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**THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN  
AREA**

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# **The Future of the North-South Dialogue in the Mediterranean Area**

## **Executive Summary**

At the beginning of a 21<sup>st</sup> century characterised by the acceleration of historical events – marked by tragedies, conflicts and distress – the members of the Mediterranean community are wondering how links can be established for restoring lost unity.

Since the Barcelona Conference in November 1995, multiple partnerships have been created by the European Union in the economic, industrial and environmental field with the Arab countries in the framework of the Mediterranean association agreements. A number of networks have been launched. They aim both at consolidating the cultural and the economic partnership between the South and the North of the Mediterranean and at appeasing the misunderstandings and the lack of comprehension between Arabs and Europeans. The latest of these initiatives has been the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean foundation for the cultural dialogue.

There will still be a long way to travel — due to geo-historical stresses and strains, to changes in the recent and in the more remote past, to the resurgence of conflicts of identity and, in particular, of the symptomatic splits and breaks that continue to affect the Mediterranean area. It is therefore urgent to re-launch the dialogue between the South and the North of the Mediterranean on the political and cultural ground.

## **Current and future challenges for the Mediterranean area**

Since the Barcelona Conference in 1995, major efforts have been undertaken for establishing an ambitious project by which the 21st century would become accessible to the Mediterranean area. These first steps on the road towards a Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area are a first positive factor which, over the coming decade, should lead to the development of dynamics at the level of enterprises and other economic actors in the Mediterranean countries.

It may be questioned, however, whether the Barcelona process can actually cope with all the challenges and problems affecting the Mediterranean basin. It is necessary to ask this question in view of the importance and of the urgency of the challenges to be met.

These challenges are well known. They exist simultaneously in the political, economic, cultural and environmental domain. Any observer of Mediterranean reality will confirm that it is here that we are confronted with one of the most profound and probably also most significant divisions separating the north and the south of our globe, i.e. the developed and the developing or sometimes pauperising countries.

The Mediterranean basin being an important border area between the industrialised and the developing world, reflects the great differences that exist between the North and the south, which lead to imbalances on the economic, financial, demographic and technological level. The growth of such disparities holds the risk of greatly endangering stability and welfare in the entire region.

It will not be possible to construct the Mediterranean area of tomorrow unless a strategy of management by partnership is applied to the complex problems of this region — that challenges are met, contradictions are coped with and the following decisive issues fully mastered:

- The challenge represented by Security and political stability in the Mediterranean region;
- Economic growth by joint development and partnerships between North and South;
- Stabilisation of demographic growth and management of migratory movements
- Ecological threats and improvement of the environment.

### **Reconstructing bridges over the Mediterranean**

Over the last years, the term “reconstruction” has been used particularly often by academics, and by writers and political people on both sides of the Mediterranean. Obviously, the problems are huge today concerning the future development of peace, stability and freedom in the region. Also the goal is clear, namely to reduce the division, the lack of understanding, the disparities — whether economic, political or cultural. In this respect, we consider that the following five factors are essential and constitute the pillars on which any project for reconstructing the Mediterranean edifice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should stand:

1. Rebuild the heritage of Abraham around the monotheist message;
2. Develop political initiatives between the Arab-Islamic and the western European-Christian worlds in the areas of peace and security;
3. Consolidate the elements of interdependence in the areas of economy, industry, energy and technology on the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean
4. Mobilise civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean around the current Mediterranean project;
5. Highlight the dynamics of the “cultural bridges” between the Arab world and Europe that existed in the past: Andalusia in Spain, Sicily in Italy, Cyprus and Turkey.

The development of a global Euro-Mediterranean society is a long-term project. In order to be successful, it will be necessary to mobilise all the vital forces on both sides of the Mediterranean for undertaking a fundamental socio-economic and cultural effort which demands the unswerving political will of most of the political movements and actors in civil society in Europe, in the Maghreb area and in the Arab world. In this context, the crucial role of civil society must be highlighted. Today and in future, civil society is the only element that is both able to abandon the die-hard thinking patterns concerning north/south relations and to overcome blocked situations.

It can do this by mobilising the population itself to better understand the common bond between the Mediterranean, European and Arab countries, and thus open the way for a global co-development project proportionate with Europe, the Mediterranean and the Arab World in the 21st century.

In this quest for a new model for north/south cultural relations, it seems important to deal with the “Andalusian model”. In the part of southern Europe called Andalusia, for centuries a brilliant civilisation developed which influenced the Maghreb area, Spain and even Sicily. In Andalusia, certain centres such as Seville, Cordoba, Granada or Toledo were the hubs from where cultural exchange with the Christian world took place. To revive the Andalusian dream — which stood for values such as tolerance and friendship between Muslims, Jews and Christians — should be the action platform for today and tomorrow, in order to bridge the gap of understanding from which suffers the Mediterranean region. By its ethnic mixture, its multilingual character, its Jewish-Arab and Islamic-Christian points of convergence the society of Al Andalus has multiplied between these three cultures a series of genuinely civilising contacts.

In today’s difficult times which are characterised by an uncertain international political and economic situation as well as by the resurgence of religious and theocratic elements, the dialogue between cultures and civilisations is the best essential matrix for shaping the Euro-Mediterranean project as a whole.

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  - « Dialogue de Civilisations en Méditerranée. »Tunis, Éd L’Or du Temps, 1997 , 234p
  - « La Méditerranée et le Monde arabo-méditerranéen aux portes du XXI<sup>e</sup> Siècle : Choc de Cultures ou Dialogue de Civilisations ? » Tunis, Centre de Publication Universitaire , 2004, 245p
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# The Future of the North-South Dialogue in the Mediterranean Area

## General Introduction

How do the Mediterranean area and the Arab-Mediterranean world look like at the threshold of the 21st century? A crucial question that many political scientists, economists and academics ask themselves at a time when, since the 1995 Barcelona conference, the Mediterranean area is in the focus of many debates in this region.

In view of Mediterranean actuality one is tempted to believe that the Mediterranean — with all the demographic, economic, and technological unbalances and disparities between its two banks — is rather to be considered as a concept, a kind of utopia, and at best a project that needs to be developed. Actually, the Mediterranean region suffers from a series of geo-historical burdens as complex and as important as the Mediterranean civilisations themselves are rich and profound. In addition of this heavy historical load there are the many challenges of today, which hamper the way forward of the Mediterranean project.

We must therefore ask ourselves some self-evident questions. Can we speak of stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region as long as the flagrant imbalances between the two sides persist, as long as a great number of endemic conflicts, notably in the Middle East, remain unsolved?

Is the project of a Mediterranean free-trade area, which Barcelona foresaw for 2010, not jeopardised as long as significant differences between income levels and technological capacities persist? These two questions summarise the essence of the Mediterranean debate and describe the complex problems which are at the base of the Euro-Mediterranean project.

Beyond these few considerations it is not intended to propose any new initiatives or cultural projects which would add to the thousands of projects that already exist with the objective of consolidating the basis of the Trans-Mediterranean dialogue. These ideas merely wish to identify the parameters, the mechanisms or, more exactly, the pillars on which the bridges should rest that, since the establishment of the Barcelona “construction site”, are being rebuilt between the two banks of the Mediterranean. Millions of people want their region to become a place of peace, stability and shared prosperity. Far from the biased principles and theories born in other parts of the world and promulgating the “clash of civilisations”, these considerations aim at contributing to an active strategy for developing the dialogue between cultures and civilisations around the Mediterranean and in the world.

## **Part I**

# **THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA — ITS GEO-HISTORICAL BURDEN**

In these first years of the new century, marked by an enormous acceleration of history of humanity, with dramatic events, wars and anguish, the Mediterranean community is wondering how it will be possible to establish the relations and links which will allow it to rebuild its lost unity.

Since the early 1950s, the Mediterranean has been a constant victim of sometimes radical tensions between the Arab-Islamic and the western world. This tension is due to the effects of de-colonisation but also to the economic and social differences prevailing in the area, which have become increasingly visible. Tensions have increased due to the negative perception of western attitudes in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the disastrous effects of the second Gulf war (1990-1991) followed by the third Anglo-American war against Iraq (2003).

In this context, the Southern Mediterranean and more particularly the Arab World has become the subject of a certain fixation and of a number of manipulations in the political field and in the media which has led to frequent misunderstandings of all kinds. Attention continues to be focused on this issue and already a look at publications during the last decade shows that there is a great amount of literature on the subject of a geographical region which is dominated by doubt or even anguish. Some of the more significant and worrying works dealing with this matter are : *Méditerranée: le Nord contre le Sud* (1), *Enjeux Méditerranéens* (2), *Le différend méditerranéen* (3), *La Méditerranée inquiète* (4), *La Méditerranée en question: Conflits et interdépendances* (5), *Méditerranée: Intégration ou éclatement* (6), *Mort de la Méditerranée* (7).

This limited sample reveals the worries and fears around the *Mare nostrum* which become even more visible when examining the state of affairs of still-latent conflicts in the Mediterranean area — be it recently in the Balkans with the Yugoslavian syndrome, or currently in the Near East and in Palestine where blood continues to flow without any hope of peaceful solutions. Alas, some may even wonder whether torn-up Yugoslavia is not a small-scale reflection of what the Mediterranean basin will be in twenty years. Nonetheless, one should not lose hope and try to rely on the good measure of State action and on the wisdom of the people.

### **I) Relations Islamic/Western world - for a fresh dialog between Mediterranean civilisations**

Almost all developments in antique history have taken place around the Mediterranean. It is the area where Egypt, Greece, Cartage and Rome have bloomed. It is there that Moses was born, as well as Jesus and Mohammed whose descendants

are still engaged in fratricidal disputes about the heritage of Abraham. Carthage, Rome, Byzantium, Alexandria, then the fiery explosion of Islam which, starting out from the Arabian desert, went around the Mediterranean and lived one of its culminant moments on Iberian ground, from where it has shone like a lighthouse, to become for many centuries the link between Islam and Christianity.

Paradoxically, today the Mediterranean has become an area of frontiers and frictions rather than one of encounter and dialogue, the countries of the regions preferring to turn away from their natural centre and in other directions:

- The Latin-Christian shores of the North, towards Northern Europe and the western world;
- The Arab-Muslim shores of the South, towards the Arab World and Africa.

Concerning the relationship between the two civilisations – Arab-Muslim and Judeo-Christian - a clear cultural dualism prevails which separates the European countries from the Arab nations and which acts as an obstacle in the quest of a common terrain on which to address delicate political issues. Furthermore, suspicion and mutual fear prevail. They are based on misunderstandings and sometimes on the historical conflicts which opposed Christians and Arabs, then Christians and Turks – in the Middle Ages and in modern times.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, whilst one would have thought that such common fears no longer existed, the idea of an “Islamic menace” has again been taken up by certain political circles in the West and used for creating anxieties. Actually, with the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, certain political circles in the West launched assumptions and fantastic speculations according to which “green Islamism” nowadays constitutes the new menace directed against the western capitalist world, in *lieu* of “red communism”. In other words, whilst in the past the West has used Islam as an ideological defence mechanism against atheistic communism, the latter having disappeared, Islam is now itself being called a potentially expansionist instrument. It is in this context that the famous book of Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilisations”, has been published, opposing Islam and Confucianism against the West (8).

Thus, the historical differences between the Christian West and Islam is being perceived and utilised by both sides, to explain and legitimate the differences and misunderstandings of today. The rejection of western values by fundamentalist ideologies equals the methods used by western media to sometimes abuse of negative clichés and primitive preconceptions for anchoring the idea of a fanatic and violent Arab-Muslim world. These media nourish hostility on the basis of daily news and thus systematically invoke a mixture consisting of extremist ideologies and Islam as a religion-civilisation which is a menace for western ideals such as modernism, secularity, democracy and Human Rights.

One of the most tenacious perversions prevailing in western minds is to measure with different yardsticks: Whenever the Arab-Muslim world is concerned, all parameters change – be it in international law, Human Rights or socio-cultural everyday facts. The approach taken obeys to criteria which are mostly not based on universality, but rather on discrimination.

### ***1) Islam: a religion preaching tolerance and open relations***

The problem with the relations between Islam and other communities cannot be addressed without first having briefly spoken about the bases of this monotheist religion as well as about its relationship with Judaism and Christianity. Actually, the Muslim religion recognises and venerates all the prophets of the Old Testament as well as Jesus, Son of the Holy Virgin (III/42-43, XIX/16-35). The Koran recognises and confirms the authenticity of the teachings of the prophets of Israel and of Jesus, and calls for the respect and the protection of the People of the Book, mentioning Jews and Christians. This expression “the Peoples of the Book” is mentioned about forty times in the Koran.

*“Certainly those who believe and who follow the Jewish religion, the Christians and the Sabines, in a word all those who believe in God and in Doomsday and who do good deeds, all these will receive a compensation from their master, they will no longer feel any fear and they will not be worried” (II/62)*

Moreover, the fundamentally pluralistic nature of Islam must be mentioned. As the orientalist Bernard Lewis put it, *“It is an actual fact that Christians have been much more fanatic and intolerant opposite Muslims than inversely. The reasons for this open spirit of Islam are theological and historical, but also of a practical nature. The Prophet Mohammed lived approximately six centuries after Christ. For Christians as well for Muslims, religion and revelation represent the message of God for humanity; however, the timing made a difference as far as perception is concerned: for a Muslim, Christ was a precursor and for the Christian, Mohammed was an impostor.” (9)*

This truth is best illustrated by the names given by Muslims to their children, which can be Jewish such as Moses (Moussa), Aron (Haroun), Soliman (Suleiman), Joseph (Yussuf), Jacob (Ya’Koub), or Christian such as Issa (Jesus), Gabriel (Jibril), Meriam (Mary), and are given in homage and veneration to these, whilst the name of Mohammed which the Christians obviously exclude, is often considered a synonym of imposture and heresy.

We recalled these first relations between Muslims, Jews and Christians in order to clarify the ideas of those who have always wrongly applied to Islam a number of erroneous prejudices and false ideas concerning its degree of tolerance and openness. An erroneous perception of Islam could therefore increase the distance between Europe and the Arab world by widening the already tangible cultural gap which acts as an obstacle when trying to find an understanding that could serve as a basis for addressing the decisive challenges of the future.

Will the step taken by humanity into this new millennium announce the end of the crusades and of the cultural misunderstandings between the nations of the Mediterranean and of the world? Or does it rather announce the beginning of a new phase of economic and cultural confrontation at a global scale? Alas, that is the question.

## ***2) Living in peace in a diversified world***

Even if cultural relations within the Mediterranean region still fall short of expectations, it should be tried by all means to elucidate misunderstandings between cultures, identify positive signs and elements of dialogue between cultures and religions. ***“Living in peace in a diversified world”*** should be the keyword for free men and women and for those intellectuals who stand for peace and progress all over the world.

This beginning of a new century represents an exceptional moment in history which appeals to the conscience of everyone, to try to define and conceive a new model for the relations between nations – not on a monolithic or uniform basis, but on a basis of pluralism and diversity in a world where the principles and values of political solidarity, economic balance and cultural communication will prevail.

The Mediterranean is dialectics; it is up to us and to the generations after us to make it into dialectics of life and of harmonious, shared development. For Mohamed Arkoun, one of the prominent modern thinkers of the Maghreb, *“only the quest for a culture of peace could motivate all the peoples of the Mediterranean to imagine, together and for the first time in their history, a twofold break:*

- *A break in terms of time with their respective times*
- *A break in terms of space between dominating and dominated societies.”*

Obviously, since the Barcelona Conference in November 1995 a series of initiatives, a multitude of projects and networks in many domains has been established with the objective of consolidating the dialogue and the “rapprochement” between the two shores of the Mediterranean and of decreasing the intensity of the misunderstandings and of incomprehension between Arabs and Europeans. The latest of these initiatives has been the creation of an Euro-Mediterranean foundation for cultural dialogue. We can only be very satisfied about such action and support its work and its objectives.

Nevertheless, there is still a great distance to be covered in the face of the geo-historical burden and of the difficulties before us due to the resurgence of conflicts and problems of identity and particularly due to the symptoms of separation and fracture which continue to characterise the Mediterranean region. This is why it is urgent to re-launch a cultural dialogue between the two shores, because it is in the cultural field that the future of the Mediterranean and of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership will be decided (10).

We are all aware that the Mediterranean has been a cradle of civilisation and a melting pot of cultures. Undoubtedly, the beginning of the third millennium with its tragedies, its misunderstandings and its intolerances underscores the importance of dialogue as a basis for the relationship between the Mediterranean nations and the world. We are convinced that these crucial times offer the unique opportunity of creating the new movements of solidarity between the Mediterranean and European peoples mentioned by Robert Schuman, to cope with trends of nationalism, xenophobia and extremism.

Now that we are witnessing the awakening of the Mediterranean conscience, the multiplication of initiatives for establishing a Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area and

for creating a new area of solidarity between North and South, dialogue and tolerance will become the key elements for understanding and coexistence in the Mediterranean region.

## **II) The Mediterranean — where cultural currents meet between North and South**

Seen under current historical and political conditions, the Mediterranean appears mainly as an intermediate world between the North and the South. It is a territory of mediation which gives way to confluence and exchange phenomena of all sorts which could serve as a basis for a common belonging of the peoples living on its shores.

Obviously, the cultural realities of today's Mediterranean world are an enormous source for variation in styles, for combination of ideas born from cultural synthesis. The Mediterranean is a complex and exemplary place of contacts between cultures, a permanent focus of interactions and cultural entities: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Cultures of the ancient Orient and of ancient Egypt, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arabian and Andalusian, Ottoman and European cultures. No other region of the world has ever experienced so much melting, synthesis and exchange between cultures as diverse and rich as these. Hither the fundamental question: what will be the future of the Mediterranean cultural heritage?

This question is particularly topical also because this region which is at the crossroads of cultures and civilisations has arrived at a crucial moment of its history. At least two reasons can be stated for this fact:

- Firstly, two contradictory forces are changing this region into a geo-historical area by either making it into a point of junction and exchange, or into an area of borders and fractures;
- Secondly, at world level, globalisation is challenging both the Mediterranean people and the Europeans to adapt their cultural heritage to the overwhelming globalisation phenomenon, in order to preserve the opportunity of definitely reconciling the Mediterranean with itself and with its past and future history.

In any event, the unilateral vision of the Mediterranean as a projection of the North on the South which has predominated southern thinking for a long time, is progressively giving way to a “new Mediterranean utopia” which is now seen jointly by both the North and the South together. More than ever, this beautiful Mediterranean utopia is necessary to advance an area which is in the hearts of the elites and which at the UNESCO conference on cultural policies in July 1982 in Mexico was called “*an area between peoples and civilisations, a sea carrying creation, a basin of fruitful exchanges for thousands of years, an area of dialogue between European and Islamic cultures*” (11).

This rather limited approach to inter-cultural relations in the Mediterranean leads to a number of remarks:

1. In spite of the efforts made over the last years, and especially since Barcelona, the Mediterranean area suffers from a major deficit in cultural relations;
2. the consolidation of the basis on which the Mediterranean rests requires an enormous effort of the Arab-Mediterranean societies and of their elites and it must take place as a dialogue both North-South and South-North;
3. at this moment in time the great challenge for all the Mediterranean and European peoples lies in the fact that, confronted with the globalisation of ideologies, economies and cultures, they must synchronise their cultural heritage.

One of the objectives to be reached would be, to arrive at improving mutual perception, better yet, at rediscovering each other in the framework of a new, more sincere and more open approach in their cultural dialogue. It is essential to dissipate the misunderstandings, to appease passions and to open the door to hope – for a better future in the Mediterranean region.

## **Part II**

### **THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA — CONFRONTATION WITH THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Since the Barcelona Conference in November 1995, great strides have been made to establish the basis of an ambitious project which would open the doors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the Mediterranean area. These first strides on the way to a Mediterranean free-trade area are already a positive factor in the equation and over the coming decade are bound to develop the dynamism of business and other economic actors in the Mediterranean countries.

However, in the light of the importance and of the urgency of the challenges confronting the Mediterranean today and in the shorter term, a question must be asked: Is the Barcelona Process stand up to the size of the challenges at stake and to the scope of the problems affecting the Mediterranean basin?

The challenges are of political, economic cultural and ecological nature. They are well known because any observer of Mediterranean reality can clearly see that also here there are major cleavages of which the most significant is probably the one separating the North and the South of our planet – i.e. the well-to-do developed nations and the developing and sometimes pauperised countries.

Thus, being as a zone where the industrialised world borders with developing economies, the Mediterranean basin reflects the large gap between the North and the South. This has led to economic, financial, demographic and technological disparities which, if they continue growing, may be at the root of developments which jeopardise the stability and well-being of the entire Mediterranean area.

However, the Mediterranean of tomorrow cannot not be built without a framework which includes a strategy where the complex problems of the area are managed by all partners and where the contradiction and major issues at stake are clearly addressed, i.e.:

- Security and political stability in the entire region;
- economic growth through co-development and North-South partnership;
- stabilisation of population growth and management of migratory movements;
- mastering of ecological risks and environmental improvement.

#### **I) Peace in the Middle East: the essential proviso for security and stability in the Mediterranean region**

In recent years the Middle East has again been in the limelight of international news following the murderous events in Palestine and the ups and downs of the war in Iraq. The area thus seems to slip once more into violence and general destabilisation, in spite of the appeasement that in the wake of the Oslo Agreements some political circles had promised in 1993 in the framework of a new international order, with a pacified Middle East integrated into the world economy. Evidently, the failure of the peace process will harm not only the entire Near East

but risks to affect the entire eastern Mediterranean shore, not to say the whole of the Mediterranean (12).

Worse yet, the persistence of conflicts in the Middle East and the absence of a peace perspective may lead to very serious problems in the sense of a “cultural clash“ between the Arab-Muslim and the Christian Western world – an apocalyptic scenario that some curious American observers have already been announcing with great fanfare.

### ***1) Respect of international law as an indispensable condition for lasting peace in the Middle East***

In the framework of the United Nations and in view of resolutions taken by the international community and in abidance with conventions and mechanisms relating to Human Rights, the respect of international law actually must be imposed on all parties in the Palestine area and in the entire Middle East. Before lasting peace can come to Palestine, all the UN resolutions will have to be implemented, starting with Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947– better known as the resolution on the division of Palestine into an Arab and an Israeli State- as well as the other on issues such as refugees, Jerusalem, etc. For the rest, Palestine could well become a territory where two peoples live, as in Belgium or the Netherlands, both comparable in size and population to the Palestine area.

With the necessity of peace becoming increasingly necessary for the survival of a region which was the cradle of civilisation, it is thus the responsibility of the United Nations and therefore of all countries of the world to implement peace in the Middle East. Alas, all efforts undertaken by the UN and by the major powers fall short of whatever is needed for obtaining peace on the basis of international law and international legality.

Incidentally, the weakness of the major powers concerning peace in the Middle East and the imposition of regulatory mechanisms, indifferently to all the parties concerned, has led a British legal expert, Thomas W. Mallison to say in his book “*The Palestinian problem in International law and the World order*”:

*“Whenever the fundamental rights of the Palestinians will be respected, international law will have had a meaning and its moral authority will become stronger, allowing humanity to set up an international order based on legality. If these rights are not respected, international law will become the laughing stock of the world and the dogmatic formula ‘who is strong is right’ will claim victory. This would mean that humanity has not learnt anything from Aesop or from La Fontaine who advocated that the reason of the stronger should not always be the better one”.*

Mallison adds:

*“Either justice must prevail opposite military and material power, or anarchy will reign in which case much will be at stake not only for the Palestinians, but also for all of humanity” (13).*

Needless to say that the British author had a visionary approach to this conflict, as proven by the turn of events in that region over the last years.

Actually, the peace process cannot start without a return to international legal principles. Peace has been defined in the clear and precise accords concerning all major conflicts in the Middle East. A perspective for political normalisation and regional economic cooperation can only be envisaged when peace agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours are concluded on the basis of the international resolutions.

The European precedent would serve as a political platform. Over the last five decades it has only been possible to realise the political and economic unification of Europe once the main conflicts over territorial issues between Germany and its neighbours had been solved. The same is applicable today to Israel and its Arab neighbours, starting with the Palestinians. In other words: Any other strategy for dealing with the major issues, which envisages an approach based only on security considerations will never solve the fundamental problems concerning stability in the Middle East

If stability and prosperity is to prevail in this region of the world, it will have to be resorted to the clear and precise principles of justice, of equality in the application of law, of respect of the human individual regardless of his ethnic or religious origin, applicable to relations between States as well as between States and their citizens. Any differential treatment, depending on countries or on situations or on the interest of certain powers will fail and will not be able to serve as a basis for pacifying the area.

## ***2) The political and moral responsibilities of Europe***

Will we now be seeing the start of a solution for the impasse in which the peace process in the Near East is currently stuck? This is the principal question conditioning the future of security and stability not only in the Near East itself, but beyond that in the Mediterranean and in the global context.

For a series of historical and geographical reasons Europe is called upon to stop practising its timid and lukewarm role to which it has limited itself up to now, i.e. to remain “an actor outside of the game” in the Middle-East peace process, as a Mediterranean diplomat has put it. Be it concerning Palestine or in connection with the Iraq affair, Europe must assume its global and moral responsibilities.

On the occasion of a colloquium organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, in Cyprus in March 1995, on the issue of *“Europe and the Near East – Interdependence and Partnership”*, I had written the following:

*“More strongly than the United States, Europe bears twofold, moral and political, responsibility for the tragedy that is taking place in the Near East. Firstly and vis-à-vis Palestine, where Europe itself created a national Jewish centre on 2 November 1917 (Balfour Declaration) that inseminated a widespread destabilisation process the effects of which go beyond the limits of Palestine and the Palestinians. Secondly, vis-à-vis the entire Near East, to the “balkanisation” and division of which the great powers have contributed (Treaty Sykes Picot in May 1916), thus creating the base for popular resentment and national and regional frustrations that are still alive today.*

*To speak of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership for peace and stability therefore only makes sense whenever durable peace has been found in the Near East. In the quest of this peace, Europe may not limit itself to mere lip service or to the role of a financing body for a peace process whose credibility and efficiency remains to be proven” (14).*

At this very moment in time, at the start of a new millennium full of hope and challenges for humanity, can it finally be expected that peace will come to the Near East, as the prelude for genuine reconciliation between Jews and Arabs and for a genuine dialogue of civilisations between the Arab-Muslim and the Judeo-Christian world? Or should we stop believing in wise peoples and clairvoyant leaders? This is a real challenge confronting not only Europe, but also the Arab world as well as the international community of all free peoples around the world. These are then the actual issues at stake for the future of regional peace in the Middle East and for the security of the Mediterranean area.

## **II) Contrasts and economic unbalances between the Mediterranean North and South**

The specificity of the new partnership between the EU and the countries South and East of the Mediterranean resides in the fact that there is an enormous difference between the wealth of countries North and that of countries South of the Mediterranean, income per capita in the South being only one-tenth of that in the North. It is unparalleled in world economic history to achieve economic integration between two regions with respective levels of development so far apart.

Starting off from this point, it will be necessary, to obtain a genuine economic take-off to substantially increase trade and investment levels. A new commercial dynamism underpinned by a high level of economic growth is the essential condition for creating a Euro-Mediterranean economic area which is not merely limited to the North-South axis, but extends along the entire southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Such a dynamic process requires a high degree of integration between the southern Mediterranean nations and the conclusion of free-trade agreements at the South-South level, in order to consolidate the ground on which a viable economic area South of the Mediterranean can be built.

### ***1) The Euro-Mediterranean partnership and prospects of regional South-South integration***

The Euro-Mediterranean project presented in Barcelona in November 1995 concentrates on a commercial liberalisation between the North and the South through a number of bilateral association agreements. This reformulation of the relationship between the EU countries and those in the South and East of the Mediterranean has crystallised around the free trade concept which is considered to be an efficient means of ensuring economic growth in the South.

In a certain manner, this partnership project of Barcelona led to a psychological shock at the level of the Arab world. In view of the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona Process and of the process launched at the economic summit for the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) in 1994 in Casablanca by the United States, the Arab States apparently suffered a late “political awakening” in relation to the regional and international changes required by world globalisation (15).

It is in this context that the Arab Summit at Cairo in June 1996 reacted to the two regional projects, by deciding to set up an “Large Arab Free-Trade Area” starting in January 1998. It would engage the Mediterranean Arab countries, in particular those of the Maghreb, in two parallel and contemporary movements:

- The creation of a free-trade area with the European Union, formalised by the conclusion of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements and
- An intra-Arab integration process in the framework of the Large Arab Free-Trade Area launched in Cairo on 19 February 1997.

Thus, the Euro-Mediterranean project described in the Declaration produced at the Barcelona Conference of 27-28 November 1995 created a new configuration which would subdivide the Arab countries into Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean. Of the 12 countries of the South and East of the Mediterranean, nine are Arab and one of these, Jordan, is landlocked. Libya, which is on the shores of the Mediterranean, in turn was not invited to the Barcelona Conference for political reasons. Nevertheless, it was later on included in the Stuttgart Conference of April 1999 and invited to join the Barcelona Process.

The European Union has started to negotiate Euro-Mediterranean association agreements with the Mediterranean Arab nations. Some of these negotiations started before the Barcelona Conference took place. New-generation accords were reached between the EU and Tunisia (17 July 1995) and the EU and Morocco (26 February 1996). After a certain slowdown, the process accelerated with the other Arab-Mediterranean accelerated since the year 2000. Agreements between the EU and Egypt, Algeria and Lebanon were thus signed respectively in February 2002, December 2001 and April 2002. With the exception of Libya (Syria just signed an association agreement in October 2004) the accession process started in 1995 after Barcelona is practically finalised. As the EU sees them, these accords – whether concluded or under negotiation – are part of a major strategy for strengthening the ties with the countries of the South with the objective of creating a Euro-Mediterranean economic area. Furthermore, the latest neighbourhood policy decided by the Union in December 2002 at the European Council in Copenhagen envisages the consolidation of the Barcelona Process which was considered to have lost momentum, especially after the EU enlargement to the East.

Obviously, this enlargement will contribute to accentuate the geopolitical North/South unbalance in the Mediterranean area.

At the economic level, an analysis of the structures of Euro-Arab commerce reveals once more the preponderance of Europe as the first commercial partner of the Mediterranean South, with almost 26% of exports and 42% of imports of the Arab world. The respective figures are 16% of exports and 12% of imports for Japan, and 9% of exports and 13% of imports for the US.

This trend is confirmed by the second annual report of FEMISE (the Marseilles-based Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Economic Institutes) concerning "*The Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the year 2000*". The report says, in particular, that

*"the European Union is currently the winner of the process initiated in that area. The deficit of the Mediterranean partner countries with the EU, which amounted to 46% of their total deficit in 1992, has grown to 57% in 1997 and 60% in 1998. In absolute terms, it currently represents about 30 billion dollars, against 12 billion dollars in 1992. At least partly, this result is due to the trade preferences granted to European industries". (16)*

The Arab nations of the Mediterranean are and will probably always be the main area of commercial expansion of the European Union over the next years. The commercial weight that Europe represents is one of the basic elements in the free-trade issue, for the Mediterranean region as well as for the Arab world.

Will the asymmetrical development between Europe and the Arab world not jeopardise the North-South commercial polarisation process in a free-trade area, to the disadvantage of the Arab world? This is an essential question which shows the issues at stake for the future relationship between the two parties of the free-trade area across the Mediterranean.

Obviously, the liberalisation of European imports of products from the Arab Mediterranean will have a deflative effect on trade relations with the rest of the world, including the Arab countries themselves, because of the substitution phenomena between their own products and those imported from Europe. In other words, intra-Maghrebinian and intra-Arab trade risks decreasing if trade barriers are maintained between the Arab countries whilst they are abolished between them and the European Union. It is therefore crucial to go ahead with the dismantlement of internal regional barriers if in the Arab area we want to at least maintain the current level of trade and its share in foreign-trade exchange volumes with third countries. This is the only perspective which could modify the current situation concerning economic relations of the Arab countries with the EU, a situation that can be summarised in two words: dependence and verticality. Actually, dependency is stronger than inter-dependence; verticality becomes clearly visible when analysing the structures of Euro-Arab trade relations examined above; (17)

The birth of a Euro-Mediterranean economic area will only then open real opportunities to the Mediterranean Arab countries if the latter can integrate themselves among each other at the same time that North-South integration of markets takes place i.e. for the Arab-Mediterranean countries the impact of free trade will actually be a problem if it is limited to the mere vertical aspects of the process. Furthermore, the creation of a Mediterranean area of shared development and prosperity will remain dependent on the success of coupling the South to the

European growth locomotive, the *sine qua non* of genuine inter-dependence between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

To cite Jacques Berque, that great French Mediterranean of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: “the southern board of the Mediterranean is still waiting for its Robert Schuman” or rather for the founding fathers of a unitarian movement able to go beyond the divisions and the chronic political differences, in order to give the Maghreb region in particular and the Arab world in general a chance to appear in the book of future history.

### **III) Demographic change and South-North migratory flows in the Mediterranean region**

At the beginning of this new century, the issue of migration is determined by the major mutations taking place in the world today along three lines:

- The first line is of geopolitical nature: the emergence of three major forces that dominate the economy and also international relations: North America, the European Union and South-East Asia;
- the second line, of demographic nature, resides in the fact that differences are growing between North and South concerning demographic growth and the ageing of populations;
- the third line, of economic nature, consists in the increasing of disparities in general between the North and the South and the widening of the technological gap between these two, due to the speed of globalisation.

Seen from this angle, the issue of migration emerges in all its complexity from the general set of Mediterranean challenges. It has become a dominant theme on both shores of the Mediterranean for both the official debate and civil society. In spite of different opinions in some other respects, specialists have arrived at a consensus stating that the migratory processes from North to South will continue and even increase over the next years. All conditions seem to be met to make the North into an ever-stronger magnet which attracts the population from the South of the Mediterranean, including those from countries beyond that region, like sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

#### ***1) Europe faced by new migratory challenges***

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership implies that immigration matters be considered as one of the essential elements of the new European landscape. This means that awareness of the importance of the issue of trans-national migration flows must be increased in times of globalisation and of pictures transmitted via satellite. Furthermore, if differences between the inhabitants on both shores of the Mediterranean became too pronounced, this would certainly be dangerous for freedom and would substantially limit the exemplary nature of a “Europe of citizens” founded on the principles of Human Rights, tolerance and democracy. Therefore, there is much at stake. Demographic issues are essentially of socio-economic nature. They bring about problems in the fields of security, justice and solidarity. The authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean are thus confronted with a very important challenge and will have to devise new forms of more efficient cooperation, relying on principles of actual and active solidarity (18).

The best solution consists in cooperating in order to manage the problem together. Preventive measures and consultation and coordination mechanisms have to be put in place whilst paying a maximum of attention to specific aspects and adopting programmes aiming at a limitation of the phenomenon. It will also be important to preserve the principles of free circulation of people and to arrive at the harmonisation of Human Rights principles and the effects of globalisation.

Nevertheless, it will remain true that economic partnership based on direct investments, delocalisation and subcontracting is the best solution for meeting the challenge of immigration. Economic partnership will not only reduce migratory pressures but also serve to realise that the differential between demographic growth rates on the two shores of the Mediterranean is not a danger, but a complementary element which can be taken advantage of in the quest for competitiveness and development.

Without wishing to go into too much detail and in view of the similarity of individual situations among Maghrebinian immigrants in Europe, on the one hand, and of the great number of authorities and bodies concerned, it will be necessary to coordinate action at several levels:

- Exchange of experience between the various Maghrebinian authorities concerned (Ministries for foreign affairs, employment, social affairs, youth and education, etc.) and other interested bodies (social security funds, customs services, hospitals, agencies for social planning);
- setting up of common data bases and research networks liaising with universities and research bodies in the Maghreb and the Mediterranean area, in order to come to grips with the migration issue and find appropriate solutions;
- together with the host countries, establishment of mechanisms for social and economic reinsertion of certain categories of migrant people and, in certain cases, facilitation of reinstallation in their home countries.

Obviously, the balance and stability of the North-South relationship over the next years will greatly depend on the solutions found for the migration problem. The years to come will also be marked by the future of the about 15 million immigrants of Southern-Mediterranean origin established in Europe, who over time are becoming an essential component of the socio-economic landscape. As to the Mediterranean, Europe has to choose between two alternatives: to retract behind isolation and thus worsen the fate of immigrant populations or to become a responsible partner of the southern Mediterranean in an international framework permeated by humanitarian principles and the respect of freedom and Human Rights.

#### **IV) The Mediterranean – a Sea in danger of ecological asphyxiation**

All the current studies dealing with the Mediterranean environment state that the health of Mare nostrum is deteriorating. Thus, environmental issues have become increasingly important also in the eyes of all countries on the Mediterranean shoreline among which disquiet and anguish is increasing in this respect. Pollution of the sea, of its coastal and continental waters, destruction of fishery resources, increase of erosion mainly due to deforestation and forest fires: These and other problems are growing worse, especially if the forecast concerning climatic change during the 21<sup>st</sup> century comes true (increase of sea levels and temperatures, decrease of rainfall) (19).

In the Mediterranean region such developments would lead to an immediate increase of the desertification rate and to the decrease of groundwater levels. In the longer term, they would lead to a reduction of coastal territory which is the most valuable for human activity. In short, the Mediterranean eco-system is in danger. Biodiversity has particularly decreased over the last decades. Fishery resources continue to diminish and certain marine mammals such as some types of seals, sea turtles and a substantial number of migrating as well as autochthonous birds are due to disappear because their habitats are being destroyed.

After having been the cradle of the most ancient civilisations of mankind, and a place of cultural and economic exchange for centuries, economic and demographic as well as environmental pressures risk to make the Mediterranean into an area without structures.

##### ***1) The environment as an element of common Mediterranean identity***

Against this alarming background, the environment is becoming an element of identity for all the countries of the Mediterranean. According to the Bruntland report, the environment is “*the landscape or the space where each one of us lives*” and all around the Mediterranean area it does not differ much. Conifers (Aleppo pine, *pinus maritimus*), cultures disposed in terraces, hills covered with almond or olive trees, villages against blue skies, fortified cities, etc. – the Mediterranean landscape has been fashioned by a common climate, a common past and is therefore fairly homogenous. The problems concern the pollution of water, of the atmosphere, the excessive use of natural resources (water, soil, forests) and the degradation of quality of life. They too, unfortunately, are common to all the areas around the Mediterranean.

In a report published by Mediterranean NGOs meeting on the occasion of the Cairo Conference, it was said that:

*“From the Maghreb to the Gulf of Aleppo in Syria, including the coast of the Languedoc-Roussillon and the interior seas of Spain, the NGOs highlight the fragility of the ecosystem and the increasing attacks against the environment which endanger the species of fauna and flora, in the sea and on the ground. They denounce the anarchic multiplication of economic activities along the entire Moroccan and Algerian coastline, the development of tourism-related activities which take little heed of the environment (in France, Italy, Greece, Tunisia),*

*the pressure exerted by population growth on agricultural land (regions around Oran, Mitidja, Rif), the proliferation of polluting industrial activities along the Moroccan coastline (Bay of Tangier, Kenitra Safi Zone), the Algerian, Egyptian and Italian coast, the danger of pollution by petroleum products near certain ports (d'Arzew, Bejaia, Skikda) and in the areas near the Strait of Gibraltar and of the Suez Canal". (20)*

Confronted with economic, demographic, political and cultural disparities, the homogeneous nature of the environmental element is a common denominator for the countries and the peoples bordering the Mediterranean. It should therefore be used as a platform for multilateral cooperation among the countries in that area.

## Part III

### THE BARCELONA CONFERENCE — TEN YEARS LATER

Ten years after the Barcelona Conference, many ask questions regarding the post-Barcelona situation. Has this conference really started an irreversible dynamic on the Mediterranean level? Was there a real dynamic burst in North-South relations?

Opinions are divided concerning the results ten years after Barcelona. If Barcelona opened the way for a series of meetings, seminars, studies and expertise in order to diagnose the Mediterranean situation, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership comes up against small or even insufficient means for the implementation of the objectives set down in Barcelona.

It is a fact that this Barcelona project on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, ten years later, has not kept its promises, to the greatest disappointment of the supporters of “Mediterraninity”. There is a long list of problems waiting to be dealt with and of good solutions, which fatefully weigh on the future of the Mediterranean, at the time of a globalised economy: indebtedness, unemployment, emigration, investment, desertification, etc. Hence the need to re-launch this North-South partnership, which gave rise to many hopes in the South of the Mediterranean. This would help to define the prospects of a partnership, the objectives of which should be able to face the multiform challenges and decisive stakes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### *1) Insufficiencies and limits of the Euro-Mediterranean process of Barcelona*

The Barcelona declaration strongly asserts the objective of creating a Euro-Mediterranean area of stability and economic development. The problem is the great hiatus between the ambitions displayed and the means implemented. We believe in this series of insufficiencies and constraints.

#### *1) The enlargement to the East and the new Euro-Mediterranean geo-political imbalance*

A period of disillusion and deception followed the hopes created by Barcelona I. It had been decided in Barcelona that the conference of the foreign ministers from the 27 would be held every two years, alternately in the North and South. Ten years later, this conference of foreign ministers has never been held in the South of the Mediterranean because of the impasse in the peace process in the Middle East. Besides, the geopolitical mutations of these last few years at the European level have increased the relative marginalisation of the Mediterranean as well its the geo-strategic imbalance. Indeed, since the membership of the CEEC in May 2004, the Euro-Mediterranean landscape is completely different from the one seen in Barcelona. On one side, 25 member states of the European Union, including two former Mediterranean partners, Malta and Cyprus. On the other side, 8 Arab-Mediterranean countries, Israel and Turkey (21). Turkey is about to reach the final stages of accession to the EU and the uncertainties arising from this accession; hence increasing the Euro-Arab face-to-face in the Mediterranean.

## ***2) The limits of financial help provided by Europe***

Indeed, in 1995-1999, the EU has allocated 4.6 billion € to southern countries. But the amount allocated to the CEEC is 6.7 billion for a population that is three times smaller. Besides, due to administrative constraints, only 890 million € have been paid out of the 3.4 billion voted in the framework of the MEDA I program in order to finance cooperation projects, that is to say 26%, which is derisory! This is also the case for the credit allocated by the European Bank of Investment to Southern countries, that is to say 4.5 billion €. In comparison with the financial help provided to CEEC, the contribution allocated to Mediterranean countries are 5 times smaller. The amount of the MEDA II program covering the 2000-2004 period were brought to 5.5 billion €, which is better, but remains insufficient.

## ***3) The weak investment movements towards the South of the Mediterranean***

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership is not viable without substantial investments towards the South and East of the Mediterranean. But there is a huge deficit in terms of FDI (Foreign direct investment). In this regard one must take into account the weakness of foreign investment in Arab and Mediterranean countries in comparison with other regions of the world. In 2002, the ensemble of the MEDA countries received around 6,106 million dollars of FDI, while CEEC received 28,709 million dollars for a population that is three times smaller. During the same year, African countries received around 11,000 million dollars of FDI. South America countries received 56,000 million dollars and South East Asia 88,603 million dollars. In other words MEDA countries receive the least foreign capitals in the world. (22)

Towards the end of 1999 the FDI / inhabitant figure in Tunisia (9 millions inhabitants) was only 28.2 dollars, while in Hungary it was 671 dollars and in the Czech Republic (10 million inhabitants) 289 dollars. The Southern and Eastern countries of the Mediterranean receiving direct investment, that is to say Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey received from Europe between 1986 and 1992 the equivalent of 80% of the direct investments in Malaysia only for the same period (11.2 billions) and 6% of the direct investments in Mexico (14 billion dollars). This deficit in terms of foreign investments remains one of the major handicaps for any tangible progression towards a credible and viable Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

## ***II) The Southern Mediterranean and the precedent of South-East Asia***

In this regard, there is no global Mediterranean vision without an economic dimension up to the needs and expectations of the peoples of the area. All other forms of cooperation must rely on the hypothesis of emerging economic partners on the Southern side. This hypothesis is only credible if it is the result of a real logical development organising productive and high-performance systems, in the industrial and technology field as well as in agriculture, in order to allow them to have balanced exchange relations on the global market.

These important changes imply a strategic vision going beyond traditional approaches based on commercial benefits and market conquests. Global economic development also influential sectoral policies, notably in these three fields:

- Firstly, in the industrial area where a dynamic approach must be adopted in order to obtain, on the Southern shores, the installation of production areas which are based on advanced technology;
- secondly, the domain of investments, where the countries of the North can very much help their Southern counterparts, especially in the Maghreb where, more than in other areas, the regional structure is such that it is easier to develop economically and could thus become a strategic issue for Europe;
- finally, in the cultural area: The new project of economic partnership cannot be successful unless accompanied by a cultural approach, i.e. culture must be included as a full dimension in the context of the achievement of the new Euro-Mediterranean area.

Would the creation of a major Mediterranean centre be feasible? Is it realistic to assume that a “Euro-Mediterranean system” will develop - similar to the North American one (USA, Canada, Mexico) - where Europe would play the role of a dynamic partner of the Southern Mediterranean?

Clearly, the answer to this cannot be given by the North alone but rather requires that all the partners of the region, together, formulate a number of answers to the specific challenges confronted by the Mediterranean. In this task, it will be necessary to take into account the essential issues, namely industrial co-development and the transfer of technology.

In this regard, one must consider the precedent in South-East Asia. Through its extent and rapidity, the knock-on industrialization phenomenon of these last thirty years deserves an examination, particularly of its starting conditions and more importantly of its enlargement for the whole of Asia. In other words, will Mediterranean countries, currently or those set to be associated with the European Union be able to follow the path to industrial partnership, new technology knowledge transfer and productive performances.

Nowadays, the path to be followed by the Maghreb and Southern Arab-Mediterranean countries is that of South-East Asia, which has indeed continuously improved economic performances in the fields of growth and production, an economic growth of around 10% per year, an active export and market conquest policy, and an accelerated industrialization strategy. This is why the Asian development has been so successful. Integrated in the capitalist world, these countries deprived of natural resources reach very high growth rates, through their ingenuity and work.

The conclusion to draw from this summary presentation of the mechanisms and bases of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is the following: the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is still far from being up to the political ambitions and hopes of 1995. There is a long way to go on the road before it becomes “*an open door to the 21<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean*”.

## Part IV

# THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN - A BRIDGE BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ARAB WORLD

At the dawn of the 21st Century the peoples of the North and the South of the Mediterranean are now more than ever called to work together in order to strengthen the Mediterranean project and thus allow the region to rediscover what it was across the centuries, an area of progress and dynamism. Consequently, the question no longer needs to be posed.

- A) What are the bridges and the passages required in order to rebuild in the Mediterranean so as not to go back to the past and move on and prepare for the future?
- B) How can we identify the strategies, the mechanisms and the actors who can restart the Mediterranean in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and give them a new homogenous civil identity that it lost long ago?

In this regard, academics, writers, and politicians on both sides of the Mediterranean have never asked for the concept of reconstruction and are only doing so in these last few years, as can be seen in the titles of these books that have appeared here and there: *L'Euro-Méditerranée, une région à construire* (23), *Méditerranée, le Pacte à construire* (24) *La Tunisie méditerranéenne, un pont entre les deux rives* (25) *Mostar, un pont entre deux mondes* (26).

### **I) The bridges and the passages required in order to rebuild in the Mediterranean**

There is no point restating that the stakes today are very high, the future for peace, stability and liberty between the two sides. The objective is also clear: reduce tensions, misunderstanding, and disparities economic, political and cultural. In this regard, we consider 5 factors necessary in order to the build pillars necessary to restart the Mediterranean reconstruction project in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- 1) Develop political initiatives of peace and security between Europe and the Arab world.
- 2) Consolidate the interdependency between the north and the south of the Mediterranean in the economic, industrial and energy fields.
- 3) Envisage a long-term global project with the ensemble of the Arab world, where the human, economic and energy potential provide equilibrium for both the north and the south.
- 4) Mobilise the civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean relating to the project and the agenda set down.
- 5) Re-establish and give life to the Andalusian civil model in relationships between north and south.

### ***1) North/South dialogue as a guarantee of peace and security in the Mediterranean***

The current situation in the Mediterranean might not lead one to be optimistic about future scenarios, albeit not catastrophic for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Certain current scenarios do give some of these hypotheses certain merit beginning with the World Bank (27), the French DATAR (28). Finally the Blue Plan founded on the exponential extrapolation in the ensemble of the different domains economics, social and ecological. If one believes in the Blue Plan scenarios then the Mediterranean is heading towards becoming one of the least hospitable areas in the world by 2025.

On the flip side of the Euro-Mediterranean integration, there are crisis scenarios of fragmentation and dislocation: fragmentation of societies and a block in the Mediterranean structure (notably in the south and the east). We can therefore then question ourselves on the pertinence of the notion of security and peace in the Mediterranean. In reality the worst-case scenario is never guaranteed as the saying goes in the context of any potential catastrophic scenarios in the Mediterranean and in starting from there its good to demonstrate the problems therein and to take away the impasses. It is in this regard that we are seeking to attack these problems in the southern third of the Mediterranean European Union in the framework of the Barcelona process. It is therefore necessary to work on the basis of the Barcelona process in globalising the notion of peace and security. In this regard, the idea of a “Mediterranean pact” charged with the task of “peace and security” in the evolution of the Barcelona Process constitutes an essential step that should be consolidated and expanded upon in the other processes surrounding Barcelona. In effect seen from the width and spectre of these problems all problems of peace and security can only be globally envisaged in the Mediterranean. Any one of the potential problems that could surface during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century could lead to deterioration in political relationships or inter-state relationships but also to economic, ecological and energy security phenomenon’s or war scenarios in the Middle East etc... (30)

With this in mind, the elaboration of a “Euro- Mediterranean charter for peace and stability”, the conclusion of this charter by the Euro- Mediterranean countries would without doubt constitute a first step for the long-term+ security and order in the Mediterranean.

Regarding the sentiment of the conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean organised by the ECSC in Helsinki, we do not think that this is a realistic sentiment in real international context. Such a proposition is too ambitious and too premature because of diverse interests and the absence of global approaches by countries from the North and the South. This lack of an approach can be summed up for three principle reasons.

- 1- The end of the Cold War led to slippage in the equilibrium where Europe profited to the detriment of the South, Arab Mediterranean.
- 2- The difficult recent past between the North of the Mediterranean (Christian Europe) and the southern Mediterranean (Arab Muslim) ended up creating a disparity in the perceptions which now make the concept of global security in the Mediterranean difficult.
- 3- The deterioration of the situation in the Middle East (Iraq) and the absence of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by definition exclude the hypothetical possibility of constituting an integrated global security system in the Arab Mediterranean countries.

## ***2) Mobilising the Civil Society on both sides of the Mediterranean within the project***

The evolution of a global euro- Mediterranean civil society is a long-term project. If this were not a project where exclusion exists, this would suppose a complete mobilisation of the live forces in the Mediterranean region, socio-economic, deeply cultural, with a very strong political will on the part of the political movements therein and the civil society actors in Europe in the Maghreb and in the Arab World. In effect, it would be useful to underline the important role of the civil society that is capable both today and in the future of according itself with the old structures and the North/South relationships and overtaking any impasse therein, by giving the populations therein a better understanding of the makeup of the Mediterranean World also opening up a route for a global cooperation development for Mediterranean and Arab European world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (31)

## **II) The dialogue between Europe and the Arab world, a balancing factor in the Mediterranean**

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the question of the future of Euro-Arab economic relations and the conditions required for the emergence of a viable economic area in the Mediterranean is now more than ever a topic for discussion. Also, the problem of South-South integration constitutes in itself one of the trains of thought surrounding the debate on the future of the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In effect, the area from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab-Persian Gulf and across to the red sea constitutes an international economic space at the crossroads of international communications and as such has a highly strategic role to play. The Arab world is a political reality – despite misadventures and political impasses that hold the area back – is a Euro- Mediterranean Economic area that essential for the future in 2010, from Morocco to Syria.

Globally, it must be understood that the Arab world possesses great human economic potential, which renders the region particularly interesting for a converging globalised world. Today, the Arab world is host to around 300 million people. In 2025, all indications suggest that the population in the region will be around 500 million. On the other side, Europe, with its 450 million inhabitants will soon be 500 million after the envisaged accession to the EU in 2007. As such, in the coming years, there will be in the order of 1 billion people in the Euro-Arab area with huge potential, comparable to India and almost twice that of the NAFTA countries (USA, Canada, Mexico).

It is in this context that it is now necessary to look at the long-term relationship between Europe and the Arab world in an enlarged version of the euro-Mediterranean one but limited to the Arab world. Why should we have such a project? Is it realistic to envisage a Euro-Arab partnership such as this?

There is no need to highlight the strategic interest for Europe in having a stable and prosperous southern flank from Morocco to Syria. In saying this, it is also necessary for Europe to contribute to the emergence of a homogenous, united, stable, democratic and prosperous area to its south. In short, what is required is the opposite of the world there, as it exists now, economically poorly developed, politically divided and technologically underdeveloped.

It's obvious that to state that the development of south-south relationships in the greater picture of the Arab world is not the responsibility of the European Union. This remains above all the responsibility of the Arab world, its political classes and its administrative classes. Nonetheless, the European Union could contribute in different ways in order to interrupt the status quo and to begin the process of transforming the necessary dynamics of the region. (32)

As such, the revival of the '*Esprit de Marrakech*', the birth of the Arab-Maghreb union 17<sup>th</sup> February 1989, just as in the Arab-Mediterranean tidying up of the conditions necessary in order to subscribe to the geo-strategic order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; I.E. the big job of construction in the southern Mediterranean. This is the essence of the declaration issued in Agadir on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2001 calling for the creation of an area for free movement of exchange in the Arab-Mediterranean. This is also the objective of the Tunisian declaration issued at the first 5+5 summit convened between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2003 and in which participated 10 Mediterranean countries.

In other words, if Europe were to begin a solid partnership with the Maghreb, then it could be said that there would be repercussions for the Mediterranean in this case. As for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, North Africa remains a pawn in the Mediterranean chess game.

In one word, a new Euro-Mediterranean, Euro-Arab political discourse in current fractious geo strategic Mediterranean and its moves to the east would allow for the European Union to become more active in the Middle East, where peace is now, more than ever necessary.

### **III) Re-establishing and giving credibility to the Andalusian model in the relations between north and south.**

In this new vision for the relations between the north and south, the general consensus regarding the Andalusian model requires us to hold back. Why does such a historical model interest contemporary historians?

It is because of the exceptional coexistence of three cultures, Islamic, Christian and Jewish in Andalusia during a relatively long period in its history, and as such provided an exceptional place, where people worked, met and discussed in harmony whilst elsewhere, people despised one another. This unique type of coexistence had huge implications during its time that cannot be measured. It's not only the Iberian Peninsula that benefited from this, the countries of the Maghreb and Europe also.

Across Andalusia Greek, Chinese, Persian and Indian scientific and philosophical influences were felt and pervaded throughout Europe. This Andalusian world did not only unite the Orient and the western world, it also provided a bridge between the past the future, between antiquity and the renaissance. In Andalusia certain major linkages such as Cordoba, Seville, Granada and Toledo provided various different points of view in the Islamic-Judeo-Christian world that existed therein, which have been corroborated by numerous historians, writers and thinkers. Included in these texts are those of Haim Zafrani, Professor of the Chair of Hebrew at the University of Paris I. What follows was written in one of his publications on the Muslim orient that he wrote in 1991:

*“Never, it has been said has Judaism found itself in such a situation with another culture as it has with Islam in Andalusia. The “Dhimmi” condition, which Jews, writers and Christians found themselves constituted a liberal legal status (a high degree of legal autonomy, administrative, fiscal and cultural) compared to that which Jews lived under in the rest of Europe.”*

*“The predominantly secular character of the Andalusian Islamic civilisation allowed writers and men of books to feel part of the cultural heritage of a respectable tradition. The dominant language, Arab, which was less attached to Islam than Latin was to Christianity was spoken fluently without hesitation when it came to the reading of their sacred texts.” (34)*

Resuscitating the Andalusian model with its values of tolerance and conviviality between Muslims, Christians and Jews should today act as an example and as a platform in order to transcend great rifts, an information deficit that is symptomatic of the Mediterranean today. The Andalusian example, with its ethnic mix, its plurality, and its Judeo-Arab and Islamic-Christian convergences multiplied and magnified very real civilisational interaction. There is a necessity today to use this Andalusian example as a metaphor for a similar Mediterranean vision in order to resuscitate a climate of peace within the spirit of humanity.

## CONCLUSION

In the difficult times of today, characterised by an uncertain international political and economic situation as well as by the resurgence of religious and theocratic factors, the dialogue between cultures and civilisations is the best essential matrix for shaping the Euro-Mediterranean project as a whole.

*“Dialogue between cultures or clash of civilisations?”*. These are the two leitmotifs contained in the complicated equation on which the future of the Mediterranean relationship will depend, and with it that between Europe and the Arab world. The rapprochement and the cooperation of these two regions will definitely constitute a guarantee for peace and security in the Mediterranean area and in the world.

Obviously, Euro-Mediterranean relations are actually far from fulfilling the requirements of the new historical leg and from concretely satisfying the political and economic aims of the Mediterranean project. On the other hand, it can be assumed that Mediterranean real-life offers sufficient opportunities to transform the Mediterranean wager into a winning game.

The Mediterranean area is already and will continue to be a concrete testing ground for evaluating the success of a dialogue between a South which covets better developing conditions and more stability and a North which fancies quicker progress and more prosperity whilst wanting to preserve its strategic positions in the context of the complex and difficult international order whose emergence we are currently witnessing.

Will history confirm the optimistic vision of Charles de Gaulle who, already during the war-torn years around 1943 wrote:

*“The day will come when, from the Bosphorus to Gibraltar, peace will unite peoples who thousands of historical reasons have ordered to get together in order to complement each other.”*

May this vision come true and a supreme effort made to arrive at the point where reason and wisdom will conquer foolishness.

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