progress and setbacks in women’s participation in economic activity
   (1990-2005) ............................................................................................................. 409
Chart F18. Energy consumption per capita and percentage change (1990-2005) ....... 410
Chart F20. Intensity of CO₂ emissions (2003) (metric tons of CO₂ emitted per million
   dollars PPP produced) .............................................................................................. 412
Chart F21. Availability, use and consumption of water resources (2007) ................. 413
Chart F25. Fuel imports (2005) (% of total imports) ................................................... 417
Chart F27. Official Development Assistance from DAC Members (2003-2007) ...... 419
# Index of Maps

Map 1  
Intra-Mediterranean Trade in 2006 ................................. 258

**APPENDICES**

Map A.1  
Crisis in Gaza (27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009) ................. 301

Map A.2  

Map A.3  
Migrant Remittences, 2007 ............................................ 303

Map A.4  
Civil Liberties ....................................................... 304

Map A.5  
Political Rights ..................................................... 305

Map A.6  
Natural Gas: Reserves, Production, Consumption and Trade .................. 306

Map A.7  
Education (2004-2007) .............................................. 308

Map A.8  
Global Gender Gap Index 2008 ........................................ 309

Map A.9  
Evolution of MPC and EU Imports (1995-2006) .......................... 310

Map A.10  

Map A.11  
GTMO 5+5 Western Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network Maghreb Countries, 2008 Ports ........................................ 312

Map A.12  
GTMO 5+5 Western Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network Maghreb Countries, 2008 Airports ........................................ 313

Map A.13  
GTMO 5+5 Western Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network Maghreb Countries, 2008 Railways ........................................ 314

Map A.14  
GTMO 5+5 Western Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network Maghreb Countries, 2008 Roads ........................................ 315

Map A.15  
Balance of Payments and Evolution of the Cereals CPI ...................... 316
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