



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

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**SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY
EUROMED PROGRAMME
OF ACTIVITIES
JANUARY-JUNE 2008**

The Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council rounds off the first trio of Presidencies (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) and the implementation of the first 18-month programme. Cooperation with our partners has been a unique and positive experience. The Slovenian Presidency will seek to ensure the continuity with the remarkable work done in 2007 and insure the smooth transition and cooperation with the incoming French Presidency and the next trio (France, the Czech Republic and Sweden). It will also be the first Presidency of a new Member state, the most Central-European Mediterranean state and the most Mediterranean Central-European state.

The Presidency will pursue the efforts to realize the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; continue to implement the Euro-Mediterranean Five Year Work Programme and the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism adopted in 2005 at the Barcelona Summit and especially the 2008 annual programme, adopted in Lisbon at the 9th Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in November 2007. All members of the Barcelona Process have unanimously adopted the Lisbon conclusions, which is an important achievement.

The Barcelona Process continues to be a unique framework for an enhanced dialogue and cooperation in a wide range of fields of common interest for the Euro-Mediterranean partners, for building regional cooperation and mutual understanding. But there is always room for improvement and new developments should be taken into consideration to consolidate the Barcelona Process in the future. We would like to emphasize the centrality and the importance of the Barcelona Process for the EU relations with Mediterranean countries, even though it could be enriched by other initiatives aiming at strengthening the political, economic and cultural ties between the Euro-Med countries. The Barcelona Process also proves to be of the continuing interest – at the beginning of the Presidency, we can welcome two new countries, Albania and Mauritania.

The common challenges facing the Euro-Mediterranean region that were emphasized in the Lisbon Conclusions, are in synergy (Si.nergy) with the main priorities of the Slovenian Presidency: economic and social development, energy and climate change package, civil protection, countering terrorism and extremism, European Neighborhood Policy and the intercultural dialogue. The Slovenian Presidency shall try to make an open, transparent and comprehensive work programme with full participation and dialogue of all the Euro-Mediterranean partners.

The adopted programme of the planned Euro-Med initiatives for 2008 is very ambitious and comprehensive, with a lot of the on-going initiatives as well as many new initiatives on all levels.

Political and Security Partnership

The Presidency reaffirms its commitment to strive to make progress in achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to maintain a constructive dialogue between the Euro-Med partners and contribute to achieve further progress in the MEPP. Political dialogue will remain a regular item on the agenda of the Euro-Med Senior Officials meetings with a comprehensive exchange of views between the partners.

There is an interest for the deepening of the dialogue on **ESDP** and security issues, to promote an efficient and coherent conduct of crisis management operations. The ad-hoc ESDP meeting will be organized on June 23. A Euro-Med seminar on ESDP issues, co-organized by the European Institute on Security Studies and Morocco, which will take place in Rabat.

In the framework of **EuroMeSCo** activities, a busy agenda has been developed for 2008 including a wide range of issues pertinent to the development of the region and the relations among the partners. The policy and security-oriented approach of EuroMeSCo contributes towards the goals of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in these areas and as an official confidence-building measure of the Partnership strives to reinforce confidence amongst its members and within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The Slovenian Presidency will ensure continuity in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, prevention of its financing and is fully committed to implement the **Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism** adopted in 2005 at the Barcelona Summit. The Agreed Lisbon conclusion in November 2007 reaffirmed this commitment in a more practical way. In defining the agenda and the programme the Presidency would like to proceed in an open and transparent way with all Euro-Med partners.

The regular Euro-Med ad-hoc meeting on fight against terrorism will take place on April 22 in Brussels.

A Euro-Med Workshop on the Mechanisms of International Cooperation in Criminal Matters pertaining to Counter-Terrorism, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Morocco will be hosted by Morocco and should take place in March.

The Czech Republic will host a Euro-Med seminar on the Respect of Human Rights and International standards in the field of Counter-Terrorism.

The Presidency will continue with the dialogue and discussions on the subject of best practices and exchange of experience in **the area of elections** at the Senior Officials' and experts' level.

The Presidency is convinced that **the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)** is a major asset for the improvement of the dialogue and understanding between all peoples of the Euro-Med region. We intend to follow closely the activities, also in view of the annual Plenary Assembly in Greece in March 2008.

The Presidency will be interested in exploring the possibilities and various forms of **reinforced cooperation**, especially within the regional framework. The Presidency also

intends to follow up and continue with some initiatives of cooperation started in the previous presidencies.

Free Trade and Investment

Significant progress has been achieved in the area of trade in 2007, so new and intensive activities will take place under Slovenian Presidency in launching negotiations with a number of Mediterranean partners in view of concluding bilateral protocols. There will also be a preparatory meeting for the next Ministerial meeting on Trade, which will take place in the second semester.

The Presidency is aware of the importance of an environment conducive to investment and private sector development, of the competitive and dynamic business environment. We are paying particular attention to the initiatives in the area of sustainable industrial policy and eco-innovation.

The next Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Industrial Cooperation is planned for the second semester; Slovenian Presidency shall organize a preparatory meeting.

Economic and Financial Issues

On February 20-21 in Brussels, there will be a XII. Euro-Mediterranean Economic Transition Conference that will focus on financial and banking services at the heart of economic transition.

The first Euro-Med technical meeting on customs co-operation and fight against fraud will take place in Tangiers (Morocco). Such meeting will enhance cooperation between customs at regional scale and will thus contribute to prevent illegal trade.

The Presidency is also considering the initiative for the first Meeting of the Euro-Med network of public finance experts.

Environment, Climate Change and Tourism

The Presidency reiterates its commitment to the realization and success of the 1st Euro-Med Ministerial Meeting on Tourism that will take place in Fes in Morocco on April 3-4. Another expert and senior officials meeting will take place prior to the Conference. The general orientation was that tourism as a highly multi-sectoral activity has an incredible potential to generate economic progress and welfare. Distinctive diversity of the Mediterranean area remains key competitive advantage and long-term development potentials of sustainable tourism.

One of the key priorities of the Slovenian Presidency will be the climate-energy package and we shall work intensively on further initiatives to respond to the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean, with the interrelated issues of climate change and energy. The Presidency

will also take great interest in the report on the impact of climate change on international security and will look at the possible implementations and implications.

The Presidency welcomed the conclusions of the 4th Conference of Water directors in December 2007 in Slovenia, which will be probably followed by the Euro-Med preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Meeting on Water in the second semester of 2008.

Information Society

The Presidency is fully committed to the preparation and realization on the 2nd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on Information Society to be held in Cairo, Egypt on February 26-27. Another preparatory meeting on expert and senior officials' level will take place prior to the Conference.

Education, Science and Social Development

The Presidency is interested to stimulate the implementation of the objectives of the Cairo Declaration, adopted at the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial conference on Higher Education and Science. The Slovenian project of a Euro-Mediterranean University with its seat in Piran has been recognized.

There shall be a Euro-Med meeting of the expert group for higher education.

In the preparation of the ministerial conferences in the second semester of 2008, the Slovenian Presidency shall organize preparatory meetings for the Ministerial Conferences on Health and Employment.

The Role of Women in Society

The Presidency is stressing the importance of strengthening the role and participation of women in society at social, economic, political, civil and cultural levels. A meeting on the role of women in society will be organized in the first semester, focusing on the role, place and influence of women in politics.

Further actions may be envisaged in line with the five-year work programme adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Istanbul in 2006.

Intercultural Dialogue, Dialogue between Cultures

Year 2008 is the Euro-Mediterranean year on dialogue between cultures and EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The opening event took place on January 8 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. A Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Culture and Cultural dialogue will be held in Greece on May 29-30. There will be also a preparatory meeting on expert and senior officials' level. This important event will be organized also in close cooperation with the Anna Lindh Foundation.

The specific contribution of Slovenia to the strengthening of partnership and dialogue is represented by the initiative to establish a Euro-Mediterranean University in Piran. Solemn inauguration will take place in May in Slovenia. The main reason for establishing such international institution is the need to draw inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanistic inheritance of the Euro-Mediterranean area. This event will be the marking point of Slovenia's own significant contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to the enhancement of the intercultural dialogue in the region and elsewhere.

The University has also every prospect of becoming a meeting place for young people from the entire Mediterranean. One of the accents of the Slovenian Presidency will be to promote multilingualism and intercultural exchanges among youth, as a means of increasing their employability, mobility and social inclusion.

The Presidency understands intercultural dialogue as a strategic category of coexistence in diversity. Overcoming stereotypes and prejudices is vital for a number of other areas: migration, the fight against organized crime, and terrorism.

Anna Lindh Foundation

The Presidency would like to stress the importance of the consolidation of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the necessity for the full implementation of the guidelines for the future activities as well as the implementation of the decision for the new leadership.