

Brussels, 10 July 2009

Union for the Mediterranean

State of Play, July 2009

The Union for the Mediterranean (UpM), created at the Paris Summit of Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government on 13 July 2008, is the framework of multilateral relations between the EU and the Mediterranean non-EU countries¹. It complements bilateral relations, which will continue to develop under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the pre-accession framework.

The UpM builds on the acquis and reinforces the achievements the Barcelona Process, launched in 1995. While the Barcelona Declaration, its goals and its cooperation areas (Political Dialogue, Economic Cooperation and Free Trade, and Human, Social and Cultural Dialogue) remain valid, the UpM gives a new impulse to the Barcelona Process in three very important ways:

- by upgrading the political level of the relationship between the EU and its Mediterranean partners;
- by reinforcing co-ownership of our multilateral relations with a system of co-presidencies (one from the EU and one from the Mediterranean side), by the setting up of a Secretariat, and by setting up a Joint Permanent Committee;
- by making these relations more concrete and visible through additional regional and sub-regional projects, relevant for the citizens of the region.

During 2008, the co-presidencies were France and the CZ Republic, on the EU side, and Egypt, on the Southern Mediterranean side.

The European Commission fully supports the UpM and is already working towards achieving the objectives of the priority projects.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Projects are in the core of the UpM. They should have a visible impact on the life of citizens in the whole region by promoting growth, employment, regional cohesion and socio-economic integration and by supporting the creation of infrastructure for interconnections.

¹ All EU Member States together with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey, as well as the other Mediterranean coastal states (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Monaco) and Mauritania. The Arab League and Libya have observer status.

At the Paris Summit six projects priorities were identified:

De-pollution of the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is much more than a symbol or an icon for the region and it provides employment and pleasure for its people. However, its environmental quality has suffered serious degradation in recent times. The de-pollution of the Mediterranean, including coastal and protected marine areas, particularly in the water and waste sector, will therefore be of major benefit for the lives and livelihoods of its people. Activities will build on the Building on the Horizon 2020 programme, launched in 2008.

Maritime and Land Highways

The Mediterranean joins its people and is also a highway for commerce. Easy and safe access and flow of goods and people, on land and sea, is essential for maintaining relations and enhancing regional trade. The development of motorways of the sea, including the connection of ports, throughout the entire Mediterranean basin as well as the establishment of an efficient and integrated Euro-Mediterranean Transport Network, will increase the flow and freedom of the movement of people and goods. Attention will also be devoted to maritime security and safety, in a perspective of global integration in the Mediterranean region.

Civil Protection

The global landscape is littered with examples of the devastation caused by man-made and natural disasters. The effects of climate change are evident for all. The Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable and exposed to such disasters. A joint civil protection scheme on prevention, preparation and response to disasters, linking the region more closely to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, should, therefore, be one of the main priorities for the region.

Alternative Energies & Mediterranean Solar Plan

The recent activities on energy markets, in terms of both supply and demand, confirm the need to focus on alternative energy sources. Market deployment as well as research and development of all alternative sources of energy are then a major priority in efforts towards assuring sustainable development in this area. The creation of a Mediterranean Solar Plan is one of the key priorities identified in Paris.

Higher Education and Research - Euro-Mediterranean University

A Euro-Mediterranean University can contribute to the understanding among people and encourage cooperation in higher education. Through a cooperation network of partner institutions and existing universities from the Euro-Med region, the Euro-Mediterranean University in Portoroz (Slovenia) will develop postgraduate and research programmes and thus contribute to the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education, Science and Research Area.

Supporting Business

With a view to develop Mediterranean business, an initiative to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises by assessing their needs, defining policy solutions and providing them with technical assistance and financial instruments will be launched.

A YEAR LATER

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

As a follow up to the Paris Summit, Foreign Affairs Ministers agreed on 3-4 November 2008 in Marseille the structure and functioning of the UpM and its Secretariat, based on a proposal by the European Commission, and on the location of the new Secretariat in Barcelona.

Upgrading the level, quality and intensity of the dialogue

A Summit of Heads of States or Government will be held every second year after the first Summit of 13 July in Paris. Foreign Ministers would meet between summits, review progress and prepare the upcoming summit. The existing dialogues under the Barcelona Process like the Euro-Med Senior Officials' meetings and the experts' meetings would be preserved and reinforced, where necessary.

Co-Presidency

The UpM has a co-Presidency from the EU and one from a Mediterranean partner, which runs for 2 years. This would apply to summits, annual Foreign Ministers' meetings as well as sectoral Ministerial meetings, senior officials and Joint Permanent Committee meetings. Currently the EU co-presidency is jointly held by Sweden and France and the Mediterranean by Egypt.

Project-oriented Secretariat

The Secretariat would make proposals for joint initiatives to be decided by the political bodies and would ensure the follow-up of project related decisions of the Summit. The tasks of the Secretariat would include the gathering of project initiatives for instance from civil society, private sector or national or regional authorities, their examination and proposal to the Senior Officials (the clearing house). Once projects are approved by the Summit (Heads of State or Government), the Secretariat is responsible for the follow-up by promoting the project and searching for partners for implementation.

The Secretariat will be led by A Secretary General and 5 Deputy Secretary Generals, both from the EU and the South region.

The Commission is in the process of identifying the financial needs and possibilities related to the running of the Secretariat.

Senior Official Meetings (SoM)

High-ranking officials of all the partner countries (43) and the Commission take part in the meetings. The SoM is tasked with the preparation of Euromed Ministerial meetings including projects to be endorsed, in particular those of Foreign Ministers; to take stock of and evaluate the progress of the UfM in all its components and submit the annual work programme to Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

They meet regularly and analyse the progress made towards the fulfilment of the Union for the Mediterranean objectives. The SoM also provides incentives for new initiatives.

The SoM is assisted by a Joint Permanent Committee.

Joint Permanent Committee

The JPC would assist the co-presidencies in their duties and functions and to ensure the increased co-ownership of the decision making process by intensification of dialogue. The Committee will comprise specifically appointed representatives from all Member States' and Mediterranean Partners' missions in Brussels on the other hand, would serve as a kind of standing committee. They would be responsible for preparing the meetings of the Senior Officials, assisting the co-presidencies in the preparations for the Summits and Ministers' meetings, and last but not least, could also serve as rapid reaction mechanism in case of a crisis situation requiring consultation of Euro-Mediterranean partners.

Funding

Funding will need to be mobilized to implement the ambitious projects identified. The Commission envisages financial resources could come from:

- the private sector
- bilateral cooperation from EU Member States,
- contributions from Mediterranean partners,
- international financial institutions or regional banks,
- Community budget for the Mediterranean, such as the ENP South regional programmes, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility and the Cross-Border Cooperation instrument, all of them within the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI).

Ministers in Marseille also adopted a considerably enhanced work programme for 2009, which includes, among other areas:

- prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters;
- maritime safety and security;
- energy cooperation and renewable sources with the Mediterranean Solar Plant as key project;
- integrated Euro-Mediterranean transport system and connections with trans-European transport network;
- water strategy and environment with a target to achieve the de-pollution of the Mediterranean by 2020;
- establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area;
- development of the social dimension of the partnership: health, research, education, intercultural dialogue, migration, and gender equality;
- identification of areas of common ground to strengthen democracy and political pluralism through expansion of participation in political life and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

MEETINGS

The crisis in Gaza at the end of 2008 resulted in a suspension of the UpM meetings during some months.

A Senior Officials meeting took place on 23 April in Brussels where the Arab partners stated the suspensions of activities but agreed to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis

At the invitation of Minister Moratinos, the group drafting the Statutes of the Secretariat met on 25 May and 16 June in Barcelona, meetings in which all Arab partners participated.

A Senior Officials meeting on civil protection took place on 16 and 17 June in Marseille where it was agreed actions to build the Euro-Mediterranean Area for Civil Protection by progressively integrating the Southern partners into the European Civil Protection Mechanism.

Euro-Mediterranean Ministers met on 25 June in Paris to discuss sustainable development issues such as transport, water, energy and urban development (all Southern partners participated, except Syria, Libya and Turkey).

On 7 July, Senior Officials and Ministers of Finances and Economy met in Brussels.

PROJECTS

Despite the political blockage, the Commission has kept busy implementing the activities regarded as priorities in the Paris and has since then provided or earmarked almost €90 million to achieve its goals. To this amount we need to add the contribution of more than €50 million from the European Investment Bank and from the funds of the European Neighbourhood Facility.

Since July 2008, the European Commission is financing or just about to launch²:

Environment (€22 million for 2009-2010)

The Mediterranean Environment Reporting system and activities and projects within the Horizon 2020 programme, aiming at the de-pollution of the Mediterranean by 2020.

Promotion of water policies and practices in the Mediterranean region

Renewable energies

Studies to identify the effective strategy to develop and implement the Mediterranean Solar Plant and how to support renewable energy in the Mediterranean region. Following the studies, the Commission expects to launch the Solar Plant programme before the end of the year.

Feasibility study for a concentrated solar power plant in Tunisia (€1 million from the Neighbourhood Investment Facility).

A 200 MW wind farm in the Gulf of El Zayt, Egypt (€1 million from the Neighbourhood Investment Facility).

Transport

Mediterranean Motorways of the Sea and Integrated Mediterranean Maritime Policy (€7.5 million).

Mediterranean Maritime Security via the SAFEMED programme (€4.5).

Support to the implementation of a regional Transport Action Plan, including the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Transport Network and associated infrastructure (€6 million).

² See [IP/09/1113](#) latest assistance package.

Civil protection (€5 million since July 2008)

Development and reinforcement of the civil protection in the region by building and strengthening the reaction capacity. Activities are carried out by a consortium led by Italy and with the participation of Egypt, France and UN; Balkans countries and Turkey also participate.

Education and Research

a contribution of €1 million to the Euromed University in Portoroz (Slovenia) to facilitate the participating of students and academics from the Mediterranean countries.

Business

The "Invest in Med" initiative which supports investments in the region (€9 million).