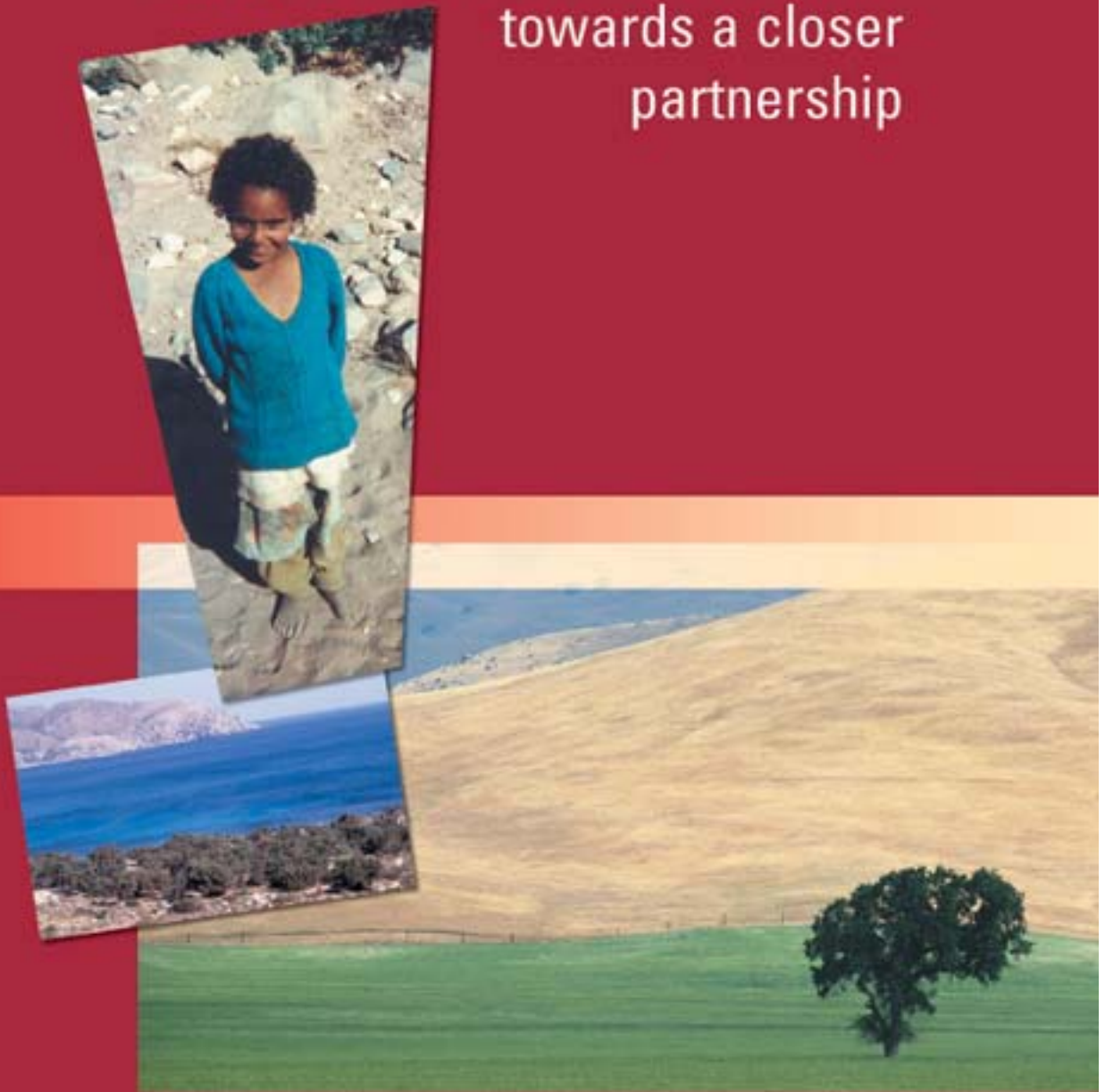


EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Europe and the Mediterranean: towards a closer partnership



Europe and the Mediterranean: towards a closer partnership

An overview of the Barcelona Process in 2002



The boundaries shown on these maps do not imply on the part of the European Commission any judgment on the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Text finalised in March 2003

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>). For further information on external relations please consult the following web site: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/index.htm

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

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1. The Barcelona Process — An introduction

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995, marked the starting point of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process), a wide framework of political, economic and social relations between the 15 Member States of the European Union and 12 partners in the Mediterranean region (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey).

The Barcelona Process is a unique and ambitious initiative, which laid the foundations of a new regional relationship and which represents a turning point in Euro-Mediterranean relations. In the Barcelona declaration, the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners established the three main objectives of the partnership:

1. The definition of a common area of peace and stability through the reinforcement of political and security dialogue (political and security chapter).
2. The construction of a zone of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership and the gradual establishment of a free trade zone (economic and financial chapter).
3. The rapprochement between peoples through a social, cultural and human partnership aimed at encouraging understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (social, cultural and human chapter).

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership comprises two complementary dimensions:

- **Bilateral dimension.** The European Union carries out a number of activities bilaterally with each country. The most important are the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements that the Union negotiates with the Mediterranean partners individually. They reflect the general principles governing the new Euro-Mediterranean relationship, although they each contain characteristics specific to the relations between the EU and each Mediterranean partner.
- **Regional dimension.** Regional dialogue represents one of the most innovative aspects of the partnership, covering at the same time the political, economic and cultural fields (regional cooperation). Regional cooperation has a considerable strategic impact as it deals with problems that are common to many Mediterranean partners while it emphasises the national complementarities.

The multilateral dimension supports and complements the bilateral actions and dialogue taking place under the association agreements. The existing MEDA programme became the main financial instrument for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Since the Barcelona Conference in 1995, five Euro-Mediterranean Conferences of Ministers of Foreign Affairs were held, in Malta in April 1997, in Stuttgart in April 1999, in Marseilles in November 2000, in Brussels on 5 and 6 November 2001 and in Valencia, under the Spanish Presidency, on 22 and

23 April 2002. In addition, informal Foreign Ministers meetings took place in Palermo in June 1998 and in Lisbon in May 2000 ('think tank').

During the Stuttgart conference, Libya was welcomed for the first time as special guest of the Presidency. At Marseilles, Brussels and Valencia, Libya was again present. Its full participation in the Partnership, however, remains open.



2. The Euro-Mediterranean Committee

The Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process is the main steering body for the multilateral and regional aspects of the Barcelona Process. Made up of officials from the EU Member States, the Commission, and the 12 Mediterranean partners, it meets on average three times during each Council Presidency. The committee is chaired by the Council Presidency (held by Spain from January to June 2002 and then by Denmark from July to December 2002).

Senior officials meet, usually the day before the Euro-Med Committee, to coordinate the political and security aspects of the Barcelona Process. Special meetings in the course of 2002 focussed notably on the fight against terrorism and on preventing the financing of terrorism.

3. The fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers, Valencia, 22 and 23 April 2002



The fifth meeting of Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministers took place in Valencia, Spain, on 22 and 23 April. The conference provided a good opportunity for full, frank, and constructive discussions on the achievements, shortcomings and future of the Barcelona Process, and to look at ways to move forward in the three main areas of cooperation. Ministers adopted an action plan (the Valencia action plan), the main features of which are as follows:

In the political and security field, ministers decided to strengthen political dialogue and cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

In the economic and financial area, the Valencia action plan aims to promote economic growth and employment in the region. On trade and industry, the focus is on the harmonisation of rules of origin, regional integration, liberalisation of services, regulatory reform, and access to new technologies. Ministers also welcomed the progress made in the Agadir process, a free trade pact between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

In the social, cultural and human chapter, the plan stresses how important it is that both governments and civil society participate fully in the Barcelona

Process. Ministers also agreed to step up regional cooperation in the field of justice, in combating drugs, organised crime, terrorism and migration (including the social integration of immigrants). The need to promote dialogue and mutual understanding between cultures and civilisations was also underlined, and ministers agreed to the principle of setting up a Euro-Mediterranean foundation.

Ministers also discussed events in the Middle East, and stressed the need for a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The conference also provided an opportunity to sign the latest association agreement concluded under the Barcelona Process, the EU-Algeria association agreement.

Ministers are scheduled to meet again in 2003 (in Crete in May and in Naples in December).

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euomed/conf/val/index.htm



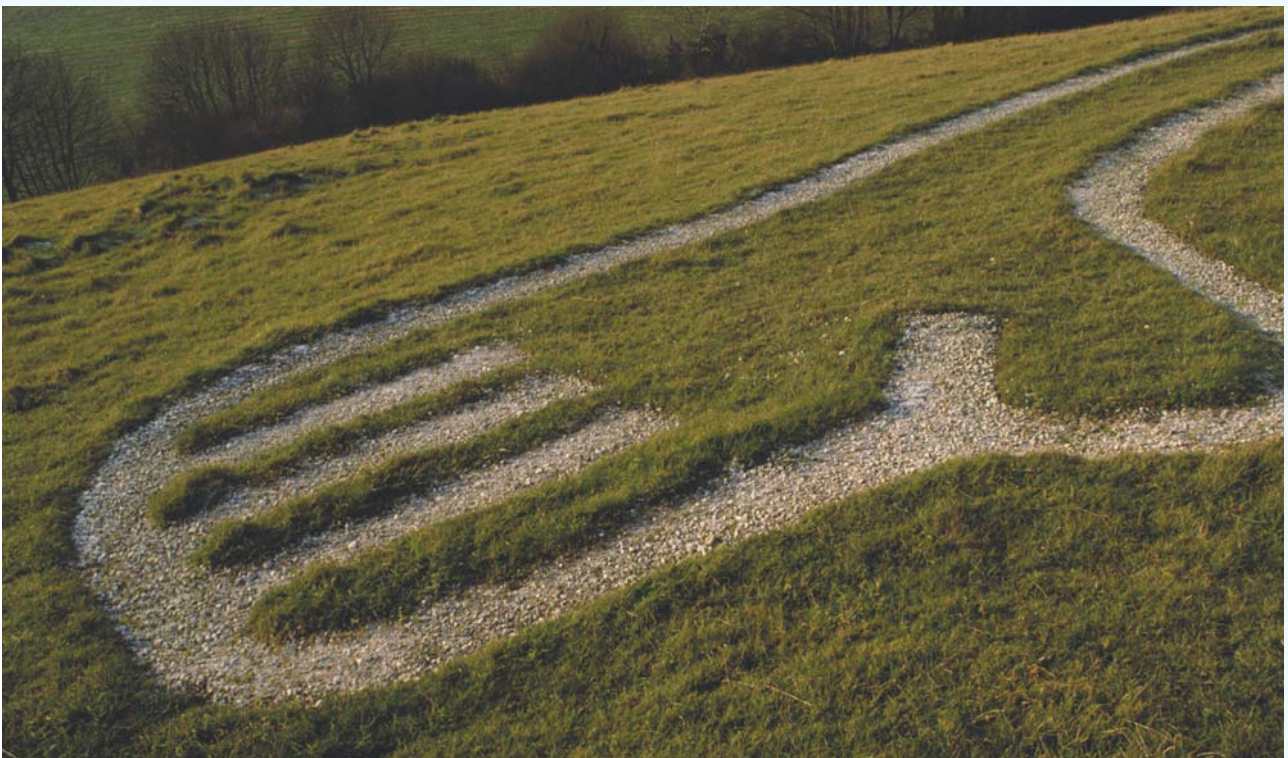
4. Bilateral relations

Association agreements

Euro-Mediterranean association agreements are the main contractual agreements between the European Community and its partners in the Mediterranean. They replace cooperation agreements concluded in the 1970s. The agreements cover the three main areas included in the Barcelona declaration, that is to say, political dialogue, economic relations, and cooperation in social and cultural affairs. All agreements contain a clause defining respect for democratic principles

and fundamental human rights as ‘an essential element’ of the agreement. They all contain clauses dealing with political dialogue; the free movement of goods, services and capital; economic cooperation; social and cultural cooperation; financial cooperation; and institutional arrangements.

With regard to the three partners that are either set to join the EU on 1 May 2004 (Cyprus and Malta), or which are candidates for membership (Turkey), they are currently linked to the Union by means of association agreements that provide for customs unions with the EU.





5. MEDA — The financial arm of the Barcelona Process

Launched in 1995, the MEDA programme is the main financial instrument to implement the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. From 1995 to 2002, MEDA accounted for EUR 5 731 million. Over this period, 86 % of the resources allocated to MEDA were channelled bilaterally to Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority. The rest of the resources were devoted to regional activities: all 12 Mediterranean partners and the 15 EU Member States are eligible to benefit from these activities. MEDA, now in its second programming period (2000–06), has changed with the adoption of a new Council regulation (the so-called MEDA II regulation). Under the new system, decision-making and programme implementation are to become more streamlined. MEDA II has a budget of EUR 5 350 million.

The way all the Commission's external aid programmes are managed has also undergone significant reform in recent years. EuropeAid, the European Commission's new Directorate-General in charge of external aid, started work on 1 January 2001. Operating under the general principle of reform, that 'everything that can be better managed and decided on the spot will not be managed or decided in Brussels', management of programmes is gradually to be taken over by the European Commission's delegations in third countries, with EuropeAid to take on an essentially support function.

The year 2002 saw some remarkable progress in financial operations. A total of EUR 762.4 million

was committed, and EUR 684.3 million paid out. Many operations were launched, both within bilateral cooperation between the EU and each beneficiary Mediterranean partner, and within regional activities of interest to the whole region. The implementation of regional programmes also picked up speed in the course of 2002, with EUR 113 million committed and EUR 64 million disbursed. Ongoing programmes are worth some EUR 240 million.

MEDA's interventions are coordinated with those of other important partners in the region like the European Investment Bank, the World Bank and, of course, the EU Member States' own bilateral programmes. The EIB projects in the Mediterranean are part of the economic and financial chapter of the Barcelona Process, and are compatible with the development strategy of the beneficiary countries. The EIB is to lend up to EUR 6 425 million during the period 2000–06, supplemented by EUR 1 billion of its own resources.

The MEDA web site is online

A MEDA web site was launched in 2002 by the European Commission's EuropeAid cooperation office. It presents cooperation between the European Union and the southern Mediterranean, Near and Middle East region, and includes information on MEDA-funded bilateral and regional activities, as well as other important items such as financial statistics, sectors of cooperation, reports and publications.

ALGERIA



Algeria

Name

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Population

30.6 million (2001 estimate)

Surface

2 381 740 km²

Unemployment

29.8 %

Annual growth

2.4 % (2000)

Currency

Algerian dinar (DZD)

Per capita income

USD 1 590 (2000)

The EU-Algeria association agreement

Negotiations on the EU-Algeria association agreement ended in December 2001, and the agreement was signed in Valencia in April. The association agreement commits both sides to further liberalise bilateral trade and will help ensure that Algerian consumers and businesses benefit from the growth in trade and investment. It provides for the gradual removal of import duties on industrial products from the EU over a period of 12 years. The two parties have decided to implement a policy of immediate liberalisation (without duty or quota) for a number of agricultural products, and to grant tariff reductions for a list of sensitive items. The agreement will contribute to enhancing Algerian economic liberalisation and modernisation of legislation on competition and the protection of intellectual property. In the political and social fields, it aims to promote dialogue and cooperation across a wide range of fields, from security and justice and home affairs to education and culture. Both partners are committed to respecting human rights and democratic principles.

EU programmes in Algeria

The EU's MEDA programme in Algeria will concentrate on the following areas in the period 2002–04:

Consolidating the rule of law by supporting reforms in the judicial system and through projects to rehabilitate areas destroyed by terrorism.

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Strengthening market reforms by means of a particular support programme for the association agreement itself, but also through a programme to support the modernisation of the Ministry of Finance, as well as programmes dealing with environmental issues, such as one on support for urban solid waste management.

Developing human resources by means of a local development programme in the north-east of the country, through supporting the reform of basic education, and by supporting higher education by means of the Community's Tempus programme.

An indicative budget of EUR 150 million is available to put these initiatives into action in the period 2002–04.

Some of the programmes outlined above got started in the course of the year. This is the case of the EUR 50 million (46 million disbursed, giving a payment rate of 92 %, a big increase on 2001) 'Local development in the north east (social safety net)' programme. Payment rates in Algeria in general have now caught up with those witnessed in other countries that benefit from the MEDA programme.

EGYPT



Egypt

Name
Arab Republic of Egypt

Population
68 million

Surface
1 000 000 km²

Unemployment
15 % (1999)

Annual growth
4.9 %

Currency
Egyptian pound (EGP)

Per capita income
EUR 1 396

The EU-Egypt association agreement

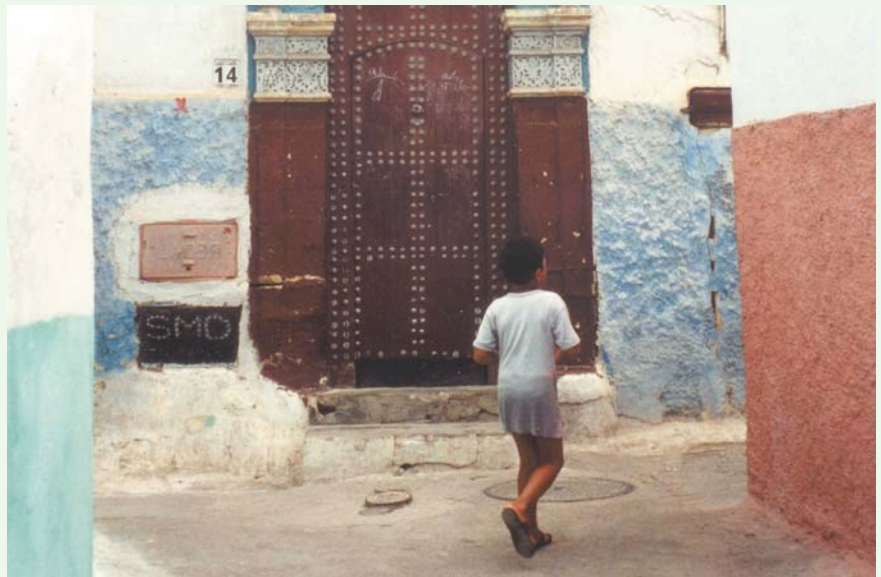
The association agreement with Egypt was signed on 25 June 2001 and will come into force when the parliaments of the EU Member States and Egypt (presented to the People's Assembly in November with a view to ratification in the 2002/03 session) ratify it. The European Parliament ratified it in December 2001.

EU programmes in Egypt

The main developments as far as the EU's MEDA programme in the country are concerned were as follows:

- A EUR 33 million programme in the area of reforming technical and vocational training was identified. The programme aims to help government efforts to provide Egypt's modernising economy with appropriate human resources.
- The financing agreement for the first part of a programme to boost trade (the trade enhancement programme, with a budget of EUR 20 million) was signed. The programme aims to contribute to Egypt's macro-economic stability and sustained development.
- The long-delayed industrial modernisation programme, with a budget of EUR 250 million, was effectively re-launched in 2002 under a new director and a newly approved work programme.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/egypt/intro/index.htm



The EU-Israel association agreement

Israel signed the association agreement in November 1995, and following its ratification by the Parliaments of the 15 Member States, the European Parliament and the Knesset (Israeli parliament), the agreement entered into force on 1 June 2000. It aims to promote political dialogue, the respect for human rights and democratic values and market principles such as the liberalisation of services, the free movement of capital and competition rules and also economic cooperation. The agreement establishes free trade in manufactured goods, as well as reciprocal liberalisation of trade in agricultural products. It also aims to encourage mutual assistance in the political, economic, social and cultural fields between Israel, on the one hand, and other States in the region and the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the other in the belief that it is a way to achieve peace and stability in the area.

The second meeting of the EU-Israel Association Committee took place on 8 October in Jerusalem. The meeting provided an opportunity for an in-depth exchange of views on Israeli-Palestinian relations, the political situation in the region, and terrorism. The agenda of the talks also included trade and economic issues, topics related to the integration of immigrants within society, the dialogue between cultures and civilisations, along with the follow-up to the Valencia action plan.

The third meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council took place in October. Ministers discussed the situation in the Middle East as well as EU-Israel links in the political, economic and trade fields. On the rules of origin issue, the EU stressed the importance of the correct application of the association agreement. Under the terms of the EU-Israel association



Israel

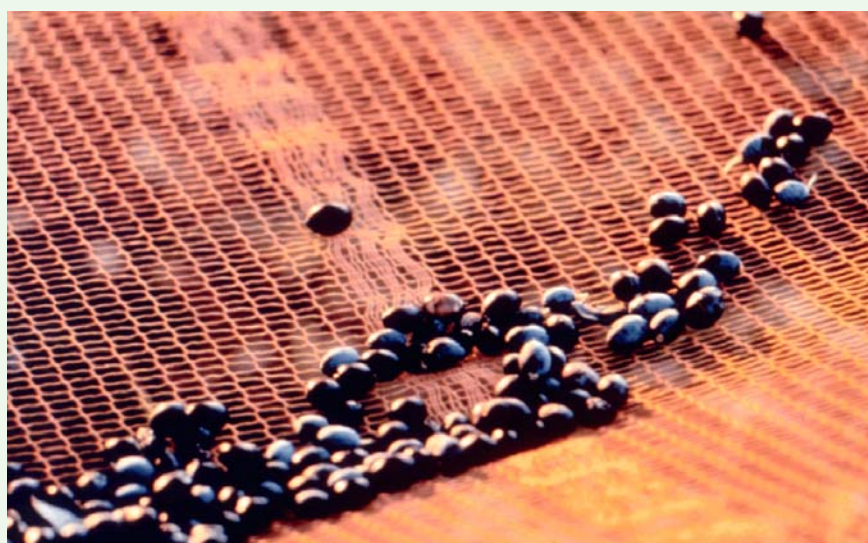
Name	State of Israel
Population	6.1 million
Surface	21 500 km ²
Unemployment	10.5 % (2002)
Annual growth	- 1 % (2002)
Currency	new Israeli shekel (NIS)
Per capita income	EUR 15 600 (2002)



agreement products originating in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights cannot benefit from the preferential import regime that covers products originating in Israel. Since 1997, the EU has expressed concerns about the implementation by Israel of the rules of origin provisions of the association agreement with respect to imports of goods originating in the Palestinian Territories. While no progress towards a solution had been made since the previous Association Council in November 2001, the EU welcomed the Israeli commitment to resume technical talks in order to reach a definitive agreement which fully respects the provisions of the agreement. In the meantime, the EU customs code is to be applied fully.

EU programmes in Israel

Israel's high per capita GDP means there is no bilateral MEDA programme in operation in the country. Israel does participate in the regional track of the programme, however, and is also involved in a number of other Community programmes, such as the EU's research and development programme, known as the sixth framework programme.



The EU-Jordan association agreement

The Euro-Mediterranean association agreement with Jordan entered into force on 1 May 2002. It aims to create a free trade area between the EU and Jordan over 12 years and establishes a comprehensive agenda for economic, social and political cooperation.

In the economic and financial field, the priority is on enhancing trade, boosting regional integration, and supporting a stable macroeconomic framework, broad economic reform and the development of infrastructure. On social issues, the focus is on social reform, human resources development and strengthening civil society. The political aspects of the partnership will look into institution-building, as well as respecting pluralism and the rule of law.

The first meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council was held in June, with the first measures to implement the agreement adopted. The initial focus was on further liberalisation of trade in agricultural products and to advance cooperation on social issues by setting up a working group. Ministers also discussed prospects for constructive political dialogue. The agenda of these first talks also included the situation in the Middle East, the Barcelona Process, and the Agadir Process.

Chris Patten was in Amman in October for talks on the state of play of EU-Jordanian links.

The EU-Jordan Association Committee met for the first time in November. The EU side gave an overview of the follow-up to the Valencia action plan and the Jordanian side updated the Committee on the state of play of the Agadir initiative. The agenda of the discussions also included political dialogue, trade issues (implementation of tariff dismantling in the EU and Jordan), agriculture, competition policy, financial cooperation, and mutual assistance in the fields of justice, migration, drugs, organised crime and terrorism. Both sides stressed the importance of further debate and exchanges of all kinds on social matters and inter-cultural cooperation. Meetings of the Association Council and of the economic dialogue group take place in July and November 2003, with the talks likely to focus on intellectual property, competition, standards and certification.



Jordan

Name
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Population
5 million (2001)

Surface
91 860 km²

Unemployment
Up to 20 % (1999)

Annual growth
4.2 % (2001)

Currency
Jordanian dinar (JOD)

Per capita income
USD 1 680



EU programmes in Jordan

The EU's MEDA programme in Jordan focussed on projects that seek to contribute to economic transition. In total, EUR 92 million were committed, in the following areas:

A EUR 20 million project that will support the implementation of the EU-Jordan association agreement in the areas of free trade, the legal and regulatory environment and the strengthening of institutions.

A EUR 10 million project to provide institutional support for the Aqaba special economic zone, with the focus on technical assistance in tourism, trade and the environment.

A EUR 2 million project to strengthen pluralism and human rights.

A EUR 60 million structural adjustment facility (SAF-III), to support the government's strategy on fiscal consolidation, through fiscal and pension reforms.

The EU-Lebanon association agreement

Following the conclusion of negotiations in January, the main event in 2002 was the signature of the Euro-Mediterranean association agreement and interim agreement on 17 June in Luxembourg. The agreement was ratified by the Lebanese Parliament on 2 December.

On the political front, the agreement provides an agenda to promote political dialogue, democracy, and human rights. It includes commitments on judicial cooperation and the respect for the rule of law, and requires the parties to fulfil international rules on money laundering, on combating organised crime and drugs, and on migration and re-admission issues. On the economic and trade front, it commits both sides to further liberalise bilateral trade and also enhances economic and financial cooperation. The agreement offers important concessions for Lebanon in agricultural exports to the EU. The EU has agreed full liberalisation (no duty, no quota) for all Lebanese agricultural products, with a list of exceptions covering sensitive areas of EU agriculture.

EU programmes in Lebanon

Lebanon's EUR 80 million national indicative programme for 2002–04 was launched in the course of the year. It includes a EUR 12 million package of support measures to implement the association agreement, and a EUR 3 million higher education programme (the Tempus programme). A high-level workshop was held by the Commission and the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Beirut in December 2002 to discuss the shape and form of assistance to help implement the new agreement together with the business community and government departments.



Lebanon

Name	Republic of Lebanon
Population	4.4 million (2001 estimate)
Surface	10 452 km ²
Unemployment	In excess of 20 % (1998)
Annual growth	0 % 2001, 2 % 2002 (est.)
Currency	Lebanese pound (LBP)
Per capita income	EUR 5 000 (2002)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/lebanon/intro/index.htm



MOROCCO



Morocco

Name

Kingdom of Morocco

Population

29.2 million (2001 estimate)

Surface

710 850 km² (including the territory of Western Sahara)

Unemployment

12.5 % (2001)

Annual growth

4.5 % (2002 est.)

Currency

Moroccan dirham (MAD)

Per capita income

EUR 1 297 (2001 est.)

The EU-Morocco association agreement

The Euro-Mediterranean association agreement with Morocco was signed in February 1996 and came into force on 1 March 2000. The agreement provides for the gradual liberalisation of trade over a period of 12 years by the end of which a free trade area will have been established. It also includes a timetable to dismantle customs tariffs for industrial products coming into Morocco.

Cooperation in key fields such as scientific research, environment, transport and energy advanced after the second EU-Morocco Association Committee meeting in March. Discussions on expanding the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products took place in the course of the year. Pending the outcome of talks, the EU allowed an increase in tariff quotas for Moroccan tomatoes between November and December 2002, as well as opening quotas for April and May 2003.

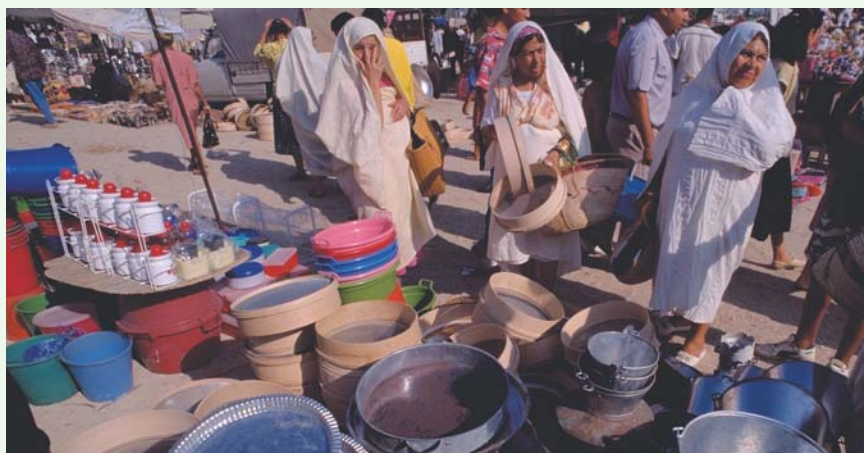
EU programmes in Morocco

In the period 2002–04, EUR 426 million is set to be invested under EU programmes in the following areas:

EUR 81 million on institutional support, and on the reform of the public administration in particular.

EUR 132 million in a trade facilitation programme, with projects to support the restructuring of private enterprises, the liberalisation of the transport sector, and the implementation of the association agreement.

EUR 58 million to human resource development, with the focus on vocational training and on higher education (the Tempus programme).



EUR 115 million on projects in the area of migration, with programmes to improve the socioeconomic development of poorer regions of the country, to channel legal immigration, and to contribute to a more effective control of illegal immigration.

EUR 40 million on programmes to protect the environment, including interest rate subsidies on EIB loans, as well as a project to protect argan trees (*Argania spinosa*, species native to Morocco) and thus create job opportunities for rural women.

This national indicative programme was agreed with the Moroccan authorities in January, and funds were committed in four projects following the adoption of the national financing plan in November. These were: EUR 5 million on technical assistance to implement the association agreement, EUR 61 million to support the restructuring of enterprises, EUR 50 million on reform of vocational training, and EUR 6 million on the sustainable management of argan forests through the promotion of women's cooperatives.

Disbursements were up sharply in 2002, reaching a record of EUR 122 million. This puts the payment rate at 100 % of total commitments of the same year.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/morocco/intro/index.htm

The Gefrif project — positive lessons from a pilot project

The Gefrif project aimed to involve local people in the management of forest ecosystems in the Rif area of northern Morocco. The project, which received funding totalling EUR 4.45 million from the European Commission, saw concrete results in terms of getting local people involved in developing sustainable approaches to managing their environment, but also improved their quality of life by improving local infrastructure (tracks, improved access to water, and so on), and contributed to resolving disputes with local authorities over land issues. The approach developed in the Gefrif project is now being expanded to two new projects, one on integrated rural development (with a budget of EUR 28.4 million), and one on getting local people involved in the development of forests in the Chefchaouen area (with a budget of EUR 24 million).

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES



West Bank

Name

No official name, but current denomination is West Bank and Gaza Strip

Population

3.1 million (2001)

Surface

5 997 km²

Unemployment

> 40 %

Annual growth

~ 25 %

Currency

New Israeli Shekel (NIS)

Per capita income

USD < 1 000

The interim association agreement

The interim association agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority) was signed on 24 February 1997 and entered into force on 1 July 1997.

The first meeting under the agreement, a joint committee meeting, took place in May 2000. Since the outbreak of the 'Al Aqsa Intifada' in September 2000, with the worsening of the conflict, and the imposition of unprecedented levels of closure and curfews, implementation of the agreement has been rendered extremely difficult.

In 2002, there were no meetings under the interim association agreement. In late 2002, however, preparatory measures were undertaken to hold a joint committee meeting in 2003.

EU programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

In 2002, the European Community committed over EUR 270 million in financial assistance to the Palestinians to alleviate the economic and humanitarian situation there and to advance reform efforts in the Palestinian Authority. An additional EUR 50 million was allocated in late 2002 in response to the deteriorating situation. The Community's package of assistance included support to refugees, emergency private sector funding, food aid, support to the health sector and municipalities, budgetary assistance, institution building and judicial reform.



http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/gaza/intro/index.htm

The EU-Syria association agreement

Syria formally confirmed its intention to start talks on the association agreement in October 1997. In 2002, negotiations entered a phase of concrete agreement, with progress being made on the text of the preamble to the agreement and the objectives as well as on the chapter on political dialogue. In the area of justice and home affairs, most provisions on migration, the fight against drugs, organised crime and money laundering as well as counter-terrorism were agreed. On the trade aspects, the first offers on the dismantling of custom tariffs and the provisions for free movement of goods were also examined.

EU programmes in Syria

Two MEDA projects were launched in the course of 2002. The first is a EUR 30 million programme to contribute to the modernisation of the Syrian health sector. The second is a EUR 6 million programme which will continue support to the Syrian-European Business Centre, but which will also contribute to the development of an industrial development strategy for the country and study the prospects for a major industrial modernisation programme in Syria in the coming years.



Syria

Name
Syrian Arab Republic

Population
16.6 million (2001)

Surface
185 180 km²

Unemployment
20 % (est.)

Annual growth
2.8 % (1996–2000)

Currency
Syrian pound (SYP)

Per capita income
USD 1 080

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/syria/intro/index.htm



TUNISIA



Tunisia

Name
Republic of Tunisia

Population
9.8 million (2002)

Surface
163 610 km²

Unemployment
14.5 % (2002)

Annual growth
4.7 % (1995–2002)

Currency
Tunisian dinar (TND)

Per capita income
EUR 2 300

The EU-Tunisia association agreement

Tunisia signed the Euro-Mediterranean association agreement in 1995. It has been in force since 1 March 1998 and aims to develop a free trade area between the European Union and Tunisia by 2010. The agreement also includes important provisions on political dialogue, the respect for democratic principles and human rights and economic, financial, and social and cultural cooperation.

The third EU-Tunisia Association Council took place in January, with ministers agreeing to give a new impetus to the implementation of the association agreement, taking into account that, as the first Euro-Mediterranean agreement to have come into force, it should be regarded as a model for the rest of the partners. Ministers also stressed the importance of a dialogue between cultures and civilisations. There was a positive exchange of ideas on the situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East peace process. Human rights and terrorism issues were also on the agenda. The EU-Tunisia Association Committee took place in September. Talks here underlined the importance of democracy and human rights within the agreement. On trade issues, priority was given to trade facilitation, services, intellectual property and tariff dismantling.

In parallel, important work was carried out 2002 by experts and senior officials to implement the association agreement in key areas such as trade, industry, social affairs and migration.

EU programmes in Tunisia

Programmes in 2002–04 will concentrate on the following areas:

Improving the quality of governance, notably through institution-building to support the rule of law and modernising the legal system.

Continuing the liberalisation of the economy to allow it to benefit from the Euro-Med free trade area by means of an economic transition programme, an association agreement support programme, and an industrial modernisation programme for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Improving job prospects for young people through programmes to modernise higher education and to promote access to the EU's Tempus programme.

The indicative budget to put these programmes in place is EUR 248.65 million.

In terms of commitments disbursements, 2002, EUR 92.15 million were committed in 2002 in the following projects: support to the media (EUR 2.15 million); modernisation of ports (EUR 20 million); technical assistance to implement the association agreement (EUR 20 million), and industrial modernisation (EUR 50 million).

Disbursements improved substantially in 2002, to reach a record of EUR 92.7 million, thus giving a payment rate at more than 100 % of the total commitments in the same year.



6. Regional activities

The political and security partnership in 2002

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum

A meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum took place in June in Bari, Italy. Parliamentarians held an exchange of views on the outcome of the Valencia ministerial meeting as well as on immigration, dialogue between cultures and civilisations. In their final declaration, parliamentarians committed themselves to promoting the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, which would confer Euro-Mediterranean civil society a more important role within the Barcelona Process.

http://www.europarl.eu.int/conferences/euomed/euomed_3/default_en.htm

EuroMeSCo — the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission

Set up in 1996, the Euro-Mediterranean network of foreign policy institutes (EuroMeSCo) includes some 37 institutes located in the Mediterranean partners and in the European Union.

A EuroMeSCo working group on European security and defence policy (ESDI) met in September 2002. The network also held a joint meeting with senior officials in November to address future challenges in relation to security in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The possibility of developing a broader concept of security, which brings together the different security cultures in the area, was discussed.

EuroMeSCo held its annual conference in February 2003 in Malta. The impact of EU enlargement on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was the central point in the agenda. Future debates will focus on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the conflict in the Middle East; the fight against terrorism after September 11 and the protection of fundamental democratic rights and democracy; and migration and xenophobia.

Papers and reports published in 2002 include titles on sub-regional cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and civil society cooperation. These papers, as well as other EuroMeSCo papers, are available at the following site:

<http://www.euromesco.net>

Training for diplomats

The aim of the Euro-Mediterranean information and training seminars for diplomats is to train diplomats in the Euro-Mediterranean partners and to provide them with regular and updated information as well as issues for debate on relations between the 27 partners.

The 12th half-yearly seminar took place in Malta in May 2002. Discussions focused on the state of play of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership after Valencia, the Agadir Process of sub-regional integration, and dialogue between civilisations. The 13th seminar was held in November, with debates focusing on conflict prevention, cooperation among partners and confidence building in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

More information can be found on the web site below:

<http://www.euromed-seminars.org/mt/>

Middle East peace process

Activities taking place under the political and security partnership aim to contribute to peace and stability in the region. A further call for proposals for Middle East peace projects (MEPP) was launched in the course of the year, with grants available under a new EU partnership for peace programme funded by MEDA. This programme aims to provide a solid foundation at civil society level for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The initiative has an indicative budget of EUR 4 million. The Middle East peace projects programme has been running since 1995. For more information, see:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mepp/index.htm

Human rights

The European initiative for democracy and human rights (EIDHR), which complements the work of the MEDA programme, aims to promote human rights and democratisation in third countries by funding activities carried out by non-governmental and international organisations.

For the 2002–04 period, a certain number of priorities have been set under the EIDHR. These are: to strengthen democratisation, good governance and the rule of law; to support the abolition of the death penalty; to fight against torture and impunity and support international tribunals and criminal courts; to combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities and indigenous peoples. The EIDHR worked closely with a number of priority countries in the Mediterranean basin in 2002, with projects funded in Algeria, Israel, Tunisia, Turkey, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, on a total budget of EUR 15 million. Two regional workshops took place in 2002, in Amman and in Casablanca with representatives of civil society from the Middle East and North Africa. These seminars underlined the important role that civil society plays in implementing and monitoring human rights and democratisation policy.

For more information on the EU's human rights and democratisation policy, please consult the following site:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/intro/index.htm



© EPA PHOTO Lino Arrigo Azzopardi

7. The economic and financial partnership

The economic and financial partnership is based on the progressive establishment of a free trade area, and the implementation of economic cooperation, backed by EU financial assistance.

The Valencia action plan contains a number of important initiatives in the economic and financial area. One of these is the European Investment Bank facility to support the development of the private sector.

Meetings of ministers of trade, ministers of industry, and ministers of the environment took place in the course of the year, confirming the importance all 27 partners attach to regional cooperation and integration.

Towards a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area

Euro-Mediterranean trade ministers held their second meeting in March in Toledo, Spain. They stressed that extra efforts were needed to further expand regional free trade among Euro-Mediterranean partners. Ministers decided to set up a working group on trade measures relevant to regional integration. Ministers also stressed the need to coordinate Euro-Mediterranean activities with those carried out by the WTO, endorsed the principle of extending the pan-European system of cumulation of origin to the Mediterranean partners, and encouraged continued work in the area of trade in services.

On the future Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, a call for tender to carry out a sustainability impact assessment, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects, was launched in October.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/data.htm>

Industrial cooperation

Industry ministers from the 27 partners met in Málaga, Spain, in April, for talks on industrial cooperation. The aim here is to help the Mediterranean partners harmonise their regulatory environments, boost innovation and access to technology, attract investment, and help the creation and growth of small-and medium-sized enterprises. Ministers agreed that priority should be given to implementing regional programmes in the following areas: promoting investment; innovation, technology and quality; and the Euro-Mediterranean market mechanisms programme. This last programme started work in 2002. With a budget of EUR 9.9 million for a three-year period, the programme aims to improve understanding of the EU's regulatory environment in areas such as the free movement of goods; customs and taxation, including rules of origin; public procurement; financial services; intellectual property rights; data protection and regulatory aspects of e-commerce; accounting and auditing; and competition rules and aspects of trade policy. A workshop on the free movement of goods took place in September and another on public procurement in December. Further workshops in this series are in the pipeline.

A programme to promote investment also started in 2002. This programme, which has a budget of EUR 3.95 million over three years, aims to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Mediterranean region both from EU countries and from the Mediterranean partners themselves. It aims to do this chiefly by promoting cooperation between investment promotion agencies in the EU and in the partners. A separate call for tender, on investment-related information access, was launched in May.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euomed/publication/euomed_report40_en.pdf

Economic transition

The sixth meeting of government experts on economic transition took place in June, where experts discussed the economic impact of September 11 on economies in the Mediterranean. Talks also centred on growth, employment, and employment policies in the 27 partners. Participants agreed that association agreements could serve as a tool to re-establish confidence in the region. On growth and employment, experts stated that 25 million extra jobs would need to be created over the next 10 to 25 years.

The European Investment Bank's new facility for Euro-Mediterranean investment and partnership

The European Investment Bank (EIB) launched a new facility to promote the economic development of the Mediterranean partners. The facility for Euro-Mediterranean investment and partnership (FEMIP) will see a gradual increase in the annual volume of EIB loan activities in the region from EUR 1.4 to 2 billion. The FEMIP will bring a sharper focus on private sector development, while also working to promote social cohesion, environmental protection, and communications infrastructure. Another feature of the FEMIP is the closer involvement of the Mediterranean partners themselves through the creation of a forum for dialogue (the policy dialogue and coordination committee). Finally, the EIB plans to boost its presence in the region by opening two regional offices, one covering the Maghreb and one covering the Middle East.

<http://www.eib.eu.int/>

Employers' organisations

Unimed, launched in 1999, facilitates the exchange of best practices, training courses and exchange visits for staff working in Mediterranean employers' associations. In 2002, Unimed organised three training seminars to examine the role of employers' organisations in the completion of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area and also to enhance social dialogue and vocational training.

The fifth Euro-Mediterranean business summit took place in Istanbul in March. The summit brought together representatives from employers' organisations in the EU and the Mediterranean partners to discuss issues including investment in infrastructure in the region, the EIB's financing opportunities, the association agreements, the new WTO round, and preparing Mediterranean businesses for the knowledge-based economy.

Further information is available at the web site below:

http://www.unimedbn.be/E_P_about.asp

Dialogue between business communities in the Mediterranean

The main employers' federations in the 12 Mediterranean partners in 2002 launched a regional organisation to represent Mediterranean industrial interests. The organisation aims to contribute to the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area. The Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE), was made possible thanks to the work already done in the Unimed programme.

In 2002, UMCE set up a permanent structure with its own statutes, financial arrangements and working procedures. It also launched an action plan to address issues such as economic integration, including south-south integration, human resources development, particularly in SMEs, and institutional capacity-building.

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Research into Mediterranean economies — the Femise network

The Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Economic Institutes (Femise) was created in 1997 to produce independent analysis of economic issues relating to the Barcelona Process. Femise is made up of independent economic institutes from the EU and Mediterranean partners. The network has addressed a broad spectrum of socioeconomic issues relevant to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including the fiscal implications of the free trade area, the consequences for the Mediterranean of introducing the euro, and the impact of the EU enlargement on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

In May 2002, Femise launched a call for proposals for research to improve understanding of the region's development in terms of national and regional dimensions, as well as to put forward suitable initiatives to meet the aims of the Barcelona Process. Twenty research projects have been selected and a number of country profiles have been launched.

Femise research papers can be downloaded from the network's web site:

<http://www.femise.org>

Energy

Industry ministers from the region met in Tunis in May to discuss regional energy supply strategies. Addressing the conference, European Commissioner for Transport and Energy, Loyola de Palacio, stressed the need to make trans-Euro-Mediterranean energy networks a reality.

Eight seminars aimed at stakeholders in the energy sector were held in 2002, covering energy policy and markets issues (electricity, gas, oil, renewable energy, environmental issues and liberalisation), as well as questions linked to financing (development, appraisal, financing implementation and operation).

More information is available from the following web site:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/data.htm>



Transport

The Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum is the body within the partnership in charge of the coordination of joint policies concerning transport. It held its third meeting in July where discussions focussed on regional cooperation in the field and on further assistance in areas such as maritime safety and satellite navigation.

Preparations got under way for a new regional transport programme, which will work on an action plan developed on the basis of an analysis of the Mediterranean transport system.

Other developments in 2002 included the launch of a call for tender to develop a Mediterranean transport infrastructure network, the continuation of operations in maritime transport, notably with regard to aligning legislation, and controlling the environmental impact of transport in seaports.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/enlarg_2_en.html

Regional statistical cooperation — Medstat

The Medstat programme aims to develop and strengthen the statistical systems in the Mediterranean partners. Cooperation includes technical assistance such as training, statistical developments (preparation, collection, analysis, production and dissemination of data), information technology and the organisation of seminars and conferences.

The Medstat Steering Committee met in January, 2002, to discuss the main elements of the new Medstat II programme which started in 2002. Medstat II will continue activities carried out under Medstat I in training, information systems, external trade, national accounts, environment, migration, tourism and transport. A call for tender was published in late 2002 to extend the scope of Medstat to agriculture and social issues. The programme has a budget of EUR 30 million.

The Medstat focal point was set up in 2001. The focal point aims to reply to queries about Mediterranean statistics from the public administrations in the 27 partners. The focal point has also

promoted Eurostat information tools (web, newsletters, brochures, etc.).

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/cooperation/>

Information society — the Eumedis programme

The Eumedis information society programme was established in 1999. With a budget of EUR 65 million, the programme aims to contribute to reducing the information and technological gap between the EU and the Mediterranean. Projects being carried out under Eumedis cover areas such as e-commerce; healthcare; culture; heritage and tourism; information technology; industry and innovation; and education. Some 18 projects began work in 2002 for a total of close to EUR 45 million. One of these, the Eumedconnect project, aims to facilitate the interconnection between networks in the Mediterranean partners.

The Eumedis programme supported the first Euro-Mediterranean forum on management and quality in small businesses and the craft sector. Participants stressed the need to make IT available to small businesses so as to enable them to fulfil their fundamental role in the economy.

Further information on the Eumedis programme is available from the web site below:

<http://www.eumedis.org.dz>

Water

The Euro-Mediterranean regional programme for local water management published a EUR 32.6 million call for proposals in January 2002. Following this call, seven projects are already in the process of being selected. Most of the countries have also appointed water facilitators, whose objectives are to integrate water information in their own countries, and to support the projects selected there.

With a budget of EUR 2.5 million, the main objectives of the EMWIS/Semide water information system are to facilitate access to water information in the Euro-Mediterranean region, to develop the sharing of water among partners and also to elaborate common outputs and cooperation programmes.

In 2002, two information seminars aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of know-how and information exchanges among the main water sector stakeholders took place in Jordan and Tunisia. An EMWIS/Semide training seminar was also held in June.

A project on the sustainable use of cross-border water in the Middle East was signed in January. The initiative, which involves participants from Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories, aims to boost active participation in sustainable management and to improve the public water supply situation in areas with inadequate fresh water facilities. A similar initiative to improve water management in Morocco was launched in March.

More information on the programme can be found on the web site below:

<http://www.emwis.org>

8. Protecting the environment — The Euro-Mediterranean programme for the environment

The Euro-Mediterranean programme for the environment ⁽¹⁾, established in 1997, represents the main environmental branch of the Barcelona Process. The programme provides a framework for policy guidelines and funding both at regional level and at national level. It focuses on five priority areas: integrated water management, integrated waste management, environmental hotspots (covering both polluted areas and threatened bio-diversity elements), integrated management of coastal zones and the fight against desertification.

The programme includes a networking component, by means of a network of correspondents in the 27 partners as well as an NGO steering committee. The network held its fourth annual meeting in April. The meeting focused on preparing the second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which took place in July in Athens ⁽²⁾. Ministers highlighted the need to integrate environmental considerations into policies undertaken in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as well as programmes and projects to promote sustainable development. The conference adopted strategies for the water sector, industry, the transport sector, and the information society. Strategies will analyse the impact of these sectors on the environment and set timetables for actions and performance indicators. Ministers also endorsed a European Commission report on the first five years of the Euro-Mediterranean regional programme on the environment.

A total of EUR 30 million has been allocated to implement the second phase of the environment programme. Following a call for proposals in 2001, eight projects were selected and started operations in 2002, addressing issues such as the fight against desertification, and improving waste management. More information on the programme is available at the following web site:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/smmap/home.htm>

The fight against desertification

A project to fight desertification in Morocco and Tunisia was launched in the course of 2002 under the regional programme on the environment. With a budget of EUR 1.6 million, it aims to make sure that data are properly collected and analysed, that sensitive areas are monitored, and that exchange of relevant information and experience between countries is carried out.

In late 2002, EUR 3 million were allocated to a World Bank trust fund and directed to a research centre working on the fight against desertification in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories and Tunisia.

⁽¹⁾ Formerly known as the SMAP programme (short- and medium-term action plan).

⁽²⁾ Further information on the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Conference on the Environment can be found on the following web site:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/smmap/home.htm>

9. The social, cultural and human partnership in 2002

The Euromed audiovisual programme

This programme aims to contribute to mutual understanding between the peoples of the EU and the southern Mediterranean region by highlighting their common values and the richness of the region's audiovisual and cultural diversity. The programme supports regional projects in the field of television and cinema, particularly in the following areas: preservation of archives, production and co-production and distribution and circulation of audiovisual products. The third annual conference of the Euromed audiovisual programme took place in October, and provided an excellent opportunity to evaluate the results achieved so far within the six Euromed audiovisual projects as well as to present them to a wider audience.

More information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/med/regional/audiovisual_en.htm

Cultural heritage — Euromed heritage

In April 1996, within six months of the Barcelona declaration, ministers of culture from the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners met in Bologna to devise a strategy that would turn heritage into a catalyst for cooperation throughout the Mediterranean. They did not just focus on physical monuments and artefacts, they also wanted to draw attention to the Mediterranean's extraordinary heritage of intangible traditions, beliefs, arts and local festivals. Since 1998, the Euromed heritage programme has committed over EUR 47 million to fund partnerships between leading conservation experts and heritage institutions in the EU and the southern Mediterranean. The programme is helping countries to appreciate their common interests and transform cultural capital into a social and economic asset. Just as importantly, Euromed heritage has created a unique opportunity for the Euro-Mediterranean partners to learn about each other, and for southern countries to make the most of their heritage.

With a budget of EUR 30 million, the second phase of the programme was launched in 2001. Most projects selected under this phase started work in 2002 for a period of three years. All of them deal with fields of special relevance for the preservation of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage such as knowledge, human resources and development, and public and private investment.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/med/regional/heritage_en.htm

Museum with no frontiers: an example of learning about each other

One of the major projects in the Euromed heritage programme is 'Museum with no frontiers'. It was inspired by a simple idea; instead of getting people to visit exhibits in a museum, published catalogues and on-site information would turn historic and archaeological sites into exhibition spaces. This makes sense because much of the greatest Islamic art is found in buildings, and 12 in-situ 'exhibitions' with detailed information displays have been mounted in 11 countries. A series of catalogues and guidebooks about aspects of Islamic art in each country bring the sites alive to visitors and suggest itineraries. Written by experts from the countries concerned, they have the merit of presenting readers with a 'southern perspective'. The response has been immediate, and specialist tour operators in Europe have started to offer itineraries based on the catalogues. 'Museum with no frontiers' is a very practical contribution toward sustainable tourism in the southern Mediterranean.

Young people — Euromed youth action

The Euromed youth programme aims to facilitate the integration of young people into social and professional life and boost the development of a genuine civil society in all Mediterranean partners. It is also a key tool to promote communication, mutual tolerance and respect among young people across the region.

In 2001, the Commission adopted the second phase of Euromed youth action. With a budget of EUR 10 million, this new initiative, to be launched in 2003, focuses on youth exchanges, voluntary service in NGOs, the role of national coordinators, and other support measures.

Three calls for proposals were launched in 2002 in areas such as the fight against racism and xenophobia, cross-border cooperation and the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities into the programme. In all, 167 projects have been selected for funding, covering activities such as youth exchanges, training and information, and voluntary service.

So far, over 8 000 young people from all 27 Euromed partners have participated in this successful programme.

Further information on the Euromed youth action can be downloaded from the following web site:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html>

Civil society

Non-governmental organisations, are involved in many of the projects taking place under the various programmes in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Examples include Middle East peace projects, Euromed youth, and Euromed heritage.

The Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum

The seventh Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum met in April, bringing together over 500 people from various NGOs in the region. The forum reaffirmed the commitment of Euro-Mediterranean civil society to the partnership. Working groups examined the state of play in the areas of human rights, youth, women, volunteerism, migration, and the environ-

ment in the Mediterranean. The conclusions of the Civil Forum can be downloaded from the following web address:

<http://www.fcevalencia2002.org>

After the Valencia forum a number of civil society networks, institutions and NGOs started to work in order to improve the Civil Forum format. The main aims are to strengthen cooperation within civil society and thus increase the potential and the impact of the Civil Forum. The meetings of the forum are scheduled for May 2003 (in Crete) and November (Naples).

Women

A seminar on women's citizenship and development capacity was held in March, in which participants recommended that a communication strategy on women's rights in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia be developed. They also underlined the need to boost skills through the use of modern technologies. The second part of the seminar, entitled 'Positive actions for the citizens, rights of women and equal opportunities in the Maghreb' took place in October. The project aims to help promote women's rights and the democratic development of North African society by strengthening civil society organisations.

Justice and home affairs

Senior officials and experts responsible for justice and home affairs issues met in January to prepare the regional justice and home affairs programme, which aims to reinforce good governance and the rule of law in the Mediterranean. At the Valencia ministerial, a framework document was approved and a regional programme on good governance and improving the rule of law was launched in late 2002. With a budget of EUR 6 million, the programme aims to ensure that international standards on governance and the rule of law are applied in the Mediterranean region. The focus will be on encouraging the reform of judicial systems and on promoting cooperation between these systems, as well as on combating organised crime and drugs, and promoting joint approaches to the management of migratory flows.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/doc_centre/external/mediterranean/doc_external_mediterranean_en.htm

Information and communication

The European Commission, in late 2002, approved a EUR 10 million programme to strengthen the visibility of the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and its perception among both the general public and opinion leaders throughout the region. The programme aims to increase awareness of the objectives (political, economic and social) and achievements of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to maximise local ownership of the partnership, as well as to create dialogue between opinion leaders.

In addition, three visits of media representatives from the region took place in the course of the year. The visits involved all 12 Mediterranean partners and enabled participants to gain a better knowledge of the EU institutions and the Euromed Partnership.

Education

The EU in May decided to extend the Tempus programme of higher education exchanges to all Mediterranean partners (Cyprus, Malta and Turkey had already been involved in the initiative). The decision aims to promote greater understanding between peoples and cultures across the Mediterranean. Tempus-MED will have a budget of EUR 21.5 million in 2003, with the same amount allocated for 2004. The first projects will start in 2003.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/tempus/home.html/>

The preparatory phase of the MEDA regional education and training programme started in autumn 2002 with a launching conference that brought together high-ranking officials from both shores of the Mediterranean, to discuss the programme's future approach.

Following a decision taken in Valencia, eSchola and Netd@ays programmes are to be opened to the Mediterranean partners. eSchola is a campaign to promote e-learning in Europe — an event to provide an opportunity for schools and teachers to learn together and from each other about the use and impact of new technologies in education.

<http://eschola.eun.org/>

Netd@ays aims to promote the pedagogical value of using new media, especially the Internet, as teaching and learning resources in the areas of youth, education and culture.

www.netdayseurope.org/



The Commission's delegations in the Mediterranean — Key players in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership

The European Commission has delegations in all the Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey, as well as offices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip).

The delegations play a key role in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and, as part of the Commission's reform process described on page 11 will gradually take on a greater role in the management of Community programmes, notably MEDA.

Delegations also play an active role in providing information on the partnership, and in promoting cultural activities, like dance festivals, film festivals, and other events that contribute to promoting awareness and understanding of different cultures.



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