

## Conclusions of the Second Euro Mediterranean Ministerial Conference Malta, 15 and 16 April 1997

- The Council of the European Union, represented by its President, Mr Hans van MIERLO,
- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, also representing the Netherlands,
- The European Commission, represented by Mr Manuel MARIN GONZALEZ, Vice President,
- Algeria, represented by Mr Ahmed ATTAF, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Austria, represented by Mrs Benita FERRERO WALDNER, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Belgium, represented by Mr Erik DERYCKE, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Cyprus, represented by Dr Ioannis KASOULIDES, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Denmark, represented by Mr Niels HELVEG PETERSEN, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Egypt, represented by Mr Amre MOUSSA, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Finland, represented by Mr Ole NORRBACK, Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade,
- France, represented by Mr Hervé de CHARENTE, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Germany, represented by Mr Klaus KINKEL, Vice Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Jordan, represented by Dr Fayez TARAWNEH, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Greece, represented by Mr George PAPANDREOU, Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs,
- Ireland, represented by Mr Dick SPRING, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Israel, represented by Mr David LEVY, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Italy, represented by Mr Lamberto DINI, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Lebanon, represented by Mr Fares BOUEZ, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Luxembourg, represented by Mr Jacques F. POOS, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Cooperation,
- Malta, represented by Mr George VELLA, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Environment,
- Morocco, represented by Mr Abdellatif FILALI, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Portugal, represented by Mr Francisco SEIXAS DA COSTA, State Secretary for European Affairs,
- United Kingdom, represented by Baroness CHALKER OF WALLASEY, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
- Syria, represented by Mr Farouk AL SHARAA, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Spain, represented by Mr Ramon DE MIGUEL, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs,
- Sweden, represented by Mrs Lena HJELM WALLEN, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Tunisia, represented by Mr Abderrahim ZOUARI, Minister for Foreign Affairs,
- Turkey, represented by Mr Ufuk SOYLEMEZ, Minister of State for Economic Affairs,
- the Palestinian Authority, represented by Mr Yasser ARAFAT, President of the Palestinian Authority,

taking part in the second Euro Mediterranean Conference in Malta;

recalling that the Declaration adopted at the first Euro Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona on 28 November 1995 lays the foundations of a multilateral and lasting framework of relations through the establishment of a comprehensive Partnership comprising three Chapters relating to political and security affairs, economic and financial affairs and social, cultural and human affairs;

taking account of the progress made in implementing that Partnership, particularly in line with the work programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration;

reaffirming their commitment to the Barcelona Process, which constitutes a fundamental political basis, and reaffirming the common principles and objectives as enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration and in the Work Programme;

expressing, in this context, their deep concern about the obstacles which are blocking the Middle East Peace Process and stressing the need for the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East within the framework of the Peace Process as agreed in Madrid on 31 October 1991;

reiterating that this Euro Mediterranean initiative is not intended to replace the other activities and initiatives undertaken in the interest of peace, stability and development in the region, but that it will contribute to their success and reiterating their support for the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement in the Middle East based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and principles mentioned in the letter of invitation to the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, including the principle land for peace, with all that this implies;

taking note of the progress report from the European Commission of 19 February 1997 on the Euro Mediterranean Partnership;

resolved to confirm and strengthen their Euro Mediterranean Partnership, the Participants reaffirm their wish to ensure a balanced development of the three Chapters of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership;

agree on the following conclusions:

Substantial progress in the development of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership has been achieved since its establishment, despite the uncertainties of the regional political and security situation. The Participants are aware that they are in the process of establishing a fully fledged Partnership, and recognize the amount of work which still lies ahead. They stress the importance of balanced development of the Partnership through the gradual implementation of all three Chapters of the Barcelona Declaration and the Work Programme, as well as the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the bilateral and multilateral dimensions. This process is achieved in full awareness of the link which exists between stability and the promotion of economic and social development in the region. In view thereof, they undertake to give, in full agreement and in a concerted manner, priority to a number of objectives, and to monitor progress in achieving them before the next Euro Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

### **I. Political and Security Partnership: establishing a common area of peace and stability**

The Participants take note of the various activities that the Senior Officials have undertaken in order to implement the first chapter of the Barcelona Declaration and the corresponding chapter of the Work Programme, included in Annex I. They take note of the results that have been achieved so far. They take note of the assessment by the Senior Officials that the contacts among the partners have created a basis of trust and a new platform for political consultations with a view to fulfilment of the common objectives in matters of external and internal stability, inter alia the rule of law, democracy and human rights, included in the Barcelona Declaration and the Work Programme. They encourage the Senior Officials to continue and deepen the political dialogue in line with the Work Programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration.

The Participants take note of the progress made by Senior Officials on the draft action plan. This draft is considered, in its entirety, a rolling document to be regularly updated by the Senior Officials in order to sustain its function as a guide for them in their efforts to implement the principles and common objectives of the political and security partnership of the Barcelona process.

The Participants take note of the work carried out by the Senior Officials on confidence and security building measures, in particular those already in operation or approved and included in Annex I. They recognize that other measures at different stages of development should be approved in a progressive way, taking duly into account the evolution of the situation in the Mediterranean region.

The Participants take note of the work of Senior Officials on a Charter for peace and stability in the Euro Mediterranean region, and instruct them to continue the preparatory work, taking due account of the exchanged documents, in order to submit as soon as possible an agreed text for approval at a future Ministerial Meeting when political circumstances allow.

### **II. Economic and Financial Partnership: creating an area of shared prosperity**

The Participants take note of the progress made in the exploratory talks, the negotiations, signature and

ratification of Euro Mediterranean Association Agreements, as well as in the implementation of customs unions and pre accession arrangements.

They reaffirm the importance they attach to the full attribution of the ECU 4.685 million of Community budgetary funds as agreed at the Cannes European Council and the increased loans from the EIB.

The Participants take note of the commitment of Community budgetary funds in 1995 and 1996 of ECU 1.205 million in the form of grants and the signing of ECU 1.694 million in the form of EIB loans. Furthermore they take note of the prospects for further commitments of up to ECU 1.002 million in grants in 1997 and the agreement by the Council concerning EIB lending of up to ECU 2.310 million over the period 1997 to 1999.

The Participants reaffirm that the implementation of MEDA will be carried out in a fair and even handed way in accordance with transparent procedures fully respecting the appropriate financial and regulatory arrangements as well as those agreed and to be agreed with the beneficiary countries, and the international obligations of the beneficiary countries with the aim of improving the pace and conditions of implementation.

The Participants welcome the regional activities which have taken place in many sectors and which have allowed for the exchange of knowledge and experience, the creation of fora for continuing regional dialogue aimed at defining the key elements of sectoral policies, and the launching of several concrete cooperation activities. A list of these activities is attached as Annex II to these conclusions.

The Participants reiterate the importance they attach to sustainable and balanced economic and social development in view of their objective of creating an area of shared prosperity, taking into account the different degrees of development. They agree to give a new impetus to the establishment of a Euro Mediterranean free trade area with 2010 as a target date, with due observance of the obligations resulting from the WTO. They also agree to implement rapidly and in an efficient and careful manner financial assistance, principally through MEDA funds and EIB lending, as well as bilateral assistance from the European Union Member States to the Mediterranean partners, in accordance with the undertakings given at Barcelona. They underline the importance of:

- accelerating in a constructive manner work on negotiation and ratification of the Euro Mediterranean Association Agreements, which are one of the essential elements of the free trade area, with a view to their entry into force as soon as possible;
- further developing the free trade area, in particular through increased intra regional and sub regional cooperation, facilitated by technical assistance from the Union, for the achievement of free trade through agreements amongst the Mediterranean Partners;
- taking a range of accompanying measures at regional level to permit greater harmonization and greater compatibility with the Union's internal market. Areas such as: cumulation of rules of origin, customs cooperation, standards, intellectual property, taxation and competition should be encouraged in particular. Appropriate initiatives in these fields are welcomed. Training initiatives will also be encouraged.

In view of these objectives, the Participants take note of the work of government experts on economic transition and of the Euro Mediterranean network of economic institutes. They agree that this work should result in a survey which, drawn up under the auspices of the Commission and in collaboration with the partners, will cover free trade issues and the impact of economic transition in the region. This survey will be available in time for the next Euro Mediterranean conference of Foreign Ministers and could serve as a basis for discussion on a future strategy.

In the context of such a strategy, the Participants further underline the importance of:

- undertaking a more systematic and efficient approach to encourage private investment in the region, including direct foreign investment, in particular through the wider dissemination of information and the removal of obstacles to investment, amongst others through the use of measures to promote investments, to

promote greater competitiveness and private sector growth, and to create employment opportunities, and thereby to establish favourable conditions for investment in the Mediterranean partners;

- promoting the harmonization of rules and regulations relevant to the creation of the Euro Mediterranean free trade area;
- reinforcing and concentrating activities on priority sectors where cooperation has already been successfully started, in particular industrial policy, including industrial modernization, SMEs, energy policy, environment, water policy, the information society and maritime transport. The Participants also agree to begin cooperation in such sectors as modernizing and restructuring agriculture, the evolution of trade in agricultural products, reducing food dependency, developing regional infrastructure, and the transfer of technology;
- pursuing and implementing as quickly as possible measures to alleviate the negative social consequences which may result from the adjustment and modernization of economic and social structures;
- continuing the dialogue on debt in order to achieve progress in the competent fora, taking note of recent operations to reduce the external debt of Mediterranean third countries owed to certain countries of the European Union or debt equity swaps on a voluntary and bilateral basis, which has the effect of increasing European direct investment;
- helping the Mediterranean partners to prepare for the future evolution of the European Union.

### **III. Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs: developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies**

The Participants recall that the traditions of culture and civilization throughout the Mediterranean region, dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological level are an essential factor in bringing their peoples closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.

The Participants welcome the progress made on regional cooperation in some fields in the Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs. A list of activities is attached as Annex III to these conclusions. However the Participants note that further efforts are needed in order to achieve the objectives of this chapter of the partnership, in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration and the Work Programme. In this respect they underline their common wish to:

- adopt the regional projects currently under discussion concerning cultural heritage, prepare a further set of such projects and widen the scope of cooperation to cover other cultural activities, including in the audio visual sector. The Participants welcome the intention to put forward a regional programme on culture and information. Cultural aspects should be taken into account in other actions within the framework of the partnership;
- actively pursue the dialogue between cultures and civilisations, within the overall objective of improving mutual understanding and bringing people closer together, taking account of the work already accomplished. In this context, the Participants recall their commitment to adopt measures likely to facilitate human exchanges, particularly through the improvement of administrative procedures;
- consolidate the dialogue between civil societies, an example being the Civil Forum. In this context the Participants look forward to the relaunch of the European Union's decentralised cooperation programmes (MED CAMPUS, MED MEDIA and MED URBS), as soon as a satisfactory management system has been set up; they will work towards the effective development of this cooperation, including administrative aspects;
- maintain and develop the direct involvement of civil societies, within the framework of national legislation, among others via the establishment of networks between NGOs;
- encourage active cooperation in the field of the prevention of and the fight against terrorism in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration and the Work Programme; (\*)
- establish programmes of activities for youth and health which complement existing bilateral and multilateral activities in this sphere; specific initiatives for youth will be put forward shortly;
- continue and develop education, including higher education, and training activities;
- wage a determined campaign against racism and xenophobia and intolerance, and agree to cooperate to that end;

- intensify, in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration and Work Programme, the dialogue and cooperation on a Euro Mediterranean multilateral level,
- on migration issues and human exchanges;
- in the field of illegal immigration;
- continue the dialogue on governance, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between civil society and administrative systems with the aim of reinforcing the efficiency and reliability of public administration;
- pursue actively a dialogue and cooperation on combating organised crime and all aspects of the illicit drugs trade.

#### **IV. General aspects**

The Participants reaffirm the role of the Euro Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process as a central forum for providing impetus, monitoring and following up actions and initiatives within the framework of the Partnership. They consider in addition that the Committee should place particular emphasis on ensuring that balance and coherence be maintained in the follow up to the Barcelona Process, through an improved evaluation of the results and recommendations of the various activities undertaken in the framework of the Partnership. They also agree that the role of the Committee would be enhanced by the presence of the representatives of all Member States of the European Union.

The Participants agree on the need to increase further the visibility of the work undertaken in the Euro Mediterranean partnership. They note the measures undertaken by the Commission to make available general information on the Partnership, and underline the importance of every partner increasing its efforts to keep its own public informed.

The Participants reaffirm the importance they attach to the active involvement of Parliaments in the Partnership. They welcome the fact that the European Parliament has taken the initiative with other Parliaments to begin the Euro Mediterranean Parliamentary dialogue.

The Participants also encourage the continuation of the dialogue among social Partners.

The Participants welcome the proposal by the European Union to hold the next meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Germany in the first half of 1999.