Shared Identities and Cultures in the Mediterranean
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Shared Identities and Cultures in the Mediterranean.
Introduction

The "Mare Nostrum" has covered always an essential meaning for Europe and North Africa, being often identified as point of encounter between the European culture (Christianity rocks) and that Arab (milliard stone of Islam). However, for a long time, the contacts between the several civilizations had been capacities ahead to level of private organizations, without to be involved national institutions directly. The process of cooperation strengthening has resumed vigour only from some year ago when the old continent relive its Mediterranean vocation, a little beat forgotten after the second world war that had lead the Europeans to lend greater attention to the Atlantic politic in spite of the "Mare Nostrum" one.

The end of the cold war has created a series of tentative attempts to define "a new world order". So far, the only certainty is that the international community has entered a period of tremendous global transition that, at least for the time being, has created more social problems than solutions.

Mediterranean civilisations gave birth to contemporary models of social organisations now widely adopted. The evolution of these civilisations is a result of the continuous movements of people for centuries, as well as of the rich and complex continuous interaction between cultures.

As a result of this long history of exchange, there has been a multicultural tradition in the Mediterranean basin for millennia.

Throughout centuries, the high level of achievement of these societies has often been a cause of conflicts between various peoples. We greens believe that complexity is a source of valuable and meaningful life.

Our common culture is based on the respect and recognition of diversity, human rights, democratic participation and ecological values. We all carry with us diverse heritage that gives each one of us a sense of place and belonging.

Our protection of cultural heritage emanates from a strong will to build cohesive and sustainable societies. Cultural heritage (the Arts, languages, traditional forms of production, etc.) and natural heritage constitute the foundations of a socially and ecologically balanced community.

Mediterranean identity is a living example of "unity in diversity". We affirm the need of a solid and rooted identity for every individual, which, at the same time, is open to accepting "otherness". We commit ourselves to political action that allows people to live according to their identity.

Diversity as being fundamental for social, economic and cultural progress in the Mediterranean. Diversity comprises several essential issues: language, it's important to respect, preserve and enhance the various languages of the Mediterranean area, it can increments the knowledge of other languages as a tool for further understanding amongst peoples; cultural minorities, their respect and
preservation can build a stability and a mutual understanding; culture can be a strong means to building relationships based on trust, political equity, co-operation and the pursuit of peace; and equality, the defence, promotion and enhancement of cultural rights are essential to guarantee equal opportunities.

Relations between Europe and the south Mediterranean countries have experienced highs and lows in the past, and we cannot analyse the current situation without taking account of historical factors.

Starting in Phoenician times and throughout antiquity, especially classical antiquity, the Mediterranean has served as the link between Europe and North Africa.

The large number of Greek and Roman ruins which are found all around its perimeter are evidence of this. These relations were maintained following the emergence of Christianity, the fall of the western Roman empire and the Islamisation of the south Mediterranean.

In 711, the Arabs and Berbers arrived in the Iberian Peninsula, where they stayed for eight centuries and created Al-Andalus, one of the most important points of contact between Europe and the Arab-Islamic world in the Middle Ages. The city of Cordoba, with its population of 500,000, was in the 10th century both the biggest Islamic capital and the most civilised European city, and gives an idea of what this period was like.

In the 11th century, the Christian “reconquest” and the crusades began, and exchanges between Christians and Muslims changed. During the 800 years of Arab presence in western Europe (on the Iberian peninsula but also, for shorter periods, in the south of France and Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and the Balearic Islands) cultural exchanges had been strengthened. They occurred via the troubadours and other European travellers who visited Al-Andalus, trade (frequently carried out by Jewish merchants), diplomatic embassies sent to Cordoba, Christian monasteries on the Iberian Peninsula and schools for translators. These exchanges enabled Europe to rediscover Greek philosophy and to discover Arab science and technologies.

From the 16th century onwards, European countries settled in the South Mediterranean: first the Spanish and the Portuguese, then the French, Italians and English. European civilisation “caught up” with Islamic civilisation and overtook it to such an extent that during the Enlightenment the Islamic world was considered as a civilisation in economic and intellectual decline. The European presence continued until the second half of the 20th century, but the countries of the South Mediterranean failed to benefit from the industrial revolution or the developments in thinking that have transformed Europe over the past two centuries.

Cultural relations have been maintained, but while intellectuals from both shores concentrated on history and geography, the respective populations are ignorant
about the other (in the South) or have stereotypical and false ideas about each other (the North).

Today, it is still true that public opinion in Europe and the South Mediterranean lags far behind the views of intellectuals and politicians. On both shores, the media have played a decisive role — and continue to do so — in embedding in our imaginations the false notions that we have of each other. The reactions to 11 September provide many examples of this.

Preservation and promotion of cultural diversity are among the founding principles of the European model. They are enshrined in the Treaty, in Article 151, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, under Article 22 and they figure in the European Constitution. These principles are a contribution to a new world cultural identity based on a dialogue between cultures.

Culture diversity has become one of the major issues of the international debate taking place among international and regional organisations since 1998 and it has been the subject of discussions of other international and regional fora, including the civil society. Such progressive affirmation of cultural diversity at international level is a contributing answer to growing concerns of civil society and governments regarding the preservation of cultural diversity (as common heritage of humankind, in a similar manner to biodiversity) as well as the promotion of living cultures and creative capacity. In both dimensions, cultural diversity tends to integrate global strategies of sustainable development. Public authorities are increasingly sensitive to the need to develop intercultural dialogue, with a view to foster peace, security and stability at global level.

On the two shores of the Mediterranean, globalisation is bringing fundamental changes. The pace at which established frameworks and reference points are being displaced as a result of the mixing of peoples and ideas, and flows of goods and services, means that it is not always possible to identify what has remained unchanged in the different "civilisations" where these transformations have taken place. The only way for everyone to creatively construct a common future is to endeavour to steer a path of change together between a resigned fatalism in the face of an essentially economic globalisation on the one hand and a retreat into exclusive identity politics on the other. For this to be possible, two conditions must be present: first a readiness to seek in the dialogue with the Other new reference points for oneself and, second, general agreement on the aim of constructing a "common civilisation" beyond the legitimate diversity of the cultures that have been handed down. Leopold Sedar Senghor encapsulated this when he said that by living the particular to the full we reach the dawn of the universal. A common civilisation naturally looks to the universal, and hence equality, while dialogue thrives on diversity, and hence a taste for difference.

From an awareness of this need has grown the political will to propose a major initiative. This consists of developing an intercultural dialogue, referring to culture
not only in the traditional sense of the term, but also in the anthropological sense, which includes all the practical, day-to-day features of a living culture (education, role of women, place and image of immigrant populations, etc.).

1. **Globalisation and multiculturalism**

The impact of globalisation on cultural liberty deserves special attention. Globalisation has resulted in a strong acceleration of cultural diffusion and exchange throughout the Mediterranean. This acceleration, to a great extent, has been driven by the expansion and liberalisation of market forces, often dominated by countries of the North. The protecting cultural diversity is as relevant to an ecological attitude as protecting biodiversity and that cultural life should not be subordinated to large market forces.

Global flows of goods, ideas, people and capital can seem a threat to national culture in many ways. They can lead to the abandonment of traditional values and practices and the dismantling of the economic basis on which the survival of indigenous cultures depends. When such global flows lead to cultural exclusion, multicultural policies are needed to manage trade, immigration and investments in ways that recognize cultural differences and identities.

And the exclusion of traditional knowledge from global regimes for intellectual property needs to be explicitly recognized, as does the cultural impact of such goods as films and the cultural identity of immigrants.

The aim of *multicultural policies* is not to preserve tradition, however, but to protect cultural liberty and expand people’s choices — in the ways people live and identify themselves — and not to penalize them for these choices. Preserving tradition can help to keep the options open, but people should not be bound in an immutable box called “a culture”. Unfortunately, today’s debates about globalisation and the loss of cultural identity have often been argued in terms of upholding national sovereignty, preserving the ancient heritage of indigenous people and safeguarding national culture in the face of growing inflows of foreign people, films, music and other goods. But cultural identities are heterogeneous and evolving — they are dynamic processes in which internal inconsistencies and conflicts drive change.

Four principles should inform a strategy for multiculturalism in globalisation:

- Defending tradition can hold back human development.
- Respecting difference and diversity is essential.
- Diversity thrives in a globally interdependent world when people have multiple and complementary identities and belong not only to a local community and a country but also to humanity at large.
• Addressing imbalances in economic and political power helps to forestall threats to the cultures of poorer and weaker communities.

There is much to cherish in traditional values and practices, and much that is consonant with universal values of human rights. But there is also much that is challenged by universal ethics, such as inheritance laws that are biased against women, or decision-making procedures that are not participatory and democratic.

Taking the extreme position of preserving tradition at all cost can hold back human development.

In no society are lifestyles or values static. Anthropologists have discarded concerns with reifying cultures and now see importance in how cultures change, continuously influenced by internal conflicts and contradictions.

The second principle is that diversity is not an end in itself.

If local cultures disappear and countries become homogeneous, the scope for choice is reduced.

Much of the fear of a loss of national identity and culture comes from the belief that cultural diversity inevitably leads to conflict or to failed development.

Much of the fear of a loss of national identity and culture comes from the belief that cultural diglobalisation can expand cultural freedoms only if all people develop multiple and complementary identities as citizens.

Just as a culturally diverse state can build unity on multiple and complementary identities, a culturally diverse world needs to do the same.

As globalisation proceeds, this means not only recognizing local and national identities but also strengthening commitments to being citizens of the world.

Multiple and complementary identities are a reality in many countries — and people have a sense of belonging to the country as well as to a group or groups within it.

1.1. Globalisation and the intensification of identity issues

Recent history has been marked by a rapid succession of ruptures, approximately once every ten years. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, then the fall in 1989 of the Berlin Wall and, more recently, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre towers on 11 September 2001. Each one has defined its era. Together they have fashioned the world of uncertainty and fear in which we now live. First symptoms and then causes of major historical changes, these crises have undermined the established forms, methods and rules of the international order.

These crises have combined with globalisation to subject contemporary societies to changes of all kinds the cumulative effect of which has led to major evolutions or
even transformations in the very nature of those societies. This state of affairs calls for new paradigms.

These exceptionally rich and complex cultures are reduced by mutual antagonism to one-dimensional identities.

The Balkan wars arose out of the same violent dynamic, pitting neighbours against each other and requiring the intervention of third parties to impose peace. While problems of integration among people who have migrated from the Maghreb or Turkey to Europe are frequently referred to, it is important not to overlook the difficulties they have in defining their relationship with their countries of origin, an experience which shatters the traditional, simplistic image of an original unaltered identity in opposition to an intolerant host situation. In reality, the problem is one of adjustment, within a given society, of new elements which in some way change it and therefore participate in its evolution from the moment of their arrival. It is pure fantasy to imagine a static society on the one hand and migrants who find the gate barred on the other. In reality, migration and societies have a relationship of mutual transformation which involves them in the same adventure from the start, the apparent difficulty being entirely of proportion and duration, since in one case it is often about living out individual destinies, and in the other it is about slow, imperceptible general trends.

However, it is none the less true that migrants have already transformed both the host societies and the societies of origin, if only, in the case of the latter, by sending financial remittances, which far exceed all development aid and associated investment flows.

Thus the question of cultural relationship in the Euro-Mediterranean area begins for each individual at his own door, for the southern as much as the northern countries. It is doubtless in this area that the shock of modernity has given rise to the most comprehensive, fastest, most troubling changes, making the transmission and sharing of culture (in the anthropological sense of the term) one of the most burning questions in societies undergoing profound change.

A dialogue of this kind with oneself is, in a way, the most difficult of all. It lacks reference points, since those on which it could base itself internally are precisely those which are subject to change and doubt. Thus it slides all too easily into confrontation, rhetoric, ideologies, prejudice, scapegoating. Facing change on so many fronts is bound to be unsettling. Broadening the circle of cultural exchanges is the only way out of this impasse. The Euro-Mediterranean dialogue must be envisaged less as the problem to be solved than as part of the solution to the problems that arise, in different forms, in the North and South respectively. It is a path of change for both the North and the South which, separately, have difficulty in managing the impact of these changes on their own future. They are more likely to succeed together.
The Mediterranean area is one of the areas in the world where the idea of the world itself originated, as did the web of relations which organise the entirety of the known universe. We owe it both the notion of the universal and critical thought, in other words the tools for analysing both the general and the particular. Its history should place it at the very heart of a successful globalisation. However, what we see is the exact opposite. For several centuries this area has been the theatre for successive radical reversals of relationships of power, wealth and influence.

It is as if, from the outset, globalisation in the Mediterranean has been constructed on an ancient cultural scar. Thus, there more than elsewhere globalisation is perceived as a process exacerbating feelings of relegation and marginalisation. Globalisation, by exposing the economic, social and financial structures of all societies, reveals their advantages and disadvantages, while accentuating the instability of the existing systems, and weakening those societies which were already the most fragile.

An essentially economic and financial liberalism is intensifying interdependences, redoubling the destabilisation of societies that are simultaneously disorganised within and bled dry from without.

Finally, globalisation not only exposes the existing mechanisms, but also brings its own complexity, for example combining standardisation and fragmentation, the principle of openness and blocking mechanisms, all contradictory commands which create real problems in reality and in people's minds. Few analysts have yet accepted the fact that globalisation is not, or at least is no longer, a process of change within established structures, but a challenging of these structures themselves, of rules, of benchmarks, of proportions. Where it was once accepted that there was a whole, we must see differences, and where divisions reigned, affinities are now emerging.

However, this resurgence of politics is not the answer to everything, if only because it ignores the essential element, the reconstruction of frameworks and benchmarks, references and rules. The national context in which politics is traditionally set no longer fits all the issues.

Ideology offers a way out of this uncertainty, creating certainties by opposition. We can thus see caricatured visions of the world gaining ground in the Mediterranean, where established frameworks lie in ruins: they give simplistic answers to the complex matter of globalisation by caricaturing, and thus exploiting, the subtle elements of human experience, ending up transforming the diversity of cultures into a clash of "civilisations".

Civil societies are organising and consolidating. They still need to take serious, innovative steps, along with all the interest groups and states concerned, to respond to the need for effective democratisation and promote a culture of participation.
1.2 Fields of a new culturalism

Cultural cooperation is not just a tool for resolving conflicts and difficulties. It brings enduring enrichment, opens new avenues, bestows a heritage and represents a value in itself, a structural asset. Our goal is to work in a sustainable perspective in this sphere, innocent of plain opportunism. Cultural co-operation involving the Mediterranean region can play a genuine part in furthering exchanges and knowledge between cultures and societies, to breaking down isolation and to creating a new atmosphere of communication and exchange.

There are currently numerous initiatives that focus on the Mediterranean, and we ought to give our backing to the major institutions that are seeking to find solutions to problems that are of concern to us all: firstly, the European Union, which organises a Euro-Mediterranean Conference and manages the MEDA programmes (and we should assess their scope and the possibilities for co-operation), ALECSO, ISESCO and of course Unesco. With regard to non-governmental organisations, we must mention the European Cultural Foundation, with its programme on the history of the Mediterranean and “Mediterranean Meeting Points”, and the King Baudouin Foundation, which runs a programme to raise awareness of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage.

Undoubtedly, religion is one of the most important fields. The most pressing problem is fundamentalism, whether Muslim or Christian. This attitude results in rejection of the other, who is viewed as a heretic. Those who have a fundamentalist religious approach see those who are different as enemies. They perceive a danger and permanent threat to what they hold sacred when faced with different morals, mentalities and beliefs.

Education and training are the foundation of culture. This is a vast area for co-operation. In order to encourage mutual knowledge and respect, our respective educational systems should be revised, as there is a great gulf between them. A first step should be stepping up the fight against illiteracy in the south. The Council of Europe could offer its experience in this area, whether in terms of school textbooks, equivalence of qualifications or vocational training.

As regards cultural heritage, the conservation of archaeological sites and preservation of the architectural heritage are projects that should be conducted in partnership. The heritage of a long and remarkable past should be given greater prominence.

With regard to culture in the traditional sense, meetings, co-operation and exchange are possible and desirable in several fields: dialogue between intellectuals, artists and researchers in what are called the “humanities”; organising meetings; establishing a network of contacts between writers, artists, communicators, opinion-formers, etc. All the artistic fields, from literature to music, theatre to cinema, architecture to painting, cooking to folklore, can be used to discover and move closer to others.
2 The cultural European approach to the Mediterranean Region

Europe is made up of countries of different cultures and traditions. The unifying factor for the 44 Council of Europe countries is their adherence to a set of values, namely democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as their determination to co-operate on a project for a joint future, while preserving their individual cultural specificities.

Relations between Europe and the south Mediterranean countries - which have all signed the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - must and can be improved. Culture, including education, heritage and the arts, science, youth, sport and the media, is particularly conducive to such co-operation.

Of course to give priority to cultural cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean countries in the cultural field, it's necessary to encourage the translation and publication of the fundamental works of Arab culture in Europe and of European cultural works in the south Mediterranean countries, including contemporary writers and studies on topical issues.

Vital, it's to establish and develop contacts and exchanges among artists, with joint exhibitions and music, drama and film festivals; organise contacts and encounters in the field of folk culture (folklore, gastronomy and traditional costumes); cooperate in the field of migration policy in order to ensure that immigrants to Europe from Mediterranean countries become genuine intermediaries between the cultures of the home and host countries; promote meetings between journalists, researchers and common peoples to stimulate an exchange of life expediencies, studies and others cultural and ethical aspects.

Europe must demonstrate that it genuinely wishes peace, stability and global progress for all, and that it is willing to contribute to ensuring a fairer distribution of wealth worldwide for the sake of these goals.

We should remember that, from the 15th century onwards, European countries carried out a policy of colonial expansion under which they exploited almost every part of the world, often in a thoughtless and brutal manner. This colonisation was committed in the name of certain moral values (religion, civilisation, culture and progress) which were sometimes put into practice violently, and frequently rendered meaningless by the behaviour of the colonialists. It is not our place to judge, but it should be borne in mind that current conflicts, wars, divisions, confrontations and hatred in several parts of the world originated in the period of colonisation or decolonisation, the latter having been carried out (to say the least) with a blatant lack of sensitivity.

The basic line of argument is rediscovering the commitments which arise from the history, and calling ethical and moral imperatives to mind in order to give new
impetus to relations between the Council of Europe and the Mediterranean countries.

It is important to have a general framework in order to work effectively in this sphere, that of culture in the broad sense.

In the Mediterranean, Europe remains the closest neighbour.

2.1 The Mediterranean Region contest

The process of Barcelona, one has said more times, priority objective is placed the constitution of one zone of free exchange. Economic integration, however, it could not totally be realised if an able one will not have been formed "background" cultural to create one "Mediterranean" common conscience. The promoter of the plan exposed to Barcelona have endured comprised that it was necessary to work to bottom in order to construct a collective base and to search of the values that could widely be you flavoured yourself between the two rivers of the "Nostrum Sea". Since 1996, with the conference of Bologna, particular attention to the cultural cooperation has been lend, discussed in one successive reunion to Rodi in 1998. The progresses completed in the course of the years have allowed to reach a concrete result to Naples, supplying to form the "Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue of the cultures". Such institution, as it is written in point 58 of the final declaration of Naples, it means to become "the element catalyst for all the initiatives aimed at the strengthening of the dialogue and the mutual understanding". The Foundation is proposed to pursue the indicated aim (integration between the several ethnic and cultures) with means that are not limited to the traditional channels graduate to us. In the process of cultural collaboration one would agree to be involved also press and other mass media of mass, citing the role express that will be able to carry out daily paper, reviews, televisions, radio and Internet. The Foundation declares to trust in the collaboration from part of the many other associations, of both the sides of the Mediterranean, already operating in the field of the cultural exchanges. To such scope the organ delegated to integration between cultures is proposed to sponsor one series of particularly suitable events of great prestige and to develop to integration and the dialogue between cultures and civilization.

It is difficult to consider the Mediterranean as a coherent whole without taking account of the fractures which divide it, the conflicts which are tearing it apart: Palestine-Israel, Lebanon, Cyprus, the western Balkans, Greece-Turkey, Algeria; incidents with their roots in other, more distant wars such as those in Afghanistan or Iraq, and so on. The Mediterranean is made up of a number of sub-units which challenge or refute unifying ideas. Conflict, however, is not inevitable; it is not its predestined fate. It is this that convinced Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, to set up a High-Level Advisory Group. The group set its work on the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the broader context of
economic globalisation, enlargement of the European Union, the permanent presence on its soil of communities of immigrant origin, and the questions about identity which these changes are throwing up on both shores of the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean countries which do not belong to the European Union, however, are exposed to many forces which thwart their potential to form a single entity and make the voice of their peoples heard. Their proximity to their northerly neighbour – whose strength is in large part due to its unification – may incline them to an equally creative openness to better, more intense and more egalitarian relations.

In numerous situations, therefore, where the logic of the melting pot is used, we can talk about forced assimilation. The risks of multiculturalism Multiculturalism was operational in Canada and the United States in the early 1970s and later on in Australia and Sweden. It is expressed in both the social science literature and also, more significantly, in some of the policies adopted by these countries. Unlike cultural pluralism, multiculturalism grants recognition to the barriers produced by race, and therefore, posits a diversity of populations whose experiences of discrimination have given particular histories to peoples of colour. The debate regarding multiculturalism is commonly fashioned around recognition, identity and cultural difference, and tends to emphasise 'cultural injustice' rather than economic discrimination. Indeed, Charles Taylor has been criticised for assuming that rectifying cultural injustice would provoke 'significant leverage by itself to attack the power structures that produce economic injustice'. Multiculturalism seeks to redress some social problems, but it does not attack head-on the rooted cultural issues of the cultural and economic hegemony of some groups in relation to others.

Historically, it can be seen as a response to the emerging cultural and racial minorities in North America, and a tentative approach to the issues of cultural difference. It was important for challenging the hegemonic culture in the United States, but over time it has become a mere policy oriented concept meant to counterbalance the marginalisation of the minorities, and reduced to the programme of affirmative action. As Wieviorka formulates his critique: 'the preconditions for multiculturalism are such that the problem is almost resolved before having been posed, or that it is based on the utopia of a society which has already been capable of shaping its project.'

Yet it is important to remember that cultural differences and the presence of minorities will always generate conflict that must be accepted. Crisis and conflict have always existed and will continue to exist. Another point concerns multiculturalism, as applied in certain countries, which causes economic injustice because it only focuses on cultural differences rather than on the original structural differences in certain segments of the population.

There is no need to fear that a new identity group may be created. This is an expression of liberty. The problem is that spontaneous and oral culture is often
inhibited when faced with a scholarly culture that steals the limelight, although this will change with time.

It obvious to consider that the Mediterranean is one of the regions of our world in which a plurality of cultures, languages, religions, and traditions have historically co-existed, with different degrees of tolerance and confrontation; that it is an area of great potential and at the same time a focus of serious conflicts, in which the weight of history and tradition must have their place in our analysis, but must not prejudice our commitment to building a region of peace, cooperation and mutual understanding.

The Mediterranean region stands at a historic crossroads, where there are still profound inequalities and disjunctions of an economic, social, political, cultural and religious nature, together with a new positive spirit of which the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona was an occasion and a symbol; that the Conference served to create a positive spirit and was an exceptional opportunity for the participants to commit themselves to a new phase of cooperation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Underlining the importance of the contents of the Barcelona Declaration, because of the multi-dimensional character of the partnership established around the three axes - political, economic and social - which stands as a basic point of reference for cooperation in the region; that it signifies a real change, especially in terms of the relationship between the European Union member countries of the northern shore and the countries of the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Mobility and exchange among the citizens of the countries around the Mediterranean, as an apprenticeship in multi-culturalism, is a fundamental stepping stone to real, multi-dimensional cooperation which will foster common values, respect and understanding of differences, and put an end to the fear produced by ignorance and lack of contact. This is what is needed to guarantee balance and integration between economic, political and social partnership.

Towns and cities have the potential for developing democracy at local level, for involving citizens in the management of public affairs and strengthening an integrated and collective identity.

2.2 The Barcelona Process

The Barcelona Process, or EMP, is a wide multilateral framework of political, economic, and social relations that involves 700 million people in 27 countries or territories around the Mediterranean. In addition to the 15 EU states, the EMP includes Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority.

The Barcelona Declaration, in 1995, has launched the EuroMed Partnership on three separate chapters, the third one being Culture. It recognised that the traditions
of culture and civilisation throughout the Mediterranean region, dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological level are an essential factor in bringing their people closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.

Dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary precondition for bringing the people closer. The mass media can play an important role in the reciprocal recognition and understanding of cultures as a source of mutual enrichment.

The idea is more to involve civil societies in ending the discriminations from which European citizens of immigrant origin still too often suffer and the persistent situation of injustice, violence and insecurity in the Middle East, in implementing educational programmes designed to replace negative mutual perceptions with mutual knowledge and understanding, and so on.

The initiative is also intended to create conditions favourable to the harmonious combining of cultural, and particularly religious, diversity, of untramelled freedom of conscience in every dimension, with the neutrality of the public realm.

They express, concerning the intercultural area, their intent to promote cultural exchanges and knowledge of other languages, respecting the cultural identity of each partner, and to implement a lasting policy of educational and cultural programmes; in this context, the partners undertake to adopt measures to facilitate human exchanges, in particular by improving administrative procedures.

They also recognize the essential contribution civil society can make in the process of development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and as an essential factor for greater understanding and closeness between peoples.

After this analysis we can say that where it was chose the dialogue in spite of the civil, historical differences, between the occidental hemisphere and the muslim world, the different can live together and enrich themselves reciprocally.

The value of the process of Barcelona could quite grow in the next few years if some favourable circumstances will be taken place. The Mediterranean can become the zone of greater interest for Europe, if the European Union will choose to accept new members that show oneself on the "Mare Nostrum".

The process of Barcelona seems to still show a desire to grow politically, even engaging in one mediation in the zone more explosive than all the world. A Euro-Mediterranean initiative for the Middle East would be a sign of great maturity, an able action to confer ulterior authority to a structure that could play an important role in the world-wide equilibriums. In this way it will be good also for the field of the economic cooperation, because now all the governments have understood it, the area of free exchange that will have to be born within 2010 could be realized single if supported from analogous progresses in political matter.
2.3 The Mediterranean Charter

The Mediterranean Charter is another important document for the Mediterranean Region cultural identity. It is inspired by the following criteria:

- comprehensiveness;
- inter-culturalism, pluralism and tolerance;

(The basic thread woven throughout this Charter, which gives it legitimacy, is that of inter-culturalism, rejecting any interpretation of this as a homogenisation of the diverse cultural identities of the Mediterranean under the influence of those which are more powerful. The inter-cultural Mediterranean society is conceived as an open space in which the diverse cultural identities coexist under equality of opportunity, the only factor able to legitimise them, and far from any consideration of ethnic, religious or cultural purity or of any kind of intolerance.

- solidarity;

(The Charter can only be understood as a proposal based on solidarity among peoples, cultural identities and individuals, above particular interests be it at the intra-state, national, international or supranational levels.)

- cooperation;
- equality of opportunities and rights;
- peace-building and security.

The Mediterranean Region, cradle of the three great monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - melting-pot of peoples and cultures, a place of encounters and scene of confrontations, is the crossroads of three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.

The concepts of democracy, human and communal rights stem from the humanistic tradition of the Mediterranean cultures and belong to the common legacy of the peoples of the Region.

They shall promote and foster the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social cultural and other rights, all of which stem from the dignity inherent to human beings and are essential for their free development.

In this context, the States and Peoples of the Mediterranean Region shall recognize and respect the freedom of persons to profess and practise, individually or in community with others, their religion or belief, acting in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience.

The States and Peoples of the Mediterranean Region in whose territory there exist ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, shall respect the right of individuals belonging to them to equality before the law and shall take the necessary measures to ensure for them the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Without prejudice to the regional systems to which they belong, the States and Peoples of the Mediterranean Region will give particularly careful consideration to the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and procedures within the Mediterranean Region that permit international control, by appropriate organs, of their obligation to respect the fundamental human rights and liberties recognized by International Law. Such procedures will include those whose functioning may be initiated on the demand of one or more States of the Region.

Intercultural dialogue is a basic element to the fostering of regional cooperation and convergence.

3 Cultural diversity and shared values

Culture is by nature egalitarian, giving equal weight to all its forms: it is therefore both the basis of and vehicle for an equitable relationship. But in no other area is there such scope for both misunderstanding and understanding: it is therefore the ideal area for equals to work together to clarify and enrich a Euro-Mediterranean relationship still littered with obstacles (mutual perceptions, role of the media, etc.) and denials (of rights, dignity, liberty, equality, etc.). Why should this relationship be made a priority? Certainly not to prevent a very hypothetical clash of civilisations, but rather in the certainty that the principal complementarities of the two halves of the Euro-Mediterranean area will, in the next half century, have been integrated into their day-to-day life: what we now have to do is prepare the ground for this. These complementarities are now emerging, but there is a risk that they will not achieve the desired result if no effort is made to back them up with ambitious plans to bring peoples and cultures together.

Cultural diversity, is a key concept because diversity is a fact of life in Europe and goes to the heart of the European Union.

In today's interdependent world the cultural diversity and dialogue must go hand in hand. And this dialogue must be based on respect for the culture of the other.

There can be no dialogue if we all think the something. So, difference is vital.

Dialogue does not just call for a common language - it calls for basis of shared values. Sometimes it takes a trip abroad to put cultural differences into perspective.

Trade can be a way of sharing the benefits of economic prosperity. Cultural goods and knowledge do not diminish - but increase - when they are shared.

With a view to contributing to the strengthening of peace and of understanding among the Peoples of the Mediterranean Region, without regard to race, sex, age, culture, language, religion, value-systems or ethnic, social or national origin, and irrespective of their political, economic and social systems, the States and Peoples of the Mediterranean Region will intensify among themselves scientific, cultural and academic exchanges and the solution of educational problems.
The fundamental objectives of this politic are the cooperation and exchanges in cultural matters and the cooperation and exchanges in educational matters.

3.1. National Policy-makers

The argument of cultural relativism frequently includes or leads to the assertion that traditional culture is sufficient to protect human dignity, and therefore universal human rights are unnecessary. Furthermore, the argument continues, universal human rights can be intrusive and disruptive to traditional protection of human life, liberty and security.

When traditional culture does effectively provide such protection, then human rights by definition would be compatible, posing no threat to the traditional culture. As such, the traditional culture can absorb and apply human rights, and the governing State should be in a better position not only to ratify, but to effectively and fully implement, the international standards.

Traditional culture is not a substitute for human rights; it is a cultural context in which human rights must be established, integrated, promoted and protected. Human rights must be approached in a way that is meaningful and relevant in diverse cultural contexts.

Rather than limit human rights to suit a given culture, why not draw on traditional cultural values to reinforce the application and relevance of universal human rights? There is an increased need to emphasize the common, core values shared by all cultures: the value of life, social order and protection from arbitrary rule. These basic values are embodied in human rights.

Traditional cultures should be approached and recognized as partners to promote greater respect for and observance of human rights. Drawing on compatible practices and common values from traditional cultures would enhance and advance human rights promotion and protection. This approach not only encourages greater tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, but also fosters more effective international cooperation for human rights.

Greater understanding of the ways in which traditional cultures protect the well-being of their people would illuminate the common foundation of human dignity on which human rights promotion and protection stand. This insight would enable human rights advocacy to assert the cultural relevance, as well as the legal obligation, of universal human rights in diverse cultural contexts. Recognition and appreciation of particular cultural contexts would serve to facilitate, rather than reduce, human rights respect and observance.

Working in this way with particular cultures inherently recognizes cultural integrity and diversity, without compromising or diluting the unquestionably universal standard of human rights. Such an approach is essential to ensure that the future
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will be guided above all by human rights, non-discrimination, tolerance and cultural pluralism.

*Human contacts,* concerns the development of contacts among persons, taking family links as a particular basis and protecting, as required, the reunification of families. The progressive granting of facilities for travel motivated by personal or professional reasons, gradually simplifying entry and exit procedure, reducing regulations related to the movement within their territory of the nationals of other States of the Region and progressively reducing the fees for visas and official travel documents.

*Intercultural dialogue,* concerns the acknowledgement of and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious differences. The promotion of mutual knowledge and understanding through the establishment of appropriate regional structures.

3.2. *Municipality and local policy-maker*

It is thus pertinent to inquire about the relevance of the Barcelona Process today, not only as a regional security and economic affair, but also as a small, albeit not insignificant, means of preventing a "clash of civilizations" of global proportions. Said otherwise, in this volume, we would like to explore the notion that the promotion of a shared Mediterranean identity, as it becomes a means for transforming the discourse and practices of the region, from a "clash of civilizations" to a "convergence of civilizations" may have global security implications.

By convergence of civilizations, we do not mean what in Euro-Mediterranean Partners discourse and practice is generally regarded as "cultural cooperation," for example, well-intended meetings between the clergy of the three major Mediterranean religions, or cultural contacts involving music, theatre, and literature, however important they may be. Rather, we primarily mean the creation of a process aimed at generating shared normative and epistemic understandings and meanings about political, economic, and social life, for example, about social order, the rule of law, human rights, social and political justice, peace, and security.

Most important, however, we mean by it the creation of a *Mediterranean shared narrative.* On the basis of this shared narrative, multicultural traditions, dispositions, identities, practices, and policies may thus become established.

This idea builds on the notion that the Mediterranean has always been the meeting place of different civilizations and religions.

Under the new scenario, conditions of increasing globalisation and the spread of markets and liberal ideas will provide the spark for identity change that reinforce new concepts of security envisioned in the Barcelona Declaration. And when the various regional actors have developed a culture of dissent without having to resort to violence in the Mediterranean, they will have built a stable Mediterranean
culture with its multiple identities and beliefs. Indeed, if regional integration is achieved in the Mediterranean, it will not follow the European model. It is likely to be constructed in such a way that it can neither be mistaken for a Northern economic hegemonic design nor for an attempt on the part of Southern states to impose a new economic order on their Northern “partners.”

In this scenario, the fate of the Middle East is tied to the fate of the development of a Mediterranean region, and not the other way around. National, trans-national, and international actors around the Mediterranean Sea, empowered by the Euro-Mediterranean countries initiative, have continued to lay the foundations of dense social networks that we believe are necessary for the development of a “region.” If they continue to grow, we suspect that the Euro-Mediterranean countries can begin to cast a shadow on the Middle East conflict.

Some positive indicators of this trend: despite the failure of the peace process and the failure of Syria and Lebanon to exclude Israel from the Euro-Mediterranean countries process, Arab states remained in the negotiations and meetings. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that in 2002 Israelis and Palestinians fought out their differences, and in spite of symbolic protests against Israel, as scheduled, the EMP met in Valencia for its yearly meeting. As a result, with the purpose of putting the Barcelona Process back in business, an Action Plan was agreed.

This effectively will mean ending the Barcelona Process and replacing it with a smaller but more manageable Arab-European partnership. This partnership will involve mainly southern European countries and Maghreb Arab countries, such as Morocco and Tunisia, with whom southern European countries had long standing and important economic relations.

Municipalities and regional authorities need to be closely involved in the operation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. City and regional representatives will be encouraged to meet each year to take stock of their common challenges and exchange experiences. This will be organised by the European Commission and will take account of previous experience.

We can invented ethnicity and also culture can be invented (R. is invented also Wagner, The invention of Cultures, 1975), a category that for along time has been associated to the primordial and intangible content of the ethnicity. Today the cultures are in order to replace the States and the nations in how many great subjects to comparison, delivering up itself like instruments of identity affirmation and imaginary shelters. First the supremacy was of the West and this guaranteed the success to impose the own economic-social and political models (Capitalism, the Socialism), at that time the speech didn’t concern the "cultures war". So, this is true, because the period that goes from the post-war period until the end of years Seventy is that one in which the speech has been able to develop itself that spoke about dialogue between the cultures and hope the advent of a world-wide culture
that was nourished of the differences and became rich in virtue of the multiplicity. But when the world-wide situation newly it has been difficult and when the world-wide and the globalisation unfolds the own effects destroyed to you, the culture like imaginary value shelter has become a dominant idea and it has been determined "choc of the cultures", like expression and result of the imbalances and the disparities to international level.

Once again, it is a problem that seems an illusion: the illusion of the correspondence between cultural unit and political organization, between cultural unit and it turns out to you economic, between cultural unit and definition of the democracy and the rights of the man, between religious cultural and practical unit. It happens then that Confucianism (or Buddhism) and economic development are developed to convictions like those of the "successful wedding" between, the incompatibility of the Islam with the shapes of Capitalism and the democracy, of an happy link between the western values and the universal rights of the man. The “Culturalist Illusion” thinks that a culture is made up of a corpus, stable and closer, of representations, of sideboards and symbols, which would have one strongly "affinity" with opinions, attitudes, precise behaviours.

Now, if it is true that they exist of the practical cultural ones, he is instead arduous asserting that unhistorical culture one exists. We take the example of the "French culture" of which some xenophobe atmospheres emphasize the presumed homogeneity and ancientness. The French identity is something that comes constantly changed and its "genius", therefore like every other culture, it is in the fact to have assimilated successive the immigrant big wave values.

Culture is first of all an intellectual object. The product of one representation, that it can be one of the group that car -is described, that one that distinguishes "we" gives "theirs", or that one of the anthropologist who studies a sure group. And it is in such sense that is necessary to re-establish itself to the tradition of the ethnology which - it goes remembered - privileging the culture concept has intentional to extend contained the descriptive and taxonomic intention in the classic expression of "uses and customs" and to emphasize some, in contrast, the character of plan of construction of the sense. Edward B. Taylor was the first one to offer one scientific definition of culture, clearly various from the hierarchical and substantive notion of "civilization", that it will prefer to abandon. As far as Franz Boas, it explicitly assumes from Taylor the culture concept, with the scope to show the absurdity of the idea, to the dominant and contained age in the race notion, of a tie between physical features and the features of the civilization. For Boas the culture notion is indispensable since concurs to explain the diversity of the human societies without to resort to the race notion.
3.3. Culture and Community

The central issue in cultural liberty is the capability of people to live as they would choose, with adequate opportunity to consider other options.

As it happens, some communitarian theories have glorified the absence of choice involved in the “discovery” of one’s real identity. Michael Sandel has helpfully explained this claim, which is part of the “constitutive conception” of community:

Community describes not just what they have as fellow citizens but also what they are, not a relationship they choose (as in a voluntary association) but an attachment they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of their identity.

In this perspective, social organization can be seen as attempts to “create opportunities for men to give voice to what they have discovered about themselves and the world and to persuade others of its worth”.

The claim that identity is not a matter of choice but ultimately one of discovery needs further examination, and that larger issue will be taken up below. For the present argument it is relevant to note that the special importance and exceptional gravity that are connected, in this communitarian perspective, to inherited affiliations and attachments relate to its discovery-based foundation, in contradistinction to things that are “merely chosen”. Whatever may be the persuasive power of that claim (it certainly needs some justification), it is in real tension with attaching importance to choice and the freedom to choose.

The communitarians are right, however, in emphasizing the importance of a sense of identity in leading one’s life. Less clear is how identity can be a matter of just discovering something about oneself, rather than, explicitly or by implication, exercising a choice. These choices are constantly being made—quite often implicitly his identification with Indians seeking independence from British rule over his identity as a trained barrister pursuing English legal justice, there can be no question that he was consciously and firmly making a choice.

In other cases the choice may be implicit or obscure, and also far less grandly defended than Gandhi’s decision, but the choice may be no less authentic for that reason.

Typically, each individual can identify with many different groups.

The choices are not unlimited (you cannot choose the identity, for example, of an Inuit or a Sumo wrestler, if you are not one). But within the range of the memberships that you actually have, you can choose what priority to give to one membership or another, in a particular context. The fact that you have all these—and many other—memberships may be a matter of “discovery”, but you still have to think and decide on what relative priorities to give to your various affiliations. The fact that discoveries occur does not exempt you from the need to choose, even if the choice is made implicitly.
3.4. People and Multiculture

Given the importance of improving mutual understanding by promoting cultural exchanges and knowledge of languages, officials and experts will meet in order to make concrete proposals for action, inter alia, in the following fields: cultural and creative heritage, cultural and artistic events, co-productions (theatre and cinema), translations and other means of cultural dissemination, training.

Greater understanding among the major religions present in the Euro-Mediterranean region will facilitate greater mutual tolerance and cooperation. Support will be given to periodic meetings of representatives of religions and religious institutions as well as theologians, academics and others concerned, with the aim of breaking down prejudice, ignorance and fanaticism and fostering cooperation at grassroots level. The conferences held in Stockholm (1995) and Toledo (1995) may serve as examples in this context.

Senior officials will meet periodically to discuss measures likely to facilitate human exchanges resulting from the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, especially those involving officials, scientists, academics, businessmen, students and sportsmen, including the improvement and simplification of administrative procedures, particularly where unnecessary administrative obstacles might exist.

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership must contribute to improving the living and working conditions and increasing the employment level of the population in the Mediterranean partner States, in particular of women and the neediest strata of the population. In this context the partners attach particular importance to the respect and promotion of basic social rights. To that end, actors in social policies will meet periodically at the appropriate level.

Multicultural conception of democracy is often required. Several models of multicultural democracies have developed in recent years that provide effective mechanisms of power sharing between culturally diverse groups. Such arrangements are crucial for securing the rights of diverse cultural groups and for preventing violations of these rights by majoritarian imposition or by the political dominance of the ruling elite.

4 Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Cultural identity

For the peoples of the of the Mediterranean Region, the immediate concern is to tackle uncertainties and international change no longer separately but together, while respecting their differences. The long-term concern is to develop not just the perception but also the feeling of a shared destiny. The dialogue between peoples and cultures must therefore play a decisive role in creating a Euro-Mediterranean area which "holds together and makes sense". To this end the dialogue must go much further than the traditional mechanisms of international and regional cooperation and assistance. It must also be cemented by mutual awareness and
understanding, not only among states and institutions but also, and most importantly, among the societies and people living within this common area.

What must be understood from the outset is that the dialogue between peoples and cultures can no longer be a secondary element of Euro-Mediterranean relations, tacked on to the rest (the "poor relation" of the Barcelona process), but must extend beyond the bounds of its specific areas of action to become a cross-cutting element, informing all aspects of Euro-Mediterranean relations with its "common civility", as outlined above.

Europe and the Euro-Mediterranean area are both at a crossroads; each must find new paths and new approaches if they are to ensure that the major forces referred to in the introduction do not compound each other, with incalculable consequences.

There is no lack of ideas and proposals for important and valuable activities to broaden and deepen cultural cooperation across the new European Union boundaries. But some objectives take priority over others because they work as general preconditions for the successful and effective implementation of specific programmes and projects. For example, it is widely recognized that more support for mobility of artists, journalists, educationalists (and students!) and other cultural professionals would be highly desirable. However, the current visa regulations to enter the Schengen zone provide formidable obstacles to the free flow of ideas and intellectual and artistic stimulation.

For a musician from Macedonia (let alone Amman), who is invited to perform at a concert in Rotterdam the bureaucratic hurdles to apply for a visa are discouraging, and the actual process of acquiring the visa are cumbersome and time demanding.

But also the inviting institution or organization in Rotterdam is faced with some considerable challenges: the invitation letter has to include a written guaranty of being solely responsible for the invitee’s personal (room and board) and medical needs during the stay in the Schengen zone, and also for his or her return journey after the expiry of the visa. For many cultural institutions within the European Union, particularly the smaller ones or those that have no prior experience in inviting ‘complicated’ guests from non European Union countries, these stipulations can have a deterring effect and thus prevent cultural exchange and intellectual mobility.

It is not the question whether the governments of the European Union were justified in establishing a rather rigorous visa regime to protect their countries against illegal immigration (they probably were); but the issue here is to find ways of countering unintended effects of these regulations and to avoid conflicting policies, in this case of promoting more mobility with neighbouring countries on the one hand, and inhibiting it from happening by rigid entry requirements on the other hand. For artists (cultural operators, journalists, etc.) who are regularly being invited to perform or attend meetings in European Union countries, a special multi-entry visa could avoid wearisome and repetitious procedures. For inviting
organizations, the perception of risks could be minimized by establishing a liability fund as part of European Union mobility programmes that works like an insurance and covers the financial damage in the very rare cases where problems arise. With these two mechanisms, the effectiveness of these programmes would be significantly reinforced.

Another area of strategic As the first partnership institution of its kind in the region, the decision to establish the “Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations” has created high expectations within the countries concerned regarding its potential to serve as a principal facilitator of consultation, coordination and project support. The decision also sent a strong signal that after years of stagnation of the Barcelona Process, the European Union is placing a new emphasis on its trans-Mediterranean relations at a time when interchange and interaction between both shores has been seriously weakened by distrust, suspicion and a new cultural parochialism in the wake of September 11 and its consequences.

There are two key issues that will determine whether the high expectations are justified: one is obviously the level and the sustainability of funding support for the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. Considering the complexity and scope of the challenges that the Foundation is addressing, the funding that is currently under discussion seems to be inadequate. Secondly, it will be vitally important that in all matters related to its programme structure and funding decisions, the Foundation is acting like a true platform of artists and cultural/educational operators rooted in the civil societies, and not like an intergovernmental agency. Thus, it must be granted a maximum degree of autonomy and independence and the partner governments that came together to set up the Foundation should limit their role to a supervisory function making sure that public funds are properly used.
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