

# THE EU AND MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY

## Over a Decade of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) is certainly the most important regional process that currently exists in the Mediterranean as it brings together all of the European Union member states and ten Mediterranean countries which are Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, and Turkey.

At the first Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministerial conference that took place in Barcelona in November 1995 the original twenty-seven Euro-Mediterranean countries established three principal areas of co-operation.

- a political and security partnership with the aim of establishing a common area of peace and stability;
- an economic and financial partnership with the aim of creating an area of shared prosperity;
- a partnership in social, cultural and human affairs in an effort to promote understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies.

The Barcelona Declaration stresses the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and is founded upon a basic understanding that future Euro-Mediterranean relations should be based on comprehensive cooperation and solidarity, in keeping with the privileged nature of the links forged by neighbourhood and history.

Given the more indifferent patterns of regional relations that have dominated Mediterranean relations than those that existed in November 1995, it is no small feat that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has continued to evolve. As the Barcelona Process proceeds through its second decade of evolution, the participating Euro-Mediterranean countries are continuously taking stock of the progress or lack of achievements registered in each of the different co-operative sectors they are seeking to advance.

The groundwork for the eventual introduction of a Charter for Peace and Stability, preparations for the smooth functioning of a Euro-Med free trade area and the establishment of an interactive Euro-Mediterranean Foundation that brings civil society together at regular intervals should be the priority areas that policy makers focus on. Implementation of the EU Commission's "Work Programme for 2006-2010" published at the tenth anniversary Euro-Med summit held in Barcelona in November 2005 identifies those areas of co-operation where implementation of confidence-building measures can proceed in the short-term.

If European Union efforts to foster inter-Mediterranean political and economic co-operation are to succeed they must be complemented by initiatives that Mediterranean states themselves initiate as part of a process that aims to create a transnational network upon which cross-border types of economic and financial interaction can take place. To date, the Mediterranean has not succeeded in creating an environment where people, products, ideas and services are allowed to flow freely. At the moment there are too many bottlenecks in the system and this will prohibit the region from competing and prospering in the global village of tomorrow.

Through its Neighbourhood Policy the EU is seeking to secure its borders by promoting a ring of well-governed countries to the East and South of Europe. The over-riding goal of this policy is to ensure that successive waves of EU enlargement do not create new dividing lines in Europe. The EU is already seeking to project prosperity and resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a strategic priority for Europe. Stability in the Middle East depends on such an outcome. Measures must also be introduced to bolster the Barcelona Process by dedicating more resources and commitment to the EMP objectives of enhancing economic, security and cultural co-operation with the Mediterranean.

In the Mediterranean the progressive establishment of Euro-Mediterranean free trade in the coming 10 years will have far-reaching consequences for Mediterranean societies and economies. Euro-Mediterranean policymakers must articulate more clearly the positive goals and the timeframe it will take to implement such goals. Emphasising that the Barcelona Process is a long-term initiative will also help eliminate the high expectations that have dominated the EMP since 1995.

By 2015 the EMP will vastly enhance the volume of trade within that gigantic trade area. One may expect that by 2015 the participating 40 odd countries will do 50-60% of all their trade within the zone. In the next decade the EMP will also have a positive impact on the amount of foreign direct investment in the Mediterranean countries. Assured market access and an improved overall political and economic environment will facilitate the task of attracting European, American and Asian investors to this region of the world.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partners should focus their attention during the next five years to ensuring that the EMP has enough of a direct positive impact on the Euro-Mediterranean citizens it is supposed to be addressing. Raising awareness of the EMP can be overcome by directing more of future Euro-Mediterranean programmes to the civil societal level, especially educational programmes as already identified by the European Commission in its current work programme.

In many ways the Barcelona Process is a farsighted and novel initiative. Some scholars believe that the EMP is so ahead of its time that it is unrealistic to achieve the objectives stipulated in the Barcelona Declaration. A major problem with the EMP is that it takes little account of the need for prior resolution of existing disputes in the Mediterranean area that include the Arab-Israeli, Cyprus and Western Sahara conflicts. It is highly unlikely that protagonists in each of these disputes can enter into co-operative security arrangements without first resolving their antagonisms.

Only the creation of a co-operative Mediterranean region in which the perceptual and prosperity gap is addressed, reduced and gradually eliminated, will ensure that the Mediterranean does not become a zone of indifference and an eventual economic wasteland. Integrating the Mediterranean into the twenty-first century international system through mechanisms such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the EU Neighbourhood Policy and a sustainable Middle East Peace Process is the immediate challenge that the international community must confront. Otherwise transnational sources of instability emanating from the Mediterranean will continue to manifest themselves at a regional and international level.

## **Enhancing Euro-Mediterranean Relations**

Since becoming independent, Malta's strategic relevance in the central Mediterranean has led Malta to pursue a comprehensive and proactive foreign policy agenda in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The importance that Malta attaches to Euro-Mediterranean security, stability and prosperity is highlighted by the prominent role that Malta has been playing in international organisations such as the United Nations, the Organisation for security and Co-operation in Europe, the Commonwealth and the European Union.

Malta's foreign policy priority of promoting a more enhanced structured dialogue between the European Union and the League of Arab States and its member states is essential if closer Euro-Mediterranean relations as envisaged in the Euro-Med Partnership and Euro-Neighbourhood Policy are to be realised.

A better structured EU/Arab political dialogue must focus on building confidence and trust and ensure that **the media** make use of their advanced technology to transmit such positive messages instead of the regular flow of negative political messages.

Malta believes that the time has come to focus more Euro-Mediterranean political energy on delivering practical cooperation in areas where such measures are urgently required. This includes cooperative measures in the field of **management of migration control, environment control and also economic development**. Such forms of cooperation are essential if the Euro-Med Partnership is to be perceived as relevant to the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Such modalities of cooperation would of course adopt all of the existing mechanisms of partnership (association agreements, action plans, trade provisions and financial cooperation) that already exist through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy. The main goal of this initiative would be to create a more positive atmosphere between Europe and the Arab world in all sectors, including politics, education, culture and business. The success of this initiative will lie in the informality of regular interaction between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

When it comes to immediate practical forms of cooperation Arab states should be encouraged to play a direct role in the management of illegal migration across the Mediterranean. One modality of cooperation that could be considered is that of cooperating more closely with FRONTEX or the EU Council of Interior Ministers against appropriate financial support from the EU.

Preparatory discussions ahead of the Ministerial Summit scheduled to take place during the **Portuguese Presidency later this year that will focus on Legal and Illegal Migration and Migration and Development** should concentrate on identifying practical measures that can be introduced in the short-term to start addressing this phenomenon in a more concerted manner. Similar modalities of cooperation can be launched when it comes to surveillance of pollution, monitoring fishing activities and carrying out search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean.

The success of coordinating Euro-Mediterranean relations will be determined by the extent to which interaction between these two adjacent regions of the Mediterranean contributes to an improvement in the standard of living of all peoples. **A more integrated engagement should focus on immediately enhancing Euro-Arab R&D in the field of innovation, especially when it comes to renewable and alternative energy.**

Global warming, global climate and global environment protection have become a key issue for worldwide political and industrial actions. Europe – under the German Presidency – is taking appropriate actions through leadership in relevant key technologies. New innovation policies for Europe (e.g. FP7), for Germany (HighTech initiative, launched late 2006) are already being implemented.

**EuroMedITI (the Euro-Mediterranean Initiative for Technology and Innovation)** is an initiative that has been launched by Malta in early 2007 and is already opening up partnerships between research, business and governmental sectors supporting innovation policies. **Water and environment technologies, Sustainable energy technologies, Marine technologies, and Information and Communication technologies** are the main areas of cooperation being focused on and will be discussed at a workshop scheduled to take place next month in Malta.

EuroMedITI aims to develop and empower an outstanding technology and innovation platform in the Mediterranean markets for business-driven services in Training, Applied Research and Development, Testing and Prototyping, Incubation, and Dissemination in the region. This will appeal directly to industries searching for a location to execute applied research and development under favourable conditions, and a hub to access the emerging Mediterranean market of approximately 400 million people.

An enhanced Euro-Mediterranean dialogue needs to focus much more seriously on **climate policy**. So far not enough attention has been dedicated to this issue in the Mediterranean. The time has come to start addressing this issue in a more comprehensive manner so that a Euro-Mediterranean strategy can be adopted and implemented as soon as possible.

Strengthening such practical policy dialogue mechanisms will add momentum to the Euro-Med Partnership Five Year Work Programme that is currently being implemented and which seeks to integrate our Mediterranean partners closer into the fabric of European society.

**The Five Year Euro-Med Work Programme (2006-2010) also calls for the “Launching of a substantial scholarships scheme for university students from Euro-Mediterranean Partner countries and increase mobility grants for Higher Education staff”.**

**The educational field** is a sector where much more needs to be done. 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 their shores. This will of course require an updating of

procedures for visas, making them more user friendly for such a category of professionals.

Future Euro-Med programmes need to ensure that **people to people interaction** is at the forefront, especially young people. It is essential that a much larger number of students from the Arab world are 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 Euro-Med region via scholarships, seminars, and other initiatives. The Euro-Med Education Ministerial due to take place in Cairo in June this year should 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) where over 400 graduates have been trained in the last seventeen 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 600 diplomats have had the opportunity to interact as you will be doing over the next four days. The time has come to emulate such success in other areas such as that of justice and home affairs so that a future generation of professionals from other sectors also have the chance to share a similar experience.

In such an exercise one needs to guard against abstract grand designs. The focus needs to be on delivering practical modalities of cooperation. Such an enhanced dialogue will also provide more dynamism and substance to the EMP, ENP, and also sub regional groupings such as the Med Forum and the 5 + 5. In such an exercise of network building one must also remember the very important role that Mediterranean municipalities can play. If we can manage to establish a truly interactive network between them, this will go a long way to fostering a closer understanding of one another.

The longer-term objective of an enhanced political dialogue between the EU and the Mediterranean world should be to foster a more conducive political environment within which a political dialogue that aims towards a convergence of civilisations is achieved.

**Professor Stephen C. Calleya is Director of the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta. Professor Calleya is author of Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations, Routledge, 2005.**