

REVIEWING THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS

Report of the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2015

8th – 9th October 2015, Palazzo Clerici, Milan

Opening session

Ambassadors Florensa (IEMed) and Aragona (ISPI) introduced the annual conference, highlighting the important role of EuroMeSCo at a critical juncture for the Mediterranean and for Euro-Mediterranean relations. Ambassador Florensa stressed that the commitment and the dynamism of EuroMeSCo were greater than ever.

The Mediterranean space has become the epicentre of global disorder.

The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Gentiloni gave an official address to the participants of the EuroMeSCo annual conference, describing the Mediterranean space as the epicentre of global disorder and enumerating the various challenges it posed for the European Union in particular, in terms of security but also in terms of identity and values. Minister Gentiloni identified five matters of contention in the European public debate that had to be dealt with: well-being vs. solidarity (Minister Gentiloni warned against the risk of manipulating emotions), North-South divide (the threats and challenges coming from the





The EU has three important tasks: manage the migration crisis, the security agenda and the need to integrate the Mediterranean in world economy.

Mediterranean were now understood as such by all European countries), interventionism vs. isolationism (the EU should not remain passive), democracy vs. security (there was no sustainable security without democracy) and west vs. Islam (there was no clash between Europe and Islam). In this context, the EU had three important tasks: manage the migration crisis (the Minister mentioned the permanent relocation mechanism, the need to reform the common asylum policy, the upcoming Malta conference and the EUNAVFOR mission), the security agenda starting with Syria where a chance should be left to diplomacy and the need to integrate the Mediterranean in world economy. The Minister also mentioned that Italy was engaged in drafting a comprehensive strategy for the Mediterranean.

Plenary Session: **Objectives and Challenges behind the Process of Reviewing the Euro-Mediterranean Relations**

First, the discussion involving panellists, discussants and other EuroMeSCo members touched upon the unprecedented challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean space. The situation was obviously more complex than in 1995. There were a number of inter-related crises in the Mediterranean (of military, socio economic, religious and political nature) that had left a vacuum which had, in turn, been filled by radicalism. Conflicts had also resulted in renewed waves of migration. It was important to acknowledge that both shores of the Mediterranean faced the same challenges, that most of the instability for the EU was coming from the South rather

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than from the East according to a panellist and that some of the problems would last and could prefigure further and even more difficult ones. A panellist argued that it would take some time for democracy to take root in Libya.

With this context in mind, all participants to the session discussed the limited success of EU-Mediterranean policies. While the principles of the Barcelona declaration remained fully topical, 20 years of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 12 years of European Neighbourhood Policy and 7 years of Union for the Mediterranean had not been enough to reach the objectives set in 1995 of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. There had been insufficient financial assistance to the South and political dialogues between both shores of the Mediterranean had not reached a satisfactory level. On the EU side, the Member States were too often not pushing in the same direction. Despite almost €4bn spent in Syria, the EU had not managed to avoid a humanitarian crisis. Some argued that the EU was paying the price for not having intervened more decisively and cohesively at an earlier stage and drew a parallel between the inaction of the EU in the Balkans in the nineties with the situation now in Syria. Others argued that the EU's ambivalence towards regimes was still an issue. The risks of rehabilitating Assad were mentioned.

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However, it was acknowledged that what had been achieved so far should not be under-estimated. There was no other region in the world that had developed such structured relations with its neighbours. EU-financed projects involving many



people were happening every day and the civil society was now more structured than 20 years ago. The EU was also making significant financial efforts to deal with the crisis in Syria. There were also some reasons to hope with the Iran nuclear agreement that was to be welcomed as such but also because it had the potential to generate further positive developments for the Mediterranean.



Finally, the discussion turned to the review of EU-Mediterranean relations. The EU would release its communication on the new European Neighbourhood Policy in November 2015. The need to further differentiate the approaches between the EU and its partner countries was discussed. The ENP had to be more flexible, reactive and flexible. Some participants argued that the EU also needed to treat the Mediterranean as a priority and to offer new prospects of integration. In parallel, political dialogues had to be strengthened. According to others, it was time to review the more for more principle.

In operational terms, it was explained that the joint communication would only be the beginning of the review process as it would be followed by a period of consultations between the EU and its partners where cooperation areas would be defined. It was widely acknowledged that security should feature prominently in the new ENP. Discussions on this related to the need to deconstruct the jihadist discourse and the need for the EU to be part of the solution in Syria. The Middle East Peace Process and the role the EU should play was also discussed. Pleas for the EU to take an initiative in a decisive way through engagement with all sides were made. However, the EU should not be only absorbed by security challenges. The importance of stimulating foreign direct investments in the Mediterranean was stressed. Ideas of creating a

The Union for the
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to move up a gear.

The EU should not give too much importance to the institutional framework of policies; it should concentrate on addressing challenges in a more responsive way.

specific financial institution or promoting the equivalent of the Marshall plan for the Mediterranean were put forward.

In parallel with the bilateral dimension, there was also a need to strengthen the Union for the Mediterranean. It was argued that the UfM should become the genuine regional leg of the ENP. Others commented on the regional integration challenge in the southern Mediterranean. Proposals had floated from some EU Member States to encourage projects with a regional dimension through additional financial incentives.

Some cautioned against giving too much importance to the institutional framework. There were profound geopolitical dynamics at play in the Mediterranean and the EU had to concentrate its reflection on this, hence the question of the articulation between the new ENP and the global strategy the EU would present in 2016.

Plenary Session: **Twenty Years of Euro-Mediterranean Relations. What Went Wrong?**

During this session, the experts reviewed in more detail the past twenty years of Euro-Mediterranean relations from different angles as the well as the main issues and events that had undermined them.

The rise of radicalism has polluted the Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The panellists identified 9/11 as an event that had created a major reversal of the Barcelona process, with the security approach becoming a priority. The rise of radicalism had polluted the Euro-Mediterranean relations, translating into growing anti-Western discourse in the South and anti-Islam discourse in the North. The rise of Islamist fighters and the ambivalence of some governments were also commented upon.



Values and principles have not been shared from the onset, thus a review of Euro-Mediterranean relations should be as inclusive as possible.

Many views on the issue of values in the Barcelona process were expressed. It was preliminarily stated that values and principles had not been shared from the onset, thus a review of Euro-Mediterranean relations should be as inclusive as possible. It was then stated that the EU did not have a clear vision of its own values and how to project them abroad. More fundamentally, it was commented that the fact that nobody on the panel had mentioned citizens reflected that a broader constituency in the Mediterranean had failed to materialize.

Overall, the Barcelona Process was acknowledged to have many positive features (although the overall assumption that fixing the economics would help fixing political issues was contested) but to have failed in terms of implementation and adaptation. According to others, a transformation process as that planned in Barcelona in 1995 needed more time to bear fruits. It was also suggested that the institutional framework for Euro-Mediterranean relations should apply to the broader Middle East. Moreover, ownership was a big issue, as many countries in the Mediterranean felt that Euromed was perceived by the Europeans as an exclusively European policy. Against this background, there was a need to review the role of the Union for the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean needed a strengthened regional platform for cooperation.

Governance had been weak, as the European Commission and the Member States had not been able to sustain the momentum of the process.



Democratisation had been incentivised at some point but this had not been followed through. The EU had overestimated its transformative capacity in the Mediterranean region and the “soft power” slogan had sometimes been used to dissimulate the lack of power of the EU. It was argued that EU should be more realistic and re-open the dialogue with partner countries in order to determine how agreements could be better implemented.

The divisions within the EU and the lack of coherence resulted in EU inaction on major developments and the price for inaction is sometimes greater than making mistakes.

In the same vein, it was argued that the EU and its Member States were not pushing systematically in the same direction. The divisions within the EU and the lack of coherence had resulted in EU inaction on major developments and the price for inaction was sometimes greater than making mistakes. There was a lack of a single institutional framework for foreign policy on the European side. In fact, the Mediterranean was too often perceived as an issue of domestic policy by some European countries that had been illustrated by very reactive and rushed policy responses in the migration crisis for instance contrasting with the lack of an overall strategy in the Mediterranean.

More generally, it was also highlighted that debates on Euro-Mediterranean relations tended to repeat themselves with an abusive focus on the policy and institutional framework rather than on the challenges and issues. Against this background, the role of EuroMeSCo and similar bodies in the Euro-Mediterranean relations was also examined. Researchers and think-tankers were in the position to offer a long-term assessment that was too often lacking in the policy domain. Reactive policies dictated by short-term considerations in a fast-changing region had led to major failures in the region.

Working Session 1: Political and Security Dimension of Euro-Mediterranean Relations

Echoing the numerous references to the security situation in the Mediterranean made in the plenaries, the first working session took a closer look at three security-related aspects.

The panellists started discussing the European Union (EU)'s conflict management policies, both in terms of crisis management and of conflict prevention, to deal with the situation in the Mediterranean. First, it was acknowledged that the nature of conflicts had deeply changed in the Mediterranean over the last years with new actors and fault-lines appearing. In particular, 'old' unresolved inter-state conflicts had been matched by intra-state, civil wars that tend to proliferate in contexts of state collapse and lack of security. Against this backdrop, the experts focused on how the EU response had changed in the face of new security challenges. In general, it appeared that the EU was ill-equipped to deal with crisis management and that its focus on conflict prevention (i.e. through the promotion of regional integration, democracy, rule of law and human rights) had fallen short of tackling complex conflict realities. The security dimension was under-represented in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration and the lack of adequate instruments had become even more acute with the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2003 and the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008. Discussants agreed that the ENP review would probably show a strengthening of the security dimension.

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The panellists then turned to the challenges of terrorism and radicalism, and more specifically to how the new threats had been handled in policy terms both in the EU and in the Southern Mediterranean (with a focus on Tunisia). 9/11 and the



attack in Madrid in 2004 had led to a renewed counter-terrorism cooperation in the EU with a focus on home-grown terrorism. The EU Counter terrorism strategy adopted in 2005 showed an effort to look at root causes and radicalization processes. After the Paris attacks, the EU Council reviewed its policy in February 2015 advancing new solutions on counter-terrorism, based essentially on conducting targeted and upgraded dialogues over security issues with partner countries and organisations. The primary role of the Member States in the conduct and implementation of EU CT policies was noted by the experts.



The panellists noted that Tunisia was an interesting case study on many accounts. The 2003 counter terrorism law had been sharply criticized by the EU for not respecting civil rights and displaying an excessively broad definition of terrorism. Recent attacks in Tunis and Sousse had accelerated the preparation of a new counter terrorism law that was adopted in July 2015. Although the preparation of the law was characterized by open and transparent proceedings (contrasting with what happened in other countries) and although the law was a progress in many regards, the panellists argued that the security concerns of the Tunisian population and the strong pressure on authorities after the attacks had resulted in some ambiguous provisions of the law that bore the risk of restricting freedom of expression.

The EU and the NATO have a key role to play in the stabilisation of the region. However, the lack of synergies impede a much-needed joint approach to address regional crises.

Experts in the round-table made a distinction between two categories of terrorism: the old jihadism and another radicalism whose recruits were those who had lost faith in democracy. These groups would require two distinct sets of counter terrorism responses. The second group was composed of people that had radicalized very quickly and that was much dispersed geographically. The case of the Egypt counter terrorism law was also discussed in the round-table.

The EU should be more coherent and united in tackling security challenges in the Mediterranean. The upcoming EU Global Strategy offers an opportunity to rethink the EU security approach, including towards the MENA region.

'Re-nationalisation' of foreign and security policies by some EU and NATO member states is a key challenge to the effectiveness of multilateralism in the MENA region.

Last, the panellists discussed the partnership between the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. With the security landscape in the MENA region deteriorating, the EU and the NATO had a key role to play in the progressive stabilisation of the region, via their distinctive tools and policy approaches. Yet, both the EU and NATO were still struggling to increase their 'security footprint' in MENA's volatile landscape, while lack of synergies and teamwork on security projection, diplomatic dialogue and practical cooperation with their regional interlocutors still impeded a much-needed, joined-up approach to address at least some of the region's most urgent crises. The panellists reviewed the shortfalls of the two organisations' policies and instruments towards the region's security challenges, the arguments in favour of a stronger cooperation (including political re-assurance to EU and NATO's Southern European member states and financial economies of scale) and the possible fields where further cooperation would bring benefits (including strategic planning, the development of security capacities relevant to the region's manifold theatres, missions and operations, local capacity building and public diplomacy and strategic communications). The lack of a regional security framework for the MENA region, especially in the Middle East proper, was also commented upon. Some tentative, practical recommendations were formulated such as the development of more joint EU-NATO strategic analysis and threat assessment environment (which would also help prepare scenarios for possible future crises), a possible re-evaluation of the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements for potential, future operations and missions in the region, a stronger and more systematic division of labour between the civilian and military components of security sector reform in the region, stronger cooperation between EUNAVFOR Med/Sophia and NATO's Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean, and education and training for local security elites, among others.

Discussants stressed the importance of the EU itself to be more coherent and united in tackling security challenges in the Mediterranean. The upcoming EU Global Strategy would offer an opportunity to rethink the EU security approach, including towards the MENA region. It was also noted that leadership by the EU

was in particular important for small and medium-sized EU countries that had not necessarily developed their own threat assessment capacities. Other experts raised the issue of the rather low popularity of NATO in the region and the importance of involving other stakeholders for the security of the region. The risks of some 're-nationalisation' of foreign and security policies by some EU and NATO member states was also mentioned as a key challenge to the effectiveness of multilateralism in the MENA region, also affecting the very capacities of the EU and NATO to act as security providers, either individually or jointly.

Working Session 2: **Socio-Economic Dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation**

This working session analysed the Euro-Mediterranean relations from the socio-economic perspective. The influence of the changed socio-economic situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region on the current framework of cooperation was thoroughly examined as well as the drivers of migration and the EU response to the crisis that had illustrated a certain level of misperception of the root causes behind the increasing migrant influx. Furthermore, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) negotiated with selected Mediterranean partners were

examined in the light of lessons drawn from the eastern experience.



The financial crisis that began in 2008 had a significant influence on the political, economic and military landscape in the Mediterranean. The global socio-economic degradation had hit both shores of the Mediterranean. While it had been one of the major factors that had led to the outbreak of the Arab uprisings in the Southern Mediterranean, it had also provoked disputes over the political and economic identity in the EU, thereby decreasing its capacity to cooperate with the Mediterranean Partners Countries in a coherent and effective way. The current political turmoil in most of the Southern Mediterranean countries,

The EU approach to crisis management is inefficient, as it is not addressing the root drivers of migration, but continues to apply traditional measures to counter migration flows.

the oil price collapse, the deterioration of trade terms, and the outbreak of civil wars and, as a result, massive migration, had invalidated the current frameworks and tools of cooperation. Against this background, it was argued that the EU should rethink its relations with the Mediterranean and incorporate them into a wider, global perspective, in order to effectively respond to the new socio-economic and political situation.

The socio-economic degradation was also mentioned as one of the major factors behind the migration crisis. Other conditions that had contributed to increased migration flows were transportations and communications, demography, political and ideological, as well as deteriorating local security-related and structural conditions. According to the experts, the EU responses to the crisis proved that it had overlooked its humanitarian dimension. Instead, it continued to apply traditional measures to counter migration flows, such as increasing border controls, strengthening cooperation with countries of origins in terms of capacity-building and externalisation of refugees' assistance. It was observed that the EU approach to crisis management was inefficient, as it was not addressing the root drivers of migration. The EU policy-makers should adapt a comprehensive strategy and view migration not as a threat, but as an opportunity to address some

of the European major problems related to aging population and workforce reduction.

Last, Mediterranean DCFTAs currently negotiated with Morocco, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia were analysed in the light of similar agreements that had already been signed with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Despite some differences between the two groups of countries, a comparative analysis was made in



order to draw some lessons from the eastern experience. Both groups of DCFTAs were established in the same ENP framework and their main aim was the economic integration with the EU internal market. The DCFTAs were also ambitious political instrument of approximation to the EU policies and laws. The DCFTAs signed with the Eastern countries were complex and required adoption of wide range of EU acquis. This requirement may not be applicable in the case of Mediterranean countries, which did not have the perspective to join the EU. Therefore, instead of using Eastern DCFTAs as a model to be applied for the Mediterranean countries, the EU should adapt a comprehensive approach, tailoring trade agreements to the national interests and ambitions, limiting the scope of legislative approximation and designing comprehensive implementation assistance and strategy.

Working Session 3: Social, Human and Cultural Aspects of Euro-Mediterranean Relations

During this session the civil society and social issues were taken into consideration under different perspectives, including two specific interventions on the cases of Syria and Egypt and a broader analysis of the Neighbourhood policy approach towards civil society.

The Syrian regime has never been secular and the claim that the survival of minorities depends from the regime is wrong.

First of all, the point was made that there was a false debate in the EU and in the US regarding the management of diversity in the Middle East. The example of Syria was put forward to illustrate this claim. In 1945, there were more than 20% Christians in Syria. The proportion of Christians in the Syrian population had kept decreasing under the combined effect of the repression under Hafez el-Assad



from the seventies, the promotion of Christian emigration out of Syria by some European countries, and the lower birth rate of the Christian community in Syria compared to other confessions. The Syrian regime, it was stated, had never been secular and the claim that the survival of minorities depended from the regime was wrong. It had security institutions that were keeping religious institutions under control.

In parallel, it was claimed that there was a revival of some kind of colonial orientalism in the European and American approach towards minorities in Syria. In 1925 Syria was reunited after having been divided in five by colonial powers. The argument of the necessity of dividing Syria was coming back in some Western discourses, especially in Washington, as it was sometimes perceived as being the solution requiring less effort. The management of diversity in the Middle East would be crucial in the years to come. There was a need to fight against the programmed impoverishment as well as against the monopolisation of the public space by some.

Lack of means to react decisively, the prioritisation of civil and political rights over social and economic, and lack of consistency of the EU objectives were major obstacles to support democratic transitions in the region.

From a different angle, the Egyptian case was addressed in light of the EU policy of the recent years. It was stated that the Arab Spring had highlighted the EU's lack of means to react decisively to events occurring in its neighborhood. It was argued that in term of the content of the EU's policy, the reference to the transition paradigm had been misleading. Adding to this, that the reference to the only liberal paradigm for democracy promotion in Egypt was not helpful since promoting democratisation was not only about promoting economic or political liberalisation. Also the prioritisation of civil and political rights over social and economic rights, the exclusive focus on market-driven strategies for growth and the lack of developmental projects linked to a right based approach were identified as a an obstacle to building an infrastructure for democracy in Egypt. Third, it was stated that there was a lack of consistency when it came to the EU's objectives: EU security concerns had been prioritized over democracy promotion, which had in turn been exploited by the regime.

Regarding the instruments used to channel democracy assistance, it was suggested to assess the inefficiency of the positive conditionality and the

benchmarking instruments, a matter that could be understood in light of both the lack of incentives from the EU and the lack of consistency while applying conditionality. The EU had to recalibrate its offer especially with respect to market opening and free movement of labor, while being at the same time aware that the success of conditionality would be mostly determined by the will of the third country to carry out reforms, which was not the case in Egypt.

Finally, the EU's strategy to broaden its reach to civil society organisation despite the doubts regarding their potential/capacity of reaching grassroots was discussed. In fact many civil society organisations remained elitist and largely disconnected from



the wider society and therefore unable to counterbalance the state's authoritarianism. On the other hand, the EU's will to foster the 'supply-side' of democracy through its focus on the State's 'capacity-building' remained problematic because of the lack of willingness of reform from the Egyptian side and to a some extent because of the lack of incentives from the European side. It was then recommended to the EU to focus more on extending the infrastructure of democracy in Egypt rather than focusing on only promoting an elitist human rights agenda, to adopt radically different strategy in a changing geopolitical context: Europe should thus base its policy on the new challenges that the societies were facing rather than on the EU's available technocratic instruments, and to focus on projects that would contribute to building a new image for the EU as a partner rather than a model which should be copied and pasted.

Last, the experts discussed the European Neighbourhood Policy under the angle of Brussels' efforts to stabilize the region through norms, rules and procedures

coming from the European model. The EU had expanded its neo-functional approach beyond its borders expecting political cooperation and integration induced by economic interdependence. This had been seen as a technical process in which a set of elements had to be implemented, including the reform of state institutions and the strengthening of civil society. These policies had generally ignored hybrid, un-institutionalized, social networks and informal hierarchies as well as Islamic networks. Based on the idea that any “effective” Neighbourhood Policy - one that would strengthen rule-based governance and democratic values –would need to leave normative conceptions behind and take the realities on the ground into account, it was suggested to better confront the complex cartography of power and the dynamics and processes at work. Neoliberal policies had further weakened central state power and fostered the emergence of neo-patrimonialism. Neo-patrimonialism denoted a form of dominance in which informality and formality were intimately linked to each other in various ways. Clientelism was a phenomenon that generally flourished in times of rapid socio-economic change and weak state expansion.

Finally, the discussants challenged the added value of the European Endowment for Democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood. They also acknowledged that the responsibility for the failure of democratisation in the South Mediterranean was not lying exclusively in the North, as even in Tunisia there was still a large number of people refusing to accept certain values. It was as well underlined how the discourse on democracy in the Mediterranean had given place to a focus on security. More specifically, the arguments in favour of the division of Syria were contested.

Understanding the root causes of the crisis is a sine qua non for designing sustainable solutions and allocating resources more appropriately.

Plenary Session 3: What Future for Euro-Mediterranean Relations?

The session started with the premise that it was difficult to talk about the future of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, as there was no single future, but a variety of them, including possible, probable and desirable futures. Therefore, the main question was what sort of future was desirable for the Euro-Mediterranean relations. In this reflection, a range of challenges should be taken into account,



including strategic inconsistencies, bureaucratic problems, context changing and unpredictability of actors, which may impede the achievement of the set objectives.

The experts observed that the current Euro-Mediterranean policies were very fragmented and lacked a strong sense of co-ownership. The context for cooperation had also significantly changed. On the one hand, the financial and social crisis had pushed Europe towards inward-looking approach, accentuating national divisions and weakening the EU value as a strong geopolitical actor. On the other hand, the Mediterranean region was facing a growing number of challenges, including the conflicts in Libya and Syria, with an increased involvement of external and regional actors, the increasing migration pressure, the socio-economic degradation, leading to increasing youth unemployment, growing sense of populism and enhancing popularity of Da'ish, and the dramatic effects of climate change.

The panellists acknowledged that solving those problems required coherent and innovative solutions. Understanding the root causes of the crisis was a sine qua non for designing sustainable solutions and allocating resources more appropriately. In order to be able to address the old and new challenges, the EU stronger political commitment was also needed. Security-wise, the EU should engage more actively in solving conflicts in Syria and Libya. In terms of economics, the EU should address the problem of accommodating the growing number of youth on the labour market. The co-development joint projects across societies, sharing similar challenges, should be also promoted. On socio-cultural level, the EU should launch an in-depth reflection on regular and irregular migration,

The EU should address the problem of accommodating the growing number of youth on the labour market



involving the EU Member States, the neighbouring countries, but also neighbours of the neighbours.

According to the experts, considering the inability of the EU to compete with the regional actors financially or economically, Europe should build relations with the Euro-Mediterranean on its values. Europe had too often applied the principle of stability, ignoring that often it did not coincide with the respect for its fundamental principles. Now, there was a need to adapt a new, inclusive discourse, which would guarantee moral and legal rights and ensure the plurality in the Arab world.

The panellists underlined that most of the challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region could not be addressed bilaterally or nationally, but only on a regional level. Therefore, the EU should empower the already existing frameworks for regional cooperation. The Union for the Mediterranean and the 5+5 Dialogue could work as driving,

interconnecting platforms for a larger format of regional cooperation, based on the principles of co-ownership.

Considering the urgency of demands and the inability to respond quickly, due to prevailing principle of intergovernmentalism, the EU should reflect on a model of cooperation outside of the rigid frameworks and involve other actors, including civil society, youth and private sector.

In order to strengthen the tangibility of results, the variety of activities existing in the Euro-Mediterranean should be better coordinated. The experts stressed that the coherence between ENP and the Common Foreign and Security Policy should be strengthened, without forgetting that the latter was shaped on an intergovernmental basis, which very often resulted in solutions based on the lowest common denominator among the EU Member States. Considering the urgency of demands and the inability to respond quickly, due to prevailing principle of intergovernmentalism, the EU should also reflect on a model of cooperation outside of the rigid frameworks and involve other actors, including civil society, youth and private sector. Enhanced dialogue with other actors would allow the EU to understand the real needs of the society and accordingly adjust the priorities for cooperation. It would also contribute to create innovative and reinvigorated Euro-Mediterranean relations, transforming the concept of neighbourhood into a Euro-Mediterranean community.

Special address by Fathallah Sijilmassi

Regional challenges in the Mediterranean call for regional solutions and more cooperation between countries is needed.

Before Senén Florensa and Paolo Magri (Director of ISPI) concluded the annual conference, the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean Fathallah Sijilmassi addressed all participants. While arguing that discussions on the need of the EU to strengthen its political commitment in the southern Mediterranean were legitimate, he also stated that on the one hand the achievements so far had to be acknowledged and on the other hand that only the level of EU engagement could not be blamed for the lack of more ambitious results. The lack of regional integration in southern Mediterranean was an important factor to take into account. Regional challenges in the Mediterranean called for regional solutions and more cooperation between countries was needed.

In this context, reinventing the model was not necessarily the best avenue to pursue according to Mr Sijilmassi, who made a plea in favour of getting better organized with existing instruments in order to tackle challenges and deliver results. This would require more political commitment and better coordination. The UfM was a unique platform that was mostly dedicated to coordinate and promote synergies.

Referring to the fruitful meeting involving youth representatives in the margins of the 5+5 meeting in Tanger, he also claimed that the Euro-Mediterranean civil

society was alive and often ahead of institutions. Avenues for further cooperation with civil society and youth representatives, that had not necessarily the same views on what main priorities were, should be explored. Youth employment was uncontestedly a priority to be addressed. Mr Sijilmassi invited EuroMeSCo delegates to the UfM in Barcelona.



Official launch of the EuroMeSCo ENI Project



Project funded by
the European Union

The new ENI Project “Euro-Mediterranean Political Research and Dialogue for Inclusive Policymaking Processes and Dissemination through Network Participation”, awarded to the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), together with 13 co-applicants and a pool of associated institutes from the EuroMeSCo network, was presented to the General Assembly by Michael Koehler (Director Neighbourhood South, DG NEAR, European Commission) and Senén Florensa (Executive President, IEMed and President of EuroMeSCo Steering Committee).

Mr Koehler stressed the importance of the advocacy mission of EuroMeSCo. Building on the significant efforts of consolidation over the last years, the network had to intensify its ability to come up with operational recommendations, to help design sophisticated answers to complex challenges. This would go through increasing dissemination of its outputs and stepping up its contacts with policy makers. In this context, direct contacts with policy makers in Brussels and in EU delegations were recommended in particular. Last, Mr Koehler also recommended to reach out to new generations.

“Given the status of Euro-Mediterranean relations, there is the need to have sophisticated answers, not easy answers. For this reason it is extremely important for the European Commission to embark on this partnership with EuroMeSCo”



EuroMeSCo ENI Project

The general objective of the action is to reinforce the dialogue, political research and studies on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership priorities and to ensure the dissemination of the results to civil society as well as decision and policy-makers, building on the experience of the EuroMeSCo network.

The project is centred on three types of activities: Research activities, consisting of the publication of Joint Policy Studies, Papers and Policy Briefs and Recommendations; Dialogue activities in the form of Dialogue Workshops and Conferences and Dissemination activities of the project results through Local Presentations, presentations at the Annual Conferences, Newsletter and a new website.

Three Working Packages are defined every year and result in the production of a Joint Policy Study, two Policy Briefs and Recommendations, a Dialogue Workshop to present and discuss the initial research findings of the Joint Policy Study and Presentations of the final research outputs at local level and at the Annual Conference.

The three Research Groups selected for the first year of the project are:

- Research Group on “Security Threats in the Euro-Mediterranean Region”, led by Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Egypt);
- Research Group on “Youth Activism in the South and East Mediterranean Countries since the Arab Uprisings: Challenges and Policy Options”, led by Istituto Affari Internazionali (Italy)
- Research Group on Migration, led by Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan)

The submission of the final version of the Joint Policy Studies is foreseen for January/February 2015, and the publication of the three joint volumes is scheduled for February/March 2015. The final research results of the three groups will be presented at the Local Presentations, to be held in February/March 2016 and at the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2016, to be held in March/April 2016.

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