



Home page

Who we are

The Network

The Branches

Activities

La Maison de la Méditerranée

Activities

- Planned activities
- **Realized Activities by year 1994 - 2010**
- Realized Activities by thematic areas
- **General Index**
- Activities the Branches
- **Publications**

Brussels 24th November 2003

The Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo collaborates with the High-Level Advisory Group of Prodi



The **Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo** has collaborated with the **Group of the High-Level Advisory** of Prodi Essays of Prodi through 5 members of the Foundation participating in the Group (Predrag Matvejevic', Fatima Mernissi, Bichara Khader, Tariq Ramadan, Malek Chebel) and providing the collaboration and the contribution of President Michele Capasso - among the creators of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue between cultures.

The ancient **map of AL IDRIS** dating back to the 13th century was donated by the Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo and was used as the cover of the report of the High-Level Advisory Group of the Wise Men of 2 December 2003.

- [Images](#)
- [The report in French](#)
- [The report in English](#)

[Back](#)

Accademiamed

Almamed

Euromedcity

Isolamed

Labmed

Cinemamed



Mappa del sito • Links • Contattaci • Indice • Cerca sul sito
La Stampa • Dicono di noi • Partenariato euromediterraneo • Azioni • News



Copyright Fondazione Mediterraneo © 2018. Tutti i diritti riservati.
Cod. Fiscale 94139240637



REPORT BY THE HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY GROUP
ESTABLISHED AT THE INITIATIVE OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



*Courtesy of Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo**

Dialogue Between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean Area

Co-Chairs of the Group:

Assia Alaoui Bensalah

Jean Daniel

Members of the Group:

Malek Chebel, Juan Diez Nicolas, Umberto Eco, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt,
George Joffé, Ahmed Kamal Aboulmagd, Bichara Khader, Adnan Wafic Kassar,
Pedrag Matvejević, Rostane Mehdi, Fatima Mernissi, Tariq Ramadan, Faruk Sen,
Faouzi Skali, Simone Susskind-Weinberger and Tullia Zevi

This report expresses only the opinion of the High-Level Advisory Group and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

The report is produced with the collaboration of Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo

PRODUCED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EuropeAid Cooperation Office DG)

WEB SITE: http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm

E-MAIL: europeaid-euromedinfo@cec.eu.int - TEL: (+32-2) 295.40.96

The Report is on the web at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/publication.htm

Euromed Report recipients are welcome to partly or fully reproduce and disseminate the contents of the publication provided that they acknowledge the source.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

Enlargement is causing the European Union to reflect on both its identity and its relationship with the rest of the world, starting with the countries and regions in close proximity. The neighbourhood policy is the creative expression of the vision of making the Union one element in good neighbourly relations – as well as being specifically responsible for providing the neighbourhood with a stable core - and therefore ensuring that it maintains closer links with its immediate "ring of friends".

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.

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.).

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. It is a historic and hence politically crucial task, and it is urgent.

Why should culture act as a vehicle for dialogue in this relationship? It is certainly not a panacea, nor can it act as a substitute for the existing policies within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership put in place at Barcelona. 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 untrammelled freedom of conscience in every dimension, with the neutrality of the public realm. Once all these conditions are present they can ensure an inclusive process of secularisation without which racist (particularly anti-semitic and islamophobic) prejudices could persist. The High-Level Group was unanimous in strongly condemning any doctrines or ideas which legitimise any form of exclusion or discrimination to whatever end.

The High-Level Advisory Group has therefore identified and put in order of importance a number of founding principles, themselves translated into principles for action to which the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area must constantly refer in order to give the neighbourhood policy a human dimension. It is this set of principles which make up the "software" of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, the "specification" of which must enable it to both set in motion, promote and coordinate all the initiatives responding to these principles, and assess whether each initiative complies with those principles.

The High-Level Advisory Group has also identified three "operational" guidelines in the fields of education, mobility and the identification of best practice, and the media. It has elaborated a number of concrete proposals for each one.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

I. WHERE HAVE WE GOT TO?

- 1.1. Changing identities in both the North and the South
- 1.2. Enlargement and the changing identity of the European Union
- 1.3. Intercultural dialogue as a response to the structural problems in the South
- 1.4. Globalisation and the intensification of identity issues in the North and South of the Mediterranean
- 1.5. Dialogue - desirable yesterday, essential today

II. FORGING AN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

- 2.1. The dialogue between peoples and cultures: a key concern in Euro-Mediterranean relations
- 2.2. Place and role of the dialogue between peoples and cultures in a living Euro-Mediterranean area
- 2.3. Common founding principles
- 2.4. The need for a joint institutional structure
- 2.5. Diversity of the target audience for our recommendations and feasibility criteria that must be met

III. IMMEDIATE NEED TO ENGAGE IN RENEWED DIALOGUE

- 3.1. Recommended actions and decisions
 - 3.1.1 *Make education a vehicle for learning about diversity and transmitting knowledge of the Other*
 - 3.1.2 *Promote mobility, exchanges and the exploitation of expertise, skills and best social practice*
 - 3.1.3 *Make the media a vital instrument of equality and mutual knowledge*
- 3.2. Make the Foundation the guardian of the dialogue
- 3.3. Preconditions for success, risks and consequences of our proposals

CONCLUSION

LIST OF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY GROUP

FOTO







