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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

"The Barcelona Process : Union for the Mediterranean. A reinforced regional partnership. Proposals for the 2009 work programme to be adopted at the 10th Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Marseille, 3-4 November 2008)."

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The first Summit of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' (Paris, 13 July 2008) injected a renewed political momentum into Europe's relations with its Mediterranean Partner countries. 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. The Commission welcomes the results of this first Summit which marks an important step forward for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership while also highlighting the EU's unwavering commitment and common political will to make the goals of the Barcelona Declaration – the creation of an area of stability, shared prosperity and security in the Mediterranean region – a reality.
2. At the Paris Summit, the Heads of State and Government agreed to hold biennial summits to endorse broad two-year work programmes for the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the Annual Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs will continue to review progress in the implementation of the summit conclusions and prepare the next summit meetings. It was also agreed that the Senior Officials would continue to convene regularly in order to prepare the Ministerial meetings and submit the annual work programme to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. At the invitation of the current French Co-Presidency of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' and Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and in line with established practice in the Euro-Med Partnership, the European Commission is putting forward the present working document to review progress in the implementation of the work programme agreed in Lisbon and to set out proposals for 2009, with a view to the next (10th) Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Marseille, 3-4 November 2008).
3. The 10th Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers Meeting in Marseille will take place at a crucial time for the development of the European Union's relations with the Mediterranean. The purpose of the meeting should be threefold: to take stock of the progress made by the Partnership since the Lisbon Foreign Ministers' Meeting (5-6 November 2007), particularly in the implementation of the Five-Year work Programme adopted at the 2005 Barcelona Summit; to discuss the future development of the Partnership, notably in the light of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean', and finally to agree on the institutional arrangements of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'.

Stocktaking and Proposed initiatives for 2009

4. Since the Euro-Med Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon (5-6 November 2007), important progress has been made in many areas of the Partnership, and regional cooperation has advanced in all four of its chapters (political dialogue; economic cooperation; cultural and human dimension; and migration, social integration, justice and security). Most of the concrete initiatives agreed at the Lisbon Meeting have been implemented or will be before the end of 2008. Further steps need to be taken in 2009 to implement the Five-Year Work Programme in order to advance the regional integration process. The following meetings are therefore proposed for 2009:
- The 6th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Transport,
 - the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education & Scientific Research,
 - the 6th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Energy,
 - the 4th Ministerial Meeting on the Environment,
 - the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on strengthening the role of women in society,
 - the annual Euro Med Economic Transition conference,
 - the 9th FEMIP Ministerial Meeting,
 - the 5th Euro-Mediterranean ECOFIN Ministerial conference,
 - the 8th Trade Ministerial Conference,
 - The 11th Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs

Political and security dialogue

5. Since the adoption of the Lisbon conclusions, 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. To this end a Euro-Med ad hoc meeting on counter-terrorism (Brussels, 22 April 2008) provided the opportunity for a meaningful exchange on measures to counter the use of the internet for terrorist purposes. Furthermore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in cooperation with the European Commission and the Kingdom of Morocco, co-organised a regional workshop on the mechanisms of international cooperation in criminal matters pertaining to counter-terrorism (Rabat, 5-6 May 2008), which proved to be very useful for sharing expertise, case studies and experience in matters such as extradition and mutual legal assistance. Combating terrorism in accordance with international law was the topic of the Euro-Med seminar in Prague (16-17 June 2008), organised by the European Commission and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The seminar adopted extensive recommendations on issues of common concern, such as the fight against discrimination, ensuring freedom of

expression, combating torture and guaranteeing the right to a fair trial. The Commission proposes to build on the recommendations of the Rabat workshop and concentrate efforts in 2009 on mechanisms and conditions for international cooperation, such as the role of liaison magistrates or the setting-up of appropriate legal and regulatory regimes to ensure an adequate level of protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data.

- c. Deepening of the dialogue on ESDP and crisis management. The Euro-Med ad hoc meeting on ESDP (Brussels, 23 June 2008) provided a good opportunity to review past and future ESDP dialogue and activities (civilian and military) and to present the crisis response component of the Instrument for Stability.
- d. The deepening of regional dialogue on joint cooperation, best practices and exchange of experience in the area of elections has further been pursued at Senior Official level. The European Commission has prepared some proposals to take these issues forward at the appropriate expert level with a view to practical cooperation in this area.
- e. 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. The Commission believes there should be an open discussion with a view to identifying areas of common ground in legislative and regulatory reform. In this context, the following ideas could be further developed in 2009: 1) experiences with and exchanges on national human rights plans and strategies; 2) freedom of expression and association.
- f. The rising trend in vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters in many parts of the Mediterranean confirms the need for greater safety and security measures to protect its citizens. The Commission has therefore highlighted the role of the regional 'Bridge Programme (2004-2008) on Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Natural and Man-made Disasters', which has helped pave the way for an effective and sustainable Euro-Med system of civil protection, 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). The PPRD will contribute to the development of stronger prevention, preparedness and response capacities in civil protection at international, national and local level, in both institutional and operational terms. It will also aim to bring the Mediterranean Partner Countries progressively closer to the European Civil Protection Mechanism (MIC).
- g. The Commission is a strong supporter of the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) because it reinforces the democratic legitimacy of the Partnership. A Union for the people of the Mediterranean requires a strong parliamentary dimension, so the Commission welcomes the role played by the EMPA as the legitimate expression of the Barcelona Process. The position of the EMPA should be further consolidated and its work better articulated with the other institutions of the Partnership.

Economic and Financial Partnership

Energy

6. Participants at the last Euro-med Energy Ministerial Conference (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 legislations in the Euro-Med region; (2) promoting sustainable development in the energy sector; (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 Euro-Med 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 by the Euro-Med Expert Group reporting to the Euro-Med Energy Forum. The next Expert Group will meet on 7 October 2008 to review progress achieved and to agree on future actions.

Transport

7. There is widespread recognition of the need to set up an integrated Euro-Mediterranean transport system and to improve connections with the trans-European Transport network. All modes of transport should be covered, with a particular focus on the opening up of markets, security and safety, and smooth functioning of the multimodal transport chain. The high-level conference on transport (Lisbon, 3 December 2007) reaffirmed the importance of the 2007-2013 Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP), adopted at the 8th Euro-Med Transport Forum in Brussels, May 2007, and its related 34 actions on infrastructure development as well as on policy and regulatory reforms. In order to follow up the implementation of the RTAP, the Expert Groups on “Infrastructures and Regulatory issues” and on “Motorways of the Sea” met, respectively on 16 and 17 July 2008. One more meeting for both of these working groups, a financing conference, and the 9th Euro-Med Transport Forum are planned before the end of 2008. The outcome of all these activities would lead to a Ministerial Conference in 2009.

Environment

8. The Second Water Ministerial Conference (29 October 2008) should approve guidelines for a Water Strategy in the Mediterranean and the related Action Plan. The Strategy should cover the following areas: (a) effective water governance for integrated water resources management and water supply; (b) addressing water and climate change through both adaptation and mitigation measures; (c) optimising water financing; (d) water demand management and efficiency and non-conventional water resources. The Strategy should also build upon existing programmes, especially the Horizon 2020 initiative launched at the Environment Ministerial in Cairo (November 2006) and on the outcome of the Mediterranean component of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI), launched at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (WSSD). In 2009, the EUWI and Horizon 2020 will each, where appropriate and taking into account their own specificities, contribute to implementing the measures agreed for 2009 at the Water Ministerial Conference. The Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors are scheduled to meet in 2009.

9. Implementation of the measures in the timetable of actions (Cairo roadmap) approved at the third Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Environment Ministers in Cairo will continue to dominate Horizon 2020 work. A summary of progress with the Cairo roadmap since its ministerial approval will be produced. The Horizon 2020 Steering Group, which met in Tunis on 16 June 2008, is up and running with wide regional participation on the part of governments and other stakeholders and has co-chairs from both North and South. The European Investment Bank (EIB) will work with a small group of key donors to follow up on the publication of the Mediterranean Hot-Spot Identification Programme (MeHSIP) report. The aim will be to develop the pipeline for the H2020 pollution reduction project based on the analytical work carried out for the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). Following the agreement reached with MAP in April 2008, MAP Regional Activity Centres will collaborate with the European Environment Agency to develop the scorecard and indicator framework in line with the Cairo roadmap.
10. The results of the Water Ministerial Conference, together with the achievements since the Cairo Ministerial, should form the basis for the Environment Ministerial planned in 2009. The annual meeting of the Horizon 2020 Steering group will be held along as will meetings of each of the three sub-groups (pollution reduction, capacity building along with monitoring and research). Additional meetings for the transfer of know-how (similar to those that have already taken place) will be held subject to available resources.
11. Developing an integrated maritime policy and promoting a maritime strategy for the Mediterranean will also be an important feature of the Euro-Med Partnership in 2009 and beyond. The Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers Meeting in Marseille should therefore take into account the Blue Book on the new European Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) and its Plan of Action, thus reinforcing an integrated approach in sectoral policies with maritime components such as transport, energy, environment or tourism.

Information Society

12. In the light of the Cairo Ministerial Declaration (28 February 2008), a new step is to be launched in Euro-Med dialogue on issues relating to the Information Society. Ministers agreed to intensify cooperation on a regulatory framework 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 specific Action Plan will be prepared for approval at the next meeting of the Euro-Med Forum of Senior Officials to be organised before the end of 2009.

Tourism

13. Tourism is one of the major economic sectors in the Mediterranean. In 2005, more than 50 million tourist arrivals were registered in Mediterranean partner countries, with, in most cases, between 50% and 80% from EU Member States. The EU and Mediterranean partner countries held a first ministerial meeting in Morocco (Fez, 2-3 April 2008), and agreed that such meetings would be held every two years. They stressed the need to reinforce cooperation in the field of tourism and 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. They 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 senior tourism officials to meet in order to prepare a Working Programme to be submitted to the next Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on Tourism in 2010.

Towards the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area

14. The 2007 Euro-Mediterranean Trade Ministerial meeting in Lisbon launched discussions by Euro-Med Senior Trade Officials on the future Euro-Med trade agenda. The aim of this work is to deepen the current trade and investment relations with Euro-Med partners with a view to enhancing economic integration, trade diversification and European investment in Mediterranean countries. At the 7th Euro-Med Trade Ministerial 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 future Trade Roadmap will include acts to be carried out : 1) in the short and medium term: the priority will be to conclude ongoing negotiations and to focus on concrete proposals to enhance transparency and facilitate market access in the Euro-Med region, and 2) in the longer term: partners could envisage turning the existing Association Agreements into deep and comprehensive free trade agreements, including provisions on 'beyond the border' and regulatory issues, which will yield positive results for both North-South and South-South relations. The Trade Senior Officials Working Group will meet in the autumn 2008 and in early 2009 in order to finalise the Euro-Mediterranean Trade Roadmap till 2010 and beyond. The ultimate aim is the establishment of an ambitious, deep Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.
15. 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 and are expected to be concluded by 2010 at the latest. Regional negotiations 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.
16. 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 be accelerated with other Mediterranean countries with a view to concluding the remaining bilateral protocols as soon as possible.
17. 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 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.

Industrial Cooperation

18. 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 Euro-Med 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. One key issue will of course be the articulation of Euro-Med industrial cooperation and the new BP:UfM initiative. Ministers will endorse a work programme on industrial cooperation for 2009-2010 adapted to this new context.

Economic dialogue

19. 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 Commission proposes centring discussions for the upcoming Conference in 2009 on agriculture and the world food crisis.
20. The Euro-Med Network of Public Finance Experts will be 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.
21. The first meeting of the network will take 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 Euro-Med ECOFIN/FEMIP Ministerial. The next regular meeting of the Euro-Med Network of Public Finance Experts is expected in the lead up to the 2009 Ministerial, with its activities possibly expanding to include the funding of targeted studies on the economic aspects of the neighbourhood policies in the Mediterranean region and/or dedicated workshops or conferences involving EU and partner countries and focusing on macro-economic policies and public finance.

Ongoing work on statistics cooperation

22. Reliable statistics are an important factor in decision making. The technical assistance to the statistical services in the Mediterranean partner countries are receiving technical assistance from the regional MEDSTAT II programme, which aims to improve statistics in nine key areas: Agriculture, Energy, Environment, External Trade, Migration, National Accounts, Social Affairs, Tourism and Transport. The programme will run until September 2009. The last year of this programme will be devoted to consolidating the results achieved so far, notably the dissemination and continued exchange of data. To this end, Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with several countries. In addition, the new instruments available under the ENPI framework and a regional bridging programme will be used to ensure the sustainability of cooperation in the field of statistics.

Social, human and cultural cooperation

Developing a genuine social dimension

23. In December 2007 a Euro-Med workshop on employment policy and on practical measures to enhance the employability of job seekers and create decent employment opportunities was held in Brussels, paving the way for the first Euro-Med Conference of Employment and Labour Ministers to be held in Marrakesh on 9-10 November 2008.
24. This workshop, which brought together government representatives, social partners, and international organisations, helped to enhance understanding of the challenges facing labour markets and employment policies in the context of globalisation, technological evolution and demographic change. Social protection, employment creation, the modernisation of labour markets and the promotion of decent work are among the most pressing challenges for the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries, despite considerable national differences.

The first Conference of Employment and Labour Ministers will take stock of the Workshop. The Ministerial Conference will also 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. The aim will be to reaffirm their international commitments. 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 gender equality, the integration of young people within the labour market, the transformation of informal into formal employment, and labour migration.

25. Employment and Labour Ministers should also approve an effective follow-up mechanism, with reporting on national progress and exchange of practices in advance of the Ministerial conferences on Employment and Labour, the next one taking place in 2010. This work is to be supported by a Euro-Med Employment and Labour Working Group of Senior Officials, chaired by the European Commission, which will meet for the first time in autumn 2009. 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-Med region should be further developed.

Health

26. The 2nd Euro-Med Ministerial on Health will take place in Egypt on 17 November 2008. Ministers should take stock, inter alia, of the results of the Workshop on Communicable diseases and Health Systems (Brussels, 4-5 December 2007) and on non-communicable and chronic diseases. The Ministerial meeting should agree on means to strengthen the health dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in order to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region by improving human health, enhancing the coordination of international activities within the Mediterranean region, improving their capacity to set priorities in health in the fields of communicable diseases (taking into account the ECDC activities) and non-communicable diseases (e.g. national plans for nutrition and physical activity), helping to ensure equal access to quality care on a sustainable basis for their populations by strengthening health systems, and contributing to a broad

participation and consultation and cross-sector cooperation in health sector development involving different line ministries, health care providers, professional and scientific organisations (e.g. WHO), user and patient representation and economic operators.

Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area

27. The inauguration of the Euro-Med 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 institutions and existing universities in the Euro-Med region, the Euro-Mediterranean University will develop postgraduate and research programmes and thus contribute to the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education, Science and Research Area.
28. Following the conclusions of the Cairo Declaration adopted at the 2007 Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Research, an ad hoc working group on higher education was convened for the first time on 5 June 2008. This meeting confirmed that European and Mediterranean countries are facing similar challenges in reforming their higher education systems to make them attractive, competitive and compatible. This work should continue in the near future, but the Commission considers that further reflection is needed on the precise mandate of the working group.
29. The 12th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Research and Technological Development (MoCo) will take place on 6 November 2008 in Istanbul. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the participation of the Mediterranean countries in the Seventh Framework Programme for RTD (FP7), identify science and technology (S&T) priorities and assess the progress made in S&T cooperation so as to prepare the next Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research due to take place in 2009.
30. In promoting regional cooperation in higher education, the Commission encourages Euro-Med partner countries to make full use of possibilities offered by existing higher education cooperation programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, including the External Cooperation Window, which addresses the challenges noted above through projects, students and academics exchanges, conferences and related activities. The Commission considers 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-Med Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research should be convened in the 2nd semester 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 and access to local culture

31. 2008 has been a very important year for the cultural dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The 3rd meeting of Euro-Med 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 Euro-Med 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.
32. Following the approval of its new 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. The partnership welcomes the observatory role that the Foundation is intended to play and the annual reports to be produced.
33. 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.
34. The audiovisual media and cinema as well as the promotion of cultural heritage are excellent vehicles for intercultural dialogue between the Mediterranean countries and Europe. On the basis of the previous Euro-Med 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 Euro-Med Audiovisual Programme could be launched in 2009.
35. Euro-Med 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 and workers.

Strengthening the role of women in society

36. As part of the follow up to the Istanbul Ministerial Conference held in 2006 on ‘Strengthening the role of women in society’, a second Ministerial conference will be held in 2009. The Commission proposes that the next Ministerial meeting should focus on priority areas based on the Istanbul conclusions. A possible outcome could be a concrete two-year working plan, including benchmarks and indicators. In order to prepare this ministerial Conference, two ad hoc working groups will be organised: a thematic group during the first half of 2009 and a second group focusing on the

general implementation of the Istanbul conclusions but also to prepare the Ministerial meeting. To this end, the Commission will also produce an implementation report on the basis of a questionnaire sent to all Euro-Med partners as well as other stakeholders (EMPA, EESC, civil society organisations). Furthermore, an ad hoc thematic working group held in Brussels on 12 June 2008 provided an opportunity for a meaningful exchange on the participation of women in political life.

Cooperation with civil society and local actors

37. To further strengthen mutual understanding, cooperation and dialogue between local actors in the Mediterranean region, the Commission is launching a new programme in 2008, called CIUDAD (Cooperation in Urban Development and Dialogue), which will start its activities in 2009. The CIUDAD program will cover the entire ENPI region and will strengthen the capacity of local and regional governments to put into practice good governance principles and to formulate and implement sustainable, integrated and long-term urban development plans. The key thematic priorities to be addressed include environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, sustainable economic development, and reduction of social disparities.
38. Civil society should be further empowered and its capability enhanced through improved interaction with governments and parliaments. It is therefore necessary to encourage more target-oriented approaches from organisations and use the Partnership as a springboard for promoting structuring at national level. To this end, the Commission is launching a new regional programme in 2008 aiming at strengthening the role of civil society. Furthermore, efforts to organise the next Civil Forum in Marseille (31 October-2 November) should be encouraged and the important contribution of the Euro-Med non-governmental platform acknowledged.

Enhancing the visibility of the Partnership

39. The visibility of the Partnership is vital for its public understanding and acceptance as well as its accountability and legitimacy. 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.
40. Furthermore, efforts will continue to promote the different aspects of media development in the region. The Euro-Med 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, intercultural dialogue, and freedom of the press.

Migration

41. The first Euro-Med Ministerial meeting on migration (Albufeira, 19 November 2007) adopted a joint work programme based on three areas of cooperation: promoting legal migration opportunities, fostering links between migration and development and combating illegal migration. Ministers recalled that migration should be an

integral part of the regional Partnership, and its related challenges need to be addressed through a comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach. The agreed initiatives have begun to be implemented this year with the launching of the regional Euro-Med Migration II Programme (2008-2011), aimed at developing cooperation in the management of migration in order to build capacity to provide an effective, targeted and comprehensive solution for the various forms of migration. Furthermore the thematic Cooperation Programme with Third countries on migration and asylum highlights the Euro-Med region as one of the priority areas of the 2007-2008 call for proposals and a number of additional initiatives are therefore expected to be launched by the end of 2008.

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.