

# COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP:

### **A work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years.**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION: THE EU IS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP**

The meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in Barcelona on 27-28 November 1995 marked a turning-point in relations between the European Union and its neighbours on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. A partnership was launched which is comprehensive, both in its geographical coverage and in its sectoral scope, and forward-looking in its political, economic and social ambitions.

The Barcelona Process has developed a strong partnership on a basis of joint ownership, dialogue and cooperation. It has been successful: in creating long-term political and institutional links between Europe and Mediterranean Partners; in establishing the foundations for free trade, and in engaging Mediterranean Partners in the path of reforms. More importantly, the partnership has been driven by a common political will to build together a space of dialogue, peace, security and shared prosperity.

Today, the EU is the main partner of Mediterranean countries both in trade of goods and services. More than 50% of the trade of the region is with the EU, and for some countries, the EU represents the destination of more than 70% of their exports. Europe is the largest foreign investor (55% of total foreign investment) and the EU is the region's largest provider of financial assistance and funding, with nearly € 3 billion per year in loans and grants. The EU is also the main source of tourism and the first destination for migrants.

All countries that adopted the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 have negotiated Association Agreements with the EU<sup>1</sup>. In parallel with this strong bilateral relationship, the regional dimension of the partnership has grown considerably with the establishment in 2003 of the FEMIP (The Euro-Mediterranean Investment Facility for the Mediterranean, in the framework of the European Investment Bank); the creation in 2004 of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly; the setting up in 2005, after the decision taken by Ministers in 2004, of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures in Alexandria and the signature of the Agadir Agreement<sup>2</sup> in 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> Agreements are in force with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestinian Authority, Lebanon. With Algeria the agreement has been signed and is awaiting ratification. With Syria an agreement has been initialled.

<sup>2</sup> The Agadir Agreement for a south-south free trade zone was concluded between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.

What the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference presents us with is an opportunity to take stock of what the Barcelona Process has achieved so far, and to look at where the obstacles to progress lie and how we might approach some of the more difficult issues afresh to ensure that our common goals are met.

It will also be an opportunity to look at how European Neighbourhood Policy through Action Plans agreed with Partner Countries and the Barcelona Process can, through working in a complementary and mutually reinforcing way, bring about a qualitative change in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

European Neighbourhood Policy offers partners the possibility to have a stake in the EU internal market and to participate in EU programmes and policies (on the basis of the fulfilment of agreed priorities reflecting shared values and foreign policy objectives). But it also helps to strengthen cooperation between countries in the Barcelona process and further promote regional and sub-regional cooperation. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will provide financial support for cross-border and trans-national cooperation.

While the Barcelona Declaration and its overall approach remain valid, there is no room for complacency. The UNDP Arab Human Development Reports and the declarations of Sana'a and Alexandria and the Arab League Summit in Tunis in 2004 have all stressed the need to move forward in areas such as political reform and women's rights and education if the region is not to lag behind. Progress towards a number of the goals set out in the Barcelona Declaration has been slow, partly because of the political difficulties caused by the continuing conflicts in the region, partly because partners have at times not appeared wholly committed to implementing the principles to which they have signed up, and because the search for consensus has sometimes acted as a brake on those wishing to move forward more rapidly. A summary analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of the Barcelona Process since its inception in 1995 is included in Annex I.

During 2005 Foreign Ministers of the Partnership will meet in Luxembourg on 30-31 May ('Barcelona VII') and an Extraordinary Conference will be held in Barcelona at the end of November. The present Communication is intended to serve as a preparation for both meetings. It contains proposals to make concrete progress in three critical areas for the future of the region and of EU relations with our Mediterranean partners. Once agreed, these initiatives will help to address the short and medium-term challenges faced by our partners over the next five years:

**(1) Human Rights and Democracy**

The aim is to advance human rights, democracy, peace and security and engage more decisively in the process of strengthening governance and participatory democracy.

**(2) Economic Growth and Reform**

The modernisation of Euromed partners' economies is necessary so they can benefit from the opportunities offered by globalisation and free trade with Europe. Partner countries will need to create 5 million jobs a year to cope with the new entrants to their labour markets.

### **(3) Education**

Increasing the quality of education and providing education for all is critical for the social and human development of Mediterranean Partners.

Discussion should however not be limited to these areas and the initiatives proposed in this Communication include proposals on areas such as migration, weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism, also aimed to address the challenges that we will face over the next five years.

This work programme is to be developed through the institutional framework of the Barcelona Process as well as the Neighbourhood Policy and, in particular, its key instrument, the national action plans. The time-line for this work programme is summarised in section 3 of the Communication.

Successive Ministerial meetings have underlined the need for **increased visibility** of the partnership in both the EU and in partner countries. The tenth anniversary and the celebration of 2005 as the Year of the Mediterranean provide a major opportunity to address this situation by a sustained strategy of awareness raising activities and events.

Raising visibility requires a number of jointly agreed, clear and consistent messages addressed to the man and woman in the street using the most effective means of communication and dissemination. The role of the mass media is essential to this pursuit.

The Commission has already presented partners with a detailed list of information and communication actions planned on a regional and national basis. These include satellite television programmes on a regional basis; bilateral activities with national television and radio networks; initiatives with the national and regional press; proactive organisation of events and exchange opportunities for journalists and dedicated activities targeting the civil society and youth sectors.

As agreed at the last Foreign Ministers meeting in The Hague effective communication depends on the convergence of messages transmitted by all partners. The Commission urges partners to mobilise governmental and non-governmental channels to achieve this.

## **2. A WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS**

### **2.1. Advancing Human Rights and Democracy**

*Political reform* is key to achieving sustainable security and stability. Based on the Commission's Communication of May 2003<sup>3</sup> on human rights and democratisation greater emphasis has been put on this cooperation. Partners should consider how to pursue this, including policy to promote gender equality and to associate and engage civil society, as well as encourage its development. An important issue in this respect

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<sup>3</sup> Reinvigorating EU actions on Human Rights and Democratisation with Mediterranean Partners (COM(2003)294).

is to strive towards common perceptions of the challenges of democratisation, including the role of democratic Islamic political movements in national politics. (Reference to the forthcoming UNDP report on freedom in the Arab world).

The Sana'a Conference in January 2004 proved to be a constructive, well publicised event with 800 participants from civil society, governments and international organisations from the Arab world. The Conference Declaration agreed on 10 points including the protection of human rights, the empowerment of women, the strengthening of democracy, pluralism, and independent judiciary. Some of these conclusions could be usefully discussed in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

**In line with the Commission's Communication, the Commission proposes to hold a Euro-Mediterranean Conference in 2006 prepared at sub-regional level on Human Rights and democratisation. The Conference should constitute a focal point and opportunity to push forward regional efforts to reinvigorate democracy and pluralism, publicise joint efforts in the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy, allow for exchanges of good practices and encourage the involvement of Arab civil society. Actions to promote civic awareness and human rights education will be supported at regional and national levels. This conference should come up with concrete ideas for the future with results to be made operational through the Neighbourhood Policy and the financing instruments.**

Building on the activities undertaken by the Commission in the field of human rights and democratisation, The Commission will propose a Democracy Facility that will provide targeted support for those partners with a clear commitment to political reforms. This would be under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and would go beyond the specific support that may be mobilised under regional or national action plans. This Facility will include electoral observation and other democracy support measures and it should enter into force in 2007. It will also allow for the further mainstreaming of good governance, promotion of and respect for human rights and democratic principles.

## **2.2. Helping to create jobs and enhancing sustainable economic growth (subject to further discussions with line DGs during the ISC)**

The review of the Barcelona process shows that, with the conclusion of all the Association Agreements, the implementation of the *free trade area* for industrial goods is well on its way. Partners should now take the necessary measures to expand the scope of this core free trade area, including further progress towards free trade in agricultural goods and in services, and expand the geographical coverage of the Agadir agreement to all Mediterranean Partners countries. In order to meet the 2010 target date for a full fledged Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone, as set out in the Barcelona Declaration, Partners should agree to conclude the negotiations and start the implementation of the agreements on free trade in agriculture and in services by 2010, while the Mediterranean Partners should commit to 2010 deadline to expand the Agadir Agreement to trade in services and to all Mediterranean countries.

### **a) *Free trade and cooperation in agriculture***

On the basis of the work done by the sectoral Senior Officials meetings on agriculture, a **road map should be agreed for free trade in agricultural and processed agricultural products with a regional mandate providing for a high degree of liberalisation with a very limited number of exceptions and a timetable for implementation, consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Association Agreements. This would be accompanied by a commitment to the launching of a regional cooperation programme on rural development and optimisation of quality production from 2007, consistent with the objectives of the Neighbourhood Policy. Following the results of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Luxembourg in May, the Commission will submit negotiating guidelines on free trade in agriculture for approval by the Council with the objective to start negotiations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2005. Negotiations should be concluded within a year with a view to aligning the liberalisation of trade in agriculture with 2010 Free Trade Area objectives.**

#### ***b) Services and Investment***

Foreign investment to the region remains insufficient and has been identified as one of the major shortcomings of the economic partnership. In recent years investment into partner countries has been at a low level. However, the acceleration of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2004 (€19 billion), nearly doubling the amount of 2003, seems to indicate that the region is increasing its share of FDI, and closing the gap in the attraction of foreign investment with the new Member States. The region needs to address the obstacles to *investment* in the Mediterranean. This should not be limited to improving the regulatory environment for foreign and domestic investments – where progress has already been made – but include a review of the wider institutional environment with a view to eliminating remaining bottlenecks that have a negative impact on the attractiveness for private investment. These include transaction costs, security and enforcement of contracts, a variety of missing or incomplete markets, the regulatory environment for the private sector and the reform of public administrations.

**Partners should agree a timetable for bilateral economic integration agreements on *services* and *investment* in line with the commitments made at the regional level and in the Neighbourhood Action Plans. In addition, through the Neighbourhood Action Plans, including their aspects relating to services liberalisation, special focus on investment will help to promote reforms and make them more acceptable and appealing for partners. The objective is to significantly increase foreign investment in Mediterranean Partner countries. The Commission will submit negotiating guidelines to the Council with a view to starting negotiations with partner countries during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2005. . Partners should agree to conclude negotiations on free trade in services with the view to aligning the liberalisation on services with the 2010 Free Trade Area objectives.**

These efforts should aim at combining social development with economic development. In this respect, and in order to guarantee the respect for fundamental social and economic rights, the ongoing Sustainability Impact Assessment of the free trade area should make an important contribution and its recommendations help guide future policy.

Mediterranean partners have recently underlined the importance of creating a *Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank*. In this context it is important to note that major progress has been made by the EIB through the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) which is now lending to Mediterranean partners at the rate of € 2 billion per year. Progress made by FEMIP in supporting the activities of the private sector should be assessed. The ECOFIN Council agreed in November 2003 to review the FEMIP mandate before the end of 2006. **The possibility of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank should be carefully re-considered in the light of the FEMIP experience, the experience with previous reviews of this idea and taking into account the overall review of the EIB's External Mandates. The Commission will submit an assessment in 2006 in this respect in consultation with the EIB.**

### *c) South-South economic integration*

South-South economic integration is fundamental in order to overcome market fragmentation in the South, and increase its ability to attract investment. On South-South trade partners should accelerate the adoption of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean Origin Protocol, ensure that the Agadir Agreement enters into force in 2005 without further delays, and be widened in line with its existing provisions. Free trade should also be developed between Agadir and non-Agadir partners.

**Therefore, partners should agree to the creation by 2010 of a free trade area, including free trade in services, among all Mediterranean partners, on the basis of the Agadir free trade agreement and of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean Protocol of origin, so that the all agreements are compatible and at the end of their respective transition periods the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area is fully operational.**

### *d) Transport*

Building bridges across the Mediterranean and extending European *Transport Corridors* to the Mediterranean are essential preconditions to make the FTA work effectively. Necessary regulatory reform should also be accompanied by significant infrastructure investment. Important resources for investment are available in FEMIP. **A Euro-Mediterranean Transport Ministerial in 2005 with the participation of the EIB should discuss the further integration of Med partners not only with the EU, but also among themselves and with their neighbours.**

### *e) Environment and sustainability*

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EMP, is an appropriate time to launch a major, highly visible and ambitious initiative designed to improve the quality of life of the average citizen, by the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. The goal should be to tackle all the major sources of pollution including industrial emissions, municipal waste, and particularly urban wastewater. This initiative would improve the prospects for the development of tourism, contribute towards stemming the decline in local fishery stocks as well as providing safe drinking water to millions of citizens.

A clear political backing and substantial financial investment will be required to deliver the necessary capacity building and support at the local level (including support for sustainable urban management and mobilization of local actors), transfer of best practices (including in Integrated Coastal Zone Management), as well as

major investments in environmental infrastructure. With a clear commitment to concentrating financial assistance towards meeting this aim, its realization should be feasible.

The Commission proposes that a precise timetable should be agreed with Med partners on the adoption of measures leading to a thorough de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. This timetable should be adopted in 2006.

### 2.3. Contributing to a better education for all

#### *a) Education and vocational training*

The Arab Human Development Reports have stressed the need for substantial improvements in *education*. This issue has most recently been highlighted at the Forum for the Future Ministerial meeting in Rabat on 11 December. It will also be the subject of the Forum for the Future Education Ministerial due to be held in Jordan in May.

The Commission acknowledges the paramount importance of the development of human resources for the economic and social development of the Mediterranean countries. For this purpose, the Commission has €704 million in ongoing support programmes to *education and vocational training* in the Mediterranean partners under MEDA.

In order to guarantee that the Mediterranean partners can fully participate and profit from the knowledge society, there should be agreement to increase resources devoted to educational and vocational training programmes based on a partnership approach and focussing on promoting and supporting the tailor-made reforms that these countries require. This should result in a substantial increase in the percentage of EU funding devoted to these sectors. **The Commission proposes to engage in a dialogue with partner countries and Member States in order to substantially increase bilateral cooperation to the sector of education and vocational training. The goal would be to increase by at least 50% the proportion of financial cooperation devoted to education from 2007, in parallel with renewed efforts by national governments to invest in the sector.**

The size of these challenges calls not only for an increase in EU funding but also for more and better coordination and involvement of other donors such as the EIB and the World Bank. It should crucially also involve an undertaking by Mediterranean partners themselves to devote a substantial percentage of national expenditure to education and the eradication of illiteracy and to put in place measures to improve the efficiency of this expenditure.

The guiding principle of the EU strategy is the ownership of the partner government and the need to ensure a balanced approach, which will guarantee the sustainability of the reforms in the long term. The Commission will continue promoting the principle of equity, which implies a special emphasis on underprivileged groups and local populations: illiterate populations, girl-students and populations in rural and suburban areas. The Commission will also support the efforts of modernisation of the systems and the extension of access to information and communications technology. The latter issue should be among those addressed by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting on the Information Society due to be held in Ireland in April.

The aim of the partnership should be to improve the quality, relevance and consistency of education and vocational training regarding the socio-economic needs of the region as well as an increase in access and retention rates particularly for populations at risk of exclusion. **In line with the Millennium Development Goals and through a combination of support to different policies, the EU and partner countries should focus on achieving three key goals by 2015 : eradication of illiteracy in the region; all girls and boys enrolled in primary school; and the elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education, requiring a particular effort to ensure the participation of women in education at all levels.** *b) Higher education and mobility*

Since 2002, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has adopted a number of initiatives in the area of mobility and academic contacts in order to improve mutual understanding and awareness at the formative stage. In 2002, in the Valencia Ministerial Conference, the Commission decided to extend the Tempus programme to Mediterranean partners. These activities are complementary to the support to systemic reforms. In the framework of Neighbourhood Policy, partners have agreed to pursue socio-cultural and educational exchanges. **In 2006 the Commission intends to launch a substantial scheme of scholarships for university students co-funded by the Commission and host countries within the Euro-Mediterranean region. A certain percentage of this scheme will be reserved for women.** The Commission would also propose that partners consider offering the possibility to children approaching the end of their schooling to spend either a full academic year or a summer course in a school in another partner country.

To facilitate exchange of people between the EU and partner countries, we should work together to develop a system of recognition of both academic and vocational qualifications. In order to achieve this, partner countries should consider a generic university qualification across the region that would be recognised in the EU and internationally.

Given the emphasis and objectives of the Neighbourhood Policy, Mediterranean partners have an interest in deepening knowledge of European integration. Partners should therefore agree to encourage the pursuit of European studies in Mediterranean partners' academic institutions

## **2.4. Wider proposals**

### **a) Migration and social integration**

More than [...] million citizens originating from the Mediterranean partners are now legally resident in the EU. However, the demographic situation in the EU is leading to the need for new migrants to join the work force. The objective of reducing migratory pressures contained in the Barcelona Declaration should be replaced by a more strategic approach.

The Commission considers that more work should be done on the role that can be played by the Association Agreements and Neighbourhood Action Plans, in jointly managing the movement of people (including visa facilitation) and promoting the integration of migrants. For example, under the Neighbourhood Action Plans pilot projects and twinning of administrations between the EU and Mediterranean partners

can be supported. The new ENPI can be used to promote a comprehensive approach including cross-border cooperation among the partners and between them and their neighbours. All aspects should be taken into account, including requests made by Arab partners to discuss the fight against racism and xenophobia as well as a study of the labour markets in the EU and in partners. After careful preparation at senior official level, Euro-Mediterranean Social Affairs and Justice and Home Affairs Ministers should meet, at the latest in 2007, to agree on a series of further actions to promote cooperation in these fields. The role of local authorities and civil society in dealing with these issues should also be borne in mind.

#### b) The Middle East Peace Process

The review shows that continuing conflicts are an obstacle to progress in the partnership. This is particularly true of the Middle East Peace Process. The paper<sup>4</sup> by Arab partners places particular emphasis on this point. Following the recent meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority there are encouraging signs of progress. The Barcelona Process can make a contribution to promoting this, even if this is not the forum in which a settlement will be reached. Partners should call for the strengthening of the efforts of the Quartet and facilitate the implementation of the Road Map objectives of the creation of a democratic Palestinian state living in peace and security with Israel as the guiding framework for the peace process on the Israeli-Palestinian track. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should provide continued support for cooperation among the parties, particularly in the industrial and economic sectors, to complement the political process. In the context of a settlement it should provide the instruments for Europe to help maintain the peace once it is achieved through a Charter for Peace and Stability and the closest possible integration of all partners into the European space through the Neighbourhood Policy.

#### c) Contribution to the resolution of other conflicts

In addition, the EU should show its willingness to help resolve other conflicts in the region, such as that in the Western Sahara, thus eliminating a significant obstacle to developing the further integration process within the Arab Maghreb Union. In this context EU support for regional integration in the Maghreb already plays an important role.

#### d) Terrorism

Since 1995 threats to the security of the partnership have increased significantly. Nowhere is this more evident than in the fight against terrorism. Progress has been made in strengthening cooperation among police, judicial and other authorities and this will be further developed under the second phase of the regional programme; but there remains much to be done to build the confidence necessary to step up exchanges of information on the threat from organisations and individuals. Bilateral state-to-state cooperation has proved insufficient in tackling the global threat of terrorism. Since 2001 serious terrorist attacks have hit Euro-Mediterranean countries

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<sup>4</sup> On 31 January, the Arab partners of the Barcelona Process issued a paper on «Elements of the Arab contribution to the evaluation and enhancement of the Barcelona Process ».

but regional dialogue on dealing with this has too often foundered over disagreements on definitions.

Partners should agree to pursue the parallel tracks of greater practical cooperation in the fight against terrorism in full respect of human rights and political dialogue on its root causes. In addition, the Commission proposes that Euro-Mediterranean partners should start discussions on a Code of Conduct on measures to fight terrorism, including its financing aspects as proposed by Arab partners, with the objective to reach an agreement before the end of 2007.

#### e) Weapons of Mass Destruction

The EU is working with Mediterranean partners to attain the objectives of a Mediterranean region free of weapons of mass destruction and that all countries of the region fully comply with and implement their international obligations in this area. These objectives are contained in the Association Agreement initialled with Syria and in the Neighbourhood Action Plans.

The Commission welcomes the initiative taken by the Personal Representative of the SG/HR to organise a workshop on this subject. This Workshop will take place in 2005. Partners should agree to ensure effective cooperation to implement their commitments in particular as regards export, transit and end-use controls and enforcement procedures. The Commission is prepared to examine appropriate technical assistance in this field.

Cooperation in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) should be further developed on a regional, sub-regional or bilateral basis with a view to improving awareness of opportunities for working together in conflict prevention and crisis management activities. The forthcoming seminar due to be held in Athens in June offers such an opportunity.

#### f) Civil society

In this context with support from the existing regional programmes and the Anna Lindh Foundation, virtual networks of universities in the Euro-Mediterranean region could be set up. The Foundation should be used to promote the role of civil society in the process, to overcome stereotypes and hostilities based on ignorance and help to achieve a genuine partnership among peoples. In line with an idea already included in the Barcelona Declaration, a regional strategy “against racism, xenophobia and intolerance” should be designed in the framework of the partnership instruments, including the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Concerning the role of civil society, agreement should be reached on mechanisms to strengthen their presence in the partnership. These could be developed by promoting the participation of civil society groups at regional and national levels for general or sector-specific consultations, in order to give them the opportunity to express their views on all matters related to the partnership in a more comprehensive and effective way. As regards the implementation of the Association Agreements and European Neighbourhood Policy, it could be agreed to hold regular preparatory meetings with civil society organisations before, as well as after, each sub-committee on Human Rights and democratisation.

Equality of opportunity among men and women is a cross-cutting issue which impacts on human and economic development.

A Euro-Mediterranean conference of government representatives and civil society could usefully be organised to raise awareness of the importance of the issue and take practical steps towards the improvement of the situation.

This conference should take place in 2006 and should propose concrete ideas for the future with results to be made operational through the Neighbourhood Policy and its financing instrument.

2005 is also the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women's rights, and both Euromed meetings should strongly reflect the importance that the Barcelona Process places on empowering women. The Commission is fully engaged with the Arab International Women's Forum in its efforts to make progress on this area, and proposes to set up a network of women leader from business, the arts, politics and civil society across the region.

### 3. TIMELINE FOR KEY INITIATIVES

The Commission recommends that at the Ministerial meetings in Luxembourg and Barcelona this year agreement should be reached on the following initiatives for the future of the partnership:

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| 2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Euro-Mediterranean partners should agree a road map for agricultural liberalisation. The Commission will submit negotiating guidelines for approval by the Council to start negotiations with partner countries.</li><li>– Euro-Med partners should agree a timetable for bilateral economic integration agreements on services and investment. The Commission will submit negotiating guidelines for approval by the Council to start negotiations with partner countries.</li><li>– Organise a workshop on weapons of Mass Destruction 2005</li><li>– A Euro-Mediterranean Transport Ministerial should take place before the end of the year with the participation of the EIB, to discuss infrastructure projects to further integrate Mediterranean Partners with themselves, their neighbours and the EU.</li></ul> |
| 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Sub-regional Conferences on Human Rights, with the participation of government representatives and civil society should be held.</li><li>– A Euro-Mediterranean Conference on gender equality with the participation of government representatives and civil society should take place. The Conference should concentrate on the comparison of best practices within the region to raise the role of women in society and their contribution to human development.</li><li>– Adoption of a timetable with concrete measures with the objective of a thorough de-pollution of the Mediterranean by 2020.</li><li>– In the light of the FEMIP experience, and following consultations with partner countries, the Commission will assess before the end of the year the possibility of</li></ul>                            |

establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank.

- The Commission will launch a Scholarship scheme for university students.
- 2007
- Euro-Mediterranean Partners should reach agreement before the end of the year on a code of conduct on measures to fight terrorism.
  - A Euro-Mediterranean conference of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers, with the participation of local authorities, should be held to discuss management of migratory flows and social integration.
  - A regional programme on rural development and optimisation of quality production should be identified for implementation.
  - After consultation with partner countries, the percentage devoted to bilateral cooperation in the education sector should be increased by 50% of the national and regional indicative programmes.
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- 2010
- All South-South free trade agreements should be concluded by the end of the year, including for services, on the basis of the Agadir Agreement and of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean Protocol of origin, so that the all agreements are compatible and at the end of their respective transition periods the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area is fully operational.