Report by the High-Level Advisory Group
established at the initiative of
the President of the European Commission

Dialogue Between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean Area

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The orientation of this map corresponds to the world view of the Arab cartographers of the Middle Ages.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is difficult to consider the Mediterranean as a coherent whole without taking account of the fractures which divide it, the conflicts which are tearing it apart: Palestine-Israel, Lebanon, Cyprus, the western Balkans, Greece-Turkey, Algeria; incidents with their roots in other, more distant wars such as those in Afghanistan or Iraq, and so on. The Mediterranean is made up of a number of sub-units which challenge or refute unifying ideas. Conflict, however, is not inevitable; it is not its predestined fate. It is this that convinced Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, to set up a High-Level Advisory Group. The group set its work on the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the broader context of economic globalisation, enlargement of the European Union, the permanent presence on its soil of communities of immigrant origin, and the questions about identity which these changes are throwing up on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Enlargement is causing the European Union to reflect on both its identity and its relationship with the rest of the world, starting with the countries and regions in close proximity. The neighbourhood policy is the creative expression of the vision of making the Union one element in good neighbourly relations – as well as being specifically responsible for providing the neighbourhood with a stable core - and therefore ensuring that it maintains closer links with its immediate "ring of friends".

The Mediterranean countries which do not belong to the European Union, however, are exposed to many forces which thwart their potential to form a single entity and make the voice of their peoples heard. Their proximity to their northerly neighbour – whose strength is in large part due to its unification – may incline them to an equally creative openness to better, more intense and more egalitarian relations.

On the two shores of the Mediterranean, globalisation is bringing fundamental changes. The pace at which established frameworks and reference points are being displaced as a result of the mixing of peoples and ideas, and flows of goods and services, means that it is not always possible to identify what has remained unchanged in the different "civilisations" where these transformations have taken place. The only way for everyone to creatively construct a common future is to endeavour to steer a path of change together between a resigned fatalism in the face of an essentially economic globalisation on the one hand and a retreat into exclusive identity politics on the other. For this to be possible, two conditions must be present: first a readiness to seek in the dialogue with the Other new reference points for oneself and, second, general agreement on the aim of constructing a "common civilisation" beyond the legitimate diversity of the cultures that have been handed down. Leopold Sedar Senghor encapsulated this when he said that by living the particular to the full we reach the dawn of the universal. A common civilisation naturally looks to the universal, and hence equality, while dialogue thrives on diversity, and hence a taste for difference.

From an awareness of this need has grown the political will to propose a major initiative. This consists of developing an intercultural dialogue, referring to culture not only in the traditional sense of the term, but also in the anthropological sense, which includes all the practical, day-to-day features of a living culture (education, role of women, place and image of immigrant populations, etc.).

Culture is by nature egalitarian, giving equal weight to all <u>its forms</u>: it is therefore both the basis of and vehicle for an equitable relationship. But in no other area is there such scope for both misunderstanding and understanding: it is therefore the ideal area for

equals to work together to clarify and enrich a Euro-Mediterranean relationship still littered with obstacles (mutual perceptions, role of the media, etc.) and denials (of rights, dignity, liberty, equality, etc.). Why should this relationship be made a priority? Certainly not to prevent a very hypothetical clash of civilisations, but rather in the certainty that the principal complementarities of the two halves of the Euro-Mediterranean area will, in the next half century, have been integrated into their day-to-day life: what we <u>now</u> have to do is prepare the ground for this. These complementarities are now emerging, but there is a risk that they will not achieve the desired result if no effort is made to back them up with ambitious plans to bring peoples and cultures together. It is a historic and hence politically crucial task, and it is urgent.

Why should culture act as a vehicle for dialogue in this relationship? It is certainly not a panacea, nor can it act as a substitute for the existing policies within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership put in place at Barcelona. The idea is more to involve civil societies in ending the discriminations from which European citizens of immigrant origin still too often suffer and the persistent situation of injustice, violence and insecurity in the Middle East, in implementing educational programmes designed to replace negative mutual perceptions with mutual knowledge and understanding, and so on.

The initiative is also intended to create conditions favourable to the harmonious combining of cultural, and particularly religious, diversity, of untrammelled freedom of conscience in every dimension, with the neutrality of the public realm. Once all these conditions are present they can ensure an inclusive process of secularisation without which racist (particularly anti-semitic and islamophobic) prejudices could persist. The High-Level Group was unanimous in strongly condemning any doctrines or ideas which legitimise any form of exclusion or discrimination to whatever end.

The High-Level Advisory Group has therefore identified and put in order of importance a number of founding principles, themselves translated into principles for action to which the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area must constantly refer in order to give the neighbourhood policy a human dimension. It is this set of principles which make up the "software" of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, the "specification" of which must enable it to both set in motion, promote and coordinate all the initiatives responding to these principles, and assess whether each initiative complies with those principles.

The High-Level Advisory Group has also identified three "operational" guidelines in the fields of education, mobility and the identification of best practice, and the media. It has elaborated a number of concrete proposals for each one.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent history has been marked by a rapid succession of ruptures, approximately once every ten years. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, then the fall in 1989 of the Berlin Wall and, more recently, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre towers on 11 September 2001. Each one has defined its era. Together they have fashioned the world of uncertainty and fear in which we now live. First symptoms and then causes of major historical changes, these crises have undermined the established forms, methods and rules of the international order.

These crises have combined with globalisation to subject contemporary societies to changes of all kinds the cumulative effect of which has led to major evolutions or even transformations in the very nature of those societies. This state of affairs calls for new paradigms.

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The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, was acutely aware of these background movements long before the tragedy of 11 September 2001 and had long drawn attention to the urgency of working to ward off the malaise and forge positive links between peoples and societies. Because the dialogue between peoples and cultures[1] is based on the equal dignity of cultures, it seemed to him the most promising way of achieving this while avoiding any cultural relativism in terms of fundamental rights for each human being. On the basis of this starting point, he formulated two key questions:

– How can we contribute to the emergence of a "society of peoples and cultures", alongside the society of states, in the Euro-Mediterranean area?

– What shape should such a dialogue between cultures take, a dialogue conducted primarily among the peoples who inherit and pass on those cultures, bearing in mind that it should be governed by at least the three principles of equality, co-ownership and cross-fertilisation?

The Symposium on Intercultural Dialogue held on 20 and 21 March 2002 in Brussels was the occasion on which this political will was first expressed, and President Prodi took the opportunity to emphasise the need to rethink this dialogue, bearing in mind - in the words of the UNESCO Constitution - that "*since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed*".

He therefore charged a High-Level Advisory Group with making concrete, operational proposals for the Euro-Mediterranean area, under a neighbourhood policy intended to create "*a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood - a 'ring of friends' - with whom the European Union enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations*". The neighbourhood policy, included by the enlarging Union as one of its objectives in its draft Constitution, provides an opportunity to take an important step forward, achieving both greater political effectiveness and a salutary refocusing of Euro-Mediterranean relations on the human dimension - a human dimension, let us not forget, made up of more women than men.

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[1]   The term "culture" is used here, and throughout the report, in its broad, i.e. anthropological meaning.

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The High-Level Advisory Group immediately endorsed President Prodi's choice of the intercultural dialogue as a starting point for a historic ambition shared by all parties: to construct, in the Mediterranean area, and starting from the Mediterranean, a friendly neighbourhood <u>with a human dimension</u>. It took two assumptions as the basis for its work:

−   Since they form two halves of one area with age-old ties, it is clear that there is an urgent need for Europe and its Mediterranean neighbours to combine their complementary assets to lasting effect: youth on the one hand, structures and capital on the other, to name but the most obvious. Globalisation is a further reason to work rapidly towards this *rapprochement*, because of its myriad complex, cross-cutting impacts on societies: economic interdependence, migrations, the undermining of the State's role as mediator as well as of the authority of certain international organisations since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and so on.

−   Secondly, these two parts of the Euro-Mediterranean area are, in different ways and for different reasons, facing parallel problems of internal reorganisation in a changing world. For example, thought must be given to the potential consequences, for Europe as a whole and for the Euro-Mediterranean area, of the imminent historic enlargement of the European Union, which is in the process of transforming it utterly. Equally, nothing can be said or done in the Mediterranean without an appreciation of the importance of history and of mutual perceptions. This is an essential component of the viewpoint of the so-called southern countries in particular.

Right from our inaugural meeting, President Prodi stressed that he considered this objective to be eminently political, in the noblest sense of the term, which is why he asked us to discuss it with complete freedom and independence of mind.

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All these factors have to be taken into account in devising and promoting a dialogue between cultures in the Mediterranean. Our Group has endeavoured to identify the ways and means of enhancing the role of the dialogue. We have drawn a number of lessons from these deliberations, which we have formulated into recommendations aimed at changing the place, role and content of the Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean relationship. For this policy to be successful, it must be underpinned with institutional arrangements which innovate in the sense that they are joint and call on all interests in society to take part.

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I. **WHERE HAVE WE GOT TO?**

1.1. Changing identities in both the North and the South

(i) President Prodi's initiative (creating the High-Level Advisory Group in the context of defining a neighbourhood policy) follows on from the Barcelona process, and is intended primarily to recast the cultural element. It also responds to two **questions about identity** which apply as much to the enlarged European Union as to its Mediterranean neighbours.

The parallel debates taking place in the North and South of the Mediterranean have a twofold impact. They raise the question of whether it is possible to join forces that have hitherto been disjointed or even antagonistic, and forge an original path to peace and prosperity while avoiding two interlocking and increasingly menacing risks:

- that of domination by the North in the broad sense,

- and that of an alternative that sees itself as revolutionary, inspired by cultures (or forms of civilisation) that are alienated, deformed, reduced to pure ideologies.

(ii) Alongside these risks, partly shared, partly specific to the North or South side of the Mediterranean, three developments can be identified relating to ways in which identities and social bonds are created which go beyond the national framework.

The first of these is the emergence of **transnational institutions and cooperation flows** capable not only of doing without mediation by the nation states, but also of transcending and defying those states. Increasingly insistent *calls for the recognition of cultural differences in public life* - and not just in private life - are also being heard. In many European countries, this is leading to the creation of new public forums where differences in culture and identity can be expressed, which gives rise to **new relationships between cultural identity and citizenship**.

The advent of a constitution for the Union is a genuinely "revolutionary act", marking as it does the shift from a geographical space still largely divided by the defence of national interests to an "*area of integrated peoples who form a single society and decide of their own sovereign will to express their values*"[2]. With the completion of the work of the Convention on the future of the European Union, the institutional process has crossed a clear qualitative threshold. There is no doubt that for a constitution - a pact formally sealing the union of a nation of citizens - to be adopted and take root, there must be a favourable background <u>consisting of much more than simply the ethnic/national homogeneity of a political people</u>.

These two developments are compounded by the claims by many social movements and minorities. These various movements are constantly evolving, sometimes towards openness and pluralism, and sometimes towards a retreat into identity politics and totalitarian fundamentalism. Moreover, these different visions of modernity very often find expression <u>within</u> a single culture, whatever that culture may be. Hence the importance of a third trend, which still needs to be encouraged and established: the **emergence of open and/or pluralistic public spaces** in the countries on the south side

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[2]   D. Rousseau, "Les constitutions possibles de l'Europe" in Cités, *Les Constitutions possibles de l'Europe, figures politiques de l'Europe unie* , 13, 2003, p 14.

of the Mediterranean as well as recognition by Europeans of this trend as a <u>spontaneous development</u> in the so-called southern countries.

1.2. <u>Enlargement and the changing identity of the European Union</u>

Enlargement will give the EU a more plural identity and even more neighbours. The question of its boundaries, hitherto deliberately left open, no longer arises in the same terms of the distinction between what is part of the Union and what does not have the potential to be so. The mere fact of raising this question demonstrates the will to find an answer by looking at all affinities of whatever kind. Of the EU's immediate neighbourly relationships, the proximity of the Mediterranean is felt most acutely, with its increasingly insistent presence and established migrant communities, coupled with a very ancient shared heritage.

(ii) What consequences will enlargement have for the EU's capacity for dialogue? Enlargement is generating or deepening a number of apprehensions in the countries and societies on the southern side of the Mediterranean, the key fear being that imbalances with the North could be accentuated. This fear is expressed in three areas: political, economic, and, where these two intersect, migration - all against a background of mutual concern about cultural issues.

On the **political** front, enlargement may have two positive effects, one on the internal state of the countries and societies on the southern side of the Mediterranean, the other on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership via the EU's neighbourhood policy.

The process of enlargement has brought with it political reforms and the establishment of the rule of law in the candidate countries, giving the new Member States a wealth of experience to bring to the permanent dialogue between the civil societies and populations of the North and South of the Mediterranean. This "internalised" experience of transition (democratic, economic) means that the enlarged EU will have more to share with the countries and societies on the south side of the Mediterranean to help them in their own transitions and democratic process. Since its new members have themselves had to overcome some of the difficulties facing a number of Mediterranean partners, the enlarged EU will be in a position to help the latter avoid certain risks (retreat into identity politics where individual identities become a kind of deadly shibboleth, religious fundamentalism, combination of poverty/illiteracy, etc.) and identify possible solutions: culture of participation; equality of rights and opportunities or even positive discrimination for women; elimination of economic and social exclusion, etc.

Participation by local authorities and civil societies should be encouraged not only with a generic reference to *democracy*, but also with reference to the precise requirements of *good governance*: social harmonisation, transparent and effective public practices, etc., which are a better measure of the democratic openness of a country. Because of the path that they themselves have taken, the new Member States of the EU should be best placed to avoid any risk of paternalism in the pursuit of this aim under the neighbourhood policy, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the dialogue between cultures to be conducted within it.

On the **economic front**, the new Member States now increasingly perceive their successful accession on the one hand and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on the other as complementary rather than competing or even antagonistic processes. This shift in perception should in turn <u>quell any fears</u> that the southern Mediterranean countries may have and convince them that an enlarged EU that is internally more cohesive and

equitable means opportunities for the Mediterranean partners. This change for the better in <u>mutual perceptions</u> – which the neighbourhood policy must reinforce as a matter of priority – in the economic field is certainly helpful in the creation of a dialogue between equals in the cultural field.

This shift in mutual perceptions is backed up by a series of objective findings and generally accepted analyses which all challenge the fear of the Mediterranean partners that "*intensive labour production will be shifted from the current EU Member States to the new members, and no longer to the Mediterranean partner countries, in order to benefit from salary differentials"*. The first of these findings is that, in trade relations, the <u>most worrying challenge that the Mediterranean countries will face will come essentially from the liberalisation of multilateral trade</u>, which will further increase competitive pressure and the erosion of preferential access to the European market. The second finding, on foreign investment flows, shows that <u>the Mediterranean's real competitors are not the new Member States but Latin America and, beyond that and in the long term, China, India and most other Asian countries</u>.

For these reasons, therefore, and not just because of the increasingly rapid ageing of the population of the enlarged EU or the demographic differential with the southern Mediterranean, Europe will continue both to be an attractive destination for would-be immigrants, and to call on the migration potential of its neighbours itself. In terms of **migration**, enlargement of the Union does not necessarily mean that there will be large "internal" migratory movements from East to West. It may be that the new Member States, where the population is ageing more rapidly as a result of sometimes negative demographic growth rates, will in turn become host countries for migrants from the southern Mediterranean. The conjunction of these future migratory flows and the entry of new nations into the EU is a multidimensional issue with many social, demographic and economic - and above all cultural - implications. EU enlargement can and must set an example of building on cultural affinities to extend to – or rather to share with – the Mediterranean region and migrants from that region, an example in which it is necessary to <u>differentiate values, shared to varying degrees, from belief systems</u>. With enlargement, the dialogue of cultures on the territory of the EU (and with its Mediterranean neighbours) will <u>change in substance but not in form</u>:

– First of all, the enlarged EU will move beyond the traditional relationship between Western Judeo-Christian culture and Islam by incorporating people of Orthodox religion and culture: in addition to strengthening the role of Orthodoxy within the EU and beyond, this incorporation will transform the dialogue into a "trialogue". Furthermore, Orthodoxy sometimes leads to behaviour which is surprisingly similar with that of Islam – particularly in relation to secularisation – which will have a major impact on, even radically change, the relationship between the enlarged Union and the Arab-Muslim world, and more broadly the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. Such similarities could raise awareness of their long history and common destiny, while helping to relativise and then transcend differences.

– Secondly, enlargement in the longer term to Bulgaria (where 10% of the population is Muslim), and then to the Balkans (including Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has a Muslim majority), and finally to Turkey (combining a secular political regime with the Muslim religion, with 80 million inhabitants at present), will lead to the inclusion of a "historically" European Islam. This, combined with the presence in Germany and Austria of populations of Turkish rather than North African origin, will contribute to the diversification of Islam in Europe.

These two future developments will have a number of positive effects on the prospects for immigration and on the place of Islam in Europe. First of all they will show that a European Islam has come into being, thus dispelling the image of a rampant Islamisation of Europe. This European Islam is developing its own characteristics which increasingly distinguish it from Islam as lived in Muslim countries:

– Firstly, it takes the form of a minority religion whose adherents have made the choice to settle definitively on European soil and have therefore come to terms with the fact that they will not be returning.

– Secondly, their permanent establishment in a secular European area is gradually transforming the patterns of thought and behaviour of these new European citizens of the Muslim faith, particularly their conception of the relationship between society and the religious sphere. This transformation legitimises and leads to an aspiration to be considered full citizens and not second-class citizens.

– Thirdly, these changes clearly require the EU and its Member States to rethink their relationship, still all too often problematic, with the closest Other. Europe's relationship with its neighbours within determines its relationship with its neighbours without, and vice versa. Of course the Euro-Mediterranean partners must also make an equivalent effort with their Jewish and Christian minorities.

1.3. Intercultural dialogue as a response to the structural problems of the South

In addition to having a relationship with Europe which has existed for thousands of years and is still very active – as demonstrated by the human, financial, cultural and other flows across the Mediterranean - all the Mediterranean countries which do not belong to the enlarged EU form a space which, while diverse and criss-crossed by numerous dividing lines, can generally be considered as a whole. However, this whole is also facing questions about its future, because of its demographic situation, economic and societal upheavals caused by globalisation, the social and political evolution of the people and of governments, and so on. All these factors are coming together in the debate about the place likely to fall to the Mediterranean region in the world now emerging.

(i) The success of the dialogue requires full knowledge and consideration of the characteristics of, and factors at work in, the southern Mediterranean. The development of an open, intercultural society, respectful of common rules (in the North) and of an open, balanced North-South/South-North partnership is merely one of a number of preconditions for a peaceful and productive dialogue between the EU of today and tomorrow and some of its important neighbours. But the emergence of the South as a genuine (i.e. dynamic and coherent) partner, is essential: it represents not merely a means to achieving a dialogue but rather a vital element of the dialogue itself. Here we must emphasise the extent to which the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process represents an additional obstacle to democratisation in the Mediterranean region, and also prevents Israel from making its proper contribution to the *joint* process of putting in place the necessary conditions for democracy. To be effective, the intercultural dialogue must be set within a context of respect for fundamental rights, and may then also become a powerful vehicle for democratisation.

Six major series of factors continue, in our view, to characterise the southern Mediterranean in terms of the requirement that it become a "full" partner.

– First of all, the special triangle within it made up of the links between **political power, civil society and religion**. Why did the Arab-Muslim world of the 20th century,

where *formal and material secularisation* made considerable headway (use of Western legal codes, modern institutions, etc.), not lead to the *secularisation of values and attitudes*? Three historical reasons broadly explain why the one has remained largely dissociated from the other: the use of Islam as a political resource and signifier of identity in the wars of independence (sometimes after the colonial authorities had also used it to establish their authority), the first calls for modernisation, which initially came from the "enlightened Ulemas" over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, and lastly the failure of the modernist policies of the newly independent states. The current situation is therefore largely due to the fact that these societies assigned Islam three *eminently political* functions which are in no way religious: to combat colonialism, (and/or, earlier, to serve it), to combat the archaic, conservative systems of their time, and finally to denounce socially ineffective and often corrupt regimes. So, what should be done to ensure that the majority of the populations in the South of the <u>Mediterranean accept for themselves the principle of secularism as a basis of positive tolerance, and no longer consider it to be the expression of a "decadent modernism"</u>?

– This is compounded by other factors which increase the importance - some would say ascendancy - of this religious reality. First and foremost among these are **demographic and social changes**. Over the last fifty years, the Arab population has grown from 80 to 320 million inhabitants, <u>50% of whom are aged *under 20*</u>. No country has been spared the rural exodus, and food dependency in particular has increased with half of all calories being imported since the 1980s. Furthermore, all the industrialisation strategies – be they import substitution, sub-contracting or "*industrialisation industrialisante*" (state-led industrialisation to promote development) - have reached their limits, while indebtedness reached the record figure of $260 billion in 2002. All these developments of course increase the *social demands* on states which have to simultaneously invest in *infrastructure*, *provide schooling* for more than 120 million young people, *accommodate* new flows of arrivals in already overpopulated cities, and lastly *provide health care* and *food* for a population which, notwithstanding some signs of demographic change, continues to double every 25 to 30 years. <u>In such young societies – where, furthermore, defence and security budgets are constantly rising - culture and dialogue cannot have the same role or scope as they do for the ageing, cynical populations of the northern Mediterranean.</u>

– The economy and infrastructures are still significantly **underdeveloped**, as we have seen. As a result, local authorities and players in civil society <u>are sometimes compelled to have other priorities than dialogue, or at least to raise other pressing matters within that dialogue</u>, confronted as they are with problems of survival.

– A different **scale of values**, for example relating to the status of individuals, the position of women,[3] etc., which clash with the **values lived in day-to-day life** which are characterised by solidarity, whether this be family solidarity, local assistance schemes, support for the elderly, etc. These everyday values, as well as the fundamental principles and principles for action, illustrate <u>the extent to which the South can also contribute proposals, particularly on questions of **solidarity**</u>. However,

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[3]   There are, however, some remarkable exceptions in this area. Since 1957 Tunisia has had a Family Code which enshrines equality between women and men. Morocco is also now moving in this direcction.

these solidarity schemes can be ambivalent since they allow themselves to be exploited by Islamic movements.

– The **accumulation of mistrust and conflict** between certain southern countries, which goes beyond a divergence of interests. It is this "weight of the past" which constitutes one of the main obstacles preventing regional initiatives such as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) from asserting themselves, and thus prevents the South from coalescing into a partner. Generally speaking, the reasons for this are not merely circumstantial but more fundamental. However, in the case of the AMU the past ought rather to militate in favour of *rapprochement*. Countries which are still engaged in the sociologically, politically, economically and culturally very complex – even painful – processes of state-building are unlikely to be spontaneously inclined to regional cooperation.[4] States that are still entrenching their recently recovered sovereignty are mistrustful of shared powers, let alone transfers of power to the regional level.

– The **weight of humiliation** and the **feeling of impotence** which, though inherited from the colonial period, are nursed and even sharpened by the vicissitudes of the peace process in the Middle East and by military ventures trumpeted as crusades - for example, in Iraq.

(ii) These characteristics should not lead either to a pseudo-dialogue, nor to an ideology or attitudes which make a "*clash of civilisations*" inevitable. On the contrary, the North-South/South-North dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area is the sole vehicle for a common solution to internal problems in both the North and the South.

The "*dialogue of civilisations*" derives from the polemical, not to say warmongering, concept of the "*clash of civilisations*", and while it may be intended as a counterblast, it unfortunately shares the same logic in spite of itself by giving credence to the idea that the whole question is thrashed out between "blocs" distinguished by quasi-ontological differences. However, it is paradoxically between "civilisations" that dialogue is easiest, as the respective movements of trade, tourism and migration suggest, in that they demonstrate a mutual attraction. The elites are more inclined to universalism, sometimes arrogantly delight in it, unlike the less favoured majorities who cling to an identity that is often little more than a mythologised construct. The problem of a potential difference between civilisations arises when they are so much in contact with each other that they start to blend. This is not, then, so much a process of one civilisation forging ahead and the other lagging behind, but rather internal upheavals within each one, which, if they are on a large enough scale or last long enough, rapidly start to create a new area of civilisation, a process which repeats itself in an ongoing cycle. Nowhere is there more of a difference between "civilisations" than within these areas. As soon as one leaves behind the ideological register of general categorisations, one discovers the profusion of differences, distinctions and oppositions of which every society is made up.

A hundred years ago, no one was surprised at the classification of peoples by race, until it became apparent through developments in biology that beneath distinct phenotypes there is absolutely no way of tracing a boundary of this kind, wherever one may draw it. Humanity is made up of individuals - who are all distinct - on the one hand, and a universal global species on the other, without any legitimate distinction between these

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[4]   Some successes have nonetheless already been achieved: notably the signature by Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, on 21 May 2003, of a declaration of intention on the integration of the Maghreb's electricity market into that of the Union.

two facets. Likewise, today it is equally unacceptable to demarcate "civilisations" within the historical whole, especially in the Mediterranean, where each claimant to the title has so long, so persistently, and in such complex fashion, penetrated into the heart of all the others, that it is quite impossible to disentangle them without reducing them to caricatures.

The temptation to look at the project of intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean on a North-South/South-North axis only would therefore be dangerous if it was restricted to that alone. The problem is quite simply much more comprehensive and much more general: there has been a failure to grasp the impact of culture on historical developments in the North, the South, and even, one might be tempted to say, between the North and the South - though such provocative suggestions should ring warning bells because from North/South it is a short step to Europe/Africa, Europeans/Arabs, Christians/Muslims, Christianity/Islam, them/us or us/them.

However, the reality that needs to be taken into account is quite different: it is simply Us; an Us which begins with each person for themself and extends to all the neighbours, in this case the Euro-Mediterranean area, but potentially extending to the universal. We are citizens of here and of the world, and hence of everything that falls between the two, and not first individuals of X ethnicity or groups of Y country belonging to Z region - all of which define themselves by opposition to others. In other words, feelings of belonging now work as intersecting circles, and no longer as concentric or juxtaposed circles.

The relationship with the Other as a different entity is most problematic not with those who are very distant, but with those who are closest. As Amin Maalouf says in "*In the Name of Identity*", it is with those closest to us that we fight most bitterly.

The situation in the southern part of the Mediterranean area illustrates this perfectly. Nowhere more than in the Holy Land is the encounter between two cultures so violent; not even communities living in the closest proximity are spared fire and sword. These exceptionally rich and complex cultures are reduced by mutual antagonism to one-dimensional identities. The Balkan wars arose out of the same violent dynamic, pitting neighbours against each other and requiring the intervention of third parties to impose peace. While problems of integration among people who have migrated from the Maghreb or Turkey to Europe are frequently referred to, it is important not to overlook the difficulties they have in defining their relationship with their countries of origin, an experience which shatters the traditional, simplistic image of an original unaltered identity in opposition to an intolerant host situation. In reality, the problem is one of adjustment, within a given society, of new elements which in some way change it and therefore participate in its evolution from the moment of their arrival. It is pure fantasy to imagine a static society on the one hand and migrants who find the gate barred on the other. In reality, migration and societies have a relationship of mutual transformation which involves them in the same adventure from the start, the apparent difficulty being entirely of proportion and duration, since in one case it is often about living out individual destinies, and in the other it is about slow, imperceptible general trends. However, it is none the less true that migrants have already transformed both the host societies and the societies of origin, if only, in the case of the latter, by sending financial remittances, which far exceed all development aid and associated investment flows.

Thus the question of cultural relationship in the Euro-Mediterranean area begins for each individual at his own door, for the southern as much as the northern countries. It is doubtless in this area that the shock of modernity has given rise to the most comprehensive, fastest, most troubling changes, making the transmission and sharing of

culture (in the anthropological sense of the term) one of the most burning questions in societies undergoing profound change.

A dialogue of this kind with oneself is, in a way, the most difficult of all. It lacks reference points, since those on which it could base itself internally are precisely those which are subject to change and doubt. Thus it slides all too easily into confrontation, rhetoric, ideologies, prejudice, scapegoating. Facing change on so many fronts is bound to be unsettling. Broadening the circle of cultural exchanges is the only way out of this impasse. The Euro-Mediterranean dialogue must be envisaged less as the problem to be solved than as part of the solution to the problems that arise, in different forms, in the North and South respectively. It is a path of change for both the North and the South which, separately, have difficulty in managing the impact of these changes on their own future. They are more likely to succeed together.

Paradoxically, it is "the South" - which has failed to benefit over the last half century from anything like the incredible lessons in cooperation drawn from the process of European integration - which has the most to gain from this Euro-Mediterranean pooling. Yet, affected as it is by the separating effects of decolonisation (between North and South, between countries asserting themselves in the South), exacerbated by the choices made under the influence of the Cold War, "the South" is now divided, organised on narrow, essentially national bases, at a time when globalisation is challenging all the existing realities. While the North benefits from the "effect of scale" that states enjoy by virtue of their membership of the European Union, making them relatively powerful agents of their own fate, the South is at the mercy of all influences, to the extent of becoming the theatre for open competition between forces for integration into the empire of globalisation and forces of fundamentalist rejection of that globalisation.

The South must urgently enter into an inter- and intracultural dialogue with itself. It can only do so by fully participating in a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue which in no way excludes, say, Arab-African dialogues or dialogues with the other large areas of the world. But, in the Mediterranean, Europe remains the closest neighbour.

1.4. Globalisation and the intensification of identity issues in the North and South of the Mediterranean

(i) The Mediterranean area is one of the areas in the world where the idea of the world itself originated, as did the web of relations which organise the entirety of the known universe. We owe it both the notion of the universal and critical thought, in other words the tools for analysing both the general and the particular. Its history should place it at the very heart of a successful globalisation. However, what we see is the exact opposite. For several centuries this area has been the theatre for successive radical reversals of relationships of power, wealth and influence.

It is as if, from the outset, globalisation in the Mediterranean has been constructed on an ancient cultural scar. Thus, there more than elsewhere globalisation is perceived as a process exacerbating feelings of relegation and marginalisation.

The current trend is reinforcing this perception. Three aspects are superimposed, which adds to the disarray:

- Firstly, **globalisation**, by exposing the economic, social and financial structures of all societies, reveals their advantages and disadvantages, while accentuating the instability of the existing systems, and weakening those societies which were already the most fragile.

- Secondly, an essentially economic and financial liberalism is intensifying **interdependences**, redoubling the destabilisation of societies that are simultaneously disorganised within and bled dry from without.

- Lastly, globalisation not only exposes the existing mechanisms, but also brings its own **complexity**, for example combining standardisation and fragmentation, the principle of openness and blocking mechanisms, all contradictory commands which create real problems in reality and in people's minds. Few analysts have yet accepted the fact that globalisation is not, or at least is no longer, a process of change within established structures, but a challenging of these structures themselves, of rules, of benchmarks, of proportions. Where it was once accepted that there was a whole, we must see differences, and where divisions reigned, affinities are now emerging.

This trend towards deconstruction, though productive in new ways, has no discernible gain for the majority of those it affects. It is time for the <u>return of politics</u>. 11 September 2001 made this plain - in spectacularly cruel fashion.

This return of politics is also a response to other bloody manifestations of extremism in the Mediterranean: the Balkan wars, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the rise of terrorism, and the creeping increase in security measures in response to the fear these situations have aroused. In a world where globalisation offers a future governed by the economy, the Mediterranean, in contrast, proposes the aspiration of nations to democratic expression and the defence of rights, i.e. the primacy of the "common good", managed by politics.

However, this resurgence of politics is not the answer to everything, if only because it ignores the essential element, the <u>reconstruction of frameworks and benchmarks, references and rules</u>. The national context in which politics is traditionally set no longer fits all the issues (see above, point 1.1.). Ideology offers a way out of this uncertainty, creating certainties by opposition. We can thus see caricatured visions of the world gaining ground in the Mediterranean, where established frameworks lie in ruins: they give <u>simplistic answers</u> to the complex matter of globalisation by caricaturing, and thus exploiting, the subtle elements of human experience, ending up **transforming the diversity of cultures into a clash of "civilisations"**.

But these so-called civilisations do not exist as perfect, finished entities, having cross-fertilised each other throughout history [see point 1.3(ii) above]. Consequently, even if one wanted to gather and then construct a bloc out of one group or another under the term "civilisation", this would be doubly absurd. The first mistake is to *construct "blocs", drawing artificial distinctions on the basis of particular aspects* and taking them for the whole story, and the second is to ignore the fact that today it is *always within the best constructed entities that differentiations most rapidly become apparent*, while apparently very disparate entities find themselves under the same roof, either in relation to third parties or in relation to developments which affect them all.

(ii) All of this emphasises the urgent need to go back to the root of things, taking into account the elements that make up these blocs, bringing them together, in order to see, and highlight, the fact that all individuals and groups today live in <u>one world which relishes their singularities</u> and which, far from levelling them, thrives on them. These differences, a source of conflict when they are compared individually, are in fact immeasurable assets in today's world when they are poured into the big common pot of a shared future. Cultural cooperation is one of the most appropriate ways of achieving this.

If cooperation is to work it must address:

- First of all, the **dominant ideologies** to be consigned to history, whether it be renewed tendency in the West to demonise an enemy identified with terrorism - and by false extension with Islam, through radical Islamists who advocate terrorism - or the depiction of Western modernity as an abomination to be stamped out, as certain religious leaders suggest to their followers. An exclusive identity-based nationalism, and its apparent opposite (though the two often go hand-in-hand), the stateless workings of mafia networks, are ever more frequent aberrations which are susceptible to degenerating into more traditional but no less deleterious ideologies. Also noteworthy here is the undeniable rise of two parallel phenomena: in the North a comforting pacifist egalitarianism of belief, blind to external suffering (from which it protects itself) and, in the South, an Islamism born of despair - both of which are symptoms of malaise rather than constructive responses.

- Secondly, **geopolitical realities**; in the Mediterranean the running sore of the war in the Holy Land is certainly foremost among them, but it would be naive not to include security, oil, migration and even ecological issues, not to mention trafficking of all kinds and organised crime.

- Finally, at a deeper level, the **fundamental changes** represented by

    - shifts in international law, where the promotion of democratic ideas both internationally and internally has clearly become the priority;

    - the laborious transformation of nation states, both jealous of their authority and impotent to solve the problems which exceed their ambit;

    - the change in role both of the sole superpower, America, and of international institutions and NGOs, the scope and methods of which are constantly working upon each other to reshape the international scene.

        Against this overall backdrop there are three major transitions, the demographic transition, the economic transition and the political transition, which appear in very different terms in the North and South of the Mediterranean. We know that transitions are high-risk periods and, even if their probable corollary is the potential for new relationships between the two sides (for example a genuine partnership between an ageing North, rich in capital, and a South that is rich in a young population in search of work), the timescale of these changes leaves us dangerously exposed for long periods. How do we construct the political communities needed to promote democratic pluralism in societies where, for example, the cement made up of the nation state, Islam and the Arabic language is bearing the brunt of competition between extremist religious groups and the resurgence of ethnic and tribal minorities? It is true that money taints democratic life in the North; but in the South, in societies ravaged by the devastating combination of poverty and illiteracy, it meshes with corruption to poison the very spirit of democracy before it has a chance to take root. Civil societies are organising and consolidating. They still need to take serious, innovative steps, along with all the interest groups and states concerned, to respond to the need for effective democratisation and promote a culture of participation.

All of this is crucial. It would be wishful thinking to claim that the dialogue between peoples and cultures will singlehandedly overcome all these dominant factors. But it is an essential element, with its own space, scope and meaning as in the emergence of an appropriate regional response to the challenges of globalisation.

(iii) The proliferation of cultural projects, programmes and initiatives in the traditional sense of the term culture clearly does not constitute a policy: indeed it is a sign of both the marginalisation of the cultural dimension and of the profound lack of understanding of the role of this intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, the way in which initiatives are scattered about, in an uncoordinated fashion, neither encourages nor sustains the dialogue. Rather, it exacerbates the disenchantment of the populations of the weakest countries and generates a certain fatigue among decision-makers, though the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), which has by far the widest reach, nevertheless occupies a prime position in the dialogue. The EMP was welcomed as much for what it ended - the colonial pact, in a way - as for what it was supposed to usher in - a zone of shared peace, security and prosperity. Unfortunately, when the **dialogue** was being devised, the need for another dimension was not fully grasped. The Barcelona process was a victim of its ambiguities, of the gap between the scale of its ambitions and the paucity of its resources and mechanisms, it was a hostage to integration in the North and its absence in the South – but at least it exists, even if it defers too much to the constraints and interests of the EU. Clearly, the disenchantment with the Partnership is as great as the hopes were high. The process is finding it hard to get its second wind, in spite of the determination to revitalise it declared in Valencia.

The third - and perhaps most sensitive – component of the EMP, the human and cultural partnership, is certainly the weakest. It seems to be focused, notwithstanding a number of achievements, on the problem of immigration. Will it boil down to readmission agreements, making the EU the much decried "Fortress Europe"? The spirit of Schengen, and the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of the Member States have relegated the partnership to a virtual reality by barring the territory to the other half of the partners, thus sapping it of credibility even further.

The challenges cannot be met unless everyone takes responsibility - not least, in the first instance, by making changes in lifestyles which are so destructive for limited resources and fragile ecosystems. A real, effective dialogue and cooperation between equal players are the only things in an interdependent, globalised world which can provide the appropriate responses to everyone's concerns.

1.5. <u>Dialogue - desirable yesterday, essential today</u>

Previously desirable, dialogue is now more than ever a necessity - not to align ourselves on the ideology of the clash of civilisations under the guise of combating it, but to thwart ignorance, of which the idea of the clash of civilisations is one of the most harmful forms. For the problem is rather the **clash of ignorances**, which is much more destructive.

But what place is there for a real dialogue between civilisations and peoples when culture and religion are exploited for the purpose of challenging the "established order", both internally and internationally? What place is there for culture in an era where the globalisation of risks and the privatisation of violence make security, both collective and individual, an absolute priority, while making it singularly complex to preserve it?

What place is there also for culture in an era where nations define themselves in terms of competitiveness and market share?

What place is there for cultural diversity in an era of homogenisation and political or even cultural correctness?

So many questions arise, particularly in the Mediterranean, a repository of memory and a cradle and crossroads of civilisations from the dawn of history which has now become the faultline of all fractures as violence - both real and symbolic - has become a structural feature within it.

But this violence may take more insidious or even perverse forms in the sense that its racist (particularly anti-semitic or islamophobic) element is manifested in daily life. Only a dialogue based on respect for cultural diversity and freedom of conscience, and on fostering the active neutrality of the public realm, will keep in check the forces of exclusion present in both the North and the South of the Mediterranean.

Therefore, before addressing the subject of this report, i.e. the deepest motivations and ultimate ambitions of the intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean, the strategic, political and economic context underlying it and within which it must develop should be analysed, both in global terms and at the Euro-Mediterranean level.

II. FORGING AN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

2.1. The dialogue between peoples and cultures: a key concern in Euro-Mediterranean relations

For the peoples of the North and South of the Mediterranean, the immediate concern is to tackle uncertainties and international change no longer separately but together, while respecting their differences. The long-term concern is to develop not just the perception but also the feeling of a shared destiny. The dialogue between peoples and cultures must therefore play a decisive role in creating a Euro-Mediterranean area which "holds together and makes sense". To this end the dialogue must go much further than the traditional mechanisms of international and regional cooperation and assistance. It must also be cemented by mutual awareness and understanding, not only among states and institutions but also, and most importantly, among the societies and people living within this common area.

Without such a role – which would involve a significant change of approach and behaviour, both in the North and the South and in North/South relations – there would be a serious risk that the major forces (new and old) at work in this area would combine in a negative rather than a positive way:

– "mutual perceptions and memories", revived and even exploited for the purpose of dominance or vengeance or retreat into identity and which exclude any common perspective;

– the weakening of identities as a result of the impact of globalisation and interpenetration of cultures and ways of life (especially in the poorest countries) by trade, travel, images, and so on;

– the burden of expanding migration (130 million people throughout the world) and established immigrant communities on host societies in both the North and South of the Mediterranean;

– the impact of unresolved conflicts and the failure to find an equitable solution to these conflicts for far too long (e.g. the Arab-Israeli conflict), which every day casts doubt

on whether there is genuine will among the international community and causes great bitterness and a profound sense of double standards;

– the impact on Europe of its ageing population and of its large-scale eastward enlargement, certainly in terms of potential for growth and strength, but also in terms of the greater difficulty in achieving a convergence of interests, values and political priorities, and of the capacity to be open towards the Other;

– cumulative differentials between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean: demographic differences, differences in the level of development and level of power; in the place of religion in relations between society and the political and administrative authorities; in the status of individuals and the interpretation of their inalienable rights; in the flexibility and malleability of national societies in creating the new relationships necessary between cultural identity and citizenship; in the capacity to regulate the national public authorities, and so on.

These forces, peculiar to the Euro-Mediterranean area, are constantly interacting with the upheavals in the world and in geopolitics and with all the conflicting elements these changes generate: new risks and new threats (terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction); financial instability; weakening of the international system and in particular the UN; homogenisation versus the desire for differentiation.

What has to be done then is to build a relationship, alongside the economic and commercial partnership which must continue and develop and, if possible, a political and security partnership which may come about in the future, that will work to establish a powerful and egalitarian process constructing, throughout the Euro-Mediterranean area, a **"collective civility which embraces difference and respects origin"** and fosters a *"will to live together"*.

The dialogue between peoples and cultures, to be redefined from what was set out in the Barcelona declaration (which was conceived and approved in quite another international context), must be the main vehicle for this new process.

The dialogue must therefore be given a place and a role which it has never had before within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership as it stands and, in the future, within the neighbourhood policy.

2.2. <u>Place and role of the dialogue between peoples and cultures in a living Euro-Mediterranean area</u>

What must be understood from the outset is that the dialogue between peoples and cultures can no longer be a secondary element of Euro-Mediterranean relations, tacked on to the rest (the "*poor relation"* of the Barcelona process), but must extend beyond the bounds of its specific areas of action to become a **cross-cutting** element, informing all aspects of Euro-Mediterranean relations with its "common civility", as outlined above.

This role must be built on solid ground; it cannot be taken for granted, as is shown very clearly by the organisation and operation of the Association Agreements between the Union and each of its Mediterranean partners.

These Agreements, administered by an inter-state Association Council and Committee and by discussions based on unanimous agreement between government representatives (with no automatic provision for setting up joint parliamentary committees) leave very little room for consultation and especially for consultation of interest groups (infra-state

bodies, socio-economic actors and so on) which, both in the North and in the South, should play a central role.

How is it possible, in these circumstances, to imagine that this relationship could cement the very mutual awareness and understanding that we seek?

Clearly, another approach and another method is required.

The subject, which has hitherto received little attention, is extremely important: it requires a strong, practical commitment right now, not only from governments and institutions but also from citizens and peoples.

There is something here akin to the process by which the enlarged Union recently started working towards a "Constitution", giving all due importance not only to the pursuit of efficiency but, most importantly, to relations of common citizenship, respect for the rights of individuals and the highest standards of democracy.

Europe and the Euro-Mediterranean area are both at a crossroads; each must find new paths and new approaches if they are to ensure that the major forces referred to in the introduction do not compound each other, with incalculable consequences.

This reshaping of relations would mean creating a true Euro-Mediterranean Parliament which would have real powers of initiative and oversight and would promote democratic practices throughout the Euro-Mediterranean area. Above all it would mean that, on the basis of a set of jointly agreed fundamental objectives and principles, we would create a full, balanced, joint institutional framework, which would allow the dialogue between peoples and cultures to inform the whole of Euro-Mediterranean relations and to give it **that special quality** which can humanise the impact of globalisation and the play of international relations within it.

2.3. <u>Common founding principles</u>

(i) In the dialogue between peoples and cultures, certain founding principles are needed; the important thing is to be able to state them clearly and with mutual agreement and at the same time setting them out in concrete terms, down to their operational details, and to see that they are complied with in practice. It is with this in mind that we have drawn up the following set of fundamental principles, in order of importance:

(1) Respect for the Other, without which there can be no interchange;

(2) Equality, at all levels: among states, among peoples, among cultures, among individuals, between men and women, etc.;

(3) Freedom of conscience, absolute and without restriction of any kind, which depends on the first two principles above;

(4) Solidarity, of every kind and in every field, where societies in the "South" have a pre-eminent role in "proposing";

(5) Knowledge, a founding principle of dialogue and of curiosity about the Other, which is of course a product of the other principles but is also a precondition for making those principles an enduring part of the everyday life of societies and individuals.

It is essential to be able to continually enrich these fundamental principles, by common agreement, in the light of ongoing developments.

The first principle is without doubt **total respect for the Other**, given that among peoples and among cultures there can be no relations more important in the Euro-Mediterranean area than awareness, exchange and **freedom of conscience** (third fundamental principle), a freedom which must be absolute and without restriction of any kind. After that, the goal of making democratic values and the rule of law universal becomes a credible possibility for all the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Arguments based on the defence of pseudo-special cases or on the idea that certain cultures are impervious to human rights or democracy then lose all credibility. Such arguments are counter to the approach advocated by Leopold Sedar Senghor, which can be summed up as *living the particular to the full to reach the dawn of the universal*. However, doing away with irresponsible relativism in a world shaken by the sudden radicalisation of conflicts is not the same as advocating uniformity, for democracy necessarily bears the imprint of the cultures in which it has developed.

The principle of mutual respect must lead to a change of vision if attitudes are to change. It means *"revisiting history together"*, if only to recognise the contributions made by all parties and also to acknowledge all the periods in history - whether long or short - when this principle has been flouted.

This joint effort can only be successful if pursued with **rigour** and **without any complacency in the reading of the past**. Thus identifying the basic needs in education and information, a basis to be inculcated and spread throughout all levels of the societies concerned beginning with children in schools and including the public at large through the media, would be a good starting point for promoting mutual respect in today's societies, images of the world and future plans.

This principle of effective, well-established and nurtured mutual respect leads on to the second fundamental principle, the principle of **equality**: equality in diversity and in the face of the various inequalities around us. Equality does not mean relativism. The principle of equality must be translated into concrete terms: it means equality in taking part in the dialogue, equitable access to opportunities for exchange, all things which cannot be imposed by decree but which are part of everyday life. The **equality** that cultural ties spontaneously express – and of which culture is the natural preserve – must rapidly become visible in all aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean neighbourhood relationship. **Shared institutions** such as the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation may rapidly, in the short and long term, respond to this aspiration turned requirement. For this to happen, the Foundation must express and adhere to certain principles of action in the way it works and in the choices of its fields of activity (see point 3.2. below)

It would indeed be a major innovation if the Euro-Mediterranean area were to become the focus of a continuing concerted effort by all towards the principle of equality (between countries, peoples, cultures, individuals, men and women), beyond differences (all to be respected) and inequalities too often endured.

If equality is to be made a founding principle of the dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area then women must be the actors and the primary beneficiaries. We must be constantly aware that culture will not thrive in this area unless women are called upon to play their part to the full: women as a vector of overall change, not simply as one category among others. The vision of neighbours living peacefully and the network of relations behind such a world can come about only if women are embraced as the driving force of a

coming transformation - for they are at the heart of education and interpersonal relations - and therefore a radical metamorphosis of civil society in both the North and the South of this area. Only women can provide the link between worlds which are sometimes too self-centred and which, without women, would continue to live in ignorance of one another and focus on points of tension or obstruction. Guardians of tradition, yet eminently open to change and emancipation, women have the unique ability to bring the dialogue to the here and now, from the details to the universal questions. But most importantly, as demonstrated in the United Nations development programme (UNDP) Arab Human Development Report, women are usually the most active protagonists in economic development, despite the discrimination they often continue to suffer.

Allied with the principle of mutual respect, the principle of equality would give rise to an abundance of proposals and ideas which would be judged only on their respective merits and not according to the power and strength (economic, financial, military or other) of their advocates.

It is such proposals, based on the common Euro-Mediterranean interest, that will forge the notion of a common future, and, by extension, a necessary **solidarity** (fourth fundamental principle), itself rooted in an "**ever deeper awareness**" of peoples and cultures (fifth fundamental principle).

(ii) These fundamental principles (which might possibly be enshrined in a charter) must provide active support and real sustenance to all those - from heads of state to local associations and groups of citizens, parliamentary assemblies, trade unions, non-governmental organisations - responsible for building the Euro-Mediterranean area. For this to happen, the fundamental principles underpinning the dialogue must themselves be broken down into five principles for action which will provide a <u>structure for change</u>:

– The principle of **equity**, contributing to equality: what we need to institute and to develop is a dialogue on different ways of interpreting – and giving concrete expression to – the shared values of civilisations, and not a dialogue (usually unequal) between civilisations.

– The principle of "**co-ownership**" and **shared responsibility**, linked to the foregoing: the feeling of imbalance felt by certain partners in the South must be redressed. This is particularly important in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and should begin with the establishment of joint institutions which would contribute to <u>making all partners responsible</u>.

– The principle of **transversality**: in the field of culture (in the anthropological sense of the term), any question tackled in a given context/axis (North, South, North-South/South-North) has repercussions in the others, and the same goes for any initiative.

– The principle of **cross-fertilisation**: the cultural dialogue must not be isolated from the other dimensions (political, economic, security) of relations between peoples and countries, but draw on them and feed back into them. The dialogue between peoples and cultures has added value only if it helps bring these other dimensions together into a <u>universally acceptable, coherent whole</u>.

– The principle of **cooperation** (contributing to solidarity) to translate the dialogue in as concrete a way as possible, close to <u>real</u> needs and concerns.

2.4. The need for a joint institutional structure

(i) If we are to instil a sense of individual or shared responsibility among all decision-makers and actors, it is imperative that the fundamental principles be protected and relayed not only by translating them into these operational principles, which serve as a guide to action, but also by establishing a **joint institutional system** where powers and counter-powers would counterbalance each other effectively. Until such a system is established, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation will be the only joint institutional forum - and link - in which to turn the desirable into the feasible.

The Euro-Mediterranean Council and the Association Councils and Committees are not adequate to protect, relay, or ensure the correct balance of powers and responsibilities. Indeed it is surely not by total accident that the European Union itself saw fit to set up a European Parliament (at first a product of the national assemblies and then elected by direct universal suffrage), a European Commission (guardian of the Treaties and the sole institution with the right to present proposals in the general interest), a Court of Justice to hear and determine cases, a Committee of the Regions and an Economic and Social Committee.

While simple replication is not be the solution, there are clearly some useful ideas here, as there are in the "**pathway**" by which the institutional apparatus of the European Union has **gradually** emerged.

(ii) Since the dialogue between peoples and cultures is taking on crucial importance in the Euro-Mediterranean area - an importance unsuspected at the time of the Barcelona Declaration in November 1995, why not begin with this joint institutional structure?

The "*poor relation*" of the Barcelona process would thus become, as a sign of the times, the bridgehead of future Euro-Mediterranean relations.

There would be a Euro-Med Council for culture and education (it is paradoxical that, since the launch of Barcelona, only two sectoral ministerial conferences have been devoted to culture, while the ministers of education and research have never met).

There would be a Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly, with a powerful Committee on the dialogue between peoples and cultures.

There would be a Foundation which, together with the Parliamentary Assembly, could draw the partners' attention to violations of the fundamental principles and, with the Council, draw up a programme of priorities, and would have the task of independently assessing cultural programmes and the cultural impact of other measures (such as privatisation, opening up of trade, visa and immigration policy, and prevention of discrimination). When performing its drafting role, the Foundation should take into account as much as possible the experiences and initiatives of local authorities, thus underlining the part they play, and will increasingly play in the intercultural dialogue in everyday life.

The actors in civil society, organised along geographical or thematic lines, would have full access to each of these three joint institutions which, either separately or jointly, would have a much better perception of the difficulties and concerns of a true dialogue between peoples and cultures and the most effective ways to overcome them.

2.5. Diversity of the target audience for our recommendations and feasibility criteria that must be met

We must bear in mind that the actors in the dialogue and the target audience for our recommendations are all very different. It has also become apparent to us that the effectiveness of the dialogue requires us also to consider the range of feasibility criteria (political, institutional, economic, societal, etc.) to be met in order for these recommendations to be effectively followed up.

Our ideas and recommendations for action, which range from the very structural to the very individual, are addressed to a wide **target audience** who, for the most part, are also **actors** in the dialogue:

– Those who will design and construct the European Union's neighbourhood policy, in order to establish a "*ring of friends*" with it and around it, and also to ensure that – seen from the South – is seen as a "*friend*" by as many people as possible.

– Those who, in both the southern and the northern states, are responsible for and committed to the policies and actions capable of contributing to this much-needed dialogue as well as the progress called for by it, to combat all forms of discrimination, disinformation, ignorance, violations of human dignity, and unequal relations between states, between populations, between men and women, and between individuals.

– Those who, within both the northern and southern societies, could take our recommendations and call on politicians to put them into practice in line with the principles and concepts for action that we have identified.

In order for this brief "specification" of the actors not to remain merely a vague suggestion but be translated into fact, in order for the dialogue to bear fruit, a number of **feasibility criteria** must either be spontaneously present, or have already been put in place.

The first criterion is that political decision-makers on both sides of the Mediterranean should become aware of and respect the fact that the field of culture is first and foremost a matter of <u>equality, de facto and in principle,</u> between all the parties concerned. For this to be the case, the decision-makers must endorse the "new institutional triangle" which we have identified (see point 2.4. above), within which the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation is called on to play a decisive role as "guardian of the dialogue's principles" for action (see point 3.2. below). No cultural form may lay claim to any kind of superiority. All, different though they may be, have in common the characteristic of each being a manifestation of human specificity and, hence, they are all equal.

The second criterion, which derives directly from the first, is that the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours must be aware that, within them, as also between the two entities that they form, <u>the cultural dimension of our unfolding history</u> will now be crucial. It responds to Europe's determination to "*enrich its identity, drawing on all the neighbourly relations of which it is made up*" and which it establishes around it. It responds to the desire of the peoples of the Mediterranean to see their contribution to global civilisation acknowledged. It also responds to the need to create links between Europe and the other Mediterranean countries on the basis of understanding.

The third criterion is that, on the North-South axis which makes up the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as well as in the North and South of the Mediterranean, the determination to <u>enhance the human and cultural dimension</u> should be clearly expressed and rapidly be translated into reality.

– In the North, where the original cultural background is being called on to change and adapt itself to an ever more multicultural, multi-ethnic and multinational situation, the message must be twofold: to learn to *value* this new wealth of resources, to strive for an *intercultural* dialogue and society, in other words one that is accepted and constructed together. The way in which the cultural dimension would be valued would involve mainly **education** (starting with school and childhood and also within the context of the family), as well as **life at work and in the community** (which also requires action by the **media**).

– In the South, provided that solid, open partners emerge, it will be possible for the proliferation of advances in the North and in North-South/South-North relations to produce the desired effects. The message is thus clear: for this to happen, there are initiatives which can be taken only by the states and civil societies of *the South*. The involvement of civil societies in the launch and development of these initiatives is one of the "**minimum conditions**" for **effectiveness**. The response to this need must at least include the identification of some of these conditions which would make it possible to construct and encourage the development of civil society organisations (trade unions, associations, etc.), and to generate and attract reciprocal investment (legal framework, rule of law). All this shows that both the South and the North must attach the same importance, with similar orders of priority, to education, to the media and to life at work and in the community.

– On the North-South/South-North axis, where the way in which the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership works does not generate a quality of relationship to match the intensity of cultural and interpersonal ties, the message must be to rethink the Partnership in the light of the *cultural dimension* – and the associated principles. This does not mean that culture can be either a substitute for initiatives that should be taken in other fields, or a panacea. Following the principle of cross-fertilisation, culture can give meaning and coherence because it puts the human dimension back at the heart of Euro-Mediterranean neighbourly relations.

The response to the risk of growing incomprehension as to the nature of an authentic and, in the context of "neighbourhood", ultimately balanced partnership should come, in particular, from **shared institutions**: the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and the Euro-Mediterranean Bank to start with, quickly followed by the "institutional triangle" the structure of which we outline above (point 2.4). Such institutions would seem to be in a better position to translate **cultural equality** into reality and to launch a pro-active move in this direction on the political and cultural fronts.

III. IMMEDIATE NEED TO ENGAGE IN RENEWED DIALOGUE

If a renewed intercultural dialogue is to have the desired effect on the relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean region and constitute a real laboratory producing results which all regions of the world can usefully draw on, it must in every way (from the initial conditions of its foundation to the practicalities of its day-to-day operation) constitute a model capable of performing convincingly and delivering results that, if not measurable in the short term, are at least apparent in the long run.

The lasting nature of the contribution is crucial. The recommendations we want to present to the political decision-makers and representatives of civil society form a coherent whole over a period of time. There is an urgency in all the sectors of activity concerned. Some of the actions, some of the operating methods and the ways certain instruments are applied in practice may demand patience and perseverance over the long

term, but there is no room for delay in deciding to implement any of our specific recommendations. This is crucial to the coherence of the whole, its overall effectiveness and the credibility of all the effort invested by the various partners in the dialogue.

The success of such a dialogue depends on three equally inseparable elements. In the preparatory stage we must establish the conditions for dialogue, foremost among which is the ability of the actors to talk to one another. The most appropriate tool for this preparatory stage is education. Then, at the heart of the process, there is the day-to-day operation of the dialogue, the way it is translated in practice into a genuine exchange by means of interpersonal and interorganisational communication (virtual or physical) and programmes of exchanges between people and their projects. Finally, further downstream, we must consolidate the process, support it, publicise it among all levels of civil society. The media has a crucial role here, as do all those who in one capacity or another have an impact on the gradual process whereby opinions are formed.

These three elements, each with its distinct time and place, are a necessary but not sufficient basis. They must be supported by an appropriate decision-making framework. We spoke earlier of the need for a joint institutional structure on both sides of the Mediterranean. We need a framework that will give administrative and legal shape to the practical measures. Where the implementation of these measures is not the responsibility of the public authority, the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Foundation will obviously have to act as the driving force. The public authorities will simply have to set it clear objectives and give it the necessary powers and resources. The Foundation's performance and results will, for example, be measured in terms of attention to equality between the sexes at every level all its activities: the creation of a Gender Watch within the Foundation might be useful here. In order to ensure that this is fully in keeping with the wider watchdog role of the Foundation, a **monitoring unit** should be set up to catalogue best practices in social matters and intercultural dialogue and to check whether they could realistically be applied on a larger scale.

Where, however, the implementation of these measures, and above all the decision to act, is a matter for the public authorities, they must take on board our recommendations, carve them in stone and apply them in practice, whatever the decision-making level involved (local, national, EU or regional - in the sense of the EU-Mediterranean region). This is an essential precondition for the success of the renewed dialogue as a whole; it is also the guarantee that the dialogue can count on a strong political will. A dialogue of this kind is not without risks, and all its implications need to be carefully weighed up.

3.1. Recommended actions and decisions

3.1.1. *Make education a vehicle for learning about diversity and transmitting knowledge of the Other*

Education is at the heart of our recommendations, the crux of the whole system, without which there is no point to the dialogue because there will be no participants, no partners capable of receiving or transmitting the knowledge. Failure to recognise education as the most important instrument of the dialogue is tantamount to accepting the idea that the dialogue should be restricted to a closed elite, a sort of endless succession of advisory groups producing no answering echo and leading nowhere. Education is the way to ensure that the dialogue suffuses civil society, permeates the social fabric, becomes a genuine dialogue of peoples, of peoples inspired by the knowledge of themselves and others and driven by the desire to further this knowledge. This is the precondition for co-ownership, one of the five principles of action on which our proposals are based.

Any action in this field begins with **school**, for the early years are crucial for determining all future behaviour. School is where the child learns respect, first self-respect then respect for others. At school children find themselves the object of attention in ways they may not understand but which influence the way they look at others. With the encouragement of skilled and properly trained teachers, children will develop tastes, have their curiosity aroused, experience the urge to transcend the frontiers of knowledge. Little by little, throughout their school career, they acquire the bases of the knowledge which will enable them as adults to develop a critical mind and freely to make the choices dictated by their conscience, while at the same time respecting the views of others.

However, if school is to play this role a number of **preconditions** must be accepted and fulfilled at all levels of the educational system:

– the very goals of the education system need to be redefined: the "product-oriented" rationale of education should be supplemented by a "civic" rationale which seeks not only to prepare young people for employment but also to open up access to culture and to teach the basics of citizenship;

– as a corollary to the foregoing, school syllabuses should give a central place to subjects that help to shape cultural identity and civic consciousness, like history, the comparative study of religion, literature, the visual arts and languages;

– there is a need for balance in learning: in order to engage in dialogue based on respect for others mutual knowledge must be nurtured by the <u>comparative</u> study of those subjects that contribute to the expression of freedom of conscience and the construction of imaginary worlds and cultures in all their geographical diversity; this is essential for the teaching of religion, but also important for history, literature and of course languages.

These three conditions imply not so much a reassessment of the content of the teaching as a **reworking of the syllabuses**; not a complete overhaul but a new balance in the exploration of cultural diversity that will create the capacity for dialogue. They will also entail a change in the assessment criteria used by education systems, and particularly the performance indicators used or set by Ministries of Education and by the competent international organisations (UNESCO, UNDP, OECD, etc).

It is important to realise that this sort of approach is not easy to implement because it demands a firm political will at the decision-making level, an enduring commitment by the teachers and constant vigilance on the part of all involved in its application. We urge all of the states in the region, which have exclusive responsibility for every decision in this field, to commit themselves without delay to this endeavour and to display the necessary vigilance.

Mutual respect and the possibility of comparative analysis of religions depend on the recognition of religious diversity. While religious identity is to be respected in itself, it must remain open, and we must therefore forcefully resist any tendency to introversion. A proper understanding of another person's religion implies striving for mutual knowledge. Empathy is the basis for gaining a positive understanding of the other person's representational system. Openness to another religion does not mean losing one's own identity and may often entail a closer examination of oneself. Any religious community interested in dialogue must carefully consider whether it is actually capable of undertaking such a step. In addition to the effort that the religious communities have to make, it seems obvious to us that achieving this objective is conditional upon the

implementation of an educational vision. Education as we understand it here makes it possible to view with equanimity the completion of the process of secularisation, first of structures, then of society itself, as just one of several possible reflections of a modern way of life. School should give children a clearer understanding of the psychosocial, cultural and sometimes political functions of religion. This sort of approach would undoubtedly help to sharpen and challenge their critical faculties and combat the wilder excesses of particularism.

This has fundamental consequences for the educational system, particularly as regards the teaching of <u>religious education</u>. Who should teach religion? Who can make a valid comparison between the different doctrinal elements of religions? We must beware of confusion here. A clear distinction needs to be drawn between religious education in the sense understood by adherents of a faith, which consists of transmitting the values, teachings and liturgy of their religion with a view to the proper practice of that religion (e.g. the Catholic catechism), and the teaching of <u>comparative</u> religion which aims only to instil knowledge about religion and the history of religion. Only the latter forms one of the bases of learning for the intercultural dialogue through education. Religious education of the first kind is perfectly legitimate, but is not relevant to the objective under discussion. Comparative religion should therefore be taught by professional teachers capable of providing a comparative analysis of religions, regardless of their own religious choice, *with the objectivity of an expert, not the passion of a devotee*. This is an essential choice that will determine the success of the dialogue through education.

The difficulty of the exercise lies in integrating religion, which is such a sensitive issue in the Euro-Mediterranean area, into the field of education, taking into account its irreducibility and its mission to provide absolute truth, but without altering the educational philosophy of mutual knowledge based on curiosity, self-respect and openness to the Other.

The key issue is therefore **teacher training**. We are proposing an ambitious programme in this area to enable a network of university institutions on both sides of the Mediterranean to offer training sessions for primary and secondary school teachers in the comparative analysis of subjects (including religion) that contribute to the formation of cultural identity. Other sessions would familiarise teachers with the theory and practice of mutual knowledge and the techniques of interpersonal dialogue. Such sessions would have to be organised in each of the universities that are members of the network, on the basis of the principle of reciprocity and mobility of teachers from the North to the South and vice versa. In view of the extent of the needs, such a programme would require very substantial financial and administrative resources (e.g. system of grants), which means a very strong commitment by all Mediterranean states and the European institutions. Such resources will be essential to ensure the sort of long-term follow-up required to give purpose and effectiveness to these actions. In view of the inequalities of resources between the North and South shores of the Mediterranean we call on the European Commission to examine the possibility of setting up a specific cooperation instrument to reinforce (financially) and enrich (conceptually) the existing programmes (MED TEMPUS) with the support of the future Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Foundation.

Language learning is also a key issue. In addition to the mechanical ability to communicate, which is of practical importance but no more, the knowledge of another person's language gives verbal exchanges and dialogue an intensity, a richness of flavour and a feeling of complicity that no interpreter, however gifted, can ever truly convey. We call on all the states of the region, which are primarily responsible for this, to take steps on the one hand to give greater space in the school curriculum for learning the languages

of their neighbours and, on the other, to increase the capacity of the teaching profession to meet these additional demands. We call on the European Commission to look into ways of providing support to states in the South for this purpose. We would also like to see a special effort by states on the North side of the Mediterranean to promote the learning of the languages of the southern shores of the Mediterranean, particularly Arabic, among their own school children. This sort of encouragement and commitment to giving the younger generations of Europeans a taste for these languages and a desire to learn them will be a decisive step in the direction of renewed dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean and a crucial element of the internal dialogue within Europe between the local populations and the new Europeans who are descended from migrants.

But the initiation of young people into the cultural dialogue is not just about education and modernising the conditions under which it is provided in the school. It is above all a matter for the <u>family</u>, which means we must involve families in the life of the school so that the transmission of knowledge complements learning within the family rather than competing with it. It is also a matter of **movement** and **communication**. Young people must get out and about, discover the diversity of cultures by travelling, taking part in exchanges, experiencing the pleasure of crossing seas and frontiers. The schools engaged in learning about dialogue must practise it by talking to one another across the Mediterranean. Mobility and exchanges should not be the preserve of a university elite. If cultural dialogue is to permeate the social fabric, the school, which is at the very heart of this fabric - indeed the loom itself - must be open to discovering its counterparts overseas, for example through <u>twinning,</u> and must encourage its pupils to go off to meet their fellow students on the other side of the Mediterranean. Here, too, funding will be needed. We would like to see a huge mobility programme for schools in the Euro-Mediterranean region (with special emphasis on 10-12 year-olds), similar to the student mobility programmes in Europe and the Euromed Youth programme. This would be accompanied by the necessary reinforcement of existing programmes for student mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region (mobility for students in the middle of their studies, not just those at the top level at the end of their studies, principle of effective reciprocity and guaranteed return to the country of origin). This programme should provide for short-term exchanges, the allocation of funding for the costs of travel and accommodation in host families and proper supervision of the children by accompanying teachers. These exchanges, which may or may not be connected with twinning arrangements between the schools, should be genuine exchanges and should lead to flows of pupils both from the South to the North and the North to the South and between countries in the South. In order to derive the maximum benefit from these exchanges in terms of mutual knowledge they should always be accompanied by a progressive effort to align course content and exchange teaching modules for all the subjects that combine to shape identity (culture, history, literature, religion) with a view ultimately to producing syllabuses of shared knowledge.

This drive to align the educational content of the different national school systems should be the prelude to a far-reaching project in the longer term which would lay down the foundations of **common knowledge** (as opposed to <u>simply shared knowledge</u>) in the humanities and social sciences. This will mean redefining the foundations of the these disciplines and re-examining in depth the history of the Mediterranean region, looking at the anthropological, legal, cultural, religious, economic and social dimensions in such a way as to identify and weed out all the tendentious interpretations, misleading ambiguities of language or vocabulary, all the false truths, all the distorted images of the Other, all the marks of mutual defiance and the ways these are exploited politically and ideologically. The point is not to gloss over them, for lies are also part of history, but to present them as they are. This enormous long-term undertaking will draw on existing

studies on this theme and on the classic reference works that must be distributed and translated more widely and with the support of the states in the region, which will be the project managers, and the publishers involved in this type of publication. School books dealing with the history of the Mediterranean region will have to be re-examined to identify all the negative stereotypes and treat them as such. A task like this cannot be undertaken by each state in isolation by a handful of scholars well-known in their own country. The states have the political responsibility to launch such a project but will have to work closely together and devise common tools if they are successfully to complete this difficult exercise. We suggest institutional support for this on two levels:

– firstly, for the semantic analysis of the texts, the identification of ambiguities of language or vocabulary, a Euro-Mediterranean Academy should be set up, composed of writers and eminent figures in the field who are representative of the entire region. This would operate with the support of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Foundation;

– secondly, for the many different dimensions of the actual historical research a specialised university network should be created on both sides of the Mediterranean. The work of this network would be the subject of periodic meetings in one or other of the universities, which would be carefully timetabled over however many years it takes to complete the task. Here, too, the Foundation should be able to take charge of the network, drawing on the ideas developed during the preparation of the former Euromed Human Science Programme.

Taking this proposal one step further, and in order to ensure its long-term viability by collecting, distributing and exploring more deeply the common knowledge that this work will yield, we also suggest the creation of permanent **Euro-Mediterranean Study Centres** and the establishment of a network of university professors all over the Mediterranean region, to be known as the "**Braudel-Ibn Khaldoun network**", after Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), the European historian and author of *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* who developed the concept of the world economy from a multidisciplinary and anthropological approach, and Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406), the most famous Arab historian, author of the Kitab al-Ibar, a history of the pre-Islamic period and the Muslim empires. This Braudel-Ibn Khaldoun network, working with the Foundation, could be modelled on the Jean Monnet network and develop links with it, becoming the natural extension of this network in the Mediterranean region, in the spirit of and in support of the EU's neighbourhood policy. Here, too, we want the European Commission to consider making available the operational resources required for this network, to supplement the provision that already exists for the Jean Monnet network. This would of course be the ideal framework in which to introduce a Masters in Mediterranean cultural studies in the universities of the Mediterranean region.

3.1.2. *Promote mobility, exchanges and the exploitation of expertise, skills and best practice*

The operational framework set out above for education is crucial, but would not, in itself, be sufficient to foster a dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area. What happens outside school or university can be just as important in awakening a capacity for dialogue, a taste for reaching out to other peoples and cultures, for meetings and exchanges. Outside the school the influence of the family, the local environment and community can be decisive and may even sometimes counteract the efforts at school to achieve mutual knowledge, or prevent them being put into practice. Education does not end at the school gates. A special effort needs to be directed at families, at parents in

particular, at adults in general and also at what we loosely term the informal education sector. Children and young people are rightly seen as the main target of our efforts, but adults must also be educated, trained, informed and made more aware, both in their capacity as educators and in order to develop their own potential. Like school-based education, lifelong learning should not (indeed cannot) be exclusively focused on integration into working life. Access to culture and citizenship has become one of the major objectives of lifelong learning, as it is for children and young people.

Hence the crucial importance, in our view, of organising **civic meeting places** outside the education system which are completely different from those places where "contacts" (if they can be called this) take place between immigrants and customs officers, immigrants and police officers, etc. These would be places for dialogue, for exchanges and encounters between adults, between young people and between the generations. The cultural dialogue, after all, is also a dialogue between generations and at the same time it can and must be a dialogue between social milieus - social milieus that are often ghettoised, prisoners of their anxieties, their prejudices, their hatred of those who have more or want more, their hatred of arrogance, their fear of poverty and their perceptions of each other. Achieving a social mix should be the prime aim of these civic meeting places, which should be organised and grouped into networks by associations representing civil society, with the support of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Cultural Dialogue and the help of local and national governments on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Networking between these meeting places has the twofold advantage of preventing the fragmentation and lack of coherent structure of such initiatives, which is a genuine danger and bound to lead to failure in the long term, and ensuring a powerful multiplier effect of the exchanges and encounters. That way no group or mentality is ever locked in a stand-off with its interlocutor, which can so easily lead to conflict. There is always another "Other", an intervention by a third party, a constant shift of the dialogue to other horizons, other outlets, other audiences, other responses.

However, we must be wary of the temptation for the networks to limit themselves to virtual communication using modern electronic means, which can be counter-productive. The meeting places must be physical locations, places where people can experience all aspects of dialogue, where exchange is not just an abstract concept but is enriched through contact, places where people can talk to one another, observe each other, touch one another, listen to the tone of voice, the music of words, observe the colour of a face, the emotion of a look or gesture, smell the smells, scents, perfumes. These are all forms of language which tell you everything about yourself and the Other, opportunities to learn about cultural dialogue through the dialogue of the senses. We should also think of one or more conventions a year bringing together all those who organise, occupy or frequent these places on either side of the Mediterranean.

Exchange means more than just settling oneself down somewhere and talking within small, restricted circles. Exchange also means moving, crossing the street and then the sea, taking the road that leads to other peoples and cultures. Mobility is not just for students, school children, teachers and researchers, but also for all those men and women who are part of what we refer to as civil society, whose cultural differences, skills and expertise have to be put into the mix. And what better way to start than by trading generosity and collective effort? There are thousands of local associations on both sides of the Mediterranean. Each has it own character, its cultural identity, its expertise. The often exemplary work of these associations, particularly in the field of humanitarian aid and social solidarity, can make a huge contribution to dialogue and understanding. But

these associations are isolated, lack resources and even public support, although they sometimes perform tasks that should be the responsibility of the public sector.

The Foundation must work to facilitate the creation of this type of association, for example by showing the organisers how to gain access to public funding and promoting their long-term survival. Their role is essential to cultural dialogue and will enable this dialogue to be taken over by grassroots civil society. The Foundation should also try to break down the isolation of these associations by encouraging them to work together and network.

One of the results of encouraging the pooling of these different efforts will be significantly to develop the spread of best practice in the area of social integration and the discovery by the societies on the North side of the Mediterranean of the wealth of expertise in the cultures of the South, particularly in matters of public health and forms of cultural expression. This is an essential aspect and a crucial contribution by the societies of the South to the process of exchange and dialogue between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

This contribution should be supplemented by another essential contribution from members of the European population who originally come from the southern Mediterranean and have acquired skills and expertise in their country of adoption that could be useful to the people in the South. Among these "new Europeans" there is an untapped wealth of professional innovation of all kinds - technical, scientific, commercial - and new businesses and cultural and artistic initiatives. Technical assistance projects aimed at groups in the South and drawing on this wealth of knowledge could be run by organisers in the North, who will then have to play a bridging role between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

On a general level, all of the initiatives aimed at building bridges to reconcile different points of view should be encouraged once they have been grouped together and given a framework of support. The same would be true of another initiative we would like to see come about, whereby young people on both sides of the Mediterranean would be encouraged to make a common commitment to community service in the Euro-Mediterranean region, based on voluntary work and focusing on social, cultural and humanitarian projects. This initiative is inspired by the proposal by the Convention on the new European Constitution to create a European voluntary humanitarian aid corps. It would be an ideal adjunct to the various forms of networking that we are proposing in order to translate the dialogue between peoples and cultures into lasting achievements, particularly by exchange and mobility among the younger generations.

Finally, we must not forget that cultural dialogue also includes dialogue between the arts and artists, creators and authors, via their academies and studios and the platforms where they express themselves. The Foundation will have to create an active network of artists and writers and organise meetings and events that can stimulate the dialogue between inherited memories and contemporary imagination and make heritage the beating heart of our culture rather than a mummified relic.

3.1.3. *Make the media a vital instrument of equality and mutual knowledge*

The role of the media in intercultural dialogue is obviously crucial. The media supplies the public with information, so the content of this information, its accuracy and the relative weight given to different aspects of the news shape public opinion and will, to a large extent, determine the success or failure of a venture as ambitious as the cultural

dialogue. Specific action in this area is therefore needed to support the guidelines set out above and will, in a sense, be an accompaniment to them further downstream, the culmination of the collective effort to encourage the emergence of new potential within civil society for engaging in enlightened dialogue. In fact the crux of the issue is not so much the workings of the media itself and the way it relates to market economics, as the impact the content of the information it articulates has on public opinion and hence on its ability to engage in dialogue. We must be wary of a pitfall here: when we talk about the content of information there may be a temptation to consider its impact only in terms of a rather simplistic criterion: what does the information say? Is it true or false? The answer would indeed be easy if we could agree on common criteria for what constitutes the truth. Which of course we can't. We all have our own idea of what is true and what is false, and even when we are talking about the bare facts, which are seemingly uncompromising and irrefutable in the case of a reality witnessed or experienced at first hand, the way in which they are presented may transform them from self-evident truth to downright lie. Given this danger, the role of the media is not only crucial but also extremely difficult. Being a journalist today is to attempt the impossible, a daily challenge in which success depends not so much on the raw data as the quantity and relevance of the information given to the public to enable people to reach a balanced opinion. There comes a point where the accumulation of information may be counter-productive and information overload sets in; at this point people's capacity for critical judgment is exhausted and they "switch off". But where does information overload begin and lack of information end? The question is particularly apposite in a world where media communication is subject to the enormous pressure of the market and the criteria of instant profitability. In the face of such pressure there is a serious risk that the media will forget its important role, complementing that of education, which is to stimulate critical thought and critical examination. We must stress this fundamental notion of critical examination. Reading an image is something that has to be learned, just like reading a book. The language of images, which is so powerful nowadays, should be taught at all levels and to all age groups.

Obviously, the media cannot single-handedly make up for the inadequacies of the education system in this respect, but it can aggravate them or correct them. Much depends on how aware communication professionals are of the responsibility they have for shaping the public's ideas and its critical faculties. Hence the need to help raise awareness among professionals of their responsibility in this area. In fact, this is not just a matter for the media in the narrow sense of the press and broadcasters. It applies to all those who, in one capacity or another, are involved in shaping the public's critical faculties, such as those working in publishing and the cinema.

As a first point, therefore, we call on the public authorities in our countries to encourage schools of journalism, film academies and colleges providing training in publishing to develop courses on cultural diversity, the preparation of the public for cultural dialogue and the power of critical thought and critical examination. This work could supplement the projects for journalists from the South as part of the European initiative for democratisation and human rights.

We would also like the public authorities to set up special support programmes (for both production and distribution) to develop (or preserve) sectors within the publishing world that specialise in popularising science, in university research and literary studies, in access to non-European cultures and in the translation of reference works in this field. The same should apply in the world of film and television to the sector specialising in documentaries, which should be encouraged to produce and distribute films on life in the

Mediterranean, crafts, traditional skills, the arts and music, the role of women, etc. This could supplement existing action under the Euromed audiovisual programme.

We also suggest that television stations be encouraged, via the terms of their franchises, to fulfil their responsibilities in shaping the critical faculties of the general public, by practical steps such as setting up tele-clubs, involving young people in programme design, drawing on the work and achievements in the area of popularising science, and particularly the social sciences, on mainstream channels.

Finally, in the specific area of cooperation, we want the Commission to provide support via the Euromed audiovisual programme for promoting local channels and distribution relays in the countries of the South and to encourage the creation of "neighbourhood channels" that can help to reinforce the bridging role played by Europe's immigrant population with their native countries in the South, while at the same time guarding against unhealthy particularism. In the same vein, we call on the Commission to consider ways of supporting the installation of one or more multilingual unencrypted television channels on satellites such as ARAB SAT.

All of this should be accompanied by some sort of instrument for monitoring the results of action in the media field, in the form of a monitoring centre attached to the Foundation.

3.2. Make the Foundation the guardian of the dialogue

(i) The dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area constantly needs to have fresh life blown into it. It needs someone to keep watch, a guardian if you like, to provide this fresh inspiration, to help it maintain its course in a storm and hold the thread that links the many different and unconnected participants in the dialogue.

This role will be played by the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Cultural Dialogue, to be created at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in Naples on 2 and 3 December 2003.

This Foundation should play a central role in the entire process of creating the cultural dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean area as we conceive it. But its role, its ability to combine the elements of the dialogue, to inspire and bring together different forces, will depend on the tasks, resources and powers devolved to it by the political decision-makers.

The Foundation must be able to perform three essential functions without restriction. Firstly, it should be the guardian of the values and guiding principles of the dialogue, which will together form its **operating "software"**: this means that the principles must be applied in practice, using, for example, the appropriate relays within a new institutional triangle (see point 2.4 above) and that the Foundation must be able to exercise its capacity for interaction by directly applying the principle of cross-fertilisation. Secondly, its **specification** must ensure that it can promote, launch and coordinate all the actions and initiatives that correspond to these principles and also assess the extent to which any ongoing initiative is compatible with these principles. If the Foundation is to fulfil its evaluation role fully and effectively it must waste no time in developing the appropriate methods and criteria and acquiring the necessary resources to apply them.

Although the political decision on the status, structure and location of the Foundation obviously rests with the Foreign Ministers who will meet in Naples, it is our job to state clearly what **conditions** we think are required for it usefully to perform the function being asked of it.

This Foundation will not be a funding organisation, but will manage activities and networks of participants from civil society, either directly or via national networks that it will coordinate. It will provide the intellectual support, by organising cultural meetings and events and by bringing together existing skills and expertise. It will produce an inventory of needs and evaluate results, identifying and grouping together the resources available in civil society, collecting and disseminating information and promoting virtual communication. It will make recommendations to governments on supporting particular projects that it has analysed and considers to be relevant.

Important though they may be, are these tasks sufficient to make the Foundation the guardian of the cultural dialogue, the generator of dynamism, the catalyst that we are looking for?

It is hard to give a firm answer to this question at this early stage.

(ii) The scale of the challenge is such that unless a number of conditions are met the Foundation's ability to respond to the demands and live up to people's expectations must be in serious doubt.

The first condition is <u>independence</u>, the guarantee of its credibility and legitimacy.

Apart from the formal independence from governments, international institutions and economic powers which is required and must be carved in stone, i.e. guaranteed by an appropriate international legal instrument, the Foundation must enjoy both financial and administrative independence and intellectual independence.

Financial and administrative independence means that the supervising authorities must not be able to interfere in the choices the Foundation makes about how it spends the money it is given and who its partners are to be. It will have to submit its accounts and produce results, in so far as these are quantifiable, but must never have decisions on the allocation of its budget imposed upon it. The same should apply to the national networks it coordinates.

Intellectual independence is also crucial. Political opportunism and sectoral interests must not be allowed to deflect the Foundation from its mission. It must have complete freedom of thought and freedom to propose and discuss, to choose its methodology, field of activity and intellectual partners, otherwise it will not be listened to or heeded or even taken seriously.

The second condition is that it be endowed with <u>sufficient financial and administrative resources</u> to cover its requirements. Clearly, the Foundation must have considerable resources, commensurate with the challenges it faces. Its activities are going to be expensive. It will need skilled staff who can act as catalysts for the activities carried out by the network and can call on a top-level academic committee that can give it irrefutable intellectual legitimacy in its relations with its partners. It will need competent administrators and experts on international, cultural and religious questions. It will also need an operating budget that is commensurate with its remit. Organising meetings, permeating the social fabric of 27 countries, running networks, archives and virtual

libraries, maintaining permanent contacts with universities, research centres, NGOs and local associations, supervising, planning and monitoring, day after day, the progress being made in learning about the dialogue among young people, teacher training, changes in the media, school-twinning arrangements, all of this is costly in time, manpower and money. The disappointment that would be felt if it were to fail for lack of resources would be all the greater because of the high expectations being cherished.

This is why the Foundation must, in time, be allowed to call on private sponsorship. We see this as a way of enabling it to obtain means commensurate with the ambitious role it should be assigned. It must, therefore, be allowed to draw on a substantial level of private funding, although it will be for the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference to decide the exact proportions. The diversity of its sources of funding will be both a guarantee of autonomy and an indication of the extent to which the Foundation has embedded itself. It is after all the calibre, originality and effectiveness of its initiatives that will determine whether it succeeds in winning support from private backers.

The third and final condition is visibility. The Foundation must be identifiable with a place that is clearly visible and understandable, wherever it may be. Failure to meet this condition, denying the public the chance to perceive the aims and results of the dialogue without any intermediary, through the clarity of the message alone, denying people any means of identifying the Foundation as a tangible entity (a building, a set of faces) would reduce it to an abstraction and condemn it to rapid oblivion.

Have these conditions been met, or will they be met in future? The provision that has been made so far, particularly as regards the budget, does not bode well. In Naples in particular, but also elsewhere, governments will have to display a great deal more political courage and vision to ensure first the viability and then the success of this project in the long run, in other words to satisfy expectations. If the Foundation were unable to play the central role that rightfully belongs to it, for lack of political will and the necessary resources, it would be better not to press ahead with a project that would fall short of the stated ambitions: its inadequacy would have a catastrophic effect on public opinion and would seriously demotivate civil society.

3.3. Preconditions for success, risks and consequences of our proposals

The challenge is enormous, but so too is our ambition, our mission, our determination to modernise and overhaul the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

What is at stake is nothing less than **peace** itself; not the peace of the timid and the weak, not the peace of fear and flight or the peace of indifference and ignorance, but the peace of the strong and the brave, of courage and conviction, of curiosity and knowledge.

The first condition for the success of this venture is that those to whom our appeal is addressed, the political decision-makers and representatives of civil society, not only listen but also incorporate it in their own vision, assume ownership of it and translate it into responsible and immediate action.

For this is a matter of urgency, and by urgency we mean starting tomorrow and not stopping the day after tomorrow. Urgency also means daily awareness and continuous effort. Time is of the essence, but so is patience, otherwise urgency degenerates into improvisation and short-termism. Dialogue is a process that has to be built and

maintained. Of course it requires political will to start it, but it requires <u>political courage</u> to pursue it.

Courage - on the part of both decision-makers and participants - is a condition for the survival of the dialogue. It takes courage to stand up and say that **culture is sovereign** and that in order to sustain the dialogue this must be carved in stone as a principle for political action and must finally be accorded the status it deserves as a natural priority of development policy.

Courage is also needed because the dialogue itself is not without risks.

The main risk is <u>autism</u>: the refusal of one of the potential partners to imagine such a dialogue, the intransigence of those so seriously damaged, humiliated by a colonial past or contemporary arrogance, locked in their political and religious certainties, in alienated, deformed cultures reduced to pure ideologies, too strong to be questioned. Because to question is already to doubt, and doubt is intolerable to certain closed minds. Such an attitude is not in itself reprehensible and may even, paradoxically, lead to admirable behaviour, but it can also produce terrifying examples of deviancy - terrifying in the true sense of inspiring terror by setting off a chain of unstoppable collective reactions which produce fanaticism and ultimately **VIOLENCE**.

Violence is the enemy of dialogue and will always be present until dialogue succeeds in rooting it out of our souls, thereby justifying the courage of those who pursue it.

If violence is the enemy of dialogue its evil genius is <u>discouragement</u>, the discouragement of people who have lost their illusions, of sceptical elites and leaders whose courage fails them. The twin sister of discouragement is mutual distrust, which preys particularly on states that are worried about their identity and independence (formal or otherwise), harmed by globalisation and threatened by migration, and that struggle to preserve this independence by desperate attempts at protectionism, directed both against mounting opposition from civil society at home and against other states they accuse of interference or of exporting their poor migrants.

How are we going to encourage mobility, curiosity, the taste for knowledge of the Other and for crossing frontiers if these frontiers are reinforced by <u>visa policies</u> or other practices which deter even the most determined.

It is all a matter of frontiers, whether they are national, local, moral or psychological. We shall rise to the challenge of crossing these frontiers. One of these, which is omnipresent and quite capable by itself of thwarting our hopes, is the gulf between the intellectual, political and economic elites and all those who are not lucky enough to bask in the prestige of a degree or enjoy the blessings of inherited privilege. If the dialogue we wish to establish between the North and South of the Mediterranean does not manage to permeate *people's ordinary everyday life* we will have failed. We will also have failed if wealth and poverty continue to regard one another with mistrust on the one side and indifference on the other. The frontier between rich and poor is also a cultural frontier: if it remains it will continue to feed ill will, hatred and violence and will destroy all we are trying to achieve. Dialogue is, after all, no more than politeness. *How are we to re-learn the politeness of kings - supposedly the highest form of politeness - if there remain so many serfs and valets?*

Dialogue, however, is more than vague words and empty formulas. It needs contacts, movement, meetings, projects, networking: the sort of absorbing daily activities which

make a difference. Our efforts will be wasted if there is no money to pay people and cover the costs of equipment and logistics. The Foundation's financial needs are like those of any other policy in any field that requires the mobilisation of resources on a par with the challenges and issues at stake.

We must rise to the challenge of ambitious policies and crucial issues and face the financial consequences, even when they entail painful choices and drastic measures. No doubt we will also have to appeal to the generosity of the public or to private sponsors and launch a major campaign to explain and communicate the issues.

The proposals we have made are ambitious but realistic. They require targeted but, at the end of the day, relatively limited action. This is in the interests of effectiveness, for quantity is the enemy of quality. The challenge will be to find forms of action and appropriate sources of funding with a minimum of good will on the part of all the parties concerned.

And what about afterwards? Once the questioning, the uncertainty and the political choices are over and the projects have been launched, fine-tuned and even completed in one or other areas for the medium or longer term, it will be time to evaluate the results. Here too we will need an instrument, an evaluation tool that can perform the difficult task of assessing something as intangible as the dialogue's impact, which cannot be systematically measured with complete scientific rigour. We propose a "**Euro-Mediterranean cultural barometer**", or opinion poll, to be carried out every other year on collective mutual perceptions in a sample of European countries (a northern European country, a country with a large immigrant population, a country bordering on the Mediterranean and a new EU Member State) and a sample of countries from the eastern and southern Mediterranean. The Foundation could certainly undertake such an initiative as part of its assessment functions. It would then be able to use the poll to produce and coordinate a regular social survey based on a detailed analysis of values and attitudes.

But first things first. The initial impetus, the first steps, the determination of the early days, the courage of the decision-makers are all critical to the success or failure of an enterprise that in many ways will determine our future and that of future generations.

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CONCLUSION

I. In the Euro-Mediterranean region, at least, the clash of civilisations is for the moment just a fiction manipulated by some and hoped for by others.

If it is to remain this way - despite the worrying portents on the international scene - we must act now: Culture must be used to reinforce the emerging sense of fellowship and common destiny, so that Europe and its Mediterranean partners lay the foundations of a wider civic consciousness based on a convergent understanding of history and their common heritages.

If we fail to "invest" in Culture now there is a danger that we will all be caught up in a global maelstrom in which cultures would be hijacked for the most retrograde and criminal ends.

If, on the other hand, we all resolve to meet this challenge head on, in 25 years the people of both shores of the Mediterranean will form a human and economic community united by their common destiny and capable of making a lasting mark on history. Globalisation would not then breed marginalisation and the frustration and loss of identity this can engender.

II. The hopes we are pinning on the dialogue between peoples and cultures do not, however, blind us to the dangers. We are fully aware of the difficulties and risks entailed in putting some of our recommendations into practice.

To the North of the Mediterranean the danger is twofold. Firstly there is always the danger of insufficient coherence between the different states. To guard against this the EU can draw on the relevant provisions of the future Constitution for support. Then there is the threat posed by the populist and xenophobic movements in certain Member States which could make it difficult for all 25 members of the EU to embrace the philosophy we are advocating here.

As for the South, there are few safeguards against the potential consequences of doublespeak or the risk that the very aim of the dialogue will be distorted by some parts of the elite or within civil society. The South must rely solely on political courage and the desire for openness, which can draw support from a neighbourhood policy that would not be merely superficial but would fully engage the vital forces of civil society alongside the traditional power structures.

LIST OF PROPOSALS

Subject to an inventory of current projects and initiatives planned elsewhere, and in order to enhance the effectiveness of certain projects or supplement them, the High-Level Advisory Group has selected twenty proposals which flesh out the three operational guidelines below.

The future *Euro-Mediterranean Foundation* must also be guaranteed complete independence, and must be able to express the diversity of the cultures of the region in order to ensure that all these projects, targeting and involving civil society, are prepared and then implemented in a coherent fashion.

Make education a vehicle for learning about diversity and transmitting knowledge of the Other.

– Learning about diversity and knowledge of the Other, from primary school onwards, should be supported by a series of specific provisions on:

1. Learning the languages of the Mediterranean region.

2. Reworking syllabuses to provide ***comparative*** teaching of religions and cultures.

3. Mobility for children (trips, twinning arrangements, school exchanges).

4. Sharing of teaching modules on culture, history and religion, with a view to creating programmes of ***shared*** knowledge.

– Measures which will have an impact in the longer term but also have to be launched now:

5. Redefining the foundations of the humanities and social sciences and the way they are taught, as regards the anthropological, legal, cultural, religious, economic and social dimensions of the history of the Mediterranean region. (i.e. develop elements of ***common knowledge***).

This should be complemented by specific measures in the following areas:

6. Teacher training and revision of school and university textbooks.

7. Translation of classic works and reference books.

8. Support for the branch(es) of publishing involved in the two preceding actions.

9. Creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Academy to give a scientific basis to the four actions listed above (with the support of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation).

– Creation of networks of mutual knowledge and learning:

10. Increasing the number of Euro-Mediterranean Study Centres in the Mediterranean region.

11. Creating a "Braudel-Ibn Khaldoun network" of university professors, to link up with the Jean Monnet network.

Promote mobility, exchanges and the exploitation of expertise, skills and best practice

12. Encouraging the creation or development of networks of civic meeting places to facilitate contact between social groups and foster dialogue between the generations.

   Designing mechanisms that encourage the expression of cultural differences in the public domain so that all participants generate a sense of common identity in an atmosphere of dignity and mutual recognition.

13. Encouraging local associations to play a greater role, particularly in the humanitarian field.

14. Networking between these local associations (see proposal 13 above) to encourage best practice in matters of social integration and thus draw on the skills of local and regional cultures, particularly in the area of public health (care of the elderly, for example) and different forms of cultural expression.

15. Encouraging young people on both sides of the Mediterranean to make a common commitment to voluntary service in the Euro-Mediterranean region (entitled "Euro-Mediterranean Young People's Voluntary Service").

16. Confirm the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation's watchdog function by creating a monitoring unit/task force charged with surveying "best practice" in social matters and intercultural dialogue with a view to establishing their extension to a larger scale. This task force will also have the task of gathering new ideas and suggestions in order to contribute to the drawing up of concrete proposals for the Foundation.

Make the media a vital instrument of equality and mutual knowledge

17. Promoting the development of courses on cultural diversity in schools of journalism, film academies and colleges providing training in publishing.

18. Organising and educating the general public/viewing public, by a range of specific targeted measures:

   - creation of tele-clubs;

   - involvement of young people in programme design, drawing on experience in *popularising science* (to be included in the terms of the franchises of television stations so that the programmes are attractive and achieve the desired effect).

19. Encouraging the production of specific programmes on mainstream channels for the purposes of the above-mentioned popularisation and the production and distribution of films from and about the Mediterranean.

20. Drawing on the Euromed Audiovisual Programme to:

– Promote <u>channels and local distribution relays</u> in the countries of the South and encourage the creation of <u>"neighbourhood channels"</u> to link immigrant populations with the countries of the South in which they originate, while being careful to avoid ghettoisation.

– Provide EU co-funding to support the installation of one or more <u>multilingual unencrypted television channels</u> on existing Mediterranean satellites.

– Promote the creation of a <u>media observatory</u>, attached to the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, which would, like it, enjoy complete independence.

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