

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Since the 1960s NATO began to focus its attention on the Mediterranean, establishing an Expert Working group on the Middle East and the Maghreb and later an ad hoc group on the Mediterranean. However, until the end of the Cold War there was no clear common policy towards the Mediterranean. NATO was deeply concerned about the different security threats that could emanate from the southern shore of the Mediterranean (political, economical environmental, etc.). In 1994 NATO Foreign Ministers launched the Mediterranean Dialogue on a case-by-case basis. Since then the number of countries involved in the MD and the number of topics tackled within the initiative have increased. Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia accepted the invitation in 1994; later joined by Jordan in 1995 and Algeria in 2000. The initial aim of the Dialogue was to create good relations and better mutual understanding while promoting regional security and stability, dispelling misperceptions about NATO's aims and policies. The basic concept was that if NATO members and Mediterranean partners worked together sharing expertise they could cope better with the new security environment.

Since then, the methods and fields of cooperation of the Dialogue have developed: MD countries have been consulted more frequently, new activities for cooperation have been introduced and a tailored approach for each country has been adopted, taking into consideration its situation and relevance to the MD. At the Istanbul Summit, ten years after establishing the MD, the Allies decided to give fresh impetus to the initiative and

invited partner countries to a more ambitious and expanded cooperative framework according to new guiding principles for the renewed partnership. Different reasons led to this upgrading: the new challenges to be faced after 9/11, the US invasion of Iraq and the negative perceptions this generated among the MD partners.

The dialogue has a progressive character, meaning that the number of participating countries may increase and the political and practical dimensions may develop (Progressiveness). The same basis and proposal is made to each partner, but each country will decide its level of participation according to its interests and needs (Non-discrimination and Self-differentiation). Following this latter principle, NATO does not intend to impose ideas on other countries, but rather to take into account partner countries' views in order to build a beneficial relationship (Joint Ownership). Finally the MD complements other international initiatives (like the UfM and OSCE Mediterranean Partners) through contribution in terms of political and practical cooperation in the area of security (Complementarity).

The Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG), established in 1997, is responsible for the MD; it meets on a regular basis gathering political counsellors to discuss the state of play and future developments of the MD. Political consultations can take place with a bilateral format (NATO+1), at ambassadorial and working level, to discuss issues relevant to the security situation. The other format of these consultations is a multilateral format (NATO+7). These usually take place after NATO Ministerial Meetings or Summits of Heads of State and Governments. NATO Senior Officials (Secretary General and Deputy Secre-

tary General) also visit MD countries. The aim of these visits is to meet with relevant host authorities, exchange views on the MD and attain a better understanding of each partner's objectives and priorities. In this sense, Individual Cooperation Programmes allow interested MD countries and NATO to frame their cooperation in a more focused way, so that interested countries can outline their long-term and short-term objectives in their cooperation with the Alliance.

The practical cooperation of the MD is organised according to an Annual Working Programme focusing on defence and security issues, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, civil-emergency planning and science. One of the aims of the practical cooperation of the Dialogue is to reach interoperability in a way that allows Allies and MD countries to work together in NATO-led operations. On this issue, it is worth mentioning that three MD countries (Egypt, Morocco and Jordan) have cooperated with the Allies in NATO-led peace-keeping operations. There are also information activities that include the invitation of journalists, academics, opinion leaders, and parliamentarians of the MD partners to attend NATO events. The military cooperation of the MD includes invitations to observe or participate in military exercises and attend seminars or courses (in the NATO Defence College in Rome or NATO School in Germany).

In 2004, during the same summit that reformed the Dialogue, NATO launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which has the same aims as the MD, such as enhancing security and stability and fighting terrorism, but targets the broader Middle East region. The initiative is opened to all countries that sub-

scribe to its aims. So far, four countries from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have joined the ICI, namely: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates. The initiative is bilateral (NATO+1) and gives tailored advice in different areas where NATO has expertise, such as: defence reform and planning, military cooperation, information sharing to fight terrorism, maritime cooperation and disaster response.

At the 2006 Riga Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government launched the NATO Training Cooperation Initiative in order to share NATO experience and expertise in training and education with MD and ICI partners, and to receive input and feedback from them.

It is worth mentioning the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), although it has no formal relationship with NATO and has long operated as an entirely distinct entity, while nevertheless representing a tangible expression of its fundamental mission. NATO PA is the inter-parliamentary organisation of legislators from the member countries of the Alliance and 14 associate members. The Assembly provides a critical forum for international parliamentary dialogue on different matters. Its principal objective is to foster mutual understanding among Alliance parliamentarians. NATO PA started dialoguing with MENA countries in the early nineties and in 1996 a formal mechanism to address regional challenges was launched: the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM). This provides a forum for parliamentarians from NATO countries and the MENA region to discuss political and security issues and to enhance cooperation. The Mediterranean Dialogue of the NATO PA seeks to reflect NATO's priorities but it also exceeds the scope of NATO's MD. In fact it integrates the Palestinian Legislative Council as a Parliamentary Observer and invites the Parliaments of Cyprus and Malta to its seminars. In 2004, with the upgrading of the MD and in order to further integrate the Mediterranean partners in the Assembly, the status of Mediterranean Associate Member was introduced to allow these countries to participate in NATO PA meetings. NATO PA has also begun to establish links with advisory councils and parliamentary institutions in the Gulf region after the launching of

the ICI in 2004. The NATO PA GSM holds two annual seminars, which cover the following subjects: security-related matters of the MENA region and Arabian Peninsula, developments of the MD and ICI initiatives concerning parliamentarians; the role of culture and religion; and issues of common concern such as energy and migration.

The dialogue has suffered certain political and practical impediments since its birth. First of all the troubled situation of the Middle East Peace Process hinders confidence-building among countries; the absence of some key regional countries (Syria, Lebanon and Libya); the limitation of resources; and finally the proliferation of fora and initiatives concerned with North-South relations that sometimes give rise to confusion and overlapping roles.

Chronology January 2009 – December 2009

- 10-11 January, Amman (Jordan): NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, meets King Abdullah II to discuss the regional security situation and NATO Jordan cooperation in the framework of the MD. During a speech at the Jordanian Defence College the NATO SG underlines the increase in practical cooperation to face the various changes in the security environment. Jordan is the first MD country to benefit from the MD Trust Fund Project (for the safe disposal of obsolete munitions and arms) and is currently concluding the elaboration of the Individual Cooperation Programme to identify key priorities of its collaboration with NATO.
- 11-12 January, Tel Aviv (Israel): the NATO SG meets Prime Minister Olmert, Foreign Minister Livni and Defence Minister Barak. In a speech at the Institute for National Security Studies, the NATO Secretary General stresses the need to accelerate cooperation within the MD due to the evident interdependence between the three shores of the Mediterranean, and acknowledges Israel's contribution to Operation Active Endeavour (i.e. the patrolling of the Mediterranean by NATO ships in order to protect against terrorist activity). With regard to the Middle East conflict, he calls all parties to make all possible efforts to ensure the successful conclusion of the Egyptian talks.

- 27 January, Kuwait: The NATO Deputy SG visits Kuwait, the first country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, in 2004. In a speech at the Kuwait Diplomatic Institute he tackles different issues such as the growing demand for energy and the need for partnership in order to face the security challenges affecting the Mediterranean and the Gulf.

- 16 February, Brussels (Belgium): Members of the Jordanian Senate and Parliament visit NATO HQ and meet different NATO officials to discuss the transformation of the Alliance, NATO cooperative activities with Jordan under the MD and the fight against terrorism.

- 19 May, Manama (Bahrain): the NATO Deputy SG pays an official visit to the country to discuss future practical and political cooperation in the framework of the ICI.

- 14-15 June, Naples (Italy): the NATO PA GSM meets to discuss migration in the Mediterranean region, maritime security, energy security and the global economic crisis. 40 MPs from NATO Member States and the MENA region participate.

- 25 September, Brussels (Belgium): NATO decides to resume full cooperation with Mauritania within the framework of the MD, which it has been a member of since 1994. The decision follows the political process opened in the country after the last presidential elections.

- 22 October, Naples (Italy): a Tactical Memorandum of Understanding (TMOU) is signed in the framework of Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's anti-terrorism mission. The agreement defines the modalities of Moroccan participation in the operation, envisaging a wide range of cooperation activities, from information exchange to contribution of naval and air assets.

- 24-27 October, Luxor (Egypt): a workshop in the framework of NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) gathers scientists, local universities, think tanks and governmental bodies to discuss technical aspects affecting the production and quality of water and to improve Egypt's water supply.

- 29-30 October, Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates): the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs organise a conference on "NATO-UAE relations and the way

forward in the ICI.” High level representatives from NATO and local government, as well as opinion leaders and academics from the Gulf region are in attendance. The aim of the conference is to promote a better mutual understanding between NATO and ICI countries. The event sees NATO and UAE sign an agreement to facilitate the exchange of classified information.

- 19-20 November, Brussels (Belgium): high level media representatives visit NATO HQ on the occasion of the new NATO-Jordan Trust Fund. Topics discussed include NATO-Jordan collaboration, NATO’s operation in Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism. Under the new Trust Fund, initiatives will be launched for the elimination of explosive remnants of war and the management of ammunition stockpiles.

- 16-18 November, Haifa (Israel): the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) sponsors a course for emergency management professionals, which aims to prepare them in the event of mass casualty situations.

- 23-24 November, Tel Aviv (Israel): the NATO Deputy SG conducts high level talks with Israeli officials in the framework of the NATO-Israel Individual Cooperation Programme

- 2-4 December, Brussels, (Belgium): on the occasion of the NATO Foreign Ministerial Meeting, a three-day press tour is organised at NATO HQ for journalists from the principal media entities of the MD and ICI countries. During the briefings many topics are tackled such as: NATO cooperation within the MD and ICI framework, the agenda of the NATO ministerial meeting and NATO operations. In a press conference the NATO SG Rasmussen affirms that since he took over, meetings with all the ambassadors of the partner countries have been held to discuss how cooperation can possibly be developed within NATO, both bilaterally and multilaterally within the two partnerships

For further information:

www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52927.htm?selectedLocale=en Mediterranean Dialogue

www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52956.htm?selectedLocale=en Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=1900 NATO PA MSG Seminar

2. Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in the OSCE

The OSCE’s special relationship with the six Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation dates back to the start of the Helsinki Process and is rooted in the strong historical, cultural, economic and political ties between the OSCE area and the Mediterranean Basin. OSCE Participating States (OSCE PS) and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation (MPC) recognise that, in an increasingly globalised world, the security challenges they face are intertwined.

OSCE PS have declared their intention to encourage the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields of economic activity and to increase mutual confidence to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean as a whole. OSCE has shared its comprehensive, three-dimensional approach to security with the Mediterranean Partners on a number of topics including: confidence and security building, protecting human rights, OSCE as a platform for dialogue and fostering norms of behaviour, OSCE environmental and economic dimension commitments, migration and integration policies. The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security focuses not only on territorial integrity and military issues, but also on economic, social, political, environmental and cultural dimensions. The OSCE MPC initiative includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, which have many opportunities to get involved in the work of the OSCE. They attend as observers in a number of OSCE activities: OSCE Ministerial Councils, regular meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation; they are also invited to send observers to electoral missions of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). They actively participate in the OSCE Annual Mediterranean Conference, Seminars for Mediterranean Partners, Annual Security Review Conference, the Economic Forum, the Mediterranean Contact group within the Permanent Council and the Mediterranean Forum, organised within the framework of the Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. OSCE PA is a forum in which new ideas can be tried or new ways of cooperation can be explored

(for example, MPs from Libya were able to participate in some Meetings). Since 1995, the annual OSCE Mediterranean Conferences, usually hosted by a partner state, provide the opportunity to exchange views and contributions for further developing the OSCE Mediterranean initiative and since they are also attended by parliamentarians, scholars and leading NGOs, they generate a unique platform for exchanging ideas and recommendations. Since 2001, the President of the OSCE PA has appointed a Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs with the aim of enhancing engagement of OSCE PA members and MPC parliamentarians. Over the years MPCs and OSCE PS have not only shared their views and experience on security issues, such as the fight against terrorism and human trafficking and economic and environmental challenges such as migration, development and desertification, but have also worked on commitments with a human dimension, such as fighting all forms of discrimination, racism and intolerance.

During 2009, it is worth underlining the presentation of two papers, by Egypt and Morocco, which propose suggestions for the future of the partnership. In particular, *The Future of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership – The Moroccan Vision* presents practical proposals aimed at strengthening the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership. It suggests that the initiative should be focused more on concrete projects and that effective mechanisms should be put in place for implementing the recommendations made at Mediterranean conferences and seminars. The Moroccan delegation also calls for strengthening civil society involvement in the Partnership and believes that it is necessary to review the Mediterranean Contact Group working methods, directing them towards action rather than only being a forum for discussion.

Mediterranean Contact Group

24 April, Vienna (Austria): The Personal Representative of the Chairmanship–In-Office (CiO) for the Mediterranean Partner Countries, appointed by the Greek Chairmanship, affirms that security in the Mediterranean region has to be approached according to three principles:

flexibility (increasing effectiveness in overcoming existing differences); enhancing the OSCE Partnership's visibility (involving leaders and civil society); and focusing on concrete results following recommendations that emerge from the annual conferences. Under the Kazakh Chairmanship, the Mediterranean Contact Group has held nine meetings in 2009. They have been useful to exchange ideas on a number of issues including freedom of the media, counter-terrorism, human trafficking, the Alliance of Civilizations, political and military dimensions and economic and environmental activities.

OSCE MPCs Seminar on Media Self-Regulation

19 June, Vienna (Austria): Based on a suggestion made by Egypt, the seminar aims at introducing the Media Self-Regulation Guide published by the OSCE to the MPCs. It also intends to discuss the relationship between media freedom and responsibility, focusing on the promotion of mutual respect and intercultural understanding.

OSCE MPCs Seminar on Tolerance and Non-discrimination

30 June, Astana (Kazakhstan): On the eve of the Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the participants of the seminar discuss the role of inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue and the protection of immigrant workers' rights. Participants include representatives of the OSCE Troika, Lithuania as the incoming Chair of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group, the MPCs, heads of the OSCE institutions, the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on tolerance and non-discrimination and the Mediterranean Partners, as well as a number of officials from the host country.

Seminar on OSCE Mediterranean Partner Engagement

22-23 July, Washington (USA): More than 50 participants from OSCE Mediterranean Partner States, members of the US Congress and NGOs take part in the Seminar organised by the US Helsinki Commissions and chaired by

OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, Alcee L. Hastings. The aim of the seminar is to generate open discussion and exchange ideas on how to strengthen the OSCE's Partnership with its Mediterranean neighbours in order to optimise their potential contributions. Different issues are tackled during the three sessions of the seminar: security in the Mediterranean, current issues in the Mediterranean region (youth, education and unemployment) and issues in the OSCE region. The conclusions call for greater leadership for the success of cooperation initiatives between OSCE and Mediterranean Partners; they suggest focusing events and conferences on a single issue rather than addressing all aspects of human security, in order to make conferences more manageable and implementation more effective; and finally synergies with other regional co-operation mechanisms (such as NATO, UfM...) must be developed in order to avoid duplication of efforts and competition over resources.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Fall Meeting - Mediterranean Forum

11 October, Athens (Greece): The Mediterranean Forum is divided into two sessions. The first deals with the prospects and challenges of the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension, and the second with trade and economic development in the Mediterranean. Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs Hastings highlights four key elements required to renew the foundation upon which the partnership is based: first the need to identify a regional role for the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension in the context of other regional issues, since many delegations from the MPCs have reiterated their fatigue with the multiplicity of the Mediterranean regional frameworks; secondly the need to foster MPC ownership in OSCE related activities; thirdly the goal of optimising the OSCE Partnership Fund for exchange programmes for diplomats and civil servants from the MPCs; and finally the involvement of the partnership in the Middle East Peace Process. Several speakers highlight their interest in involving the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in OSCE Mediterranean activities following PNA's official request

to join. The second session deals with the importance of economic cooperation in relation with peace and stability in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Taking into account that young job seekers represent 65% of the population, employment creation is of paramount importance to foster stability in the Middle East. In the course of the OSCE PA Annual Meeting, the Vilnius Declaration is also ratified. It includes a resolution on Mediterranean Free Trade, which calls for the creation of a Mediterranean Economic Commission with the mandate to reduce trade barriers among the countries of the region. It also recommends the creation of a Mediterranean agricultural marketing board with the aim of creating jobs for young people in the agricultural sector.

www.oscepa.org/

OSCE Ministerial Troika Meeting with MPCs

30 November, Athens (Greece): The Greek Chairmanship underlines some key aspects of work with MPCs, such as the appointment of a Personal Representative of the CiO for the Mediterranean Partners. MPCs, for their part, touch on a number of important issues. They are particularly interested in following the development of the Corfu Process, launched to tackle European Security challenges in a spirit of confidence, transparency and partnership. They also recognise the importance of the Partnership Fund as a tool to deepen their engagement in the OSCE and praise Kazakhstan's efforts to identify three priorities for its upcoming 2010 Chairmanship: border management and security; countering water scarcity and desertification; and sponsored internships in an executive structure for MPCs. In light of the increase in cases of intolerance, MPCs call for a follow-up of the 2007 Cordoba conference on discrimination against Muslims. Almost all MPCs support the PNA's application to become an MPC, believing it could contribute to the Middle East Peace Process.

OSCE Ministerial Council

1-2 December, Athens (Greece): MPCs participate as observers in the Ministerial Council. The OSCE Ministerial

Council is the Organisation's central decision-making and governing body. The Foreign Ministers of the 56 Participating States meet to review and assess the OSCE's activities. Almost all MPCs stress the following recurrent issues: the fight against terrorism and its financing, participation in the Corfu Process, the promotion of the cooperation between the OSCE and other regional organisations such as the African Union and the Arab League, strong support to include the PNA in the Mediterranean Partnership and the resumption of peace negotiations in the Middle East.

www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html

OSCE Mediterranean Conference

14-15 December, Cairo (Egypt): this is the fifth time Egypt has hosted an OSCE Mediterranean Conference. During the three work sessions, participants from the OSCE Member States, Mediterranean Partners and Arab League and NATO representatives deal with the central issue: "The Mediterranean Partners of the OSCE: Cooperation toward Enhanced Security and Stability." Representatives from the PNA are also present as guests of the host country. The main conclusions, in terms of politico-military aspects of the OSCE, concern the involvement of Mediterranean Partners in informal consultations on the Corfu Process and the use of Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) to foster cooperation. The "Implications of the Current Economic and Financial Crisis" is another issue tackled by way of a cross-dimensional approach, taking into account the strong link between migration and security, the need to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, the vulnerability of migrants as a social group, as well as the decrease in remittances due to the economic crisis. The recommendations envisage the establishment of a working group. The final session focuses on two main issues: on the one hand a review of the achievements, and on the other the establishment of an effective follow-up mechanism for Mediterranean conferences. Participants give a positive assessment of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership,

praising the establishment of the Partnership Fund, the Personal Representative of the CiO for the Mediterranean and the parliamentary dimension. They also propose enhancing collaboration in some areas such as: the environment (desertification and water management), border security (counterterrorism and human trafficking), and cooperation on tolerance and non-discrimination, which will be central to 2010's activities.

www.osce.org/documents/ec/2010/02/42596_en.pdf

OSCE MPCs Seminar on Supply Chain Security

16 December, Valletta (Malta): the seminar brings together senior public and private experts from OSCE Mediterranean PS and PC. The aim of the workshop is to facilitate dialogue, networking and exchange experiences in order to tackle terrorism more effectively while continuing to facilitate legitimate trade and transport.

3. The 5+5 Dialogue

The 5+5 Dialogue is a forum of informal dialogue among the countries of the northern and southern shores of the Western Mediterranean. It was launched in 1990 during a ministerial meeting in Rome and involves five EU countries: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta and the five countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU): Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Its main aim is to serve as a laboratory of ideas and a forum to deal with regional problems through a comprehensive approach, taking into account the growing interdependence of factors and issues. Thanks to its flexible and informal character, it has become progressively more open and over the years, ministers and senior officials have met on an increasing number of topics. The Dialogue, in fact, was initially a political commitment between Foreign Affairs Ministers only and expanded progressively to encompass different spheres: Home Affairs since 1995, Migration since 2002, Inter-Parliamentary relations since 2003, Defence since 2004, Tourism since 2006 and Transport since 2007. Two more fields of cooperation are envis-

aged within this framework: Education and Environment. It is worth mentioning that the only meeting of Heads of State and Governments of the Western Mediterranean was held in Tunisia in 2003. The 5+5 Dialogue represents a useful framework for multidisciplinary dialogue and currently has nine fora on sectoral cooperation.

Main Meetings during 2009

- 20-21 April, Córdoba (Spain): Foreign Affairs Ministerial representatives from the countries of the 5+5 Dialogue, as well as European External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner and the AMU Secretary General Ben Yahia meet to deal with a series of issues affecting nations on both sides of the Mediterranean: the effects of the international crisis on economic perspectives in Europe and economic development in the Maghreb countries; the Union for the Mediterranean (Ministers underline the important complementarity of the UfM with other frameworks of regional cooperation); migration (participants express their will to develop a permanent cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination); the Middle East (calling for a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict); reaffirmation of the Dialogue (the 5+5 model can be used for cooperation for the countries of the UfM; in this sense participants express their will to open the 5+5 to new actors such as mass media, employers organisations, territorial authorities); and cooperative relations with the Maghreb (Ministers reiterate the need to coordinate efforts to boost regional integration and to continue the high level contact between the EC and AMU). The next Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue will take place in Tunisia in 2010.

www.maec.es/es/MenuPpal/Actualidad/NoticiasMAEC/Paginas/20090421_not1.aspx

- 17 May, Tripoli (Libya): Western Mediterranean Defence Ministers and officials converge for their 5th meeting to discuss cooperation and security in the region, through an annual action plan agreed at steering committee level and endorsed by ministers at their annual meeting. Participants consider ways of exchanging information, coordinating army commanders and boost-

ing the role of women in the armed forces. To enhance cooperation between the two shores, representatives propose to establish a Libya-based Training Centre for Mine Clearing, a Euro-Maghreb Centre for Strategic Research Studies to be based in Tunisia and a 5+5 Defence College in France. Libya hands over the rotating chairmanship to Malta whose priority will be to promote search and rescue.

- 19-20 May, Rome (Italy): the 6th Conference of Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers (GTMO 5+5) gathers ministers and high representatives from the countries of the 5+5 Dialogue as well as the EC Transport Commissioner, the SG of the AMU and the vice-President of the EIB. During the meeting Tunisia hands Italy the two-year presidency; ministers also present and ratify the activity report on the outgoing presidency. Among the priorities defined in the conclusions it is worth underlining: the updating of the multimodal network; the implementation of the missing links in the strategic Maghrebic axes; the strengthening of the North-South collaboration to contribute to the emergence and identification of maritime links; and the elaboration of a document on the current status of transport in the Western Mediterranean. The next GTMO 5+5 Conference will be held in Algeria.

www.cetmo.org/e_act.asp?cod=323&despl=0

- 28-29 September, Biarritz (France): 1st meeting of the Western Mediterranean Education Ministers with the presence of EC and UMA representatives as observers. Participants place great importance on the use and promotion of ITC in the field of education, and in this regard they propose a 5+5 charter for Internet at schools; a common certification for ITC professors in the Western Mediterranean and the development of common educational digital content in the area. Tunisia will hold the next 5+5 conference on education.

www.genie.gov.ma/Documents/Actualités/Centrales/Biarritz/relevee.pdf

- 23-24 November, Venice (Italy): Ministers from the ten countries on both shores of the Mediterranean meet for the 14th Conference of the Western Mediterranean Interior Ministers (CIMO). The EC is participating as an observer. Since its launch in 1995, it

is the only multilateral forum that tackles issues concerning responsibilities of the Interior Ministries. They devote special attention to: the fight against transnational terrorism (expressing the need to coordinate regional cooperation to deal with crimes and neutralise the means by which these activities are illegally financed, and the need for a security response based on the exchange of information); the free movement of persons (stressing the importance of enhancing legal migration and managing migration flows); cooperation in the area of civil protection (strengthening the civil protection system and communication among the national focal points); and finally the importance of local authorities in terms of sustainable development. The 15th CIMO Conference will be organised by Algeria.

www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/17/00117_dichiaraz_finale_ITA_24_nov.pdf

4. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)

Following the dismantling of the Berlin wall, the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia and the instability of the Balkans, the European Union promoted the so-called "Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe" regarding those South-Eastern countries aspiring to one day join the Union. During the Finnish EU Summit of October 1999, the Italian Government, supported by Greece, presented the "Adriatic-Ionian Initiative", which was formally established at the Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas the following year. The Heads of States and Governments of Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia signed the Ancona Declaration, which still represents the All's basic point of reference. Serbia and Montenegro later joined the initiative and both remained as Participating States in the All after the referendum in Montenegro. According to the declaration, the aim of the All is to strengthen regional cooperation to promote political and economic stability in view of the European integration process; to provide common solutions to shared problems, from the fight against crime to protection of the environment of the

Adriatic-Ionian Seas; inter-university cooperation; culture; and maritime cooperation. It is worth mentioning that the geopolitical situation has changed since Slovenia entered the EU in 2004, and the other Balkan countries are now approaching the EU within the Stabilisation and Association Process framework, although with different timeframes and conditions.

The Adriatic Ionian Council (made up of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Participating States of the All) is the decision-making body, and its agenda is prepared by periodic meetings of the Senior Officials (the executive body). The Chairmanship of the Initiative rotates according to an alphabetical criterion every May/June. The Greek Chairmanship concludes at the end of May 2009 and Italy will take over until May 2010. An important step in terms of organisation was taken in June 2008 with the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat (PS). The All PS works closely with the Chairmanship in Office for the production, compilation and dissemination of relevant documents. Its main tasks are: to provide coordination among Participating States in the framework of All activities, supplying any relevant official documentation and fulfilling all other tasks assigned by the All Council, Chairmanship and Committee of All Senior Officials. The PS is committed to changing the All into a project-oriented initiative and to maintaining links with local institutions and fora of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas.

All action is organised around four Round Tables, namely: small and medium-sized enterprise; transport and maritime cooperation; tourism, culture and inter-university cooperation; and environment and protection against fire. During the Greek Chairmanship the promotion of tourism in the region has been the main issue tackled in each round table, according to different points of view.

According to the Athens declaration of May 2009, the All aims to develop links between the Participating States and the UfM. The new Euro-Mediterranean framework, in fact, justifiably includes the Adriatic area in the Euromed Partnership, with the adherence to the UfM of four All countries: Albania, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Main events under the 2009 Greek Chairmanship

- 13 February, Corfu: International Conference on an “Adriatic-Ionian Development Strategy”. First ever informal meeting attended not only by high level officials from participating countries, but also by members of the academic community, local authority representatives, entrepreneurs and civil society representatives. The aim is to exchange ideas on broader regional cooperation, coordination and future objectives of the All.
- 4-5 March, Athens: The Round Tables on Environment and Protection against Fire bring together representatives of the Participating States, European Commission, UNEP-MAP MED-POL Programme and the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities. They discuss the interconnections between the environment and tourism (devising an eco-tourism development project), the situation regarding climate change, the possibility of implementing cross border cooperation with aerial firefighting and the protection of tourists in case of disasters.
- 4 May, Athens: 6th Meeting of Presidents/Speakers of the Parliaments participating in the All, with the participation of seven All countries and Representatives of the Czech EU Presidency and of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization. They welcome Albania and Croatia’s accession to NATO. Considering the climate of uncertainty due to the global crisis, they recognise the importance of regional cooperation in this field. They also express their concern for climate change and global warming.

- 6-8 May, Athens: Round Tables on Tourism, Culture and Inter-University Cooperation. The Greek Chairmanship wants to launch concrete and realistic projects on cultural cooperation in the region, namely: promoting regional tourism in All countries; protecting underwater cultural heritage in the region and intangible cultural heritage; and cooperating in the field of contemporary culture. Cooperation in tourism and its sustainable development is another issue tackled by the participants during the Round Table. In the sub Round Table on Education and Inter-University Cooperation, participants affirm they will continue their efforts to develop common projects.

- 14 May, Athens: During the 11th Meeting of the Adriatic Ionian Council, participants express satisfaction in the progress made in transforming the All into a project-oriented initiative and express their wish to involve the All in larger EU programmes. They also support the proposal to focus and serve one concrete, common goal at Round Table meetings.

Main events under the 2009 Italian Chairmanship

- 16 June, Ancona: Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials. One of the priorities of the Italian Chairmanship is closer cooperation with the EU in acquiring funds from the EU for the implementation of projects and in assisting All Participating Countries that are not EU Member States with their accession. To this end, cooperation with local authorities, universities and chambers of commerce should be strengthened under the All-PS coordination. The All Italian Chairmanship indicates as fields of

priority: transport and logistics, environment, small and medium enterprise and inter-university cooperation.

- 25 September, Ancona: Round Table on Tourism, Culture and Inter-University Cooperation. In the field of tourism the Chairmanship wants to draw up a document to communicate a common stance on the promotion of tourism in the basin.

- 26-27 November, Ancona: Round Table on Small and Medium Sized Enterprise. A protocol aiming at creating frameworks for a more active cooperation is presented, which should foster the project-oriented approach of SME cooperation within the All. Participants state that to enhance the development of the basin, regional coordination is needed. A new instrument for settling disputes is also announced.

- 30 November, Rome: A special session of the Round Table on Tourism is convened in order to give detailed information concerning the range and instruments available for the tourism project co-financed by the EU for the Adriatic-Ionian Basin.

- 4-5 December, Teramo: International Conference on “The Role of Universities and Research in the Adriatic-Ionian & Mediterranean Integration”. In the framework of the All, inter-university cooperation has been a priority since the birth of the initiative and has led to the constitution of the UniAdrion network with the Ravenna 2001 Declaration. The aim of the conference is to constitute an inter-university cooperation network bringing together the experience of various consortiums (UniAndrion, Emuni, Unimed...).

For further information:

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