



FINAL DECLARATION

Alicante, 16th May 2010

The 250 representatives of civil society organizations from the north and south of the Mediterranean, assembled in Alicante, on 14th, 15th and 16th May, took note of the institutional changes that came about since Marseille Civil Forum (31st October - 2nd November 2008). These changes are the outcome of the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon and the disappearance of the Barcelona Process in favor of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The Civil Forum's participants strongly reaffirm the need of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership open to all countries in the region. This Partnership cannot be based merely on economic development projects, be they as important and innovating. It should rely on the same fundamental principles that have led to the creation of the Barcelona Process: willingness to share a common destiny, respect of the diversity of the partner states, inviolability of values and principles stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Euromed Non-Governmental Platform's intervention in the different official bodies should be officially recognized. Freedom of association and expression as well as trade-unions' freedom are necessary for the voice of Euro-Mediterranean civil societies to be heard. These are part of the essential conditions for sharing common values by all the Partnership's member States. Without recognition of autonomous and independent civil societies, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will not allow peoples to become the main authors of their future.

The Civil Forum's participants emphasize again the pressing need to actually ban all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, handicap, origin, race, religion, absence of religion or sexual orientation. In this respect, the Civil Forum's participants express their concern about the growing discrimination against entire populations in both shores of the Mediterranean: it is the responsibility of public authorities to think about the democratic management of the increasing diversification of European and non-European societies ensuring a real equal treatment of persons.

The Civil Forum's participants also recall that democracy's progresses, particularly in the south of the Mediterranean, require putting an end to the different conflicts which also hinder stability in the region. The occupation of Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian territories, the aggression against Gaza, the persistence of colonization, especially in East Jerusalem, and more generally the fate of Palestinian peoples, constitute a violation of International Law and a major obstacle to the development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and of the entire region. The European Union, Partnership's governments and international community should firmly engage in respecting the United Nation's resolutions, including the resolution on the Right of Return of refugees, and impose their application when needed.

The Civil Forum's participants call for equality between the peoples and within the Partnership's member States:

- The Respect of fundamental freedoms implies the enjoyment of equal rights by all the citizen of the Partnership. This is the condition to democratization, especially in the south of the Mediterranean, unlike the current realities.
- The Civil Forum's participants express, in this respect, their vigorous concerns about the aggravated violations of women's human rights, in the current context of economic crisis and rise of fundamentalism. The participants emphasize that equality between men and women is a universal value, a condition *sine qua non* to democratization and an essential objective of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. No cultural or religious specificities may be used to justify gender based inequalities and violence against women.

- The respect of peoples' sovereignty requires that all countries be treated on an equal footing. No people may be held under domination. The development of societies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership member States can not be achieved on the basis of unbalanced relationships between rich and poor countries, nor if a hierarchy exists between cultures. It is by endorsing the universal values of the 1948 Declaration that each people can build its future, following its own ways and within the Partnership.

That is why participants in the Alicante Civil Forum have adopted the following recommendations:

- The Civil Forum assembled in Alicante welcomes the launching of the “Euromed Civil Society Programme 2010-2013” promoted by the European Commission and carried out by the Platform and its partners. And asks the Union for the Mediterranean, the governments of the Partnership and the European Union's institutions to ensure the material and political means needed for the Euromed Non-Governmental Platform's autonomous and independent work.
- To promote and enforce equality between women and men, *de jure and de facto*, in all external policies of the European Union, the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plans, the paragraphs concerning the revision and suspension of the Association Agreements as well as the programs and projects of the Union for the Mediterranean. To that end, the ministerial Conclusions of the Marrakech Conference that strengthen the Istanbul Action Plan, should be implemented immediately and effectively, particularly by creating reliable monitoring mechanisms and allocating the adequate financial means. They recommend to all Euro-Mediterranean member States to lift all the reservations to CEDAW, ratify its Optional Protocol and align their national legislation accordingly.
- To integrate youth concerns in all policies of the Partnership's governments and institutions. To create spaces for the active participation of youth in the framework of programs gathering young people from both shores.
- Reaffirming the conclusions of the Marseille Civil Forum (2008), the participants recall the historical role of immigration in economic development all over the Euro-Mediterranean region. Civil, social and political rights of migrants should be respected and freedom of movement must be restored.

Participants in the Civil Forum have also adopted the following recommendations:

- To implement binding mechanisms allowing partner States to honor their commitments regarding Human Rights, democracy and good governance. The Partnership's States and institutions should refrain from encouraging, in any way, governments who violate Human Rights, democratic rules and equality. Moreover, any positive action allowing the equal participation of men and women in the public sphere should be promoted.
- To revise the free trade agreements taking into account the social needs, the right to a decent job and sustainable development. To foster civil society organizations' access to official information (including meetings' minutes, reports, evaluations, etc...) so as to enable them to monitor and assess the current processes. To integrate the contributions of civil society specializing in economic and social rights prior to drawing the economic and social policies of the Union for the Mediterranean's.
- In order to overcome current inequalities in access to resources, the Union for the Mediterranean must commit the region to a climate change strategy, to be decided by a Ministerial Conference in 2011 for immediate implementation on the basis of the CIRCE project findings and other relevant regional programmes and activities. All environmental policies, above all energy, water and biodiversity must be coherent with this strategy. Inequalities of access to water and energy, in particular in Palestine, must be resolved. Civil

- society must fully participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of regional and national environmental policies. Gender considerations should be mainstreamed throughout all these processes
- To increase the resources allocated to education and the access to new communication technologies and promote cultural programs open to the wide public, so as to ensure equal access to culture. States must ensure freedom of conscience, of expression and creation. An end has to be put to any kind of instrumentalisation of religious fundamentalism as well as cultural traits, by whatever authority. The freedom of movement of artistic works and artists, which we consider as mediators of interculturalism, must be ensured. All forms of discrimination shall be prohibited, mainly discrimination based on sex, origin or sexual orientation.

The participants in the Civil Forum in Alicante recognize that these recommendations cannot be implemented unless just peace is established in this region. Consequently, the participants in the Civil Forum demand that:

- The member governments of the Union for the Mediterranean must respect International Law and take the necessary measures in order to guarantee its implementation. States should give precedence to International Law over power struggles, and they are responsible about imposing the respect of equality between peoples and among their citizens.
- The Union for Mediterranean, its member governments and the international community should refrain from practicing double standards policies and should compel the Israeli authorities to fully respect the relevant international resolutions, thus putting an end to occupation and colonization in Palestine. It is worth noting that this situation is a blatant, persisting and unbearable violation of International Law. Hence, the participants in the Civil Forum in Alicante call upon all the States of the Union for the Mediterranean to impose immediately the appropriate sanctions and to support the conclusions and recommendations of the Goldstone Report.

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