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JOINT STAFF WORKING PAPER

Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2010 Follow-Up to the Joint Communication on a Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean

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JOINT STAFF WORKING PAPER

Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2010 Follow-Up to the Joint Communication on a Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean

There is considerable read-across between the Communication on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the 8 March Communication on “*A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the southern Mediterranean*” (COM(2011)200).

The Communication on the southern Mediterranean sets out the steps taken and the instruments available to respond immediately to ongoing events, be it supporting the transition in Tunisia or helping to prevent a humanitarian crisis in and around Libya. It also looks into the future outlining an incentive based approach to assist political, economic and social reforms in the countries of the region. Highlighting the importance of higher standards of human rights, democracy and accountable governance it builds around three priority areas:

- Democratic transformation and institution building, with a particular focus on fundamental freedoms, constitutional reforms, reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption
- A stronger partnership with the people, with specific emphasis on support to civil society and on enhanced opportunities for exchanges and people-to-people contacts with a particular focus on the young
- Sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development especially to support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), vocational and educational training, improving health and education systems and development of the poorer regions.

The Communication on 'a new response to a changing Neighbourhood' provides additional information as to how the above priorities will be addressed, both in terms of principles to be applied and specific measures to be implemented. It sets out proposals for additional funding, under the current Financial Framework, and the tools and programmes through which this support will be delivered. Finally, it integrates these elements in a broader policy framework that includes a long-term vision and a medium-term agenda covering the whole of the Neighbourhood.

With respect to the 8 March Communication, services in the European Commission and the European External Action Service have jointly embarked on an effort to put words into action – to demonstrate progress in key areas of support for democracy, society and the economy. This document highlights some of the specific areas where work has already been undertaken.

1. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

ECHO (EU humanitarian aid and civil protection) teams are present at the Tunisian-Libyan and borders as well as in eastern Libya in order to assess humanitarian needs and the overall situation. EUR 40 million has been made available for humanitarian assistance to the most affected people in Libya and neighbouring countries (Tunisia, Egypt). The Commission is ready to increase its funding if needs on the ground so require. On 15 May, the total EU contribution (European Commission and Member States) totalled almost EUR 103 million.

2. FOSTERING CIVIL SOCIETY

While awaiting a more comprehensive needs assessment, in March the Commission launched local actions (through calls for proposals) in Tunis and Cairo in support of civil society. Particular focus is given on helping Egyptian and Tunisian Civil Society Organisations to play an active and effective role in shaping the reform agenda, and to help with effectively engaging all strata of the population in this process.

3. SUPPORT FOR THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

In Tunisia an EU expert team is currently working on electoral legislation and democratic transition. Further assistance will be given to support the training of local elections observers throughout the country, to promote a gender-sensitive democratic transition and to support professionalism of the media. The EU has received an invitation from the Tunisian authorities to observe the Constituent Assembly elections planned for 24 July and sent an exploratory mission at the end of April.

4. SCREENING AND REFOCUSING OF ONGOING EU AID PROGRAMMES IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

The Commission services and the EEAS are screening National Indicative Programmes 2011–2013 and Annual Action Plans 2011 with partner Governments. Some modifications have already been made to 2011 project pipelines to strengthen governance, employment and youth dimensions. A first set of Actions Fiches (financing proposals) will be presented to the Member States in July and the remainder will follow in September.

5. INCREASE IN EIB LENDING TO THE REGION BY AN ADDITIONAL EUR 1 BILLION

The European Parliament proposed increasing the lending envelope by EUR 1 billion for the Mediterranean. The European Council of 24/25 March concluded that the ceiling for EIB operations for Mediterranean countries undertaking political reform should be increased by EUR 1 billion. This issue is part of the mid-term review of the EIB external mandate currently under negotiation in the EP and Council. Several trilogue meetings have already taken place. The shared aim is to finalise the negotiations during the summer 2011.

6. EXTENSION OF THE EBRD MANDATE TO SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES (WITH A MOBILISATION OF EUR 1 BILLION)

As proposed in the Joint Communication, the European Council of 24/25 March concluded that EBRD shareholders should consider the possible extension of the Bank's activities to countries in the Southern Neighbourhood. The EBRD presented an initial technical assessment to its Board. Some time will be necessary to allow shareholders to firm up their positions. In the meantime, the issue should continue to be explored informally within the Bank and in international fora (G7/8, G20 and the IMF/WB Spring meetings) before the Astana Annual Meeting on 21 May, where a formal decision is expected to be taken by the EBRD Governors

7. CONCLUSION OF THE SINGLE REGIONAL CONVENTION ON PAN-EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PREFERENTIAL RULES OF ORIGIN IN 2011

A Council Decision on the signature of the Convention was taken on 14 April 2011. This is now with the European Parliament for assent.

8. THE NEW APPROACH ON PARTNERSHIP FOR MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND SECURITY

The Commission will make proposals on migration policy, including for the southern Mediterranean area, in May.

9. ENHANCING TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITH SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN NEIGHBOURS

Informal contacts have started or are about to start with different Southern Mediterranean countries to assess their readiness to engage in negotiations (or preparations for negotiations) in the fields of agricultural, processed agricultural and fisheries products, liberalisation of trade in services and establishment and conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products. Contacts have also intensified with the European Parliament on the agricultural agreement with Morocco on which the consent of the EP is needed. Negotiations with Morocco on trade in services and establishment are likely to be re-launched at political level in May. A first meeting to launch the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Trade and Investment facilitation mechanism will take place in May.