



TOBB

Union of
Chambers and Commodity
Exchanges of Turkey



EU-Turkey Joint Consultative
Committee



European Economic and Social Committee



**EUROMED SUMMIT
OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS
AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS**

Istanbul, 16-18 November 2011

FINAL DECLARATION

1. The representatives of the Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and similar institutions, together with the representatives of civil society organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries which do not have an ESC or similar institution and representatives of several NGOs from the Euro-Mediterranean region, meeting in accordance with the mandate conferred by the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and extended under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), held their 2011 meeting in Istanbul. The participants warmly thank the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and the Turkish Delegation of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee for their hospitality and their contribution to the success of the Summit. The following two major themes were discussed at the Summit: the new political environment in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the current and future role of civil society within it. In addition, they also discussed specific topics of importance to the region: the development of social dialogue; entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity; cooperation on immigration; the promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency; and rural development and employment.

The participants adopted the following recommendations:

On the new political environment in the Euro-Mediterranean region

The participants:

2. welcome the fact that the political transformations that have been taking place in the eastern and southern Mediterranean region over the past eleven months and are still ongoing have created the prospect of a more democratic future for the region, and express their full support for the democratic forces that are at work in each country and are striving to promote democracy, human and other basic rights, as well as the rule of law;

3. deplore the Syrian regime's ongoing repression of protesters and its violations of human rights, which must end immediately;
4. call on the political authorities and all the stakeholders in the transitional process in several other countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean to stop human rights violations without further delay and to commit themselves to a full democratic transition and to respect for human rights;
5. call on the political authorities and the international community to take all necessary actions to reach a just and lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions;
6. welcome the fact that the European Union has been quick to respond to the changes in the region. They endorse the new EU policy, which is based on the principles of differentiation and conditionality, in other words the principle that EU support will only be provided to those players and countries that are fully committed to human rights and representative democratic political rule. At the same time they call on the EU to carry out a review of past Euromed policy with all stakeholders in order to draw lessons for the future;
7. stress that the most immediate need is to promote and consolidate the democratic transition process in the countries of the southern Mediterranean through free elections, government institution building, the creation of independent judiciaries, shoring up of media freedoms and sustained efforts to fight corruption, and emphasise the importance of dialogue with civil society on these issues;
8. believe that the EU, which is the biggest donor in the region, needs to insist not only that clauses on the protection of democratic freedoms and individual rights are included in its bilateral agreements, but crucially also that they are implemented;
9. emphasise that the EU institutions need to develop, in cooperation with the southern partner countries' governments, a longer term strategy to be implemented under the EU's 2014-2020 financial perspectives, in which the various strands of the EU's policy are joined up;
10. call on all stakeholders to focus on three key priorities in the longer term: i. continued consolidation of democratisation; ii. promotion of regional integration, including economic integration; iii. social development and comprehensive solutions to mobility and immigration issues;
11. express concerns about the negative repercussions of the current financial and economic crisis and the unstable situation within the eurozone. In this context they insist on the importance of implementing social protection measures for the most vulnerable groups of society, including women;

12. acknowledge and endorse the efforts made by the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean to re-launch a dialogue between countries of the region, and call on the UfM and the EU to work closely together on a joint future strategy;

and, emphasising the pivotal role played by women in society:

13. stress that women played a pivotal role in the processes which led to the recent transformations in the Euro-Mediterranean region and emphasise that the momentum achieved through their involvement should be kept up in order to make sure that women enjoy full political, civil, economic and social rights in the future;
14. call on stakeholders on both shores of the Mediterranean to do more and be proactive in guaranteeing better representation of women in political and economic life;
15. emphasise that an immediate priority for women's integration in the southern Mediterranean is facilitating women's access to the formal labour market.

On the current and future role of civil society in the region

The participants:

16. note with satisfaction that the EU has recognised the key role that civil society plays in empowering citizens, strengthening democratic processes, fostering economic and social development, contributing to law and policy making, and rendering governments accountable, and welcome the support the EU intends to give to a broad range of civil society organisations, including social partners in the partner countries. They welcome the statement made by Commissioner Füle at the Summit stressing the importance of social dialogue and the work carried out by Economic and Social Councils and similar institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
17. call on the EU to articulate more clearly in the form of specific goals, benchmarks, and review mechanisms the concrete results it seeks from the support it gives to civil society, and insist that civil society involvement in policy making needs to be mainstreamed;
18. call for benchmarks on the treatment of civil society (legislative framework, capacity building, dialogue etc.), human rights, and economic, social and cultural rights to be included in the assessment of a country's governance;
19. welcome the setting up of the ENPI civil society facility, but draw attention to the need for the effectiveness of EU-funded projects to be improved. The complexity of EU funding

procedures leaves out of the loop many of the non-state actors that have the greatest potential but also the greatest need for support;

20. fully endorse the support given to NGOs which indeed play a crucial role in society, but stress that greater and more targeted support needs to be given to employers' and trade union organisations and other socio-professional groups;
21. call for the setting up and consolidation of economic and social councils in the region, which are crucial mechanisms for civil and social dialogue. These councils should be guided by principles such as: broadest possible representation of civil society; independent nomination processes; democratic internal elections; regularity of meetings; independence of the secretariat and of the institutions' budget; etc.
22. stress the need to reinforce dialogue and cooperation between Economic and Social Councils and to promote an alliance of civil societies from the north and the south of the Mediterranean region in order to guarantee sustainable development;
23. insist that structured social dialogue and labour rights in the region need to be promoted, primarily through the efforts of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and call on the EU to give further support to the ILO in the implementation of ILO programmes to promote social dialogue and capacity building;
24. insist that the organisations engaged in social dialogue in the region should cooperate closely by sharing experience and knowledge, disseminating information, benchmarking, and transferring know-how. Point out that a new phase of the TRESMED project, which is coordinated by the ESC of Spain and funded by the European Commission, was launched in January 2011;
25. welcome the positive results of the ESC of Morocco's first year of activity, as well as the promising efforts to develop social dialogue in the occupied Palestinian Territories;
26. call for an open and frank dialogue between secular and religious civil society organisations, in particular on the issues of freedom of religion and women's integration in society;
27. encourage civil society organisations in the region to engage in cross-border dialogue in order to promote south-south dialogue and regional integration.

On the need to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity in the Euromed region

The participants:

28. underline that entrepreneurship and business development, especially of SMEs, are a priority because of the role that entrepreneurs can play as drivers of growth and of economic and social development in the countries of the southern Mediterranean region. There is currently a significant shortage of entrepreneurs in the region, and this sector, which has tremendous potential, could offer major new opportunities, especially for young people and women;
29. believe that as a precondition to promoting entrepreneurship and innovation it is essential to create a favourable investment and business environment based on legal certainty, good governance, the rule of law and a better institutional and administrative framework;
30. call on the political authorities and other main stakeholders, with the support of the EU, to establish the educational foundations for entrepreneurship and innovation. This can be achieved amongst other things by setting up business schools and programmes of exchanges with the EU, which need to be accessible to people from all social strata;
31. insist that policies to promote entrepreneurship and innovation should form part of a strategy that is shared by both shores of the Mediterranean. Stress in this context that it is fundamental to encourage business activity by both small and medium enterprises and by companies in the social economy;
32. emphasise that better knowledge of business in the region, with comparable and updatable statistical information is needed. This requires the design of suitable information systems so that the dynamics of the business fabric in various sectors as a whole can be determined;
33. emphasise that business culture in the region tends to be local and rooted in the informal areas of the economy and that therefore entrepreneurship needs to be mainstreamed in economic policies and the educational system. Greater participation by women and young people in the formal economy should be encouraged through the involvement of these two groups in business activities;
34. emphasise that it is necessary to improve access to sources of funding which can come through foreign direct investment or microcredits and cooperative loans;
35. point out that in all countries of the region a clear strategy on innovation supported by adequate resources and a high level of exchanges needs to be adopted. This should lead to greater efforts to identify and monitor projects, support researchers and scientists to return to their home countries, and simplify joint research and innovation projects;
36. underline that regional bodies or networks such as BusinessMed - but also those that represent trade union, farmers' and social economy interests - are key promoters of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.

On the need to cooperate on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region

The participants:

37. underline that migration in the Euro-Mediterranean context is set to remain a major, long-term policy challenge for governments on both shores of the Mediterranean which needs to be managed sustainably and humanely;
38. stress that it is in the mutual interests of political authorities on both shores to develop close cooperation on the issue with the long term aim of formulating a Euro-Mediterranean migration policy that facilitates social, business, educational, family and cultural exchanges in the region as a key feature of closer political and economic integration between north and south;
39. underline that a thorough, updated study into immigration is needed. Attention should be paid to the characteristics of migratory flows, to the situation of foreigners living in host countries, and to integration policies;
40. draw attention to the need for close cooperation between sending and recipient countries and the mainstreaming of civil society involvement in the formulation of policies. In all countries of the region civil society organisations, including diaspora communities in recipient countries, provide key social services related to migration;
41. draw attention to the significance of labour migration because of its scale and implications for social, economic and personal development. Special attention should be paid to the difficulties young people and women face in finding decent employment and training in the region in order to find appropriate solutions;
42. draw attention to the role that the social partners can play in national policies and in EU strategies on migration by promoting economic and labour market integration as well as social cohesion.

On the importance of promoting renewable energies and energy efficiency

The participants:

43. draw attention to the fact that renewable energies and energy efficiency need to be key components of all current and future policies on the security of energy supply, economic and social development, and climate change mitigation on both shores of the Mediterranean region, and for this reason deserve special attention;
44. emphasise that it is vital for renewable energies to be promoted through regional cooperation that is geared to co-development. A 'New Green Deal' between the EU and its southern

partners needs to be achieved which is based on robust regional solidarity and major financing as part of a win-win approach for the northern and southern shores;

45. stress that technical assistance and training geared to building up local expertise in the area of renewable energies and energy efficiency is a necessity;
46. call for increased support for research and development work in order to boost the profitability of renewable energy projects. The introduction of a Mediterranean energy Erasmus scheme for students from the entire region should be envisaged;
47. support the project to create a Euro-Mediterranean investment bank. The bank should fund projects supporting energy and other policies identified within a regional framework;
48. insist on the need for sound coordination between different existing and future renewable energy initiatives, as well as between the institutions managing and supporting them (European Commission, UfM, etc.) in order to guarantee a coherent renewable energy policy;
49. call for the introduction of an EU-level instrument for hedging against political risk in the southern Mediterranean countries (e.g. EU-backed bonds). In the future the 27 EU Member States should aim to purchase a minimum amount of electricity from the southern countries;
50. call for the setting up as soon as possible of an energy community between the EU and its southern partners in order to foster energy efficiency, renewable energies, and network interconnections and interoperability, and recall in this context the importance of setting up a social forum along the lines of that established in the South East Europe Energy Community.

On the pivotal issue of rural development and employment:

The participants:

51. note that economic and social deprivation in rural areas is a major threat to the prospects for democratic transition and to the long-term political and economic stability of most countries in the southern Euro-Mediterranean region, and that for this reason the issue of rural development and employment needs to be tackled as an urgent priority;
52. stress that in the current stage of agricultural transformation in the Mediterranean, the public authorities must pursue a long-term strategy that makes it possible for farming to continue, for productivity to be boosted and access to land made easier. This strategy must be based on three pillars: training; technology and innovation, geared towards ensuring quality, added value and improved marketing; and environmental protection;
53. emphasise, with regard to training, that the greatest challenge is to bring training into line with the changing needs of the rural labour market. Setting up specialist training centres in

rural areas must provide a boost for job creation, self-employment and closer coordination between the public and private sectors;

54. insist that the dangerous trend towards an accelerating rural exodus must be reversed as a matter of urgency. Measures must focus on diversifying the economy of rural areas by introducing new sources of wealth under a transparent legal framework that guarantees social rights for workers and legal certainty for investors;
55. note that differentiated sector-based strategies for rural development should be supported at local, regional and national level. The EU must strive to prevent a potential Mediterranean free trade area from generating a highly unequal distribution of wealth in rural areas;
56. point out that some traditional sectors such as tourism and agriculture must be reshaped so that the local population can benefit in full from their development. It is also essential to look at the possibilities which the energy or environmental sector offer for the diversification of the rural economy. Initiatives based on collective thinking, as in the case of the social economy, play a key role;
57. insist that priority must be given to specific policies that help young people and women in rural areas enter the labour market, and in this context propose the establishment of a special youth employment fund. This is a key step in reducing the informal economy.

On the 2011-2012 work programme:

The participants

58. have decided that at the 2012 Summit the following themes will be addressed:
 - a) The role of civil society in the implementation of the partnership for democracy and shared prosperity;
 - b) Industrial policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with special focus on the energy sector;
 - c) Addressing the economic and social situation of women following recent developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region and in the face of the current global economic situation;
59. have decided that for the 2013 Summit the following themes will be addressed:
 - a) Youth and employment in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
 - b) Follow-up report on immigration and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
60. have decided by common accord that the 2012 Summit will be held in Jordan.

APPENDIX 1

Membership of constituent bodies of the Euro-Mediterranean Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions for the 2011-2013 period

The following working groups have been or will be set up:

- *The role of civil society in the implementation of the partnership for democracy and shared prosperity*, under the direction of the European Economic and Social Committee, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council of Jordan, the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Economic and Social Council of Morocco and the Economic and Social Council of Greece.
- *Industrial policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with special focus on the energy sector*, under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Spain, in cooperation with the Italian National Economic and Labour Council, the Economic and Social Council of Jordan, the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Turkish delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee and the Economic and Social Committee of Israel.
- *Youth and employment in the Euro-Mediterranean region*, under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Spain, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council of Jordan, the Economic and Social Council of Morocco, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Economic and Social Council of Greece, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of France and the Economic and Social Council of Lebanon
- *Follow-up report on immigration and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region* under the direction of the Economic and Social Council of Greece, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council of Spain, the National Economic and Labour Council of Italy, the Economic and Social Council of Algeria, the Economic and Social Council of Morocco and the Economic and Social Council of Jordan.