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**Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean
ministerial conference
Marseille, 3-4 November 2008
Final declaration**

P R E S S

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The Paris Summit of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' (Paris, 13 July 2008) injected a renewed political momentum into Euro-Mediterranean relations. In Paris, the Heads of State and Government agreed to build on and reinforce the successful elements of the Barcelona Process by upgrading their relations, incorporating more co-ownership in their multilateral cooperation framework and delivering concrete benefits for the citizens of the region. This first Summit marked an important step forward for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership while also highlighting the EU and Mediterranean partners' unwavering commitment and common political will to make the goals of the Barcelona Declaration – the creation of an area of peace, stability, security and shared prosperity, as well as full respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms and promotion of understanding between cultures and civilizations in the Euro-Mediterranean region – a reality. It was decided to launch and/or to reinforce a number of key initiatives: De-pollution of the Mediterranean, Maritime and Land Highways, Civil Protection, Alternative Energies: Mediterranean Solar Plan, Higher Education and Research, Euro-Mediterranean University and the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative.

Ministers propose that as from Marseille the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" should be called "Union for the Mediterranean".

Ministers decide that the League of Arab States shall participate in all meetings at all levels of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, therefore contributing positively to the objectives of the process, namely the achievement of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region.

Ministers reaffirm their commitment to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, consistent with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and its principles, including land for peace, and based on the relevant UNSC resolutions and the Road Map. Ministers also stress the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and underline their support for efforts to promote progress on all tracks of the Middle East Peace Process.

Ministers stress that the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean is not intended to replace the other initiatives undertaken in the interests of the peace, stability and development of the region, but that it will contribute to their success.

Ministers welcome the positive role played by the EU in the Middle East Peace Process, notably in the framework of the Quartet. They reaffirm their commitment to support the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues without exceptions, as specified in previous agreements. They welcome the commitment of both parties to engage in vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations making every effort to conclude a peace agreement based on the Annapolis process, as agreed in November 2007. They also encourage the parties to intensify their efforts on the path of direct dialogue and negotiation in the fulfilment of the two states solution: a safe and secure Israel, and a viable, sovereign and democratic Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security. Final status issues have to be agreed upon by the parties.

Ministers call on both parties to respect their commitment to immediately implement their respective obligations under the performance-based Roadmap to a permanent two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and call on the parties to refrain from any measure that might prejudice the outcome of the negotiations.

Ministers welcome and support the indirect peace talks between Israel and Syria under the auspices of Turkey and encourage all efforts deployed to achieve stability, peace and security in the region.

Ministers welcome the establishment of diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon.

Ministers reiterate their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the perpetrators, and their determination to eradicate it and to combat its sponsors and reaffirm their commitment to fully implement the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism adopted in the Barcelona Summit on 28th November 2005 in order to enhance the security of all citizens within a framework that ensures respect for the rule of law and human rights, particularly through more effective counterterrorism policies and deeper cooperation to dismantle all terrorist activities, to protect potential targets and to manage the consequences of attacks. They also reiterate the complete rejection of attempts to associate any religion, civilization or culture with terrorism and confirm their commitment to do their utmost effort with a view to resolving conflict, ending occupation, confronting oppression, reducing poverty, promoting human rights and good governance, improving intercultural understanding and ensuring respect for all religions and beliefs.

Ministers reaffirm their common aspiration to achieve peace as well as regional security according to the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, which, inter alia, promotes regional security by acting in favour of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation through adherence to and compliance with a combination of international and regional non-proliferation regimes and arms control and disarmament agreements such as NPT, CWC, BWC, CTBT and/or regional arrangements such as weapons-free zones, including their verification regimes, as well as by fulfilling in good faith their commitments under arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation conventions.

The parties shall pursue a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems. Furthermore the parties will consider practical steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as excessive accumulation of conventional arms; refrain from developing military capacity beyond their legitimate defence requirements, at the same time reaffirming their resolve to achieve the same degree of security and mutual confidence with the lowest possible levels of troops and weaponry and adherence to CCW; promote conditions likely to develop good-neighbourly relations among themselves and support processes aimed at stability, security, prosperity and regional and sub-regional cooperation; consider any confidence and security-building measures that could be taken between the parties with a view to the creation of an "area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean", including the long term possibility of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean pact to that end.

The Ministers welcome the dedication and interest expressed by three new members of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia and Montenegro, together with Albania, to add their efforts in contributing to a successful integration of the Adriatic countries in the existing and future initiatives and projects in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

I. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE "BARCELONA PROCESS: UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN"

Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government agreed in Paris on 13 July 2008 to establish new institutional structures to contribute to achieving the political goals of the initiative, especially reinforcing inclusive co-ownership, upgrading the political level of EU-Mediterranean relations and achieving visibility through projects.

On the basis of the Paris Declaration adopted by and mandate received from Heads of State and Government, Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs Ministers approve the following guidelines, in line with its scope and main objectives:

Co-presidency

1. The co-presidency shall apply to Summits, all Ministerial meetings, Senior Officials meetings, the Joint Permanent Committee and, when possible, experts/ad hoc meetings within the initiative.
2. The co-presidents will assume the co-presidency of the Partnership as a whole.
3. One of the co-presidents will be from the EU and the other from the Mediterranean partner countries.
4. From the EU side, the co-presidency must be compatible with the external representation of the European Union in accordance with the Treaty provisions in force¹.
5. From the Mediterranean partners side, the co-president must be chosen by consensus for a non-renewable period of two years.
6. The two co-presidencies will call and chair the meetings of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.² The co-presidencies will submit for approval the agenda of the meetings.

¹ This includes the role of the Presidency and the European Commission in the external representation of the EU.

² If a State other than the two co-presidencies hosts a meeting, it will also co-chair the meeting.

7. The co-presidencies will conduct the necessary consultations with all partners, leading to the adoption of common conclusions of Summit, Ministerial, and other meetings when required¹, that shall be adopted by consensus, as well as consulting on all other issues relevant to the good functioning of the Partnership.

Senior Officials

8. The Senior Officials are mandated to deal with all aspects of the initiative. They will take stock of and evaluate the progress of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean in all its components including issues previously handled by the Euromed Committee. Senior officials will continue to convene regularly in order to prepare the Ministerial meeting, and submit project proposals to them as well as the annual work programme for adoption.
9. The biennial Summits of Heads of State will endorse the strategic priorities of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean passed to it through Foreign Ministers. Foreign Ministers mandate Senior Officials to approve guidelines and criteria for assessing the merits of project proposals. In doing so, the Senior Officials shall be guided by a broad, comprehensive and inclusive approach to the projects, which could be mutually beneficial and aiming at the prosperity of all.

They shall also uphold the principle that every project must:

- strive to contribute to stability and peace in the whole Euro-Mediterranean region;
 - not jeopardise the legitimate interest of any member of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean;
 - take account of the principle of variable geometry;
 - respect the decision of member countries involved in an ongoing project when it is subject to further development.
10. In drawing up the agenda of the Senior Officials meetings, the co-presidencies identify those items on which discussion is intended and items for information. Delegations may submit particular items to the co-presidencies for inclusion in the agenda.

¹ Without prejudice to the consultations to be carried out within the EU in accordance with the relevant Treaty provisions.

Joint Permanent Committee

11. The Joint Permanent Committee will be based in Brussels. It will assist and prepare the meetings of the Senior Officials and ensure the appropriate follow-up. The Joint Permanent Committee will deal with issues previously handled by the Euromed Committee that do not fall under the competence of the Senior Officials. The Euromed Committee will thus be dissolved. The Joint Permanent Committee may also act as a mechanism to react rapidly if an exceptional situation arises in the region that requires the consultation of Euro-Mediterranean partners.

The Secretariat

12. The joint Secretariat will have a key role within the institutional architecture. The Secretariat will:
 - Give an impulse to this process in terms of identification, follow-up, promotion of new projects and the search for funding and for implementation partners.
 - Work in operational liaison with all structures of the process, particularly with the co-presidencies, including by preparing working documents for the decision-making bodies.
 - Have a separate legal personality with an autonomous status.
13. The mandate of the Secretariat is of a technical nature while the political mandate related to all aspects of the initiative remains the responsibility of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Senior Officials.
14. Tasks: The Secretariat will gather, within the project priorities, regional, sub-regional or transnational project initiatives (from various sources such as sectoral ministerial meetings, national or regional authorities, regional groupings, private sector, civil society). The Secretariat shall examine project initiatives and inform on their implementation to the Joint Permanent Committee and the Senior Officials after close coordination with concerned States and funding partners. Once approved, the Secretariat will work on the basis of the guidelines to be set by Senior Officials, as mentioned above.

The Summit, the Foreign Affairs Ministers Conference, the appropriate Euromed Sectoral Ministerial Meeting or the Senior Officials will instruct the Secretariat to propose the necessary follow-up in terms of initiating the promotion of the projects and the search for partners for their implementation. The funding and implementation of projects will be pursued on a case-by-case basis by the various interested partners according to their own procedures and by ad hoc sub-groups, if necessary, with the assistance of the Secretariat. The Secretariat will lead on monitoring and evaluation of projects implementation.

15. The Secretariat will inform the Joint Permanent Committee and report to the Senior Officials.
16. The statute of the Secretariat will be adopted by Senior Officials (on the basis of a proposal to be prepared by a drafting group of experts to be established for this purpose¹) before the end of February 2009², taking into account the legal system of the country in which the Secretariat will be established. It will be a lean Secretariat based on the following principles:
 - a. Composition: The objective is to achieve a sufficiently higher level of involvement of all partners to increase co-ownership and participation. There will be one Secretary General³ and five Deputy Secretaries General⁴. They are to be selected by consensus by Senior Officials following proposals made by Euro-Mediterranean partners and on the basis of a short list presented by the co-presidency and the Commission, following consultations to be held with all partners. Their term of office will be of 3 years. The term of office may be extended once for a maximum of three years. The Secretariat will include seconded officials from participants in the process to be appointed by the Secretary General together with the Deputy Secretaries General on the basis of competence and geographical balance.

¹ This drafting group will be composed as follows: host country, co-presidencies, incoming presidency, European Commission and General Secretariat of the Council, and will be open to interested countries.

² EU position shall be agreed in advance in the relevant working group.

³ The Secretary General will be chosen among candidates from Mediterranean partner countries.

⁴ For the first term of office, the five Deputy Secretaries General will be from the following Euro-Mediterranean partners: Palestinian Authority, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta. All the Euro-Mediterranean partners are eligible for these posts on a rotational basis.

- b. Funding: The running costs of the Secretariat (support staff, equipment etc) will be funded from an operating grant on a shared and balanced basis by the Euro-Mediterranean partners, on a voluntary basis and the Community budget. Funding from the Community budget will come from existing resources within the ENPI (and other relevant instruments) within the Financial Framework ceilings. The Community funding will need to follow the provisions of the Financial Regulation. The host country will provide the premises of the Secretariat free of charge. Seconded officials will be financed by their respective administrations (possibly through a trust fund). Senior Officials shall adopt the annual budget of the Secretariat upon proposal of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretaries General (revenue and expenditure of the Secretariat including allocations of staff). Initial financial contributions shall be made available as soon as the statutes are adopted so as to allow the Secretariat to start functioning by May 2009. Funding provisions should aim at ensuring an uninterrupted and regular working of the Secretariat and reflect the EU and Mediterranean partners' co-responsibility of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.
- c. The seat of the Secretariat will be in Barcelona. A Headquarters Agreement between the host country and the Secretariat will ensure the autonomous status of the latter, its legal personality to carry out its activities and the status, privileges and immunities of the Secretariat and its international personnel. The Headquarters Agreement shall be concluded before May 2009.

On the matter of the governance of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, Ministers decide to continue their consultations in line with the mandate given by Heads of State and Government at the Paris Summit. Ministers agree that delegations may submit their proposals to the French-Egyptian co-presidency, which undertakes to consult Heads of State and Government, notably on the modalities for the establishment of the Secretariat and the new name for the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.

Relations with Parliaments, local and regional authorities

The Ministers believe that the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) reinforces the democratic legitimacy of the Partnership. They duly take note of the EMPA recommendation adopted in Jordan on the 13th October 2008. The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean requires a strong parliamentary dimension. Therefore the Ministers underline that the position of the EMPA should be further consolidated and its work better articulated with the other institutions of the Partnership.

The Ministers stress the need to promote the implementation of concrete action at local and regional level. In this respect, they commend the Forum of Local and Regional Authorities that was held on 22 and 23 June 2008 in Marseille. They also duly take note of the Committee of Regions' opinion issued on 9 October 2008 and the proposal to create a Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly. The Assembly's members would represent EU local and regional elected officials and elected officials from Mediterranean partner countries equally, similar to parliamentary representation in the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

The Ministers mandate the Senior Officials to consider the possibility of the involvement of the EMRLA once it is established in the Partnership.

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II. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2009

Important steps need to be taken in 2009 to implement the Barcelona Five-Year Work Programme and the declaration of the Paris Summit in order to advance the regional integration process. The following meetings are a proposed indicative list for 2009:

- the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Water,
- the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on sustainable development-projects,
- the 6th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Urban Development,
- the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education & Scientific Research,
- the 6th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Energy,
- the 4th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on the Environment,
- the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society,
- the annual Euro-Mediterranean Economic Transition conference,
- the 9th FEMIP Ministerial Meeting,
- the 5th Euro-Mediterranean ECOFIN Ministerial meeting,
- the 8th Euro-Mediterranean Trade Ministerial Conference,
- the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development,
- the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Justice, Liberty and Security,
- the 11th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs,
- the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Human Development.

III. FIELDS OF COOPERATION TO BE PURSUED IN 2009

A. *Political and security dialogue*

The political and security dialogue has focused on the following areas:

- a. Regular review of the political situation in the Middle East.
- b. Implementation of the Code of Conduct on countering terrorism. The Ministers agree to build on the recommendations of previous international and regional initiatives.
- c. Deepening of the dialogue on ESDP and crisis management.
- d. At the Paris Summit, the Heads of State and Government underlined their commitment to strengthen democracy and political pluralism through expansion of participation in political life and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- e. The Ministers acknowledge that the deepening of regional dialogue on joint cooperation, best practices and exchange of experience in the area of elections has been further pursued at Senior Official level. Ministers agreed that joint cooperation and exchange of experience could be developed on a voluntary basis upon the request of any of the partners.
- f. The Ministers have highlighted the role of the regional 'Bridge Programme (2004-2008) on Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Natural and Man-made Disasters' and laid the foundations for a Long-Term Programme, the Euro-Med Programme for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters - PPRD (2008-2011).

B. *Maritime Safety*

The growing number of transit vessels, the increasing risks of accidents, the persisting terrorist threat, the rise in organised crime and illicit trafficking, especially drug trafficking, could tend to port infrastructures inefficiency and jeopardise trade flows. To enhance cooperation, the creation of a centre to coordinate the fight against drugs in the Mediterranean region could be explored.

In 2009, a forum of Mediterranean Coast Guard Services and, as appropriate, Maritime Services, could be organised. This event might represent an opportunity to exchange experiences in the fields of marine and coastal environment protection from pollution, as well as safety of navigation, maritime search and rescue and safeguard of human life at sea. Italy is prepared to host this Forum.

Ministers recommend to study the possibility to develop initiatives in the maritime domain, for instance the implementation of integrated Vessel Traffic Management systems, systems for the management of intermodal transport and sea ports, integrated systems for the management and control of environmental risks and sea pollution with the participation of all willing and able Mediterranean partners.

C. Economic and Financial Partnership

Energy

Participants at the last Euromed Energy Ministerial Meeting (Cyprus, 17 December 2007) agreed on a Five-Year Action Plan focusing on three main areas: (1) improving harmonisation and integration of energy markets and legislation in the Euromed region, (2) promoting sustainable development in the energy sector, and (3) developing initiatives of common interest in key areas, such as infrastructure extension, investment financing and research and development. Furthermore several initiatives are being implemented such as the Euro-Mashrek gas cooperation, the integration of electricity markets in the Maghreb, the trilateral energy cooperation between the EC, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (including the Solar Energy for Peace Initiative) and cooperation among Euromed energy regulators (Medreg). In this context, a Ministerial meeting took place on 5 May 2008 in Brussels to discuss enhancing energy cooperation in the Mashrek. Overall progress in the implementation of the Action Plan Priorities is being monitored. Finally, alleviating energy poverty, in the framework of the Millenium Development Goals, has to be achieved. The outcome of these activities will lead to the third Ministerial Meeting hosted by France.

Transport

The Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) for the Mediterranean, which was approved by all representatives of beneficiary countries at the Euromed Transport Forum held in Brussels on 29-30 May 2007, proposes 34 actions in a number of areas including maritime transport, road transport, railway transport, civil aviation, multi-modal transport and transport infrastructure networks, as well as with respect to sustainability issues. These actions are being implemented by partner governments in the framework of their national policies and strategies or at the multilateral level through cooperation and the exchange of information. A meeting of the aviation working group and the ninth Euromed Transport Forum are planned before the end of 2008. The Trans-European Network-Transport (TEN-T) Workshop was held in Brussels on 14-15 October 2008.

Agriculture

Ministers recalled the importance of agriculture and rural development in the economy of the Mediterranean countries and in achieving food security. Ministers agreed to convene an agriculture Ministerial meeting on these subjects. This meeting should aim at identifying and promoting projects related to sustainable rural development, to the development and promotion of quality products and the coordination of agricultural research on topics such as water stress resistant plant species and water resources management. This conference should also support the pursuit and reinforcement of activities in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary norms.

Urban development

Sustainable Metropolitan and Urban Development are at the heart of the major issues of the Mediterranean. Population growth and uncontrolled urban sprawl, concentrated mainly on the coasts, are significant and have a negative impact on the Mediterranean region's development. Sustainable Urban Development implies that governments, developers and financiers to better anticipate future urban growth, need to better meet the basic needs of populations (housing, transportation, access to water, electricity and telecommunications) and integrate environmental constraints. This challenge implies the involvement of regional authorities to define appropriate planning through an integrated approach.

Water

The Euromed Ministerial Meeting on water will be held in Jordan. Ministers agree to define the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean along the lines decided by the Heads of State and Government in the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean. They encourage a swift implementation of partnerships in order to implement concrete projects in line with the guidelines of the strategy.

Environment

The achievements since the Cairo Euromed Environment Ministerial Meeting together with the regional (Euromed) environmental activities and efforts with regard to the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean should constitute the basis for the Environment Ministerial Meeting which is planned to be held in 2009.

The annual meeting of the Horizon 2020 Steering Group will be held along with the meetings of each of the three sub-groups (pollution reduction, capacity building as well as monitoring and research) in addition to meetings for the transfer of know-how.

Studying the process of developing a harmonised maritime policy and promoting a foreseeable maritime strategy for the Mediterranean shall take particular consideration within the Euromed Partnership in 2009 and beyond. A sectoral Euromed working group composed of national experts is clearly needed to formulate the guidelines, visions, priorities, objectives, means of implementation and funding mechanisms of such a policy, taking into account the variances between the Euromed countries. The task should take place in complete coordination and cooperation with both the competent regional and national entities to provide the guidance and technical assistance.

According to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change could adversely affect the environment and human activities in the Mediterranean. Ministers recalled the need to intensify co-operation on climate change through the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Climate Change Network to provide the forum for the sharing of information and experience as well as to build relationships in an informal working environment in support of regional efforts to combat climate change. Euro-Mediterranean interaction on climate change may lead to enhancement of capabilities of implementation of projects and programmes of mutual interest.

Information Society

In the light of the Cairo Ministerial Declaration (28 February 2008), a new step is to be launched in Euromed dialogue on issues relating to the Information Society. Ministers agreed to intensify cooperation on regulatory issues for electronic communications, the connectivity of service platforms and networks and ICT research in areas such as multilingual e-content, e-learning, e-science, e-health, e-inclusion and e-government.

A dedicated public website has already been set up by the Information Society and Media Directorate General of the European Commission, based on the Ministerial agreement to use ICT to enhance communication among countries in the Euromed region by considering to create an electronic forum. The site is to be progressively improved to help share information among Euro-Mediterranean partners.

Ministers also agreed in the Cairo Ministerial Declaration that the Euromed Forum on Information Society will carry out a mapping exercise to match existing programmes on one side and identified priorities for the Euromed region on the other. Starting this mapping process during 2009 will positively accelerate the Euromed cooperation. It is also necessary to consider an appropriate mechanism for the implementation and follow up of the outcomes of the Ministerial meeting.

The Ministers also stressed the fundamental need to ensure interconnection of research networks to support, inter alia, the creation of grid-enabled scientific e-infrastructures able to make ICT research and development cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean countries more efficient. They recognised the fundamental role that EUMEDCONNECT played in interconnecting the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in the region and with Europe, enabling collaboration in multiple domains with high scientific and societal impact, and considered it essential to guarantee the sustainability and promotion of the initiative.

A specific Action Plan will be prepared for approval at the next meeting of the Euromed Forum of Senior Officials to be organised before the end of 2009. During the "Summit of cities and local governments of the Mediterranean" held in Malaga on 2 and 3 October 2008, the reduction of the digital divide between the two shores of the Mediterranean has emerged as a major challenge for ICT development with the involvement of relevant local and regional entities.

Tourism

In accordance with the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Tourism (Fez, Morocco, 2-3 April, 2008), Ministers agreed to take steps to prepare and implement cooperation actions, particularly in the areas of vocational education and training, cultural heritage, institutional capacity building, investment promotion and statistics, drawing on existing programmes and in favour of sustainable development of tourism. In this context, Ministers emphasised the paramount importance that should be given to reinforcing the identification of investment opportunities as well as the promotion of joint-ventures in the tourism sector. They reiterated the central role of the private sector in this field, as the flow of investments to the tourist destinations in Mediterranean Partner Countries constitutes an essential tool to further support and develop this vital sector. They also invited FEMIP to mobilise its whole range of financial instruments in order to foster the development of tourism and links with the Mediterranean partner countries and called on tourism senior officials to meet in order to prepare a Working Programme to be submitted to the next Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in 2010.

Ministers recalled the need to examine the impact of the climate change phenomena on the tourism sector in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and underlined that the environmental pressures may severely impact coastal areas, in particular around the Mediterranean.

Towards the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area

At the 7th Euro-Mediterranean Trade Ministerial Meeting held in Marseille on 2 July 2008, Ministers welcomed the ongoing work and instructed the Senior Officials to present a Euro-Mediterranean Trade Roadmap up to 2010 and beyond at the 2009 Trade Ministerial. The work of the Senior Officials Working Group has focused on how to diversify and enhance trade, to encourage industrial integration and European investments in the Mediterranean countries. The ultimate aim is the establishment of an ambitious, deep Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

Bilateral negotiations with Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Israel on the liberalisation of trade in services and the right of establishment, launched in 2008, will continue in 2009. Regional consultations will also be pursued in order to ensure the transparency of bilateral negotiations and to prepare those Mediterranean partners with whom bilateral negotiations have not yet been launched. Priority should be given to speed up agreements on Conformity Assessment and Accreditation.

Bilateral negotiations will also continue on the establishment of a more efficient dispute settlement mechanism for the trade provisions of the Association Agreements. So far the agreement with Tunisia has been initialled and substantial progress made in the bilateral negotiations with Morocco, which should lead to the initialling of the agreement in the near future. Discussions are expected to continue with other Mediterranean countries with a view to concluding the remaining bilateral protocols.

Important progress was achieved in the first half of 2008 in the negotiations on further liberalisation of agricultural, processed agricultural and fisheries products, in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration and the Rabat Euro-Mediterranean Road Map for Agriculture. Negotiations were recently concluded with Egypt and Israel, progress was made with Morocco and negotiations were launched with Tunisia.

The Ministers underlined the importance of strengthening capacity building and institutional development in trade and trade-related matters, either through the participation of Mediterranean Partners in certain EU programmes, agencies and bodies or through enhanced and targeted technical and financial assistance to help them to converge towards the trade-related *acquis*.

Economic dialogue

The 12th Economic Transition Conference (Brussels, 20-21 February 2008) focused on financial and banking services, which are at the heart of economic transition. The Ministers propose concentrating discussions at the upcoming Conference in 2009 on the international financial crisis. Ministers underline the importance of discussing the issue of the food prices crisis in a relevant Ministerial meeting.

The Euromed Network of Public Finance Experts was launched in 2008. The Terms of Reference of the network, as endorsed by the Ministers of Economy and Finance in Porto in 2008, identify three main areas for analysis: 1) fiscal consolidation as part of a broader agenda for public sector reform, growth and employment; 2) the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditures; and 3) budget management systems and institutions.

The first meeting of the network took place in Brussels in September 2008, back-to-back with the Senior Officials meeting to prepare part of the agenda for this year's joint Euromed ECOFIN/FEMIP Ministerial. The next regular meeting of the Euromed Network of Public Finance Experts is expected in the lead up to the 2009 Ministerial meeting.

Ministers agree to keep improving the legal framework with the view to facilitate transfer and mobilisation of migrant remittances for long term investment in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

Industrial Cooperation

The 7th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting on Industrial Cooperation will take place in France (Nice, 5-6 November 2008), following a conference on facilitating industrial exchanges. The meeting will take stock of progress achieved so far, e.g. in following up and implementing the Euromed Charter for enterprise, the facilitation of industrial exchanges, innovation, regional dialogue on the future of the textile and clothing sector and investment promotion. Sustainable industrial development will be added to the traditional themes of discussion.

Further work could also be done on possible action to improve arbitration procedures in the region, notably for SMEs, for example with the setting up of a Mediterranean Court of Arbitration.

Ongoing work on statistics cooperation

Ministers take note of the important role of reliable statistics as an important factor in decision making. The statistical services in the Mediterranean partner countries are receiving technical assistance from the regional MEDSTAT II programme. The programme will run until September 2009.

D. Social, human and cultural cooperation

Developing a genuine social dimension

The 2007 workshop on employment policy helped to enhance the understanding of the challenges facing labour markets and employment policies in the context of globalisation, technological evolution and demographic change. The first Conference of Employment and Labour Ministers (Marrakesh, 9-10 November 2008) will provide a unique opportunity to develop a genuine social dimension in the partnership, based on an integrated approach combining economic growth, employment and social cohesion. Ministers will review socio-economic developments in the region and examine concrete initiatives and proposals to promote employment creation, modernisation of labour markets and decent work. Ministers should approve a framework of action setting out key objectives in the fields of employment policy, employability and decent employment opportunities. This framework will also address important cross-cutting issues such as strengthening the participation of women in the labour market, non-discrimination, the integration of young people within the labour market, the transformation of informal into formal employment and labour migration. Employment and Labour Ministers should also approve an effective follow-up mechanism, with reporting on national progress and exchange of practices. Successful social and employment policies require the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, namely the social partners. In this connection, the cooperation of social partners across the Euro-Mediterranean region should be further developed.

Ministers underline the commitment to facilitate legal movement of individuals and acknowledge that this has an important impact on the social dimension of the partnership. For this purpose, Ministers mandate Senior Officials to identify ways and means to implement this objective.

Health

The second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Health will take place in Egypt on 17 November 2008. The Ministerial meeting will discuss means to strengthen the health dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in order to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region by improving all aspects of human health.

Human Development

The Ministers reiterate the importance of human development in the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean and they mandate the Senior Officials to prepare for the first Ministerial Meeting on Human Development due to be held in Morocco in 2009 or 2010.

Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area

The inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia (Piran, 9 June 2008) marked an important step in building cultural and educational bridges between the North and South of the Mediterranean. This achievement will certainly encourage cooperation in higher education, following up the objectives of the Catania Process and the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, June 2007).

Ministers look forward to the implementation and follow up of the Cairo Declaration by reinforcing the role of the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD (MOCO) and the prompt creation of an expert group on Higher Education with a precise mandate to realize the objectives and actions of the Declaration.

Ministers consider that particular attention should be given to further promoting academic mobility, enhancing quality assurance mechanisms and to issues concerning the recognition of degrees and study periods which may lead to the development of joint degrees between institutions in European and Mediterranean countries. A second meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research should be convened in the second half of 2009, once the results of projects, conferences, studies and other activities under the new Tempus IV, Erasmus Mundus I and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows programmes are available.

Promoting dialogue between cultures, cultural diversity

2008 has been a very important year for the cultural dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The third meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Culture Ministers (Athens, 29-30 May 2008), which took place during the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the Euro-Mediterranean year of dialogue between cultures, has launched a political process that should lead to a new Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture in two years time. This Strategy will be built around two distinct, but interlinked components: dialogue between cultures and cultural policy. Ministers also agreed to establish a follow-up mechanism for drawing up the Strategy, which will include the establishment of a Euromed Group of Experts on Culture. This ad hoc group should meet twice during 2009 and possibly once in 2010 ahead of the next meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Culture Ministers.

Ministers agree that the following areas for action should be given consideration and further explored: condemnation of trafficking and trade in cultural property and treasures that have been illicitly acquired through illegal excavations and pillaging of monuments in the light of the relevant UNESCO Convention of 1970. Ministers welcome as well the establishment of a network for recording and documenting Euro-Mediterranean underwater cultural heritage based on the exchange of best practices.

Following the revision of the statutes and the appointment of its new leadership, the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between cultures has been further strengthened. Henceforth, the Foundation will consolidate its capacity to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity and mutual understanding and raise its profile as a bridge between Euro-Mediterranean cultures, religions and beliefs, in cooperation with the UN Alliance of Civilisations. The partnership welcomes the observatory role that the Foundation is intended to play and the annual reports to be produced.

The new Euro-Med Heritage Programme, centred on the appropriation of cultural heritage by local populations, access to knowledge of cultural heritage and institutional and legislative strengthening got under way in 2008. The launching conference for the Euro-Med Heritage IV programme will be held at the beginning of 2009 in Marrakesh.

The audiovisual media and cinema as well as the promotion of cultural heritage and contemporary culture are excellent vehicles for intercultural dialogue between the Euro-Mediterranean countries. On the basis of the previous Euromed Audiovisual programmes and the new strategy to enhance the Mediterranean audiovisual sector, approved at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting on Culture in 2008, a new Euromed Audiovisual Programme could be launched in 2009.

Ministers welcome the initiatives launched by the COPEAM. These are the Terramed project, aiming at creating a TV satellite channel for the Mediterranean, and the setting-up of an internet portal on the audiovisual heritage of the Mediterranean.

Justice and Law

The Euro-Mediterranean area has the ambition to fully respect freedom, security and justice, rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for international conventions.

Practitioners, universities and legal actors will work to facilitate best practices and ensure, in the interests of the rule of law, the proper execution of conventions and judicial decisions and awards, including their participation in a network on a national and Euro-Mediterranean level.

The two other components of the regional Programme on Justice and Home Affairs (2008-2011), namely cooperation in the field of Justice (Euro-Med Justice II) and the Police (Euro-Med Police II), have also started their activities.

Strengthening the role of women in society

As part of the follow up to the Istanbul Ministerial Conference held in 2006 on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society" and in view of a second Ministerial Conference in 2009 to be held in Morocco, Ministers encourage further concrete initiatives to accelerate the implementation of the Istanbul conclusions. A possible outcome could be a concrete set of joint activities in all fields approved in the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions. In order to prepare for the coming Ministerial Conference, two working groups should be organized during 2009. Following the first thematic working group on "Women's Participation in Political Life" that was held in Brussels in 2008, another thematic working group will be organised to complement all the pillars agreed in the Istanbul Ministerial on "Women's Social Rights and Sustainable Development" and "Women's Rights in the Cultural Sphere and the Role of Communication and the Mass Media". The other working group will prepare the ministerial meeting.

EuroMed Youth

Euromed cooperation in the field of youth will be enhanced by entering a new phase. The Euro Med Youth IV Programme will continue to run in conjunction with the Youth in Action Programme, both of which share similar objectives, such as promoting mobility, active citizenship, non-formal learning and mutual understanding among young people as well as supporting youth organisations.

Cooperation with civil society and local actors

Civil society should be further empowered and its capability enhanced through improved interaction with governments and parliaments. To this end, a new regional programme has been launched in 2008 aiming at strengthening the role of civil society. Furthermore, Ministers take note of the recommendations of the Marseille Civil Forum (31 October-2 November) and acknowledge the important contribution of the Euromed non-governmental platform. Efforts to organise subsequent Civil Fora should be encouraged by all partners.

Ministers acknowledge the important role and the contribution of the Economic and Social Councils and Similar institutions and take note of the conclusions of the Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, held in Rabat on 14-16 October 2008.

Enhancing the visibility of the Partnership

Ministers underline that the visibility of the Partnership is vital for its public understanding and acceptance, as well as its accountability and legitimacy. They acknowledge that the second Regional Information and Communication Programme aims to enhance people's understanding of these relations through a variety of actions and activities. The four components of the new programme cover media activities, journalist training and networking, campaign support and opinion polling/surveys. The launching conference for the Programme will take place in the first half of 2009 with the participation of the main media in the region.

Furthermore, Ministers encourage continuing efforts to promote the different aspects of media development in the region. The Euromed and Media consultations will continue through the activities of its Task Force and networks (media, journalism schools and gender). Seminars and workshops will cover media-related issues in reporting terrorism, gender, dialogue between cultures and freedom of the press.

Migration

Ministers recalled that the issue of migration should be an integral part of the regional partnership and its related challenges namely legal migration, migration and development and the fight against illegal migration, as laid down in the agreed conclusions of the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Migration, Albufeira, 18-19 November 2007, need to be addressed through a comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach. In this regard, some initiatives have begun to be implemented this year with the launching of the regional Euro-Med Migration II Programme (2008-2011).

They underline the commitment to facilitate legal movement of individuals. They stress that promoting orderly-managed legal migration in the interest of all parties concerned, fighting illegal migration and fostering links between migration and development are issues of common interest which should be addressed through a comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach.

IV. STATE OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS LISTED IN THE ANNEX TO THE PARIS DECLARATION

Ministers reviewed the progress made in implementing the priority projects selected by Heads of State and Government in the Paris Declaration.

A. *De-pollution of the Mediterranean*

Ministers welcome the progress on de-pollution of the Mediterranean, especially regarding a Mediterranean water strategy as well as actions taken to address climate change impacts.

At the joint Euro-Mediterranean ECOFIN and FEMIP Ministerial meeting, ministers agreed that FEMIP will in 2009 organise a conference addressing the theme of sustainable water financing including issues such as water infrastructure, water services, water efficiency, private sector involvement and environmental standards.

The results of the upcoming Water Ministerial Conference, together with the achievements since the third Euromed Ministerial Meeting on Environment (Cairo), should form the basis for the next Environment Ministerial Meeting planned for 2009. The Ministerial meeting will take note of a list of concrete projects on both sides of the Mediterranean related to integrated water management and will identify further projects linked to the Water Strategy in the Mediterranean. The annual meeting of the Horizon 2020 Steering group will be held along with meetings of each of the three sub-groups (pollution reduction, capacity building and review monitoring and research). The questions of mitigation/adaptation to climate change, biodiversity protection and conservation of the Mediterranean seabed will be considered. France is prepared to host the relevant ministerial meeting.

B. *Maritime and Land Highways*

As a follow-up to the Paris Summit's decision to develop a "Motorway of the sea" project, an expert group held two meetings on 17 July 2008 and on 17 October 2008. In these meetings, concrete and pilot projects were presented and support for their full implementation is being sought. The outcome of all these activities will lead to a Ministerial Conference to be hosted by Greece in 2009.

C. *Civil Protection*

The Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters Programme (PPRD) will contribute to the development of stronger prevention, preparedness and response capacities in civil protection at international, national and local level. It will also aim to bring the Mediterranean Partner Countries progressively closer to the European Civil Protection Mechanism and the envisaged European civil protection network against disasters. Furthermore, the joint Civil Protection project on prevention, preparation and response to disasters is one of the main priorities for the region. Therefore the development of the Euromed Programme for the PPRD (2008-2011) is a matter of urgency. The collaboration between the civil protection institutions in the EU member states and the Mediterranean Partner countries for strengthening the cooperation in the field of training and on operational level is suggested.

D. *Alternative Energies: Mediterranean Solar Plan*

The Euromed Expert Group, reporting to the Euromed Energy Forum, met on 7 October 2008, reviewed progress achieved and agreed on future actions, which should further develop the decision of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, to launch a Mediterranean Solar Plan focused on market deployment as well as research and development of all alternative sources of energy. An expert workshop organised by Germany in cooperation with France, on the potential and cost of different renewable energy technologies and aspects of a future Master Plan, took place on 28-29 October in Berlin. A conference, organised by France and Egypt in cooperation with Germany and Spain, will convene on 22 November in Paris to discuss financing and project implementation of the Mediterranean Solar Plan. An Immediate Action Plan (IAP) could be agreed to list concrete and pilot projects to be launched in 2009-2010. The aim is to launch three power stations of 20MW in 2009.

E. *Higher Education and Research, Euro-Mediterranean University*

The inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia (Piran, 9 June 2008) marked an important step in building cultural and educational bridges between the North and South of the Mediterranean. This achievement will certainly encourage cooperation in higher education, following up the objectives of the Catania Process and the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, June 2007). Through a cooperation network of partner universities and other institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Euro-Mediterranean University will provide study, research and training programmes, and thus advance the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Science and Research Area.

In this context, and in the spirit of co-ownership among all Euro-Mediterranean partners, Ministers welcome the Moroccan initiative to host a university with Euro-Mediterranean vocation in the city of Fez, complementary to the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia. This will provide opportunities for fruitful exchange among students, researchers and universities from Euro-Mediterranean countries, thus contributing to giving full substance to the concept of dialogue between cultures by investing in new human capabilities and cultural exchanges.

The Ministers consider that particular attention should be given to further promoting academic mobility, enhancing quality assurance mechanisms and to issues concerning the recognition of degrees and study periods which may lead to the development of joint degrees between institutions in the EU and Mediterranean partner countries. They welcome the initiative already proposed by relevant institutions, notably in the field of medicine and law. The ad hoc working group on higher education, which was convened for the first time on 5 June 2008, will facilitate mutual cooperation in these priority areas and prepare the second meeting of the Euromed Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The meeting should be convened in the second half of 2009, once the results of activities under the new Tempus IV, Erasmus Mundus I and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows programmes are available.

F. The Mediterranean Business Development Initiative

The 8th FEMIP Ministerial Meeting (Luxembourg, 7 October 2008) agreed to organise a conference focusing on financial assistance to SMEs in 2009. It also highlighted the importance of the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative aiming at assisting the existing entities in partner countries operating in support of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises by assessing the needs of these enterprises, defining policy solutions and providing these entities with resources in the form of technical assistance and financial instruments and based on the principle of co-ownership. Contributions by countries from both rims of the Mediterranean will be done on a voluntary basis. Italy is candidate to host an informal meeting in Milan involving Governments, the private sector and experts focused on promoting economic cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean will meet in the second half of 2009 in order to take stock of the progress achieved in the implementation of the working programme for 2009, and the projects agreed and in particular the key initiatives as agreed at the Paris Summit, as well as prepare for the next summit in 2010.

Interpretative Declaration by the Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean

With regard to the second indent of paragraph 9 of the Marseille Declaration, the co-presidency considers that the invocation by a State of its legitimate interests to oppose the implementation of a project must be assessed by all the States of the Union for the Mediterranean.
