

EU AFFAIRS



European NGO confederation
for relief and development

CONCORD

Confédération européenne des ONG
d'urgence et de développement

CONCORD

NEWS
OF THE
WEEK

7 APRIL 2008

EUROMED / UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATIONS

Commission:

Memo: European Neighbourhood Policy - [Ukraine](#) – [Tunisie](#) (FR) - [The Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) - [Moldova](#) - [Maroc](#) (FR) - [Lebanon](#) - [Jordan](#) - [Israel](#) - [Georgia](#) - [Egypt](#) - [Azerbaijan](#) - [Armenia](#).

Progress reports on implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy: [Ukraine](#) – [Tunisie](#) (FR) - [The Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) - [Moldova](#) - [Maroc](#) (FR) - [Lebanon](#) - [Jordan](#) - [Israel](#) - [Georgia](#) - [Egypt](#) - [Azerbaijan](#) - [Armenia](#).

Parliament:

Council:

◆ www.wwwwwwwwww

NEWS

[Council] 02/04/2008 - EU/MEDITERRANEAN: Everything “except EU institutions” would be shared by countries on both sides of Mediterranean, Paris Declaration states

(Agence Europe) – Paris - The “Forum in Paris”, which last weekend brought together eminent French and foreign personalities at the seat of UNESCO to discuss the theme of the “Union for the Mediterranean” (UFM), was the occasion of intense debate. This shows that there is a strong rallying against the idea to bury President Sarkozy's project or even simply against the fact that it was watered down at the last European Council. Out of this meeting came the feeling that a “founding act” was being produced for a “community of destiny”. There was a mixture of lyricism and factual reality with figures throughout a debate which did not rule out any aspect of political, geostrategic, economic, cultural, and social life, or the environment, energy, enterprises and financing - not forgetting sensitive themes such as immigration and, above all, the perception of an Islam that is increasingly Islamic. **Rapprochement between the two sides of the Mediterranean is said to be inevitable, in the way it was inevitable that the Europe of 27 should come together. Just as coal and steel were the factors of integration for the Europe of yesterday, economic and human exchange, energy and renewable resources and the environment will serve as factors of integration for the UFM. The achievements of the Barcelona process will serve as a base on which to build the new construction, but the page would be turned.**

The **main recommendation** is: look ahead and do not focus on what is happening behind us. Jacques Attali, former advisor to President Mitterrand, did not spare those present a reminder of the Mediterranean's tragic past history, more with a view to pointing out the way to be taken in the future than to tarnish an ardent ambition that is often presented as a founding “utopia”. “Vengeance is at the source of the Mediterranean organisation. Vengeance in the form of historical organisation, vengeance in the form of organisation of human relations”. It would not be permanent war-mongering but rather the conviction that the “final utopia” of a united Mediterranean comes from a “play between violence and free market organisation and democracy. (...) And it is not by chance if, when the market and democracy are stabilised, the Mediterranean becomes

the leading world power”, in turn Greek, Latin, Muslim and Christian. This “middle sea” would be a “miniature of the nightmare of the world”, a human, economic and social, environmental “time bomb” that should be defused as a matter of urgency. The solution would come from “projects”: cooperation between all actors on the ground, towns, and civil society. Mr Attali launches the original idea of taxing maritime traffic (a quarter of the oil produced in the world transits through the Mediterranean) in order to avoid the fate of the Aral Sea.

The Forum ended its session with the adoption of ten recommendations directly addressed to the leaders of the EU and the Mediterranean rim, after the example of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950. Like Europe, the Mediterranean “cannot be built in a day or as one overall construction. It will be made with concrete realisations”. The recipe has been tried and tested to create a “de facto solidarity”.

The Paris Declaration thus above all suggests:

1. **“The holding in Paris or in another town in the North, of a South-South summit, by 13 July. It would be up to the political leaders of the South rim to meet to coordinate their expectations and their positions”.** This would be to correct a situation with which the EU and President Sarkozy is reproached, that of not sufficiently consulting the countries of the southern rim. A trip is being undertaken from early April by a team from the Elysée.

2. **“The creation of a committee of wisemen to reflect, in full independence, on the project for a Union for the Mediterranean, its contours and its content”.** There are many study groups vying with each other to give body to this new “community”. Groups and networks are vying with each other even within the French government and different European institutions in order to have an influence on the preparations for the summit on 13 July. Among them, there is the director of an economic cooperation council supported by the EU Latin countries, who presents himself as chargé de mission directly on behalf of President Barroso. Andrea Canino would be responsible for establishing a preliminary draft of what the Commission should decide under the European Council mandate. “We have no contact with the services but with the president's private office”, he told EUROPE.

3. **“The creation of a Mediterranean OECD on the model of the global organisation reserved for industrialised countries”.**

4. **“A permanent conference should be set in place for peace and security in the Mediterranean, after the Helsinki model”.** The question is how to escape the fatality of the Middle East peace process without losing interest in it.

5. **“The creation of an investment fund for development in the Mediterranean, with joint capital”.** The EIB, as one of those which had ideas of what the UFM should be, suggested its know-how to rally resources that will not be - or which will not be totally dependent on - EU budgetary resources. The idea of a bank was brought up again.

6. **“The creation of an observatory of population, migration and the regulation of the movements of persons”.** “Introducing a long-term visa system for three categories of people - qualified workers, seasonal workers and the retired - the feeling of being locked up encourages clandestine immigration; freedom of movement, however, can be a powerful incentive to return to one's country”. The danger of a de facto rupture that would result from preventing people from moving around was clearly stressed by virtually all speakers, and the French immigration minister, Brice Hortefeux, obviously did not manage to convince people when he presented his plan for a 'talents and skills map' to organise monitored free circulation of managers, intellectuals, technicians and artists from the South.

7. **“Favouring horizontal cooperation at the level of regions and cities through the creation of a permanent council of Mediterranean regions as the privileged interlocutor of the authorities in Brussels. The regions are planning to carry out cooperation on the ground. Combatting pollution, the fall-out of urban concentration and waste water are, he said, the main problems of the Mediterranean.”**

8. **“The creation of a professional training agency to encourage qualified immigration to serve the country. For example, a programme to train engineers and technicians specialising in renewable energy; an agency to promote short training courses in water, energy, building, transport, communications and farming.”**

9. **“The creation of a Mediterranean Erasmus programme; in the long-term, the creation of a full-time Mediterranean university which could expand at a later date to several cities in the North and South.”**

10. **“In order to encourage the emergence of a feeling of belonging to a shared arena of civilisation, the establishment of a federation of cultural foundations in the Mediterranean is suggested”.** In this area, felt to be crucial, there is no need to re-make the world. The Anna Lindh Foundation seemed to be generally popular and in return, its new president, Andre Azoulay, stressed his full availability and commitment for giving form to the UFM.

The ten recommendations end with a memorandum insisting that all bodies should be equally representative, with some located on the north and some on the south of the Mediterranean.

European Commission in the driving seat

The wealth of the debate and the variety of speakers from all countries on both sides of the Mediterranean were outstanding. The speakers included Emma Bonino, outgoing Italian trade minister, and Joaquin Almunia, neither of whom were sparing in their criticism of how the Barcelona process is managed. The commissioner attended as a Spanish politician. **It is useful to point this out because the European institution was totally absent from these debates, although they concern the institution above all because it is responsible for preparing the advent of the 'Union for the Mediterranean: Barcelona Process'. The invitations made to the European Commission scarcely had any follow-up. Ms Ferrero-Waldner is reported to have simply not replied. President Barroso let it be known late that he would be attending but then changed his mind two days before the event, according to Albert Mallet, the Forum chair.** Community sponsorship, accepted late by Mr Barroso, could therefore not be displayed or printed on time.

What stood out at the end of the three days of debate was the commitment by the entire political and media class to President Sarkozy, a general mobilisation that did not strike any false notes and which, as was repeatedly pointed out, went beyond the splits between Right and Left. The leaders of the Social Democratic opposition (Moscovici, Guigou, Delanoie and Vauzelle) displayed a genuine fervour. Beyond that, it was the prospect of the 'French Presidency' (of the EU) that motivated and fanned enthusiasm, a prospect described as almost a time of salvation or an unblocking of the heavy European machinery that will be clearly focussed on the EuroMed project.

The enthusiasm and faith in the Union for, and 'with', the Mediterraneans were complete. It was described without beating around the bush as 'taking over from' the Barcelona process. **Everyone called for the acquis of the Barcelona statement to be consolidated (an acquis that had been recognised but gradually fleshed out by a 'Brussels bureaucracy' believed to have seized a dialogue framework and to be turning it into no more than a structure for notifying its own decisions.) The focus will be on equal representation from now on.** The European Commission's role, even in the preparation phase of the 'founding summit' of 13 July, seems to have only been niggardly granted - it will only have to prepare the 'summit', Henri Guaino, special advisor to the French president, and ambassador Alain Leroy, who is charged with promoting the project, explicitly told this newsletter. An equally representative secretariat will have to take the helm of a process and direct it towards a stronger link between countries around the Mediterranean and even beyond, suggested several speakers, thinking of other Arab countries without a Mediterranean coastline. The approach was explicitly described as historic. MEP Alain Lamassoure stressed the strength of the European model although he seemed upset by the flashes of anger he detected at the European institutions, which were not felt to be capable of properly leading the UFM project. "The project is good, the packaging wasn't", he agreed, not hiding a strong irritation with the meeting with the president's entourage.

No criticism was spared of Henri Guaino either, but this was mainly levelled at the initial project. It appears to be groundless given that in Hanover and later in Brussels, the mistake of not going through the European institutions, appears to have been rectified. **The many references to other regional dialogues, such as the Baltic and North Sea, appear to suggest that the Franco-German quarrel on this subject is not completely finished.** Some substantial subjects still need to be discussed. It is very likely that other "compromises" between the European Commission, numerous pressure groups, networks, associations, think-tanks and even Union for the Mediterranean generated NGOs will be needed. The hardest compromise will undoubtedly be at the Elysée itself and within the apparatus of the French state between Henri Guaino and all the others. Clear differences on the way to direct the project can be seen. (F.B.)

[Council] 27/03/2008 - EU/TRADE: Brussels to host 1st Forum on Investment in Member States of Agadir Agreement

(Agence Europe) - On Tuesday 8 April, Brussels will host the 1st Forum on Investment in the Member States of the Agadir Agreement. The Agadir Agreement, a prelude to the Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone, was signed in February 2004, and created a free trade area between, at that point, **Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Since it came into force in March 2007, it has sought to harmonise rules governing sectoral policies in the member countries (trade, industry, taxation, services and customs) and, in general, everything that has to do with companies and the ability to attract investment. Its main aim is to find opportunities for partnerships and to boost economic development and integration between the four countries, to encourage investment and to increase exchanges.** It is based, then, on the removal of customs duties on all goods from the four countries, with the exceptions of those which are excluded for health or environmental reasons. **Trade in agricultural products has not been fully liberalised. The agreement also allows companies in the member countries to benefit from the pan-Euro-Mediterranean cumulation system.** The EU contributes to this regional integration by funding the Amman-based body responsible for driving the agreement forward, the Agadir Technical Unit, which is headed by

Tunisian Ferid Tounsi. **This 1st forum**, which has been organised in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank, **will be attended by a minister from each of the agreement member countries**, in addition to Mr Tounsi. It will be opened by European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, who, on the eve of the forum, reiterated the importance of the Agadir Agreement for increased "South-South" integration, which is essential if a wide multilateral free trade zone is to be established in the Mediterranean. For more information, see: <http://www.agadiragreement-events.org> (E.H.)

[EP] 28/03/2008 - EP/UFM: Parliamentary dimension of Union for the Mediterranean project must not be forgotten, says Hans-Gert Pöttering

(Agence Europe) - In his speech on Friday 28 March in Athens at the opening of the plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), **Hans-Gert Pöttering spoke in favour of the parliamentary dimension of the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean"**. "The parliamentary component of the Barcelona process, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, should not be forgotten. Efficiency, the rule of law and sustainable development cannot be achieved without democracy, without parliamentarians", he added, saying: "We will be closely following the proposals and will insist that the Parliamentary dimension is to be retained". **José Manuel Barroso**, President of the European Commission, who was invited by the European Council to present proposals to give substance to the project, said he hoped **to establish a "Euromed of results"**. "We need to examine together the different options for this enhanced cooperation, especially the budgetary considerations",

[EP] 28/03/2008 - Euro-Mediterranean Assembly discusses environmental and political future of the region Delegations

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, meeting on 27-28 March in Athens, issued declarations on the Union for the Mediterranean and on Dutch MP Geert Wilders' film on Islam, after a session which featured debates on energy and environment issues in the Mediterranean. European Parliament President, Hans-Gert Pöttering, has been elected as the new chair of the Assembly.

"Both sides of the Mediterranean must work together on the many environmental issues affecting the region. It is up to us to avoid using the environmentally damaging production methods practised to date. The development of new, clean energy technologies and efforts to improve energy efficiency must be pursued more intensely", said EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering at the opening session of the fourth plenary meeting on Friday. The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) calls, in the Final Declaration, for the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Community (EMEC) which will contribute to energy security of supply, to attraction of investments and competitiveness.

Union for the Mediterranean

The EMPA welcomes "the fresh impetus given to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership" by the proposal for a Union for the Mediterranean, recently endorsed by the EU Spring Summit. The Paris Summit of 13 July will launch the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". The 27 Member States of the EU and the 10 non-EU Mediterranean coastal partners are to take part. "This initiative should deepen the existing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. We will insist that the Parliamentary dimension is retained", said Hans-Gert Pöttering, referring to the proposals the European Commission has been asked to submit to the July Paris Summit.

Dutch MP's film "highly offensive towards Islam"

Dutch MP Geert Wilders's film is "highly offensive towards Islam", says a statement of the Assembly. The EMPA says the content of the film is likely "to cause strong reactions in numerous Muslim countries".

Recommendations adopted

The EMPA also adopted the following recommendations:

Ways for the Parliaments to contribute to the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Rapporteurs: Edward McMillan-Scott (EPP-ED, UK) and Yassine Jaber (Lebanon);

Monitoring the implementation of the code of conduct for the fight against terrorism. Rapporteurs: Robert Del Picchia (France) and Afifa Salah (Tunisia);

Renewable energy sources and promotion of the environment friendly forms of energy. Rapporteurs: David Hammerstein (Greens/EFA, ES) and Fatima Chellouch (Algeria);

Encouraging investment in the Euro-Mediterranean area through education and employment-job creation. Rapporteurs: Jamila Madeira (PES, PT) and Fethi Ferjaoui (Tunisia);

Enhancing intercultural dialogue, freedom of expression, respect for religions, beliefs and cultures. Role of media and education in the dialogue between cultures. Rapporteurs: Jean-Claude Guibal (France) and Mahmoud El Karoui (Tunisia);

Impacts of radical climate change in the Mediterranean basin with particular emphasis on drinkable water. Rapporteurs: Carlos Carnero (PES, ES) and Ms Ibtisam Mechail (Egypt).

EMPA expands

With Romania and Bulgaria acceding to the EU in 2007, the Assembly has expanded from 240 Members to 260 in total. 130 MPs now represent the European Union (49 MEPs and 81 MPs appointed by the parliaments of the 27 EU Member States) and 130 represent the national parliaments of the non-EU Mediterranean partners: Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

EMPA, which meets once a year in plenary session, is a joint Parliamentary Assembly. During its debates the Assembly uses French, English and Arabic as working languages. Texts adopted are also available in Hebrew, Turkish and all the official languages of the European Union.

EP President elected chair of the Assembly

European Parliament President **Hans-Gert Pöttering has been elected chair of the EMPA. His mandate runs until March 2009.** At that time, the next plenary session of the Assembly will be held in Brussels. Mr Pöttering said his priorities would include the situation in the Middle East and intercultural dialogue.

[EP] 27/03/2008 - EP/UPM: PES calls for reflection on eastern dimension to union for Mediterranean project

(Agence Europe) - The **Socialist Group at the European Parliament fully supports the idea of reinforcing the Barcelona process, as decided at the last European Council but is calling for reflection on a similar initiative in the east of the EU.** As part of strengthening the **Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, now called the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”,** the EU must not forget the other axes of its neighbourhood policy. In a press release published on Thursday 27 March, the president of the PES, Martin Schulz stressed, **“the Eastern dimension should be given equal weighting to the Mediterranean dimension”.** The vice-president, Hannes Swoboda, affirmed that, “for us, the Union for the Mediterranean must be accompanied by an EU-Black Sea Union...We will not accept discrimination” against the Black Sea area. During the summit on 13-14 March, the Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, announced that during the next European Council, he wanted to make some proposals in this direction. (A.B.)