

Barcelona Declaration and Euro-Mediterranean partnership

The declaration is intended to establish a comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean partnership in order to turn the Mediterranean into a common area of peace, stability and prosperity through the reinforcement of political dialogue and security, an economic and financial partnership and a social, cultural and human partnership

ACT

Final Declaration of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of 27 and 28 November 1995 and its work programme.

SUMMARY

Following on from the guidelines already drawn up by the European Councils in Lisbon (June 1992), Corfu (June 1994) and Essen (December 1994) and the Commission proposals, the European Union (EU) decided to establish a new framework for its relations with the countries of the Mediterranean basin with a view to forming a partnership. This partnership became a reality at the Barcelona Conference of 27 and 28 November 1995, which brought together the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 15 EU Member States and the following 12 Mediterranean non-member countries (MNCs): Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. The League of Arab States and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) were also invited, as was Mauritania (as a member of the UMA).

This Conference laid the foundations of a process designed to build a multilateral framework for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners. At the meeting, a Declaration and a work programme were unanimously adopted by the 27 participating countries. This Euro-Mediterranean Declaration establishes a multilateral framework bringing together economic and security aspects and also comprises a social, human and cultural dimension.

In the preamble, the participants affirm their desire to go beyond the traditional bilateralism that has long characterised Euro-Mediterranean relations and to give these relations a new dimension, based on comprehensive cooperation and solidarity. This lasting multilateral framework is based on a spirit of partnership, with due regard for the characteristics peculiar to each of the participants. The new multilateral framework is also the counterpart to a strengthening of bilateral relations.

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership is not intended to replace the other activities and initiatives undertaken in the interests of the peace, stability and development of the region. The participants support the realisation 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 land for peace principle.

The new, comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean partnership focuses on three key aspects:

- the political and security aspect aims to establish a common area of peace and stability;
- the economic and financial aspect hopes to allow the creation of an area of shared prosperity;
- the social, cultural and human aspect aims to develop human resources and promote understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies.

Political and security partnership

The participants in the Barcelona Conference decided to establish comprehensive, regular political dialogue to complement the bilateral dialogue provided for in the association agreements. In addition, the Declaration sets out a number of common objectives in matters of internal and external stability.

The parties undertook to act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other obligations under international law, in particular those arising out of regional and international instruments. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (including freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of thought, conscience and religion) is reaffirmed on several occasions. The Declaration stipulates that it is important to give favourable consideration, through dialogue between the parties, to exchanges of information on matters relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, racism and xenophobia.

The parties agree to develop the rule of law and democracy in their political systems, while recognising in this framework the right of each of them to choose and freely develop its own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system.

The signatories also undertake to respect their sovereign equality and the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination. Respect for territorial integrity, the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of another partner and the peaceful settlement of disputes were highlighted as key elements of the relations between the Conference participants.

The parties also agreed to combat terrorism and organised crime and to combat the drugs problem in all its aspects.

Moreover, the participants undertook to promote regional security and to work to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons through adherence to and compliance with international and regional non-proliferation regimes and the various arms control and disarmament agreements. The parties will also pursue a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Economic and financial partnership

The creation of an area of shared prosperity in the Mediterranean requires sustainable and balanced socio-economic development and an improvement of the living conditions of the populations, an increase in the employment level and the encouragement of regional cooperation and integration. With a view to achieving these objectives, the EU and its partners agreed to establish an economic and financial partnership based on:

- the progressive establishment of a free trade area;
- the implementation of appropriate economic cooperation and concerted action in the relevant areas;
- a substantial increase in the European Union's financial assistance to its partners.

The free trade area (FTA) is to be set up by means of the new EuroMediterranean agreements and free trade agreements to be concluded between the MNCs themselves. The parties have set 2010 as the target date for the gradual establishment of this area which will cover most trade in compliance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations. Tariff and nontariff barriers to trade in manufactured products will be progressively eliminated in accordance with timetables to be negotiated between the partners. Trade in agricultural products will be liberalised in stages, as will trade in services.

To facilitate the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean FTA, the EU and MNCs defined four priority areas:

- the adoption of suitable measures as regards rules of origin (progressive introduction of cumulation of origin), certification, protection of intellectual and industrial property rights, and competition;
- the pursuit and the development of policies based on the principles of market economy and the integration of their economies taking into account their respective needs and levels of development;
- the adjustment and modernisation of economic and social structures, giving priority to the promotion and development of the private sector, the upgrading of the productive sector and the establishment of an appropriate institutional and regulatory framework for a market economy. They will likewise endeavour to mitigate the negative social consequences which may result from this adjustment, by promoting programmes for the benefit of the neediest populations;
- the promotion of mechanisms to foster transfers of technology.

The work programme sets out some practical measures designed to promote free trade, such as the

harmonisation of customs rules and procedures, the harmonisation of standards and the elimination of unwarranted technical barriers to trade in agricultural products.

The increase in **economic cooperation and concerted action** between the EU and the MNCs relates primarily to a number of important areas:

- investment and internal savings: MNCs must progressively eliminate obstacles to direct foreign investment and encourage internal savings in order to support economic development. The creation of an environment conducive to investment could, according to the Declaration, lead to the transfer of technology and increase production and exports. The work programme highlights the importance of giving greater thought to the definition of these obstacles to investment and to means, including in the banking sector, of promoting such investment;
- regional cooperation as a key factor in promoting the creation of an FTA;
- industrial cooperation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- stepping up environmental cooperation;
- promoting the role of women in development;
- creating joint instruments for the conservation and rational management of fish stocks;
- developing dialogue and cooperation in the energy sector;
- developing cooperation in the area of water resource management;
- modernising and restructuring agriculture.

In other areas, such as transport infrastructures, the development of information technologies and the modernisation of telecommunications, the partners undertook to draw up a programme of priorities. They also agreed to respect the principles of international maritime law, to encourage cooperation between local authorities and in support of regional planning and to promote cooperation on statistics. They also recognised that science and technology have a significant influence on socio-economic development.

The creation of a free trade area and the success of the EuroMediterranean partnership as a whole require **greater financial cooperation** and a substantial increase in the financial assistance provided by the EU. The Cannes European Council agreed to set aside EUR 4 685 million for this financial assistance in the form of Community budget funds for the period 1995-1999. This is supplemented by European Investment Bank (EIB) assistance in the form of loans of a similar amount and the bilateral financial contributions from the Member States

Social, cultural and human partnership

According to the Barcelona Declaration, the partners agreed to establish a partnership in social, cultural and human affairs with a view to bringing peoples closer together, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other. This partnership is based on the delicate compromise between, on the one hand, the existence, recognition and mutual respect of diverse traditions, cultures and civilisations throughout the Mediterranean and, on the other hand, the promotion of common roots.

To this end, the Barcelona Declaration and its work programme emphasise:

- the importance of intercultural dialogue, and of dialogues between religions;
- the importance of the role the media can play in the reciprocal recognition and understanding of cultures;
- the development of human resources in the area of culture: cultural exchanges, knowledge of other languages, implementation of educational and cultural programmes that respect cultural identities;
- the importance of health and social development and respect for fundamental social rights;
- the essential contribution civil society can make to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the need to strengthen the instruments of decentralised cooperation to encourage exchanges between those active in development;
- cooperation in the field of illegal immigration, the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, international crime and corruption.

Follow-up to the Conference

In order to monitor progress towards the partnership's objectives, the Declaration provides for

periodic meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Mediterranean partners and the EU. These meetings are prepared by a Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona process, which meets regularly at senior official level. This Committee is also responsible for taking stock of and evaluating the follow-up to the Barcelona process and for updating the work programme.

The various activities approved under the partnership are followed by ad hoc thematic meetings of ministers, senior officials and experts, exchanges of experience and information, contacts between those active in civil society and by any other appropriate means.

After the latest enlargement on 1 May 2004, two new Mediterranean partners (Cyprus and Malta) joined the European Union. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership now counts 35 members: 25 EU Member States and 10 Mediterranean partners (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey).

RELATED ACTS

The MEDA Programme

Launched in 1995, the [MEDA programme](#) is the EU's principal financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and its activities. The support it provides to these countries makes it possible to achieve three objectives: strengthening political stability and democracy in a common area of peace and security, creating an area of shared economic prosperity and supporting the creation of a free trade area between the EU and its Mediterranean partners by 2010, and establishing closer links between the peoples of these countries through cultural, social and human partnerships.

Between 1995 and 2001, MEDA was allocated EUR 5.071 billion of the EUR 6.4 billion of the budget resources set aside for financial cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners. These grants from the Community budget were supplemented by substantial loans from the EIB.

During this period, 86% of the resources allocated to MEDA were channelled bilaterally to the partners eligible for bilateral financing - Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey - while 12% were devoted to regional activities (the 12 Mediterranean partners and 15 EU Member States are eligible for these activities). The remaining 2% were set aside for technical assistance offices.

Complementing the national approaches with a regional MEDA programme will make it possible to achieve the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Implementing the activities through a regional programme is much more effective and has a much greater impact than a series of national programmes. Moreover, some of the problems envisaged have a transnational dimension and can only be properly resolved through regional (or sub-regional) cooperation, particularly as regards South-South integration.

Since 2002, cooperation with Turkey has been financed by a separate envelope, and no longer by MEDA. The activities are planned and implemented by DG Enlargement.

MEDA is currently in its second programming period (2000-2006) and has a budget of EUR 5.350 billion.

Euro-Mediterranean conferences

Since the 1995 Barcelona Conference, seven more Euro-Mediterranean Conferences of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs have been held: in Malta in April 1997, in Stuttgart in April 1999, in Marseilles in November 2000, in Brussels on 5 and 6 November 2001, in Valencia on 22 and 23 April 2002, in Naples on 2 and 3 December 2003 and in Luxembourg on 30 and 31 May 2005. In addition, think tanks involving the Ministers for Foreign Affairs were organised in Palermo in June 1998 and in Lisbon in May 2000.

At the Stuttgart Conference, Libya was welcomed for the first time as a special guest of the presidency. It also attended the conferences in Marseilles, Brussels and Valencia. Libya now has observer status.

The fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs held on 22 and 23 April
europa.eu/.../r15001_en.htm

2002 in Valencia was considered to be very productive and gave fresh impetus to the Barcelona process.

The participants in the Valencia Conference unanimously adopted an Action Plan to be implemented immediately. This Plan includes several short and medium-term initiatives aimed at strengthening the three aspects of the Barcelona process:

- As regards the political and security aspects of the Action Plan, the Conference adopted guidelines on political dialogue and on cooperation in the fight against terrorism;
- In the context of the economic and financial partnership, the Conference noted that four countries involved in the Agadir process were getting ready to sign a free trade agreement that should enter into force at the beginning of 2003. The new investment facility for the region, established by the EIB, also generated a great deal of interest. The Action Plan calls on the European Commission to continue its work on the commercial issues set out at the Toledo ministerial meeting together with its work on transport, energy and telecommunications and the harmonisation of the internal market. It also highlights the need for a strategic framework for sustainable development for the partnership.
- In relation to the social, cultural and human partnership, the Conference endorsed the framework document on 'Cooperation in the field of justice, in combating drugs, organised crime and terrorism, as well as cooperation in the treatment of issues relating to the social integration of migrants, migration and movements of persons'. The ministers agreed in principle to the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to promote dialogue between cultures and civilisations. They also approved an Action Programme in the same area, focusing on youth, education and the media.

At the seventh Euro-Mediterranean conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg on 30 and 31 May 2005 ("Barcelona VII"), the results were assessed and guidelines for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership discussed. The meeting thereby prepared the ground for the extraordinary high-level meeting that will take place in Brussels on 27 and 29 November to celebrate the partnership's tenth anniversary and decide on a number of actions for the future. These two events will be the culmination of 2005, the "Year of the Mediterranean".

Last updated: 26.07.2005