



**EUROMED SUMMIT
OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS
AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS**

Rome, 10-12 November 2010

FINAL DECLARATION

1. The representatives of the Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and similar institutions, together with the representatives of civil society organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries which do not have an ESC or similar institution, meeting in accordance with the mandate conferred by the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and extended under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), warmly thank the Italian National Economic and Labour Council (CNEL) for its hospitality and contribution to the success of the Summit.
2. During the Summit, delegations from most UfM countries and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) discussed the involvement of civil society in the UfM and more specifically the setting up of an Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions in the UfM institutional structure.
3. Other issues on the agenda were decent work and sustainable development around the Mediterranean, vocational training as a factor for competitiveness and job creation, building a fairer society in the Euromed region and agricultural policies in the UfM countries.

The participants adopted the following recommendations:

On the role and participation of civil society in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

The participants:

4. underline the importance of developing the UfM towards an area of peace, stability, prosperity and dialogue. They call for across the board mobilisation in order to bring about a just and lasting peace in the region;
5. reiterate the importance of developing participative democracy in the UfM involving organised civil society in the decision-making process of the UfM. The active participation of civil society in the UfM would further develop cooperation and help overcome political cleavages;

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6. welcome the European Parliament Report on the UfM of 3 May 2010 stating that limited cultural exchanges cannot by themselves bring the peoples of the Mediterranean together. A dialogue should be developed with all stakeholders including local authorities and civil society organisations, making sure that decisions are taken in a transparent manner and that they are involved in the decision-making process of the UfM;
7. respond to the European Parliament's call to establish a Euro-Mediterranean economic and social council by proposing the establishment of an UfM Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions that should be given consultative body status within the structure of the UfM;
8. welcome the agreement to set up the Assembly and the adoption of its statute (appended). The statute will be presented to the UfM institutions in order for the new Assembly become a consultative body within the UfM;
9. support the request of the Euromed Parliamentary Assembly to become the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM guaranteeing representative democracy in the UfM. They also welcome the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly in January 2010 and its request to represent the regional and local authority dimension in the UfM. They point out that the UfM Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions will complete the institutional framework of the UfM, giving it a participative democracy dimension, and will fully involve organised civil society in cooperation within the UfM;
10. reiterate the important role that the Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions will play, through its composition made up of representatives of different socio-professional groups and civil society organisations, in proposing, promoting and following up UfM projects. It will also be able to play a significant role in developing communication on the UfM to ensure its visibility and inform citizens of UfM activities.

On decent work and sustainable development around the Mediterranean:

The participants:

11. note that water scarcity is a subject of special relevance for the Mediterranean region. Some 450 million people live in Mediterranean coastal countries. Around the Mediterranean, 20 million people do not have access to drinking water. Partly, this is due to environmental factors but socio-economic, technical and other human factors also play a role.
12. note that poor water usage is a major problem, that water spills have to be brought under control and regulated, and that the use and management of drinking water and water for agriculture and industry must be improved. The implementation of sustainable development policies, as for example recycling and reusing of water, is recommended, taking particular care to ensure the compatibility of technological and ecological choices and approaches (water consumption, energy production, agriculture and monocultures);

13. regret that the Mediterranean Water Strategy could not be adopted at the UfM Ministerial Summit on Water in Barcelona in April 2010, especially as there was an agreement on the main content of the strategy;
14. stress that steps should be taken to optimise and improve consistency of approach in the region and underline the need of coordinated management of shared resources. With the Mediterranean being a shared heritage, it is particularly important to involve all stakeholders when drawing up an integrated management model based on a fair allocation of water, especially as access to water is considered to be a fundamental human right;
15. support the implementation of the provisions of the 1997 United Nations Convention on Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, in a spirit of "fair sharing", approximation of laws, and the reasonable use of water resources between neighbouring countries;
16. point out that civil society organisations and specifically the Economic and Social Councils can help secure transparency in the markets, ensuring that they operate efficiently and that projects correspond to real needs. Consultation of civil society players is all the more important since the stakes are high, both in terms of people's access to water and sanitation, and in terms of the impact on jobs and employment conditions, as well as on qualifications, skills and development projects. In order to be fair and transparent, such consultation implies recognition of the right of association and meeting, as well as freedom of expression and information;
17. underline that it is likewise high time for the UfM's water projects and the future Mediterranean Water Strategy to incorporate matters relating to labour and decent work as part of integrated human resource management, since there are many sectors involved in terms of labour conditions and job sustainability. They recommend that the fundamental ILO conventions linked to decent work be integrated into UfM water projects and the Mediterranean Water Strategy;
18. recommend Member States to work together with the social partners, with support from the ILO, to create a database of direct and indirect jobs at all skills and qualification levels throughout the water and sanitation industry, with a view to anticipating vocational training needs in the sectors concerned. A multilateral recognition and reference framework should also be established;
19. recommend to use sustainable impact assessments (SIA, conducted by the European Commission as part of trade agreement negotiations) to integrate decent work aspects into UfM water and sanitation projects, involving civil society stakeholders through the coordination of the Economic and Social Councils and similar institutions of the UfM or the EESC.

On agricultural policies in the UfM - a future priority?

The participants:

20. note that Mediterranean agriculture is characterised by its wide variety. In addition to the differences in production systems, there are divergent levels of development, public aid for agriculture and economic structures. Nonetheless, throughout the Mediterranean basin, agriculture acts as the backbone of rural areas and the driver of economies;
21. underline the importance of developing food security measures in the light of the recent food crisis, population growth, pressures on natural resources and ecosystems and adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture;
22. point out that the process of agricultural trade liberalisation will have an impact on the sustainability of farming in the Mediterranean region. They stress that liberalisation in itself should not be the objective, but rather a means to achieve the key objective of economic, social, environmental and regional development on both shores of the Mediterranean. Any benefits of market opening should be shared out evenly and fairly across the production chain;
23. recommend that public authorities elaborate long-term strategies, based on the development of training, technology and research that will enable farming to continue as a viable activity. Policies should be put in place to diversify activity in rural areas and support farmers and their businesses, helping them to adapt to the new context of production. Sustainable small-scale food production should be supported in order to increase availability of food and maintain environmental quality;
24. stress that in order to make Mediterranean farming more competitive, a more dynamic marketing strategy is needed. Cooperatives and other producer organisations could play an important role in this aspect, serving as instruments that farmers can use to group supply and improve their market positioning. Nevertheless, the biggest problem facing cooperatives in the Mediterranean region today is the lack of appropriate staff to manage cooperatives as businesses;
25. call on Mediterranean countries to implement training policies geared towards the agricultural sector in order to encourage high-quality employment, help the workforce adapt to the requirements of new production models and limit the negative effects of the rural exodus on employment and migratory flows;
26. recommend the introduction of new structural policies and incentives towards youth and women that will give value to their work, enable them to move out of the informal economy, and foster the creation of community associations as a means of boosting entrepreneurship in the agricultural sphere. The dangerous trend of rural depopulation can only be reversed if women and young people are successfully integrated into the farming sector;

27. underline the importance of strengthening the role of local agricultural organisations and their involvement in decision-making in order to support the agricultural development process in the Mediterranean basin;
28. recommend that agricultural policies be made a priority issue of the UfM.

On vocational training as a factor for competitiveness and job creation: priorities of economic and social stakeholders

The participants:

29. note that even though great progress has been made in the educational field over the last three decades, it is still necessary to consolidate progress and strengthen education and training systems;
30. stress that in particular, modern, efficient systems of vocational training are needed as tools for economic modernisation, for successful participation in the global economy and for generating greater social cohesion;
31. point out that one of the main socio-economic challenges faced by the Euromed region is employment. They note that the coordination of educational tools and transition from school and training to the labour market is generally difficult and dysfunctional in many countries, as shown in the high rates of unemployment, especially for young people and women;
32. call for flexible vocational training systems that can meet the complex and changing needs of enterprises and individuals, allowing extensive access and creating links between education and training and the labour market. Special attention should be paid to specific groups such as rural inhabitants;
33. point out that vocational training should facilitate the creation of wage employment but also self-employment and entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship should be promoted at every level of the educational system, starting with primary schools;
34. stress that vocational policies should facilitate training in businesses and workplaces with the close involvement of the social partners who should not only participate in the design and definition of training courses, but also in training actions;
35. encourage innovation in vocational training and the use of information and communication technologies to facilitate access to training;
36. underline the need to promote participation in vocational training as it is still often seen as a secondary channel for people who have been excluded from the academic educational system.

Greater efforts should be made to allocate funds to vocational training and improve its quality, as well as to develop a common approach to training trainers;

37. point out that it is still necessary to lay the foundations for better knowledge of vocational training in the region, by means of comparable, updated statistics;
38. recommend that cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean partner countries in the field of vocational training should receive greater support in the framework of the UfM and that periodic Ministerial conferences should be held in order to draw up a regional agenda for vocational training with specific objectives.

On building a fairer society in the Euromed region

The participants:

39. call on the governments of the region to act in order to help their populations, and especially the most vulnerable sectors, to overcome the negative effects of the economic and financial crisis;
40. are pleased that 2010 has, at the initiative of Tunisia, been declared the Year of Youth by the United Nations General Assembly;
41. welcome the Common Framework of Action 2006-2011 that was adopted at the Ministerial conference on strengthening the role of women in society in Istanbul in 2006 and the follow-up provided at the UfM Ministerial conference held in Marrakesh in November 2009. They underline the need to allocate adequate resources in order to ensure the effective implementation of the actions;
42. consider it crucial to attach more importance to the issue of immigrant and retired women in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
43. call for women to be able to receive high-quality education, and for women to be better represented in the media, in order to give greater visibility to the position of women in the region;
44. reiterate the commitment of the Economic and Social Councils and similar institutions in this field, which has been a standing point on the agenda of the Euromed Summits of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions and subject to several reports since 2006. They welcome the invitation, underlined in the Marrakesh conclusions, to be further involved in the implementation of the Common Framework of Action;
45. propose to set up a permanent working group on strengthening the role of women in society which will report on the situation on a yearly basis to the meetings of the Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions and to the UfM bodies;

46. welcome the Ministers' proposal to include gender equality as one of the priority project areas of the UfM;
47. note with satisfaction that many EU and Mediterranean partner countries have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and thus laid the foundation for improving the quality of life of people with disabilities;
48. point out that the ratification of the Convention is a first step on a long road to changing society's attitude to people with disabilities and their living environment, both in the EU Member States and in the Mediterranean partner countries. They regret that today the social and economic situation of various population groups, including people with disabilities, does not comply with the requirements of the Convention;
49. recommend that civil society organisations representing either women or people with disabilities should be involved more effectively in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, for example through the European Neighbourhood policy programmes and projects.

On the 2011-2012 work programme

The participants:

50. take note of the completion of the TRESMED 3 project and the European Commission's support for its renewal;
51. decide that in 2011, the following themes will be addressed:
 - a) Immigration and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
 - b) Promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity in the Euromed region.
 - c) Rural development and employment in the Euromed region;
52. decide that in 2012, the theme of Integrated industrial policies (particularly regarding energy) will be addressed.

<p>THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE EUROMED SUMMIT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS PROPOSE TO PRESENT THIS DECLARATION TO THE UFM SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN BARCELONA 20-21 NOVEMBER 2010.</p>
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N.B.: Appendices overleaf.

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APPENDIX

Membership of constituent bodies of the Euro-Mediterranean Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions for the 2010-2012 period.

1. The following work groups have been or will be set up:
 - Immigration and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Greece, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council of Spain, the Italian National Economic and Labour Council, the Economic and Social Council of Malta, the Economic and Social Council of Tunisia, the delegation of Moroccan representatives and the European Economic and Social Committee.
 - Promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity in the Euromed region under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Spain, in cooperation with the Italian National Economic and Labour Council, the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Economic and Social Council of Tunisia, the Economic and Social Council of Jordan, the representatives of the Turkish delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee and the Palestinian Economic and Social Council.
 - Rural development and employment in the Euromed region under the direction of the European Economic and Social Committee, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Economic and Social Council of Tunisia, the Economic and Social Council of Jordan, the Italian National Economic and Labour Council and the representatives of the Turkish delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee.
 - Integrated industrial policies (particularly regarding energy) under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Spain, in cooperation with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of France, the Italian National Economic and Labour Council, the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Economic and Social Council of Tunisia and the representatives of the Turkish delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee.
 - Strengthening the role of women in society (permanent working group).
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