

**Final Conference of the EuroMed Market Programme
Barcelona, 28-29 April 2009**

Final Conclusions

We, the participants* in the Final Conference of the EuroMed Market Programme of the European Commission, funded by the MEDA Programme in the framework of the EU Euro-Mediterranean policy, after two working days and at the end of this conference, approve the following final conclusions:

1. In accordance with its initial objective, this Programme has paved the way for the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010 as provided for under Chapter 2 of the Barcelona Declaration.
2. As far as a general evaluation of the whole programme (May 2002-April 2009) is concerned, we make a positive evaluation of all the actions carried out under the programme. These activities had different scopes: regional, intraregional and bilateral (study visits and experts missions), which made it possible to give a comprehensive overview of the situation both in the region as a whole and in each country.
3. Concerning information and dissemination actions, we would like to express our satisfaction regarding the basic documentation handed over to the participants when attending activities, the comparative and thematic studies carried out in the framework of the programme, as well as the end-of-the programme publication entitled: « Towards the Free Trade Area » which gives a picture taken at the end of 2008 of the actual situation in the fields covered by the programme in the Mediterranean partners. All this information can also be found on the programme website which allowed for a networking between participants and experts thanks to several interactive functionalities and which contains all information gathered over the past seven years. The programme allowed the participants of the Mediterranean partner countries to improve their knowledge of the contents and developments of the EU Internal Market, while also envisaging measures which are necessary to approximate legislation and procedures in order to enhance cooperation between the MPs and the EU and its Member States, as well as to deepen South-South cooperation in view of the establishment of a free trade area by 2010.

Among the main achievements of the programme, we would like to underline its contribution to the progress made in the field of legislative approximation and institution building in the priority fields addressed by the programme.

4. Another major achievement that can be ascribed to the programme is the creation of various thematic experts and institutional networks, both real and virtual. These networks are now consolidated through the 6 Working Groups set up at the beginning of 2008 and on the programme website. This interactive site contains several applications and supports networking between participants. Furthermore, it contains 6 thematic networks (4th and 5th phases) as well as an expert network covering all the priority fields addressed by the EuroMed Market Programme.

5. During their respective meetings, the members of the working groups made a number of recommendations, the most important of which are indicated below by priority area:

i) Customs cooperation and fight against counterfeiting and piracy.

The members of this working group admitted that it is necessary to preserve the database of the EuroMed Market Programme also adding the EU Member States with a view to setting up a network for information exchange in this field. The working group also proposed to foresee in the future training actions focused on good practices in the field of fight against counterfeiting, risk-analysis on counterfeit goods and targeting methods of such goods. Currently an application for action submitted by a right-holder to one EU Member State can also be followed up in other EU Member States. For the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Free trade Area, it would be useful to extend this procedure to the Mediterranean partners. To this end, the MPs are invited to harmonise their respective application for action forms.

ii) Public Procurement

The participants recognized that it would be useful to receive tailor-made technical assistance, such as the assistance offered by instruments like TAIEX, TWINNING and SIGMA-OECD, in order to exploit the work carried out in the framework of the EuroMed Market Programme and to continue the efforts aimed at enhanced regulatory convergence, both within the Mediterranean region and with the EU.

iii) Intellectual Property Rights

In order to capitalize on the programme acquis in this field, it would be useful to maintain the virtual network that has already been established in the framework of the EuroMed Market Programme. The Secretary General of the Spanish Society of Authors and Editors (SGAE) proposed to put at disposal his institution's infrastructure to host and continue the existing virtual network.

iv) Auditing and accounting

- It would be necessary to use the study carried out in the framework of the EuroMed Market Programme on this issue as a basis to draft national action plans in this field in each MP.
- The participants would welcome the setting up of a central Euro-Mediterranean entity comprising both representatives of the public and private sectors, with a view to coordinating action in this field. The Federation of Mediterranean Accountants (FCM), established in 1999, should start working as hub for EuroMed cooperation activities in the field of auditing and accountancy and be the starting point to create an Accountancy and Auditing Central EuroMed Entity.

v) Financial Services

Insurance:

Works have shown that supervisory insurance legislations of MP and EU are quite close to each other. The setting up of free trade areas, possibly limited in scope and in extension, which should be

progressive in time and could be favoured by guarantee funds and by enhanced cooperation between insurance supervisors, is likely to promote the convergence of practices and reinforce the competitiveness of the players.

Banking:

The in-depth study of fundamental rules, practices and structures of the MPs shows promising results. This work in common made it possible to exchange information between neighbour countries and representatives of the European Union, to compare more concretely the national rules and practices, and finally to support their convergence. The work has shown the substantial progress made: modernisation of rules, development of competition, better risk-management ; however, the banking sector still needs to improve, in particular by promoting access of households and SMEs to modern banking services. The evolution has confirmed a real convergence within the region and towards the EU, even though some differences still remain in some fields.

The participants recognized that regulatory and standards convergence should be further developed, both in the Mediterranean region, with the European Union and at the international level.

The participants are of the opinion that it is necessary to continue this joint effort to support this reform and convergence process, while taking into account the new rules and practices resulting from the financial crisis and the multilateral decision process (G 20, IMF). Moreover, a comparison between the EU and the MPs would also be useful.

vi) Competition

In order to reinforce the existing structures at legal and institutional levels, established over the last decade, several proposals are put forward:

- a) Reinforce competition advocacy in the Euro-Mediterranean societies: publish a Mediterranean Competition Bulletin, half-yearly or at least periodical; ensure the Arabic edition of this bulletin thanks to financial support that could be sought from a regional or international donator and the technical support proposed inter alia by the Egyptian and Moroccan Competition Authorities; organise every year a Mediterranean Competition Day following the model of the European Competition Day held in Paris in November 2008 (Competition Day of the French Presidency of the EU).
- b) Strengthen networking by setting up a EuroMed Competition Committee (EMCC); this committee could have various compositions: steering group, plenary, ad hoc working groups. This committee that could meet on a regular basis in Barcelona could keep the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean informed of its conclusions and offer a permanent multilateral framework in order to address common problems faced by the countries in the region. It could also be proposed to set up a Mediterranean Competition Network (MCN) that could build on the virtual network already established in the framework of the EuroMed Market Programme by reinforcing it with the creation of cases fiches such as the ECN case documents.
- c) To permanently structure on a regional Mediterranean basis the training efforts that need to be made by each Competition

Authority in the MPs interested : to this end, Tunisia has offered the possibility of a regional training centre ; the UFM interested countries could offer, according to the needs and their means, experts-days to deliver this training with the financial support of a European programme like TAIEX, such programme could also be exploited to ease up the travel of the competition authorities case handlers to be trained; as to Morocco, it is currently working on the creation of a research and documentation centre which could also be of regional scope and could be coordinated with other initiatives in this sense in the Mediterranean region.

- d) To continue the work under the Union for the Mediterranean.

The participants take note of the upcoming dissemination of these final conclusions to the European Commission, the EU Member States and the Mediterranean Partners.

Read and approved in Barcelona, 29 April 2009.

(*) See list attached