



THE NETWORK
OF MAJOR
EUROPEAN
CITIES

EUROCITIES Statement on Revising the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES represents more than 100 major cities in some 32 European countries. EUROCITIES works on behalf of the cities with the European institutions on a wide range of issues affecting local authorities, and enables the exchange of best practices in local governance among its members.

EUROCITIES aims to achieve a Europe with inclusive, prosperous, creative, and sustainable cities, with democratic and effective governance. A Europe offering all citizens ways to participate in the political, cultural, social and economic aspects of urban life.

CONTEXT

EUROCITIES has a Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. This ‘Euromed’ working group, created in 2000, involves cities from Europe, the Maghreb and the Middle East. It aims to create dialogue, exchange and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area at city level.

Euromed operates within the Regional Cooperation dimension of the Barcelona Process and in particular on the third Chapter (Social, Cultural and Human Chapter) of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership¹.

The Barcelona Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers in 1995 marked the beginning of a wide range of political, economic and social relations between EU Member States and Partners of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

The Barcelona Declaration established three main objectives:

1. The definition of a common area of peace and stability through the reinforcement of political and security dialogue (Political and Security Chapter);
2. The construction of a zone of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership and the gradual establishment of a free-trade area (Economic and Financial Chapter); and,
3. The *rapprochement* between people through a social, cultural and human partnership aimed at encouraging understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (Social, Cultural and Human Chapter).

At the most recent meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in The Hague on the 29-30 November 2004, Ministers confirmed that the Barcelona Process, enhanced by the European Neighbourhood Policy, is the main joint EU-Mediterranean initiative for the Mediterranean area. It is the central instrument for partnership and dialogue for this area and should lead to achieving the political, social and economic reform objectives of the partners, which are also confirmed in the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

¹ *The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Barcelona in November 1995*

In addition, the Ministers launched preparations for the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona process in November 2005. It was decided to name 2005 the 'Year of the Mediterranean' and conclude the year with a high-level political meeting and celebratory event on the tenth anniversary in Barcelona in November.

During the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly of March 2005 in Cairo, Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy, underlined that the new Neighbourhood Policy complements the Barcelona process and that the convergence between the two policies will be at the core of the Commission's communication ahead of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration.

Ministers agreed that a comprehensive review of the process should take place. This should provide the basis for decisions on the future of the process and be submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Affairs Ministers for their approval on 30-31 May 2005 in Luxembourg.

GIVEN THAT:

- Many of the key institutions and the actors involved in the partnership (Commission, Parliament, Ministers, Committee of the Regions, Civil Forum) have expressed the need to re-launch the Barcelona Process in order to coordinate it with the European Neighbourhood Policy.
- Emphasis has also been placed on the need to bring the partnership closer to citizens' concerns and to support the political, cultural and social aspects and point out the importance of civil society and the local authorities' in this process.
- Cities are home to a significant proportion of the population in the North, as well as, increasingly, in the South and East of the Mediterranean.
- Many cities across Europe already have relations with the Mediterranean world, as they are often home to large populations from the region whom they must integrate and whom they must, consequently, know and understand better.
- Cities are the level of public authority closest to citizens and can provide a framework for developing links between cultures and people and contribute to bringing closer

together peoples of the region. In this way they are important partners for governments in bringing the Barcelona Process closer to the citizens.

- By working together, the Euro-Mediterranean cities can contribute to building stability in the region and combating racism and xenophobia.
- Decentralised cooperation between local authorities is an effective way to boost the local economy in the East and Southern Mediterranean.
- Euro-Mediterranean cities face similar technical and political challenges and a great deal can be learned across a wide range of areas through cooperation and the sharing of experiences, both for the elected representatives as well as for the officials.
- In the current context of increased globalisation, preserving local differences and specificities is increasingly considered an important principle. A bottom-up approach, which gives local communities the opportunity to take an active part in decision-making, is a key building block to achieving this.

EUROCITIES members already have concrete experience to draw from in the framework of the European Commission funded MED'ACT pilot programme for city-to-city cooperation, which has allowed a momentum to grow in cooperation across a range of areas, such as culture, environment, urban development and local governance.

EUROCITIES SUPPORTS:

- The further development of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and believes city-to-city cooperation can provide a unique added value. The activities of its Euromed working group illustrate the capacity of local authorities to participate actively in a Euro-Mediterranean cooperation programme and the contribution they can make to establishing links and promoting practical measures amongst local partners and networks in several fields. The result is a shared heritage of experience and cooperation across the Euro-Mediterranean region, which should be recognised and fostered.
- And welcomes the establishment of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the dialogue among cultures and civilisations, the NGO Platform for the Civil Forum, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and the revision of the European Initiative for

Democracy and Human Rights as important developments in promoting the values of the Barcelona Process.

- Continued visibility of the basic principles of the Barcelona Process: equality, joint responsibility, solidarity and cooperation; and looks forward to further clarification of the institutional and operational frameworks of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

AND ASKS:

National Governments, the European Commission and the European Parliament to **acknowledge cities as active partners in Euro-Mediterranean relations**, with an important role to play in the revision of the Barcelona Process and in the shaping of the new European Neighbourhood Policy, and therefore to support the following:

1. Local and regional authorities should be consulted on the European Neighbourhood Policy and revision of the Barcelona process, particularly with regard to defining cooperation activities, financial instruments and, thematic priorities.
2. The 2005 revision of the Barcelona Process provides an opportunity to restate the commitment to hold meetings between representatives of local and regional authorities, envisaged in the Barcelona Declaration but never carried out, and to take concrete steps to realise it.
3. A Euro-Mediterranean Forum should be set up to represent local authorities as institutions involved in the Barcelona Process.
4. Emphasis should be given to the following priorities for cooperation between communities in the Euro-Mediterranean region: intercultural dialogue, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, social integration of immigrants and combating against clandestine immigration and human trafficking, sustainable urban development (water, waste management, air pollution, local economy, social problems etc.) reinforcement of local governance, urban mobility, economic development, information and communication technologies, urban planning and housing.
5. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)
 - a. Should enable the further development of cooperation between the local and regional authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean.

- b. Should provide for a large 'cities' program with an emphasis on the role of cities as a unique intermediary between civil society and national and international levels and potential engines of regional growth and sustainable development.
- c. Should cover projects that have tangible results for the wider population and not only focus on exchange of experience.
- d. Should not only rely on its own resources for funding, but also on those of the European Investment Bank's Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership, and possibly a Euro-Mediterranean Investment Bank.