

Intercultural Dialogue

Basis

for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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What matters in a dialogue is not to provide the answer to a question, but to listen and be silent.

Youakim Moubarak, Islamo-Christian Pentology.

Why is it that God made only one man during the Creation? Answer: For the sake of harmony, that no man might be able to say to another "I am of more noble race than thou".

The Talmud.

O ye men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other.

The Coran, sourate "Al-Hujurat", verse 13.

He who is the cause of destruction of one being on Earth can be considered guilty for destroying an entire universe. He who helps one sole human being on this Earth can be considered as having helped the entire universe.

Maimunid.



Preface

Taking place two years after the Barcelona conference*, the interministerial conference held in Malta** was intended to take stock of progress with the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The idea was to use an assessment of the previous two years as a means of identifying, not only achievements in this area, but also any factors that were hampering or delaying progress.

Civil society produced its own parallel assessment of the partnership and found that, of the three parts to the Barcelona Declaration, it was the third part concerned with "human" aspects, that had not only received the least attention, but which was also the most difficult to implement. Yet, it is precisely this human dimension that is at the basis of the partnership. After all, an area of stability and peace is pointless unless created by and for people.

One of the basic components of the human dimension is intercultural dialogue. How can we establish an area of development, peace and stability if the people living in the area do not know each other, or, worse, ignore each other? How can we implement the first part of the Barcelona Declaration concerned with political and security aspects if the people on either side of the Mediterranean are afraid of each other? And how can we implement the economic part if the people concerned do not communicate with each other, are unable to circulate freely, and are suspicious of each other?

Partnership must be based on an attitude of openness and respect for other populations and other cultures. Representations based on misunderstandings must be left behind in favour of a new dynamic approach that is more conducive to the development of a balanced and positive partnership. Respect for other people's differences is the best answer to all forms of fundamentalism.

During our discussions, it is important that we talk not only about our differences but also about the things we have in common. As borne out by mythology, the Mediterranean has always been prone to conflict, and dialogue and exchanges have always been used with success to overcome dissension and hostilities in the area. Incomprehension and ignorance generate fear and suspicion. Fear, in turn, leads to isolation.

Dialogue helps to develop understanding and must therefore be reflected in the policies of the different governments and societies around the Mediterranean. It is up to all of us to establish the conditions that will ensure these policies are developed and put into practice. This will only be possible if accompanied by a firm political resolve committed to overcoming any obstacles, mobilising resources, and establishing an atmosphere conducive to co-operation and peace. The voluntary sector also needs to be further developed so that civil society is fully able to make its own contribution to this approach.

For dialogue to be effective, both partners must consider each other to be worthy of attention and respect, as the only basis for establishing real agreement on political, economic, social and cultural issues in the Euro-Mediterranean area. We all acknowledge that such dialogue is a matter of urgent necessity, and that concrete action is required to that end.

There is an urgent need to promote co-operation and partnership between the countries on either side of the Mediterranean and to provide the means that will ensure that such co-operation and partnership become a reality. We cannot expect populations of citizens to support the partnership process unless they themselves feel the benefits.

On the strength of this conviction, the North-South Centre used the Euromed Civil Forum that took place in Malta before the interministerial conference as the framework for an international colloquy (11 to 13 April 1997) which provided a prime example of the constructive contribution that can be made by fruitful dialogue towards development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. I am very grateful to all those who took part in the colloquy and who were able to show how European interests and the interests of countries located on the southern shores of the Mediterranean complement each other and can help, through dialogue, to establish the area of peace, stability and shared wealth to which we are all committed.

The contents of this collection are both varied and dense, reflecting the richness of the discussions that took place during the colloquy.

Fifi Benaboud

* Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Barcelona from 24 November to 1 December 1995.

** 15 and 16 April 1997.







Chapter 1

How Islam and the West see each other





Europe and the Arab world: the essential dialogue

By Mr. Salah Stétié, writer and poet,
Honorary Ambassador of the Lebanon,
Former Secretary General of the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs



Chateaubriand says somewhere: "It is time for European man to step aside so that we can discover another world". It has taken over a century for this wish from the author of "Mémoires d'outre-tombe" - who, it should not be forgotten, was also a politician - to be partly fulfilled. Nowadays, via the media, the new communication technologies, increasing number of translations and the invention of cheap books, via reproductions of art and what are referred to as virtual museums, cultural tours, and - why make any secret of it? - certain forms of political propaganda are making major new audiences aware, in one way or another, of new cultures.

For a long time, a very long time, too long in fact, Europe and the West, in general, made its influence felt throughout the world, fortified by its military might, its technology, its colonies and its self-centredness. To the point that other, non-western cultures, however venerable, no longer dared to look themselves in the face or, if they did, did so through the eyes of someone else, someone dominant whose view was inevitably one of contempt. The local elites, who generally adopted the culture of the dominant metropolis, took part in the obfuscation or even the elimination of other native cultures by the commanding culture which, knowingly or unknowingly, contributed to their belittlement. As is common practice, these belittled "traditional" values came to be blamed for defeat at the hands of triumphant western values. This meant that entire sections of civilisation were eclipsed to varying degrees, with the collusion of the main victims. This process served the political designs of those in the dominant position, so they did nothing to restore any of the influence of these values, quite the contrary in fact.

The familiar political short-sightedness and the ensuing national upheavals led to the forms of independence in the third world which we all know about, some of them more "liberated", some more aggressive and some more successful than others. Furthermore, and in some ways this was a beneficial factor, the state of subjection and neglect that native values were kept in by the West allowed these values to survive, sometimes intact, in the darkness to which they had been consigned, like a preserved Roman fresco emerging in all its original glory once its covering has been removed. The fact remained that now that independence had been gained, the burning desire to return to the sources of cultural identity could lead to an extraordinarily strong resurgence of archaisms and latent forces. Thus, everything that had been plunged into the dark night by the direct and often violent actions of colonialism - which sometimes took the more insidious and subtle form of internal colonisation - was dazzlingly projected into the broad daylight of the nation restored by the reaction against this colonialism.

Therefore, in many third world countries, independence was closely linked with this internal decolonisation, which found active and positive expression in identification with the oldest ancestral values, whether broadly cultural or more specifically religious, and these values were suddenly unfurled in the strong wind like the brand new national flag. Thus it was that, strangely enough, one might say paradoxically, the most original, the most spontaneous and the most unexpected forms of emerging creativity became rooted in the most ancient cultural tradition. In

its independence, Africa could only think of reviving its past. Under European occupation, the Arab world had carefully preserved its identity, safeguarding its inherited traditions and values through a type of passive resistance which, it must be admitted, has made it somewhat rigid sometimes in the realm of ideas and education. This even led to a form of creationism, from which it could only emerge some years after independence by means of a "revolution" - which was not necessarily violent but took place at considerable speed - involving confrontations of ideas, morals and expressions within their own tradition. For example, the new Arab poetry, which is now one of the most important forms of poetry there is, did not stem from a rejection of ideas and practices imposed by the occupier, but much more from a desire to destroy an archaic internal practice, which nonetheless served as a means of safeguarding and preserving identity under the foreign occupation.

Conditions for dialogue

However, I must add one point which seems important to me. This release from imposed systems, ideas and attitudes, either by returning to original ideas or by questioning traditional concepts, is not without its major difficulties which, both subtle and restrictive, stem from the very fact that this process of liberation is taking place against the values of outsiders, values which used to dominate people's minds because of the prevailing situation and continue to dominate them today, after such a long immersion. Being conditioned in this way, people's minds are stretched to breaking point, torn as they are between the desire for a genuine separate cultural identity and the shadow cast upon them by a culture which, though foreign, appears to have achieved so much that it cannot fail to exert a certain power of fascination. The fact that outsiders, who are both admired and feared, regard with a degree of irony the temptation of cultural autonomy and the first, tentative steps by means of which a young person is trying to regain awareness of its own spirit, highly complicates the relations that this spirit has with itself and with the former dominant culture. This is a tangle which is difficult to unravel and, for there to be any hope of doing so, what is required is trust and understanding, which, as we know, are rare qualities in international relations.

For a fruitful dialogue to be established between different identities, one of which is extremely solid and the other trembling and uncertain, it is clear that what is needed is something more than just good will, namely an understanding of the other party, a respect for the values it represents, which should not amount to idolatry of the stronger by the weaker or a condescending attitude towards the weaker by the stronger. Only this respect and understanding, this attentive and, in some ways, affectionate regard, can provide the prerequisites for the only worthwhile form of exchange, one characterised by mutual receptiveness and tolerance. If these requirements are not met, endangered national cultures will become as tense as outraged national independence. They will harden their position to one of rejection or, in their mistrust, they will go back to the initial open wound and, through a sense of hurt pride which, although justified, is dangerous for themselves and for others, they will refuse to take part in dialogue, exchange and general trends. This has been, and sometimes still is, the situation in certain countries which are among the most representative on the planet and gave the world a substantial part of its civilisation. Cultural exclusion and its corollary, cultural fragmentation, are only ever answers given in defiance, a defiance which I would say is justified, in response to a question which was once put, and put badly, distorting the whole problem dangerously and painfully. I say this because I once felt it in me and around me. If you try to stifle someone's voice or force them to sing in a given key, you need a great deal of humility, wisdom and patience to ask them to sing in



chorus once they have recovered.

However, the world is changing, and changing fast. Great swathes of historical philosophy which were once all-powerful and proudly untouchable have suddenly collapsed into ruins and been transformed into dust, blown away by a breath of wind and a few sweeps with a broom. Complex, complicated systems, organisations and types of society are falling apart before our very eyes and, every month, every week, every day, one might even be tempted to say every hour considering how quickly everything is changing, they self-destruct a little more. As freedoms are regained, vast new prospects are opened up. Europe has broken up and is rebuilding itself and, because Europe has been, since the mid-15th century and whether we like it or not, the focal point of the planet - the point from which all the main trends in thought, industry and trade have departed and to which they return in a continuous to-ing and fro-ing - it soon becomes evident that Europe's transformation will result in the transformation of the world.

A Europe to be invented

An area without borders and with genuine human freedom. This is what Europe may be in the process of inventing before our very eyes. Of course what I mean by this is a certain high-flown idea of Europe, a kind of dream Europe. A Europe which has finally understood that a territory conquered by force is inevitably a prison, whatever arms are used for the conquest. A Europe which has finally understood, after the sudden and changeless glory of empire, that freedom is indivisible, that a single slave, whoever or wherever he is, puts everybody's freedom in chains. The free movement of ideas and people is, it must be acknowledged, a great European ideal, one of those ideals by which it is good to live and for which it would be conceivable to die. But could this programme apply only to Europe, to a Europe which is becoming more sensitive every day and is beginning to become alarmed at the idea which it itself once announced so splendidly on a particularly inspired day? That idea was aimed at and devised for the whole of humanity. The free movement of ideas and people was what it proclaimed. But Europe is afraid of ideas if they seem likely to undermine its own values, and above all, if they come from the South. Europe is frightened of people if it thinks that they are coming not just to give - which they did for so long under the omnipotence of the colonial imperialism of yesteryear - but if also, as well as giving the little they have (their work, their sweat, the sad aura of poor people labouring in the shadows of luxury and wealth), they ask for the little that Europe agrees to give them, a small amount, but one which means a lot to them and represents their livelihood. Europe is now afraid of people and their freedom of movement, particularly if the point of departure of those moving around within it is somewhere in the South. Is this Europe, extending, though not yet, in practice, from the Atlantic to the Urals, to be reserved for Europeans alone? Why shouldn't Europe close up and withdraw into itself? Why not? Because then it would no longer be Europe.

Europe, which can now give so much to others, only gives very little, as little as possible, even though, in the distant and recent past - and this has to be said - it took so much from others and, moreover, continues to do so. The East provided it with its gods and its God, the world as a whole gave it the quintessence of its cultures, the entire South of the planet offered it a treasure-case of resources, extracted by iron and fire, through use of the whip and the shedding of blood. In its wedding dowry, Europe, which, I would point out, owes its name to the daughter of the King of Tyre in Phoenicia, was given the cornucopia of all races and all peoples and, in some respects, this may be a stroke of luck for everyone. Europe made its honey, which is one of the most delectable and refined there is, from the flowers given and accepted. Europe is like an assiduous bee whose genius lies in the fact that, not only does it visit other bees' flowers, but it takes their

honey as well, making it its own if it can, though it is prepared, under certain circumstances, to give it back after transforming, and sometimes improving, it. This is an age-old argument which I should not start again here. However, because the Europe of rights also has to be the Europe of duties, and these rights and duties have never been more clearly defined over the last two or three centuries of their exercise than they are now, and in particular because Europe is the cradle of human rights, some people may find it impertinent, while many others deem it appropriate, to remind Europe that it does indeed have duties vis-à-vis others and above all vis-à-vis itself - particularly the western tip of Europe which Paul Valéry once described so aptly as a far-flung headland of Asia.

But, however urgent it may be, let us leave aside this controversy and turn to what appears today to be the most important issue of the future for the Mediterranean region and its people. This issue can be summed up in one question: is Europe going to become a reality? Much seems to indicate that it is and that, in spite of the combination of obstacles that we all know about, the process will be completed on schedule. Everyone like myself who cannot bear the thought of American hegemony over what is now such a small planet, can only welcome the essential counterweight that the Earth needs to keep it turning smoothly. The United States is a great country and a great nation, but everyone can see that it is turning into an imperial power. Every day history teaches us a little more that empires, by their very nature, can only produce evil. Unfortunately, the United States is in the process of becoming the absolute empire. It is for this reason that, for the salvation of the planet and for the salvation of the United States itself, it is highly desirable for Europe to become a reality at last.

However, it would be dangerous if this were a Europe made in the USA. A Europe of this type, which would be more or less constructed in Washington, with the complicity of certain Europeans who seem to view the Atlantic as no more than a narrow channel which they can cross at will, would be the worst possible outcome because it would be both reality and fiction, a spokesperson invented for an imaginary cause and for a "trompe l'oeil" duality, a false and forced symmetry, the type of construction which is referred to in architecture as a "dead window", the rhetorical use of which Pascal condemned, from a philosophical point of view. A Europe created under these conditions and focusing on a relationship between Washington, London and Bonn (or Berlin) would only be a counterfeit Europe.

Back to our roots

As I may have already mentioned, Europe was born in the South, growing from Mediterranean roots. Like a sheet of blotting paper placed over a large blue ink blot, Europe has nurtured itself by absorbing the blue of the Mediterranean, the blue of the philosophers and the prophets. And I would reiterate that its name, Europe, is the name of a little princess from my part of the world, the daughter of Agenor, the king of the Phoenician city of Tyre, who was spotted playing on the beach with her friends by Zeus, the king of the gods, who happened to possess all the means that the king of the gods should have at his disposal. Transforming himself into a bull, Zeus, suffering an early case of mad cow disease, approached the young girl, gently at first, then brutally, kidnapped her and had his wicked way with her. The little girl, whose name means "west", was soon followed by her brother, who rushed off in search for her, and whose beautiful name, Cadmos, means "east". Before he left, Cadmos packed his knapsack with the abstract controls of the universe, the signs of the alphabet, with which he was prepared to revolutionise the world.



I talked before of the blue of the philosophers, this inimitable, Mediterranean blue which is the blue of Socrates and Plato, as well as of Socrates' predecessors and Aristotle. Later on, it was inherited by Averroes and Ibn-al-Arabi and many others who were born on the shores of this great blue basin lined with fabulous cities from Alexandria to Tunis, Athens to Venice and Istanbul to the Algiers of the Emir Abd el-Kader, the great soldier and leading mystic who embodied the very essence of tolerance.

I also talked of the blue of the prophets - a heavenly blue. For it was here, on this shore touched by the breath of the spirit, that Moses and Mohamed received the word of God. This was the place where the tidal wave of their message originated, as well as the starting point of the extraordinary process by which the book they inspired became THE Book.

As Europe attempts to find its feet, it would be well advised to refer back to these sources which form its own roots. They are the finest sources there are, with the greatest possible implications for people throughout the world. The Mediterranean amounts to something more than the golden, or less golden, edging of its beaches. I would like to conclude on this precise point. We are told that tomorrow's world will be made, and is being made already, in the North, the North of engineering, technology, robots, the economy and its statistics, the information superhighway, and the broad-ranging eye of the media. This is the North of computing systems, carrier satellites, digital television, pictures for everyone and the indispensable prototypes of a modern world on the move - moving to take over the entire planet and, whether we like it or not, to fulfil our apparently meaningless lives. It would be good if this galloping communication - which gallops so much that it is changing its function if not its very nature - made for better understanding between people. This is a process which has to be encouraged and care has to be taken that it is humanity as a whole, which benefits from this dazzling progress and godsend, and not just a few isolated groups. It would be a shame if certain parts of this process called into question the great Mediterranean ideal which teaches that human beings should be the prime purpose and reason for all things and all progress. That is, human beings and their happiness. Faced with the relentless, cold efficiency of northern intellect, we cannot fail to point out from time to time that it is in the South, and in the Mediterranean region in particular, on its golden beaches dotted with towns and awash with fragrances, that real life begins, that the sun has made its home and that people, however down-at-heel, also feel at home. You only have to see how the people of the North will take advantage of any occasion to descend in their hordes on our sites and our coastlines. What do they want from the Mediterranean? It is true that they want to get away from their ordinary lives but, in addition, and above all, they want to explore their roots and find them once again in history and geography, in the past and eternity, in tastes and values. What they are looking for is something beyond the necessary balance, beyond possessions and power, that little extra known as happiness. Happiness is a right and a duty for everyone. It is one of the fruits of the Mediterranean area, which is so abundant in fruit of every type and form.

It is for this reason that the Arabs, as is repeated over and over in the Koran, placed on the symbolic stage of a world created by God for man and man's happiness, must, especially now, integrate their Mediterranean dimension into their historic and religious depths. The Europeans have to help them do this, so it is important that the Mediterranean is not set against them like a war machine - as in the case of Libya and Iraq - and that the attempt is not perceived as a further example of western hypocrisy and a type of Trojan horse. I wish that the Arabs would finally tame the Mediterranean, which is their Mediterranean, as this would substantially facilitate dialogue with

Europe, with which they share so many values in terms of geography, history and influence on culture and the media. As a result, Europe could benefit from Arab support, constructing itself more solidly and taking the South as its foundation. This would be of benefit not only to the Arab world, but also to Europe and the countries on its southern fringes and to the planet as a whole which, whether it knows it or not, relies for its present and its future on what is happening and what is going to happen in the Mediterranean.

All this may well be unbearably arrogant and intolerably pretentious on our part but the fact remains that a number of us believe that, wherever in the world people continue to talk about and gain inspiration from Plato, Maimonides, Aristotle or Averroes, Jesus or Mohamed, Moses or Galileo, the Mediterranean is there with them. And this leaves an enormous blue mark on the map of the world. Some of us are prepared to defend these truths, judging that even the most powerful computer will never be the equal of Socrates, our Socrates, who, in a combination of thought and passion, alone summed up the arduous privilege of being a human being.



Intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean region: a review

By Mr. Mohamed El Mili, Director General of ALECSO



For genuine intercultural dialogue to be established in the Mediterranean region with a view to healthy co-operation between the northern and southern shores, the problems, weaknesses and shortcomings of the various approaches adopted in recent years need to be highlighted.

Therefore, before we begin, we must determine the nature of the main challenges faced by our societies in their attempts to establish lasting co-operation. It is essential to conduct a thorough appraisal of the changes which have occurred in the last two decades, so as to improve our understanding and gain a more accurate picture of the real situation.

First finding

The fall of the Berlin wall and its political and ideological consequences, including the revival of economic capitalism and political liberalism in countries where these had been rejected, prompted the societies on the northern shore to seek out a philosophy which was no longer dependent on the need to oppose totalitarianism. Therefore, they began to devise a political approach which could reinforce their historical certainty. Since the need to oppose the communist threat could no longer be used as a rallying call, the West has adopted warnings about the "Islamic threat" as an initial response to the problem. In this connection, it should be stressed that, in general, most of those who help to shape European public opinion, including journalists, writers, sociologists and political pundits, have no knowledge of the Arabic language or the various Arabic-Berber dialects.

It should also be pointed out that, thanks to their technological mastery and their hold over society, the European media have played a decisive role in spreading the fear of a perceived Islamic threat through misinformation and the manipulation of words and pictures. The problem with this is not just that it presents the European public with a simplistic, distorted view, but also and above all, that this view has been sent back to us, is now reflected or has been adopted by our own media and is regarded as a reference point or even the truth by the southern Mediterranean public. It is hard to imagine what harmful effects this may have on intercultural dialogue in the region.

It is worth recalling that, to improve our understanding of the different aspects of the situation in the southern Mediterranean countries, it is enough to adopt the same process of analysis used for other countries, in which every possible factor is taken into account, both in terms of historical legacies and their contemporary impact and from the point of view of geopolitics, culture, society and the economy.

In the countries of the southern shore, the causes of misunderstanding are no less serious. The radical changes undergone in the region, the increase in unemployment, the decline in purchasing power, and the fragmentation of the middle classes have given some credence to demands based on religious identity, as an essential if not exclusive element of national identity. This is what has given rise to the need to reinvent a history and decide on a destiny which Europe

no longer shapes directly, though it too has helped, often without realising it, to lay the foundation for this resurgence of a sense of identity based on a withdrawal into oneself and a rejection of others.

Second finding

As for the relations between the countries of the two shores, it should be pointed out that, in the wake of independence, new economic links were forged with the aim of fostering development in the newly independent countries. The failure of this strategy led, among other things, to an increase in emigration to the former colonial powers. This is what led to the formation of large minority communities from the south, who were soon to import their own problems to their host countries. The boom years in the European economy concealed this problem for a while but the economic recession and the problems of adaptation and integration have created what amount to southern enclaves within European countries.

At the same time, the extent of the failure of development strategies in some southern countries, as well as the emergence of an elite with a command of European languages but not always aware of the interests of the people it is supposed to represent, have created, in turn, northern enclaves within the southern Mediterranean countries, with well-to-do groups surrounded by destitution. These "pockets of the north" in the southern countries feel threatened by the extent of dissent and the growing dangers they face and expect the European countries, to which they transfer a part of their wealth, to provide them with a degree of protection. In so doing, this elitist enclave loses all or part of its legitimacy in the eyes of its peers, whereas Europe still considers it to be representative of the great majority of its people.

The inevitable conclusion, based on these facts, is that intercultural dialogue has to take a three-pronged approach:

1. It has to involve the various components of both shores of the Mediterranean.

2. The societies of the southern shore must establish general dialogue among themselves to revive "ijtihad". Of course, "ijtihad" is recognised as a principle in the Arab, Muslim and Christian traditions but what we have to aim at today, is to give reasoning and "ijtihad" an ever increasing role in our societies and to gear our day-to-day behaviour to this principle. This implies intense intellectual activity based on freedom of opinion, balanced reasoning and respect for religion, free from all manipulation, for religion is supposed to be based on individual conscience and not on appearances. But putting this theory into practice brings us up against the social and economic problems that make the work of demagogues so easy and prepare the ground for extremism. This is where Europe must at least provide a helping hand.

3. Another prerequisite is for Europe to establish a dialogue between its humanist and scientific cultures, so as to restore communication between moral ethics and learning.

Europe should also help the economy of the south Mediterranean countries to grow, by carrying out major social and economic projects which, in order to avoid repeating the failures of the past, must take into account the social and, above all, the cultural factors and conditions of the countries concerned. This is a vital ingredient for any solution to all the problems encountered, particularly when it comes to putting into practice the ideal of social justice, which is still the main



desire of all the peoples in this region.

In this context, a reminder should be given of the vital role and involvement of regional and international economic and monetary institutions. As everybody knows, these organisations are not good in an emergency. Their methods are no longer geared to the radical changes which are sweeping the world. The crisis that these institutions are going through shows that their objectives need to be reviewed. Ideological solidarity is a thing of the past and our aim should be to devise common outcomes for both communities. When solutions are intended to be all-embracing, they often fall well short of the practical problems to be solved, whereas when they are tailored to the requirements of a local situation, they often lose any overall effect and can lead to withdrawal into oneself. The advent of an era dominated by the search for identity, rather than by the ideologies around which people used to rally, leaves us with no choice but to learn to accept a world in which various identities and projects coexist.

Any delay in challenging ossified methods leaves us open to the dangers inherent in the complexity of the issues at stake, the overlapping of conflicting interests and the absence of appropriate solutions.

This series of comments and observations leads us to question numerous practices and taboos, particularly those relating to the concepts applied in laboratories, colleges and training institutes. However, this is another story, which must take particular account of the fact that our countries are faced with problems linked to democracy, pluralism, human rights and what is generally referred to as the culture of peace.

These ideas cannot be put into practice to order. They can only be the result and the culmination of a grandiose scheme, the final stages of a process of reflection and the accomplishment, but not the end, of a human journey.

The Arab-European Mediterranean Dialogue: A Culture Bound vs. Culture Free Understanding



By Ms. Hala Sabri, General Secretary of the Arab Thought Forum,
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The fact that the word "culture" is used in two quite different senses often leads to confusion. In this paper, "culture" does not mean "civilisation": knowledge of the arts such as music and sculpture, nor does it refer to social graces, both combined in the image, in Europe at least, of the culturally refined person. It does mean, as is common among anthropologists, a collective phenomenon of acquired patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, shared by people who live or have lived within the same social environment and thus distinguishes the members of this group from another. Hence nowadays, scholars and politicians everywhere seek to explain economics, politics and diplomacy in terms of "culture areas" rather than policies or ideas, economic interests or personalities.

On the whole, culturally, we are what we are because of the histories of our societies, including their economies and religions. Few of us can, but only slowly, change what we are, and few would want to. Yet, the culture of any society cannot be pictured by itself but only in comparison with other societies and it is only in "culture-shock" that we become aware of a culture when we encounter another one. Therefore, it is all too easy to attribute too much to societal culture. Yet, to learn to recognise culture and its features is in practice a powerful aid to mutual understanding as well as a powerful means of explanation.

The Mediterranean: A Mutual Understanding

There are many areas in which mutual understanding amongst the Mediterranean countries is undoubtedly required. One of these, as stated in the aims and objectives of this conference, is to encourage projects under which the various partners will work together in the construction of a Mediterranean cultural area. Arguably though, for these projects to be successful, a better understanding of the driving forces that shape the way both southern and northern Mediterranean countries manage their businesses and organisations, is required.

I believe that consideration of this issue will be relevant to foster better mutual understanding and future trends of business environments in northern and southern Mediterranean countries.

Arab and European societies obviously have distinct cultures. When reference is made to the Arabs, they are usually referred to as one nation - or one integrated society - which shares some main characteristics: the environment, the people, the language, the religion, the social structure and the culture but lacks a unified political system. On the other hand, when reference is made to the Europeans, it is argued that Europe, as one distinct culture does not exist. Some even find a misleading fact in that Europeans look more or less alike but this does not mean that they are culturally alike (for more details on the issue, see Hickson, 1993).



When comparing management and organisations in European and Arab Mediterranean countries, I would like to emphasise that the aim is not to discuss in what respect Arab and European management styles differ. This is beyond the scope of this paper. The aim is rather to highlight some shared characteristics in the cultures of these different societies, that outstanding research has found to be manifested in the way their organisations are managed and organised. Therefore, this paper raises a fundamental question on how far and in what respect do Mediterranean countries play a part, together with other influences, in shaping the way their organisations are run? The answer to this question could be sought in the most debated issues, nowadays, in the study of international management, that is the "culture free" (or convergence) thesis against the "culture bound" thesis.

In general terms, the "culture free" thesis suggests that, in all countries, there are stable relationships between the context and structure of organisations. Size and dependence are key elements in the explanation of the broad features of organisations world-wide. Furthermore, the thesis maintains that all the non-cultural factors that we are seeing in world-wide development such as industrialisation, technology, large-scale operations and growing interdependencies of international multi-organisational systems, mean that, in due course, there will be a common global "management culture".

On the other hand, the "culture bound" thesis suggests that there are still considerable differences between countries. Even though the institutional contexts and management structures of two organisations might be the same, if they are in different societies with different cultures, the people in them will behave differently. According to the thesis, people are culture bound and they react to their organisational problems according to their ideas about what an organisation should be like and how it should be run. To understand the differences and similarities between different cultures, by which organisations are run, the thesis sets out two main factors (amongst five main factors of national culture). The first is called "Power Distance" which means the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (in other words, how far the culture encourages superiors to exert power). The second is called "Uncertainty Avoidance" which means the extent to which functions should be structured in laws, rules and procedures to limit uncertainty.

The theory demonstrated the results of a remarkable work by Hofstede, who has already been mentioned. On these two factors (Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance) differences existed between the northern European countries (such as Britain, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, Belgium, Austria, Norway and Denmark) and southern European countries (such as France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece). Whereas all northern European countries (except for Belgium) stand low on the way authority is handled (i.e. decentralisation is popular and hierarchy in organisations means inequality of roles, established for convenience), all southern European countries stand high on the same factor (i.e. centralisation of authority is popular and hierarchy reflects the existential inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs). On the Uncertainty Avoidance Factor, while all countries of the first group (except for Germany, Finland, Austria and Switzerland) also stand low on this factor (i.e. there should not be more rules than are strictly necessary), all countries of the second group stand high on the same factor (i.e. there is an emotional need for rules, even if these will never work).

Ironically, when Arab and southern European (Mediterranean) countries were compared in the same factors, it is found that they all stand high on Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance.

Apart from contextual effects, both Arab and southern European cultures encourage high centralisation of authority and high reliance on rules and procedures as a means to operate their businesses.

In terms of both arguments (the culture free and culture bound), I hope that the message of this paper is clear. To overcome all prejudices and to attain deeper, mutual knowledge and fruitful co-operation, all concerned parties on the two shores of the Mediterranean are called to acquire real knowledge through a deep consideration of their similarities as well as their dissimilarities. The culture free argument rests on the impact of the macro aspects of industrialisation, technological development and effective operations. These factors push for the same work to be done. Easy communication, travel and trade encourage the cross-cultural learning that can put pressure on for better mutual understanding. The alternative case is that the culture bound argument sets limits for this understanding. But under certain conditions, this understanding of how to jointly run businesses would be much easier if different cultures possessed, to a certain extent, similar characteristics.

Let us all hope that it will not be too long before a convergence in the management and organisations of the Mediterranean countries is identified.

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The Mediterranean region united in its diversity

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The gulf - or wall - of misunderstanding, or of suspicion and rejection between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean and between Europe and the Arab world is largely a cultural one and only cultural dialogue will ever reach across it.

The Mediterranean is both homogeneous and diversified, like its languages and cultures, its music, its colours, its fragrances and its forms. It could be compared to one of its major art forms, the mosaic, which is made up of assorted small coloured fragments assembled to create images of astonishing richness, diversity and harmony. Greece, Carthage, Rome, Egypt and Byzantium share a common history and our peoples have been intermingling for thousands of years. The crews of merchant ships and warships founded towns and opened up trading posts, transported men and goods and plied back and forth across this land-locked sea which is our sea, mare nostrum.

These shores were the birthplace of Moses, Jesus and Mohamed, whose descendants are still quarrelling today in a fratricidal struggle over the inheritance of Abraham. It was probably with this in mind that Paul Valéry wrote: "Through the mists of time we caught sight of the ghosts of huge ships bearing many treasures and souls". But paradoxically, the Mediterranean today is more a region of barriers and conflicts than of exchange and dialogue. The countries around its shores are turning away from their natural focus, to concentrate on other affiliations. They are abandoning the Mediterranean which, as a result of its strategic position at the meeting point of three continents, has been, since the Second World War, an area of running conflicts which are among the most serious in the world. As a Mediterranean thinker once said: "We are moving from the traditional, idealistic view of the Mediterranean as the cradle of civilisations to the absolutely opposite view of the Mediterranean as an arena of conflict which is in the process of becoming a new frontier". The East-West divide which used to separate the world into two blocs has now been replaced by a North-South divide at the Mediterranean, between Europe and the West on the one hand and the Arab world on the other. And it is now, in this day and age, that we are experiencing this confrontation between two worlds which differ in culture, religion, politics, development levels, demography, emigration, and economic flows. We must deal with all of these aspects with courage and clear-mindedness, free from the ideological dogma and demagogic rhetoric which paralyse our policies.

The changes occurring in the world before our very eyes have radically caused new problems, which have their own original characteristics and dynamics, so do not fall into any existing frameworks. The era of watersheds we are currently experiencing is not necessarily for the best. It is setting in motion complex processes to which we should devote some profound and clear-headed thought. By a strange paradox, the period of the collapse of the most oppressive and totalitarian regimes that the world has ever known, born from the communist Utopia, also saw the emergence, without any transition, of populism, fascism, fundamentalism and nationalism, all of which focused on race and religion. Without Marx, the East's suppressed nationalist hatred burst out, and the Muslim world, from the neighbouring republics of India and China through to the Maghreb countries, found itself in the stranglehold of fundamentalism.

The whole of Europe began to believe in its own fantasies, succumbed to the fear of immigrants and sealed its borders. But it is impossible nowadays to keep a single country, region or continent behind completely closed borders. AIDS, maritime pollution, damage to the ozone layer, drugs, fundamentalism, violence, racism, but also the principles of democracy and human rights, need neither a passport nor a visa and affect the entire world. There has been an internationalisation and a globalisation of politics in the broadest sense, due to communication, the instantaneous transmission of information and the blinding exposure of world affairs. No-one can escape this anymore. This process of globalisation has been in motion since the eighteenth century. It is inevitable and those who deny it or attempt to hold it back will be pointlessly wasting precious time for their peoples.

As has already been said, the major problem between the two sides of the Mediterranean is a cultural one. A barrier has been raised between the Judaeo-Christian North and what is called the Arab and Muslim South. The Jewishness of western culture began to be accepted after the Second World War. Do we have to pay the price of a Muslim holocaust before we accept at last that there are links between the three monotheistic religions, if only we really wanted to see them? For the time being everything happens in a fantasy world which fosters mutual rejection. The systematic rejection of all western values which is reflected in fundamentalist ideology is as excessive as the use and abuse by the western media of simplistic clichés and base prejudices to give credence to the idea of an Arab Muslim world which is violent, fanatical and amoral. And of course, in this interplay of action and reaction, each side's antagonism feeds on the other's, in a never ending spiral of suspicion and rejection.

Confusion reigns

The historic conflict between the Christian West and Islam goes back to the crusades, colonisation and decolonisation and is currently being perpetuated by the Arab-Israeli conflict and problems relating to oil and immigration. This history is regarded and used on both sides as an explanation and a justification for today's conflicts. However, one of the most deep-rooted misapprehensions in the minds of westerners is the notion of two different scales of weights and measures. As soon as anything has to do with the Arab and Muslim world, all the parameters change. Whether on issues of international law, human rights or day-to-day social and cultural questions including the status of women, the approach to these countries is based on other criteria, which are founded not on universal ideals but on discrimination.

The same applies to Islam as a religion. What is accepted for other religions in terms of potential for change, multiple interpretations, separation of orders and the status of women is denied to Islam, and these xenophobic ideas about culture's effects on individuals are echoed and tacitly supported by the fundamentalist theories or the theories of cultural and party political pan-Arabism of an inward-looking Maghreb focusing exclusively on the Arab world.

According to Mohamed Arkoun, one of the current main focuses of the conflict between Islam and the West is linked to discussions on democracy and human rights. Human rights are distorted into an ideological argument to discredit age-old enemies. Instead of creating the objective conditions for real progress on human rights and democracy in Muslim countries, westerners condemn Islam as an obscurantist religion, closed to any form of progressive thought.



Examples of some titles found in the French press, published in response to specific events or on a day-to-day basis are: "Should we be afraid of Islam?"; "Teachers' crusade against the Muslim veil"; "Koran the Barbarian"; "The fury of the religious fanatics", and; "Allah's avengers", and they sell extremely well. In a copy of the French weekly "L'Express" we were shown a picture of a lamb being slaughtered in a kitchen - I have no idea why, but it is still alive and a liver is lying next to it. Are we expected to believe that this is the lamb's liver and that it has been ripped out before the slaughter? I don't really understand what this picture is supposed to mean.

The media nurture a knee-jerk hostility and a systematic confusion between extremist ideology and Islam as a religion and a civilisation, which is presented as an "out-and-out" threat to the western values of modernity, secularism, democracy and human rights. Certain experts also write extremely serious books in which they argue that these values are entirely at odds with Islam and can only emerge and develop in areas of Christian civilisation. In former times it was claimed that democracy was protestant and absolutism was catholic and that, until the mid-twentieth century, the Jews were the cause of all evil in the world. However, unless one is completely ignorant of Islam's founding texts, one cannot deny that the notions of justice, solidarity and tolerance (as in modern "human rights") are central to the Koran and to Muslim ethics. So, you will ask me, why does this happen? It is true that it is difficult to understand the feeling of hostility or even outright rejection that this argument provokes in the Arab and Muslim world, unless it is put down to a spontaneous reaction.

It is legitimate to raise this question provided it is not just formulated as an accusation, as if everything in the West were for the best in the best of all possible worlds. It is not for us to take stock of the West's human rights record. However, it is worth reminding people with short memories that, until the end of the Second World War, it was better for Jews to live in a Muslim country than to live in the home of human rights - even if they did suffer some harassment, as certain people are only too happy to point out today - because there were never any pogroms, book-burnings, courts of inquisition, death camps or genocide in Muslim countries. However, it would never occur to anyone to suggest that the horrors perpetrated by the nazis were acts of Christianity. This could never be written or even thought, even though we all humbly recognise that this contradiction is also there in societies where explicit reference to these values co-exists with their most blatant negation and violation. Together, we should recognise that the conflict that exists between human rights and reasons of state, reasons of war or any other pretext, has not been entirely resolved anywhere in the world, in spite of the major advances made in democratic countries which have reached a high degree of development. To paraphrase Saint Thomas, it is easier to be virtuous if one lives in a certain degree of comfort.

The West has transformed its symbolic order and its values through the long and arduous process of self-questioning of the major European societies. By contrast, no Muslim society has produced its history solely through the workings of internal forces. Since the 16th century, as Hishim Jayid wrote: "The history of Islam has no longer progressed under its own impetus, but as a mirror image of the history of the West". The Arab and Muslim world has not had its religious reform, its Luther or its Calvin. It has not had its French Revolution or its industrial revolution and so it has not been able to develop the heretical thought which Mohamed Arkoun talks of, as a means of breaking free from the straitjacket of dogma, re-opening the doors to "ijtihad", rethinking the origins of authority, God, the prince and human-kind itself, and spreading iconoclastic doubt. However, the whole Arab world has been through colonialism. The West and its values broke into our traditional societies and to this day its violation still sullies modernity, which is strongly

suspected as amounting to some form of "collaboration with the enemy", even though it has accelerated modernisation, which is in fact nothing more than the consumption of technologies and ideas which we do not produce.

While we in the Arab and Muslim world missed out on all the revolutions of modern history, I believe that we are also allowing today's communication revolution to pass us by and, though we have all the satellite technologies and dishes and are swamped by images, we are insulted and outraged by the portrayal of ourselves that is sent back to us. We are incapable of reacting calmly and efficiently and making our voices heard. We do not know how to do these things ourselves, and the image masters have never allowed the Arab and Muslim world access to this stage of human fulfilment whereby, through the magic of television, we become human beings whom other people can identify and sympathise with and grow to like. This was the view of my friend, the late Hamid Essid, who was perhaps one of our greatest communicators and he wrote the following: "For our part, we continue to live in two styles, the one deriving from our own approach which we pretend to believe has some effect, and the one deriving from a foreign set of images which we want to believe has no effect on us, but whose threat we avert by some magical process. At a collective level we are not aware of the influence of what is happening in the West, the media revolution, which is even being echoed in China. We are not conscious of the impact of what is happening elsewhere in the world regarding our own future".

You know nothing about me

It is not my intention - as often happens - to blame the West for our own mistakes. I am only asking to speak for my people, my civilisation and my culture. As the first of my rights in any dialogue, I demand to be listened to and seen. Fear derives from ignorance and the big difference between you and me is that I know everything about you, whereas you know practically nothing about me. Like the philosopher Alain addressing his class, I will say: "Here you don't criticise, you understand". And yet, in intellectual, political and media circles, no-one understands, no-one listens, no-one reads; it is so much quicker for them to condemn people out of hand and imagine a fantasy world in which they are the only innocent parties. Above all, dialogue is a state of mind; it is not a debate or a controversy, and I would like once again to quote Hamid Essid, who talked of a meeting in Toledo which was more or less overlooked by the media and which brought together not only Jews, Arabs and Christians from the Maghreb, the Middle-East, and Israel, but also from the immigrant communities of the United States, Canada and Europe, people born in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Algeria, Iraq or Palestine, or their sons, with the aim of, after a half-century of injustice, violence and misunderstanding, coming to terms with one another and with other Arabs. This peaceable get-together was an example of what history expects from us, removing the sacred element from all our commitments, sayings and attitudes and getting away from this dualistic world in which everything is black and white. We need to break down the barriers used to divide ourselves from others and to undermine our resources, learning to live together again and to create an area of shared civilisation for the common good.

I would like to finish by quoting something that Jacques Delors once said on the French television programme *L'heure de vérité*: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself".





Chapter 2

Religion and secularism





Cultural perceptions in the Mediterranean region. How Islam and the West see each other

By Ms. Gema Martín Muñoz, Professor of Sociology of the Arab and Muslim World at the Autonomous University of Madrid



In terms of analysis, the culture issue has taken on enormous importance. It has come to be regarded as a means of apprehending international relations based on understanding (or incomprehension) among countries from different cultural zones.

This is no doubt bound up with the decline of the old concept of an ideological-military threat. The culture issue is now seen from the angle of the dialectic between universal integration and affirmation of differences born of the new international reality in contemporary societies, which are engaged in a process of generalisation while fearing that globalisation will dilute their cultures.

This was the background against which the theory of the "clash of civilisations", recently emerged, presenting a confrontation-oriented interpretation of History. According to this theory, different cultures can only coexist if the other world civilisations manage to "Westernise". However, this ethnocentric theory overlooks the fact that marginalising and discrediting the specific cultural frameworks of non-Western societies can cause enormous disruption, as happened when European colonisation caused a truly tragic culture shock, whose aftermath is still with us.

Even the non-specialist can see that the "Islamic phenomenon" is currently the main factor in confrontation with the "Western phenomenon". The partisan presentation of international events such as the Gulf War, or of regional problems such as the confrontation between Arab regimes and Islamist groups, have probably helped intensify the perception of a threat. However, the public is currently very much aware of the Islam/West dichotomy not only because of events over the last ten years but also because, for centuries, relations between both sides have consistently been analysed in terms of confrontation, which is a misinterpretation of History. This is the primary source of the confrontation theory which is so fashionable today.

The prevalent historical interpretation of relations between these two ensembles has mostly revolved around the ideological principle of antagonism (Byzantium against the Muslim Empire, the Christian Kingdoms against al-Andalus, the Ottomans against Europe, and Arab or Muslim nationalism against the West). Initially, this antagonism grew up on the basis of confrontation between two civilisations, whereas in fact it stemmed from a conflict of interests, in terms of political and economic hegemony, between medieval Christendom and the Arab-Muslim Empire. It was subsequently reinforced by the dialectical interplay between European colonial ethnocentrism, which justified its domination by negating the cultural value of the non-European world (and the culture of resentment thus engendered among the colonised peoples), thus reducing the scope of cultural interpenetration (although this has in fact always existed). The West was presented with a hostile, suspicion-oriented vision of Islam. And, as Mohamed Arkoun has pointed out, while Christianity and Judaism were integrated in the West under the general heading of the "Judaeo-Christian civilisation", Islam was deliberately left out.

Consequently, the erroneous perceptions of Islam haunting Western imaginations are matched by a warped image in the Muslim world of an atheistic and materialistic West dominated by imperialism, and therefore equally demonised.

These two images are mutually supportive and arose from the ideological deadlock which occurred when the wrong instruments were chosen for interpreting History.

Broadly speaking, the media, most observers and some specialists maintain two dominant analyses of Islamic issues. The first is the dogma that Western ideals are the only reference-point, to be contrasted with those of Islam.

This approach takes no interest in Islamic civilisation per se: the only relevance of Islam here is its difference from and incompatibility with the West. Or else, political and social processes in the Muslim world are explained away as expressions of extreme religious fervour. For instance, the Western historical imagination saw the Iranian Revolution solely as the fanatical expression of religious fervour, overlooking all the social, political and economic factors which originated the revolutionary movement.

For the same reasons, the Islamist phenomenon is also reduced to an irrational religious regression, without the least consideration of the causes of its rise and spread among Muslim populations, its real meaning to these communities or of the sociological implications, its inherent desire to break with the traditional order.

By the same token, the tendency is to explain terrorism and war involving Muslims as the consequence of Islam itself (and its so-called "natural inclination" to Jihad), rather than as the result of specific political or socio-economic situations. This analysis is fuelled by a deterministic vision of Islam which is very deeply rooted in Westerners. Anything involving Muslims happens solely "because they are Muslims". In this way, any individual or collective act by the people making up the Islamic world is explicable on the basis of an abstract vision of Islam, rather than with regard to local geography and history, social structures or human experience. All this leads to a view of the Muslim world as a fixed, static universe to which the doors of social change and progress are closed forever.

How the West perceives Islam

Since the late 1980s, with the gradual collapse of the enemy in the East, the focus has shifted to a huge amalgam of media-hyped issues such as the Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf War, the Islamic headscarf issue in France and the violence in Algeria. This is the only picture of Islamic realities given to the general public in the West. The Western historical heritage and education systems predispose the public to see all facts reported from the Islamic world through the all-embracing Islamic filter. This is the reason for the deep-rooted image in Western societies of a fundamentalist Muslim world pursuing an international plot to destroy the Western identity.

It explains, for instance, why the social image of Arab and Turkish immigrants in Europe has undergone a change over the last ten years: that of a foreign temporary worker to that of a devout Muslim transplanted into Europe. This transformation is interpreted solely as the sign of "high-profile Islam" and considered as religious regression and a threat to secularism.



This had rendered us incapable of understanding the real social and cultural reasons for the "re-Islamisation" phenomenon, as it has been called, among immigrants. This phenomenon mainly affects relations between immigrants and the host community, which has difficulty accepting that re-Islamisation does not prevent Muslim immigrants from experiencing their religion in a modern manner.

Another issue often used in the West to transmit a warped idea of Islam is namely that of democracy, which westerners declare incompatible with the specific culture of Islamic countries. On close inspection, the analyses flowing from this hypothesis prove to be dominated by the stubborn idea that the Muslim people are distanced a priori from the positive values characterising the West, i.e. democracy and secularism.

In a 1984 article, S. Huntington¹ wrote, "Islam has not been hospitable to democracy ". This means that where democracy is concerned, Islam has no source of sustenance. In speaking thus, Huntington was merely joining the ranks of those who transfer the sense of "submission" inherent in the Muslim religion to the political sphere, and therefore conclude that Islam fosters despotic authoritarianism and quietism on the part of its devotees. They argue that the totalitarian nature of the Muslim faith (which is in fact shared by all the monotheistic religions, which begs the question why it should apply more particularly to Islam) implies that only a totalitarian State can put its dogmas into practice and that Islam therefore discourages the formation of groups capable of standing up to despotism. This kind of argument leads them to conclude that in Muslim communities, the State is stronger than society.

They contend that socio-political associations are the exception (and where they do exist they are only very loosely organised, without a strong corporate identity) and informal groups the rule, the latter serving primarily as instruments of collaboration with and support for the authorities and the elite, whose political status is created by populist tactics.

At the time when political sociology launched the idea that a strong civil society was indispensable for democratisation, arguments like the foregoing were long used to demonstrate that Islamic countries could not possibly meet this criterion.

When the Iranian Revolution provided the proof, inter alia, that Iran was a weak State with a strong civil society (the Iranian clergy and their relay-persons within the traditional bourgeoisie of the Bazaar constituted a strong community able not only to defy but even to overthrow the authorities). This fact was later gradually confirmed by the expansion of Islamism and its capacity for semi-State organisation, prompting a number of "ad hoc" interpretations to the effect that when faced with an unstable State, a strong society blocked the development of genuine civil society and the advent of democracy. For instance, the studies by Patricia Crone, Daniel Pipes and John Hall argued that the Islamic civilisation was characterised by its flat refusal to legitimise political power.

In his work "In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power" (New York, 1983), Pipes writes that all religions aspire to ideals which human beings cannot attain, but that only Islam incorporates detailed political ideals into its code of conduct. The fact that Islam establishes these unattainable ideals means that sooner or later all Muslims will come to consider any form of government whatsoever as illegitimate.

In his article "The New Orientalism and Democracy Debate" (Middle East Report, July-August 1993), Yahyá Sadowski argued that Muslims seemed to obstinately stay on the sidelines of intellectual trends when ironically the prevalent consensus in sociology was that democracy and development needed strong and dynamic social groups. A major current within orientalism contended that Islam had no such associative life; and when sociologists began to argue the opposite, the new orientalists described Islam as a generator of anarchical solidarities.

In fact, all these explanations, as well as all the theories denying the separation between religion and politics (God and Caesar), stressing the predominance of the principle of justice over that of freedom in the Koran, and claiming that the concept of citizenship is underdeveloped in the history of Islam (these factors suffice alone to explain the alienation between Islam and democracy - one of Bernard Lewis' favourite arguments) constitute deterministic analytical models based on an "essentialist" vision of religion, which are therefore marginal to the historical, human, geographical and social context. What we should obviously be doing, contrary to the above analyses, is scrutinising social realities, in the knowledge that, as the Lebanese sociologist Halim Barakat points out in his "Enquiry into contemporary Arab society"², society is not a complete or finished organism but rather a body in constant evolution, transforming its identity, its conceptions, its culture and its institutions as new circumstances and situations arise. It is not a "star" turning on its own axis within its own firmament in accordance with immutable internal laws, in contradiction with the past and present visions of some orientalists vis-à-vis Arab realities.

Which is not to say that religion is unimportant in Muslim societies, far from it. Once again, the problem lies in the methodology used to analyse these phenomena. Determinism and the use of these facts out of context, to explain the non-existence of democracy, distort the conclusions drawn from these hypotheses. Authoritarianism in the modern Arab nation-state has more to do with incomplete decolonisation processes, outside interference, artificial borders, the delegitimisation of the elite, the predominance of the "protector-State", relations among the social classes, urbanisation and economic underdevelopment than with any alleged "congenital defects" passed on by Islam.

At all events, as the American political scientist Lisa Anderson has pointed out, we are often faced with documentation made up not of carefully checked rational arguments but of prophecies which implicitly, or sometimes explicitly, presume that modes of behaviour that emerged in the desert at the time of the Prophet are immutable and have an overwhelming power - unlike the ideas and values which prevailed in Europe at the same time.³

Moreover, we must remember that modernisation is not synonymous with Westernisation, because modernity can be disseminated across the globe by other civilisations and therefore has a significance which, while characterising the West, also transcends it. Consequently, Westernisation does not cover the whole concept of modernity.

Therefore, while most of the Muslim world is currently undergoing a process of reaffirming Islam, such reaffirmation, far from being strictly religious, is closely linked to the search for its own specific political and cultural language. The reason is that there has been no internal momentum within these societies to convey those cultural values that are regarded as modern. Consequently, they have not been integrated into the local culture and so continue to be perceived as alien.



Modernity is the fruit of a process of imitation/obligation that has left most Muslim peoples on the sidelines of modern achievements. Colossal mistakes were made by colonial administrations in adapting this concept and by a Westernised elite in imitating it and failing in their duty to integrate the community into this process of change. On the one hand, the material benefits of modernisation are perceived as the privilege of a small social stratum, and on the other, these populations consider that they have suffered under the cultural contempt directed against the Islamic heritage as compared with exogenous principles and values, which are often associated with countries that epitomise political domination and economic dependence.

All the foregoing shows the dilemma in today's Muslim world, engaged as it is in both enhancing "indigenous elements" and negating "imported products", as the result of two parallel experiences: the relation with the "Other" (the West) and the relation with self, the need to promote one's own reality.

Decline of secularism in the Islamic world

In connection with the foregoing comments, it is noticeable that since the 1970s, and even more so since the 1980s, the social impact of secular ideas has been losing ground to the Islamists, which shows that Islam now gives these peoples an identity and an "ideological autonomy" that helps them withstand shocks from the outside, thus taking over a role that had been played by secularised Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s.

How are we to explain this decline in secularism in the Arab and Islamic world? First of all, it has gone hand in hand with the attrition of nationalism and Marxism, the partners of secularism since the 1950s. This partnership had arisen out of a whole series of political events such as the 1967 defeat, the Syrian-Iraqi confrontation, the increase in oil prices and the consolidation of conservative regimes in the 1970s, the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and various political and socio-economic setbacks connected with the management of the State.

Secondly, much of this decline can be explained by the fact that secularism was never deeply rooted in popular culture, since the process of cultural modernisation and secularisation initiated in the Muslim countries had never been legitimated by the State or society, being restricted to the intelligentsia, the Army and middle-class people working either in the professions or the civil service.

A fair number of the problems confronting these societies therefore stem from the need for new forms of social contract, since that deriving from the "post-colonial era", as we might call it, is in crisis.

This also explains the fact that social debate no longer centres on modernisation, as it had done for several decades, but on identity, culture and faith. Modernisation had previously been the primary concern, but has now been replaced by the need to clean up the political and socio-economic system prompted by State-induced corruption and marginalisation.

For a number of reasons connected with the legitimacy of institutions and individuals and the arbitrary power of the courts, the phenomena of corruption, the underground economy and the erosion and discredit of law and order have caused a social rift between the classes that have

been integrated into the system and those left on the fringes. This gap is widening as generation succeeds generation, a deep-rooted process which has been affecting the Arab and Muslim world since the 1970s.

The change of generation is very important in sociological terms because the Islamists are seen as representing the socio-economic aspect of the process. This helps us understand why official Islam, for all its public declarations on respect for Islamic law, is failing to dent the Islamists' appeal. The problem is not so much religious expression as a break with the old established order. Making due allowances, we should remember that it was also during a generation change, with a new lower-middle class contesting the power of the landed and commercial aristocracy, that Arab nationalism emerged in 1952.

A third major factor explaining the deadlock in the secular movement in the Islamic world is the polarisation between those in power and the Islamist groups. The result has been the gradual neutralisation of the secular sectors. In some cases, they have been subjugated by the power, thus bringing them into public disrepute, making them less attractive and credible as a political alternative. The authorities in place have managed to attract the secularised elite thanks to their opposition to the Islamist tendency. Since 1992, some regimes have repeatedly used the Algerian example as a deterrent. Consequently, some secular opposition parties, left-wing intellectuals and secular associations have drawn closer to the authorities over the last few years for the sake of the "joint battle" against the Islamist tendency. Such parties as the "Rassemblement Culture et Démocratie" (RCD - Rally for Culture and Democracy) and "Ettehadî" in Algeria, the "Mouvement Démocratique Socialiste" (MDS - Socialist Democratic Movement) in Tunisia and "al-Tagammu" in Egypt are good illustrations of this situation, as are certain feminist movements which have put aside their fight against governments that perpetuate inequality between the sexes to form alliances with them, thus hoping to get across the message that "Islamic fundamentalism" is the only threat to Muslim women.

However shaky such tacit support might be, it still reinforces the deadlock in democratic change and increases the likelihood of a two-tier social conflict, namely among groups inside the system and also between the latter and the marginal factions. In fact, in today's Muslim world, especially the Arab part, the secular movements are concentrating on attacking the Islamist position rather than uniting around a positive project. Fou'ad Zakariyya, one of the foremost representatives of this movement, has acknowledged this fact, pointing out that the sector combines nationalists, progressives, liberals and apolitical intellectuals, each with their own social blueprint; the only unifying factor is the conviction that the type of regime advocated by the Islamist movement will only make matters worse⁴. This means that secularism is becoming predominantly a "rejectionist front" without any overall project or ideological unity.

This is no doubt why some Arab intellectuals, such as Burham Ghalyun and Mohamed Abid-Al-Jabiri⁵, argue that the secularism issue is a spurious problem which must be transcended by concentrating on democracy, given that secularism does not necessarily mean democracy (Ghalyun draws on the Soviet example in support of his thesis), and that, as Al-Jabiri contends, the separation of Church and State implied by secularism is impossible in Islam because that religion has no Church .

Authenticity, cultural values and democracy



The Iranian Revolution, the assassination of Sadat and the emergence of Islamist movements forced both researchers and the media to deal with the "Muslim dimension". As the French political scientist Jean-Claude Vatin so aptly put it in the introduction to his work "Démocratie et démocratisations dans le monde arabe"⁶, in one sense, the decisive religious component of the political machinery restored a specific feature of the Arab world which orthodox political science had tended to withhold in the name of the dual universality of objects and disciplines. Gradually, the idea emerged that, through their origins, histories, cultures, experiences and modes of organisation, Arab countries, States, nations and political communities did, after all, possess the means to implement a kind of autonomous development that can be compared, but not reduced or assimilated, to other cultures, experiences, etc.

In fact, the new reality of "re-Islamisation" has become one of the telling features of the Muslim world, fuelling the theories propounded by the media, the public and the specialists on the antagonism between Islam and the West. This is, in fact, a good example of the way in which collective representations transform into fantasies, creating suspicion and widespread fear of anything to do with Islam. The Western public has been bombarded with simplistic, black-and-white explanations of the current conflicts in the Islamic world, seeking to establish spurious divisions between "democrats" and "Islamists", "secularists" and "Muslims", "modernists" and "fanatics". It must be said that such explanations have been propagated not only by the media but also by a good many intellectuals. Shored up by a mode of argumentation which appears totally consonant with their hegemonic perception of modernity, intellectuals have disregarded such thorny subjects as the human rights situation, the search for alternative formulae for democratisation and the need to deal cautiously with information which is controlled and very strictly selected by some of the ruling regimes. Such regimes use the fear of "fundamentalism" to muster the assistance and support so sorely needed by their weakened and discredited States, and so transmit their version of the news to the West, in order to create a delusive image of a black-and-white situation. The reality is much more complex and diversified.

Furthermore, it must be stressed that the ease with which this argumentation has instilled itself is not unrelated to what we might call the "mirror effect" of Western societies, which tend to give credit to protagonists who extend the specific image of the West into other societies. We know, and therefore heed those circles which draw on our own model because their arguments are easy to understand, whereas the dominant reaction to that which is difficult to understand and would require a much greater effort is rejection. This attitude, which is both defensive and offensive, characterises the collective response of European populations to Islam and is based on a glaring lack of understanding of the problems of the Muslim world. We have not realised the consequences of this attitude, namely a negative vision of the West among Muslim populations. The real problems encountered by the Southern Mediterranean Region are, for instance, the democratic deficit, the frustrated aspirations of the rising generation, the shortcomings in economic development, the social inequalities due to unfair distribution of wealth, the cultural ethnocentrism of the West, etc. Consequently, all these issues have to be dealt with through inter-State dialogue, co-operation and agreements.

In fact, this approach has gained ground over the past few years and has begun to inspire the European Union's Mediterranean policy but the widespread tendency to use these issues in a negative manner and turn them into a threat, whether demographic, Islamist, or indeed nuclear, is still very strong. The result has been a profound dichotomy between the political determination of some European bodies to respond to problems in the Mediterranean through co-operation,

cultural dialogue and consensus and the fact that insufficient store is actually set by cultural dialogue and knowledge and acceptance of the "Other". Westerners therefore tend to observe Islam and Muslim societies in a static manner, as if they were irrational, or even simply inclined to fanaticism and obscurantism. In fact, exchanges between the northern and southern shores primarily concern strictly material and monetary matters, in the hope that this will contain the culture and migrants of the southern Mediterranean and the affirmation of their identity. The two shores of the Mediterranean cannot be reunited until the imaginations of inhabitants on both sides can be restocked with positive images, which will mean investing in the education of future generations and reworking all the relations at work in the whole Mediterranean area.⁷

The importance of civil society

In recent years, the concept of "civil society" has been a compulsory reference point in international speeches, projects and encounters. Alongside official meetings and summits, civil, non-governmental and alternative encounters have increased in importance, so much so that today they attract a great deal of media and public attention, as they express critical viewpoints complementing those expressed by official circles.

The Euro-Mediterranean Inter-Ministerial Conference held in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995 was a clear example of this process. A whole series of non-governmental fora sprang up on the fringes of the conference, alongside the main political event. However, the final document signed at this governmental conference also embraced long passages on civil society and the vital part it has to play in achieving the aims set out for the year 2010. The Barcelona Final Declaration develops three basic lines. Firstly, it defines a common area for peace, stability and security as a vital factor in creating favourable conditions for the economic and social development of the Mediterranean Basin. Secondly it establishes an economic and financial partnership with an eye to securing shared prosperity and a free trade area. Thirdly it also stresses the need to promote exchanges between the various communities by giving priority to training, youth, culture, the media and migrants.

The Barcelona Declaration asserts that civil society's potential contribution is essential for developing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and that it could be a vital factor in improving mutual understanding and bringing the peoples together. It was therefore agreed to "strengthen and/or introduce the necessary instruments of decentralised co-operation to encourage exchanges between those active in development within the framework of national laws: leaders of political and civil society, the cultural and religious world, universities, the research community, the media, organisations, the trade unions and public and private enterprises". Lastly, the signatories undertook to "encourage actions of support for democratic institutions and for the strengthening of the rule of law and civil society".

The first point to note in this Declaration is that rather than giving precedence to the economic sphere, as used to be the case, it sets out a new contract of partnership, constituting a major step forward in qualitative and symbolic terms. In fact the document stresses the need for political reform with a view to increasing democracy so as to ensure regional stability. In the past, the economic analysis of the problems and risks in the region had always been welcomed by specialists in different countries worldwide. The idea that an economic take-off would solve the region's political and social problems was one of the prime theoretical foundations of North-South relations. Yet, economic solutions are certainly not enough to settle the problems of imbalance



between the European and the Arab-Muslim shores of the Mediterranean. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, if the Southern Mediterranean is to effect an economic take-off, the social contract between the State and the citizens must be renewed because the old contract based on the concept of the "protector-State" has now been exhausted. Secondly, if the people are to accept the high social cost of restructuring the economy, the State must be capable of convincing them of its own political credibility and institutional efficiency.

It is vital for these two preconditions to be fulfilled if the system is to reintegrate the mass of socio-economic outcasts who keep the underground economy going because without them the social contract cannot work. Nor would it be appropriate to respond in strictly "economistic" terms to Islamism and the challenges that it creates, contrary to the theory that the Islamists would disappear if the economy developed. This view of the problem disregards the cultural elements and the issues of political legitimacy and participation which are at the heart of current events in the Muslim societies and which are partly catered for by the Islamists.

Although an improved economic position would indeed alleviate the problems, it would not eliminate them completely unless accompanied by a political response to the crisis. This is why it is so important to note that, as opposed to older international texts, where co-operation between the EU and the southern Mediterranean was based on economic relations, recent agreements incorporate the principle of a mandatory link between political and economic liberalisation. Viewed from this angle, although the economic issue is still of cardinal importance, it is not the sole key idea in the Euro-Mediterranean Declaration. This document embraces a global overview relating essentially to the need for a comprehensive review of relations with the Mediterranean, which implies, *inter alia*, giving a new role to actors from civil society and adopting a new vision of this society and its capacity for overcoming the political and cultural obstacles analysed above.

This is why implementation of "decentralised co-operation" and human and social exchanges in the Mediterranean Region is a major cultural and socio-political challenge to all concerned. The challenge is to create, on the cultural front, a positive mutual perception and interdependence between North and South, fuelled by a mutual need for the "Other", transcending any fear or perceived threat. We need to develop diversity and pluralism as the hallmark of civil society and bring young people into the process, in order to ensure its continuation for future generations.

NOTES

¹ «Will more countries become democratic?» *Political Science Quarterly* 99.2. p. 99.

² «Al-Muytama' al-'arabi al-mu'asir. Ba'z istitlali iytima'i». *Markaz dirasat al-Wahda al-'arabiyya*. Beirut, 1984, pp. 29 y ss.

³ «Democracy in the Arab World: A critique of the political culture approach» in «Political liberalization and democratization in the Arab World». London, Boulder, 1995, p. 89.

⁴ «Al-Haqiqa wa-l-Wahm fi-l-Haraka al-islamiyya al-mu'asira». *Dar al-Fikr*, Cairo, 1986. Very good translation in French by Richard Jacquemond, «Laïcité ou Islamisme. Les arabes à l'heure du choix». *La Découverte*. Paris, 1991.

⁵ Burhan Galyun «Naqd al-Siyasa: al-dawla wa-l-din». Beirut, Al-Mu'assasa al-'arabiyya li-l-dirasat wa-l-nachr, 1991 and Muhammed Abid al-Jabiri «Al-Islam laysa kanisa kay nafsilahu 'an al-dawla» in «Hiwar al-Machriq wa-l-Magrib». Cairo, Madbuli, 1990, pp. 45-49.

⁶ Joint publication published by CEDEJ, Cairo 1992, p. 19.

⁷ Analysis of textbooks used in Spanish secondary schools has shown that unless they are urgently revised, they will continue to transmit to young people prejudices and misunderstandings about the Muslim civilisation. Such revision is needed to correct the underlying attitude to the effect that the "Islamic phenomenon" is alien and irretrievably opposed to the "Western phenomenon", of Judaeo-Christian origin. The results of this research, which we conducted in 1994 and 1995, were set out in the work "El Islam y el Mundo Arabe. Guía para profesores y formadores" (Islam and the Arab World: Guide for Teachers and Trainers), Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, Madrid, 1996.



Inter-faith dialogue and the ethics of tolerance

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The need for inter-faith dialogue

The political process initiated in Barcelona by the Euro-Mediterranean States with a view to give their "future relations a novel dimension based on comprehensive, mutually supportive co-operation"¹ needs to be supported and accompanied by systematic intercultural exchanges between the peoples living along the Mediterranean coast. This is a precondition for ensuring that the desire to draw closer and co-operate is matched by a desire for mutual understanding.

However, the reason why inter-faith dialogue must be high on the agenda for such exchanges is not so much political or economic. The aim of such dialogue is to help us take up some of the greatest challenges facing us all today. Many observers have noted that even though our societies are being borne along by the ever-stronger torrent of globalisation, they are also increasingly affirming their attachment to their specificity. It is as though the general trend to dismantle the barriers between our societies, reduce distances and combine interests were universally accompanied by an exacerbation of specific ethnic, religious and national identities. Never in the history of humanity have the phenomena of acculturation, interbreeding and cultural cross-fertilisation been so intense and all-pervading. Yet, these phenomena are increasingly taking the tragic form of threats, clashes and conflicts. At a time of globalisation, many are haunted by the spectre of standardisation. Large sections of the population both in the North and the South are thus tempted by withdrawal, ignorance of "Others" and isolation in what they regard as the basis of their specificity. There can be no doubt that, in this context, intercultural dialogue in general, and inter-faith dialogue in particular could help restore positive communication between the various cultural communities and promote peace and understanding among the peoples.

We all know that religion has more often divided than united the various communities in the Mediterranean Region. The ignorance and suspicion that are still rife today have obviously been fuelled by many centuries of conflict and bloodshed and we have not yet seen the end of such strife. Hans Küng stated the issue very clearly in the opening lines of his "Projekt Weltethos" (Project Global Ethics): ""Kein Überleben ohne Weltethos. Kein Weltfrieden ohne Religionsfrieden. Kein Religionsfrieden ohne Religionsdialog" (There can be no survival without global ethics. There can be no world peace without religious peace. There can be no religious peace without religious dialogue)². At a time when human rights are becoming a universal reference point and the right of every human being to freedom of belief is being ever more forcefully affirmed, the followers of the various religious traditions are being urged to join together to consider their common future. Should they use their religious differences to revive the wars of religion and propagate intolerance, or would it not be better to work towards "rapprochement" in the framework of sincere dialogue, taking them back to the original message of their faiths, namely the universal message of peace, tolerance and hope? How should we broach the issue of religious diversity? This diversity, which ought to be one of the Mediterranean Region's creative assets, unfortunately still results in religiously-tinged wars (Palestine, Bosnia, etc). The fact is that in the past, when the

three major monotheistic traditions attempted to establish dialogue, they often talked at cross-purposes. Each religion simply retained the abstract image they had of the other two, without really trying to get to know them or to gain any detailed understanding of their beliefs, given that the main aim was to despise and deform their ideas and the substance of their Scriptures³. Much injury, disappointment and bitterness resulting from centuries of misunderstandings are still influencing attitudes and repeatedly re-emerge in the form of prejudices and stereotypes.

The problems of initiating inter-faith dialogue

In a region like the Mediterranean, with a history weighed down by so many conflicts and extreme passions, inter-faith dialogue was bound to come up against difficulties. Although these problems are not insoluble, they do need long-term in-depth work. In fact, dialogue between Islam and Judaism has never really got under way because of the problem of Palestine and Jerusalem, which is still a bone of contention rather than a symbol of understanding and communion in peace. Although dialogue between Islam and Christianity began in the 1960s⁴ and has been continuing through various networks of researchers, study groups and voluntary associations, it too has met with a number of stumbling blocks. Owing to historical circumstances peculiar to each of these two religious traditions, the partners in dialogue do not have the same theological training or intellectual attitudes. Christianity has forged ahead because of its specific historical experience, which brought it face-to-face with the challenges of modernity long before Islam. It was able to adapt the beliefs bequeathed by its tradition to the new issues raised by progress in human sciences (textual analysis, the history of ideas, archaeology, semiology, political economics, psychoanalysis, etc). Christians thus entered Muslim-Christian dialogue with more than a century of intellectual preparation behind them, their minds forged with long collective work of biblical exegesis and historical critique of the formation and development of the dogmas of their particular religion. Not only does Christianity have a single recognised higher authority, in the case of Catholicism, but it also has many religious institutions that have included inter-faith dialogue in their programmes⁵.

In the southern Mediterranean, the Arab-Muslim societies have developed against a rather difficult background marked by colonialism, underdevelopment and authoritarianism. Owing to the lack of appropriate, officially recognised institutions to contribute to inter-faith dialogue, Muslims have done much less than their faith and their Scriptures would demand. For example, none of the representative institutions such as the Islamic Conference, the Muslim World League or the Islamic University of Al Azhar (Cairo) has yet taken the initiative of dialoguing with the other Bible-based religions. Moreover, few Muslim theologians know these other religions or their related cultures. Unlike their ancestors, who were often well versed in the Scriptures and internal theological debates in the other monotheistic religions, most contemporary Muslims appear ignorant of specific trends in Jewish or Christian thought. But the fact is that in-depth knowledge of other religions and modern ideologies is vital if we are to engage in dispassionate dialogue, remaining both open to ideas from others and faithful to the essence of our own traditions.

Nevertheless, the sociological conditions which led to the major changes in Christian thought are currently making their presence felt in Arab-Muslim societies. The speed and degree of change obviously varies in accordance with the individual community and social category. The decisive questions raised during the 1920s by Arab writers such as Taha Hussein and Ali Abderraziq are now being re-examined in depth, thanks to the epistemological and methodological contribution of the human and social sciences. Arab intellectuals are attempting to renew religious thinking, using



hermeneutics to tackle the major issues (application of religious law, secularism, democracy, the status of women, etc) which have been wracking the Muslim conscience for almost one hundred years.

Another aspect of the current problems facing inter-faith dialogue, especially Muslim-Christian exchange, lies in the ambiguities of the language used by the partners. The centuries of isolation and mutual ignorance during which both religious traditions grew up, have erected conceptual barriers, laid strata of often erroneous representations and rooted a series of mental habits. The corresponding theological terminology is steeped in semantic and emotional content forged by centuries of cultural accumulation and long religious experience. The terminology is a frequent source of misunderstandings and incomprehension. The new partners in inter-faith dialogue must therefore invent a new "lingua franca" in order to transcend the ambiguities of their respective conceptual heritages.

Conditions for inter-faith dialogue

If we are to centre dialogue on such fundamental issues such as faith and its implications for human life, we must accept that it will be a long-term venture because only patient, protracted exchange can highlight the points of convergence between different traditions. However, tolerance is the absolute precondition for dialogue between human beings, particularly between those with deep and in this case, religious convictions. Only by adopting an ethic based on tolerance can the partners in dialogue be open and co-operative enough to understand each other. To quote Mohamed Talbi, "true dialogue presupposes respect for and acceptance of the other as he is, or better still as he wishes to be or thinks, nay imagines, he is"⁶. In other words, we must comply with the simple ethical rule that every human being possesses part of the truth. Far from advocating any general relativism or scepticism, this principle is in perfect harmony with the requirements of the monotheistic faith, which sees man as a creature made in the image of God. Although the various forms of dogma and the infinite subtleties of theological construction have driven the major monotheistic traditions apart, the unity and harmony of their ethical substance has remained intact. Beneath the doctrinal edifices lie the foundations, namely the "Judaeo-Islamo-Christian humanism" referred to by Roger Arnaldez⁷, which inter-faith dialogue has now to uncover and disseminate.

It would be extremely naïve to see inter-faith dialogue as an easy undertaking or a token gesture. It is a winding road strewn with pitfalls. Fundamental disagreements exist and will continue to exist, between Jews, Christians and Muslims. The aim of dialogue is neither to disguise the disagreements nor, *a fortiori*, to water them down into any kind of forced syncretism. Faith - just like non-faith - responds to a need for inherent meaning in man's ontological dimension⁸. It is too important to be negotiated or compromised on.

Inter-faith dialogue is the type of human interaction which most needs an environment guaranteeing human dignity and freedom of thought and conscience. If this condition is fulfilled, the dialogue can become a genuinely enriching process which leads each side both to the Other and back to ourselves, opening us up to difference while deepening the specific values of each tradition. For example, the modern, pluralist and tolerant Western society emerged from the long, painful and yet salutary conflict between the Christian church and the secular forces. The eruption of modernity into the Muslim world was a violent shock, intensified by the colonial phenomenon and the cultural discrepancies with the West. Muslims today feel that they are running out of time. They have the distinct impression that all the achievements made over the last century -

consolidation of national awareness, liberation from the domination of colonial powers, construction of the Nation State, economic and social development, establishment of the rule of law, etc - are in fact but a series of uncompleted tasks, construction sites on which none of the buildings seem quite finished. Wounded by Western arrogance and triumphalism, Muslims are tending to withdraw into their heritage and hesitate to embark on the road to dialogue. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the only way for Muslims to realise their potential and therefore help broaden the spectrum of freedom inside their tradition is to open up to and dialogue with others.

Inter-faith dialogue also raises the problem of different collective memories, which require thorough rethinking and reworking. If we are to end all the various forms of amnesia and get over the multifarious after-effects of history, both sides must have the courage to acknowledge the mistakes and injustices committed in the name of their respective religions. This will finally give the younger generations access to schoolbooks from which the untruths and misrepresentations fuelled by several centuries of incomprehension and suspicion have been removed. By the same token, a critical and lucid approach could highlight the historical and political dimensions of such phenomena as slavery, the crusades, Holy Wars, colonial conquests, etc, which many believers still consider justified on religious grounds.

However deep and evident our convictions, a modicum of argumentation is required if they are to be properly presented in dialogue. For if faith is the subject of inter-faith dialogue, reason must be its medium. This epistemological condition must be respected if the dialogue is to lead to intellectual and theological renewal. This has happened in the West, where a Christian theology of the other religions has developed over the past few decades. Similarly, the work of many researchers who have distinguished themselves with their active contribution to Muslim-Christian dialogue has greatly enriched the study of Muslim religious thought⁹.

Where Muslim countries are concerned, far-reaching reform of religious education is urgently needed in order not only to enable Muslims to communicate with non-Muslims but also, in the words of Fadl al-Rahman, to renew thought and culture as required by the spirit and the letter of Koranic Revelation¹⁰. The quality of religious education could be improved if the Muslim universities introduced the comparative study of religions and taught non-Muslim theologies. Meanwhile, the Muslim contribution to inter-faith dialogue, as in the case of the *Groupe de recherche islamo-chrétien* (GRIC), will continue to be provided by intellectuals or researchers who do not belong to any religious institution and therefore have no real power to introduce change into religious education curricula or religious policy in general. The lack of any real commitment by the Muslim religious institutions to inter-faith dialogue in a way dooms this process to remain the intellectual privilege of a modernistic Muslim elite which is unable, in the short to medium term, to change the representations and attitudes of most Muslims vis-à-vis their own religion and those of others.

There can be no doubt that the consanguine origin of all the different monotheistic creeds and their excessive proximity in human, geographic and historic terms long constituted a factor for competition and discord among the three major traditions. Human history would now seem to have moved resolutely forward into a new era, promising unprecedented changes on a scale that will make any inclination to religious polemics anachronistic. A sense of responsibility and awareness of the issues at stake should show the major monotheistic religions that it is their duty to draw the means of their reconciliation from the sources where once they derived their dissension. This



is the true meaning of, and proof of the need for, inter-faith dialogue.

NOTES

¹ See the Barcelona Declaration, adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on 27 and 28 November 1995.

² Hans Küng, "Projekt Weltethos", R. Piper GmbH & Co. KG, Munich, 1990.

³ Abdelmajid Charfi has written a thesis on "Al-Fikr al-Islami fi al raddi 'ala al-nasara" (Islamic thought in refuting Christianity), Tunis, M.T.E., 1986. The conclusion of this work was translated and published in the article "Pour une nouvelle approche du Christianisme par la pensée musulmane" (Towards a new approach to Christianity in Islamic thought), in Islamochristiana, No. 13, 1987, pp. 61-77.

⁴ As part of the implementation of the directives of the Vatican II Council (1962-1965), Paul VI set up the Secretariat for Relations with Non-Christians, which has since been conducting dialogue with the other religions.

⁵ This applies to the aforementioned Secretariat for Relations with Non-Christians and the World Council of Churches (Geneva).

⁶ Mohamed Talbi, "Islam and the West: beyond confrontations, ambiguities and complexes", in Islamochristiana, No. 7, Rome, 1981, p. 62.

⁷ See Roger Arnaldez "Trois messages pour un seul Dieu" (Three messages for one God), Paris, publ. Albin Michel, 1983, p. 221.

⁸ Mohamed Talbi writes that non-faith is a response to a question which is also tackled by faith: it is a stance, a commitment, an interpretation of the universe, a conception of being which constitutes the other, the reverse side of faith; "Liberté religieuse et transmission de la foi" (Religious freedom and transmission of the faith), in Islamochristiana, No. 12, Rome, 1986, p. 41.

⁹ These include Maghrebi researchers working within the GRIC (Groupe de recherche islamo-chrétien - Muslim-Christian research group) network, namely Mohamed Talbi, Mohamed Arkoun, Ali Merad, Abdelmajid Charfi and Hmida al-Nayfar.

¹⁰ See Fadl al-Rahman, "Al-Islam wa darurat al-tahdith" (Islam and the need for modernisation), transl. Brahim Aris, London: Dar al-Saqi, 1993.

New religions and secular movements in Europe

By Mr. Driss El Yazami, Deputy Secretary General of the *Ligue française des droits de l'homme* (French National Human Rights Association)



The main thrust of European migration

Peaceful or violent movements, slow dissemination or mass exoduses; the history of the regions, countries and nations of this continent [Europe] has invariably been marked by the mobility of its populations, according to Gildas Simon¹. This writer adds that in the 19th century and up until the beginning of the First World War, Europe was the centre of the largest emigration ever, unparalleled on any other continent. This huge shift of population may have decreased in intensity and changed in nature but it is still by no means finished. There has been mass emigration from Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland to two main destinations: the New World and the colonies, in the case of countries with empires.

Between 1825 and 1920, over 17 million people (the largest movement ever of human beings across the seas) left the United Kingdom and even now, the number of emigrants there is only slightly smaller than the number of immigrants. However, in contrast to the previous migrations, British emigration over the last few decades has mainly comprised white-collar workers and professionals and temporary migration is tending to replace permanent emigration. Ireland is another outstanding example, because no country in the world has ever experienced such a massive population drain (G. Simon, 1995). Furthermore, despite the economic development that began with membership of the European Union, Irish emigration is booming once again, even if, as in the United Kingdom, the areas of departure have changed (urban areas are taking over from rural areas) and the better-educated social strata are now emigrating. In both these countries, but also in neighbouring states, the brain-drain and international movement of the professional elite are perpetuating a different version of the old tradition of European emigration. This tradition also included enormous movements of population during and after both world wars, involving over 20 million individuals.

An old-established tradition of immigration

As we have seen, until 1945 Europe was primarily a land of emigration², apart from three countries which are distinguished by their tradition of immigration, basically dating back to the first half of the 19th century, viz Germany, Switzerland and France. In these countries, the labour needs generated by the industrial revolution could not be met by domestic supply alone. One of the main reasons for this in France was the demographic slump in the 1850s, whereas in Switzerland, the primary reason was that the farmers' attachment to their land and their reluctance to leave the countryside for the industrial cities forced Swiss entrepreneurs to call on foreign workers. In both Switzerland and Germany, immigration partly offset the emigration of nationals to other countries.

The number of foreigners in France was in the region of 400 000 in 1841 when the first census distinguishing nationals and non-nationals was taken. The figure topped one million in 1881. In



Switzerland, the percentage of strangers was similar to that in France in 1850, namely 3% and Germany had over one million aliens in 1907. In this country, and even more so in France, the war economies accelerated migration: France brought in many of its colonials, while Nazi Germany exploited the workforce of persecuted minorities and deportees from the occupied countries.

1945 - 1975: a dual change of direction

From 1950 to 1975, the number of foreigners in Western Europe increased from 5 to 15 million³. This large increase was accompanied by a dual change of direction (Alfred Sauvy) in European migratory trends: firstly between the old continent and overseas destinations and secondly, between North and South.

There were many reasons for this reversal and they have been analysed many times over. There was obviously economic necessity, stemming firstly from reconstruction (repairing communication networks and restoring economic infrastructures as well as towns and cities, etc) and secondly, from the subsequent expansion in the fifties and sixties. Workforce deficits, despite being partly made up by the arrival of "nationals", some of whom had been expatriated for generations⁴, were still so severe that the European countries launched a kind of race to sign labour agreements in order to guarantee an uninterrupted supply of workers for their labour markets⁵.

Demographic imperatives (which had long been established in France but which spread to the rest of Europe over this period) and the sometimes tragic consequences of decolonisation accelerated population movements towards the major cities of north-western Europe. This immigration, which had initially been intended to be temporary and comprised men only, gradually changed in nature, particularly because of increasing family reunion and despite the policies to control and restrict migration flows, which the governments began introducing in 1973.

These movements of population gave rise to a number of new phenomena. Some old-established but small-scale migrations such as those from Algeria and Morocco to France intensified, while other types changed their main destinations. Portugal provides a very telling example of such redirected migration: emigrants had previously headed primarily for the New World and the African colonies, but now they began concentrating on continental Europe, particularly France. One result of the active policy of signing workforce agreements was to anchor the Mediterranean area into these processes, prompting the emergence of such new emigration countries as Turkey.

The European migratory system today

Without prior consultation, around the mid-seventies, the various European governments began introducing increasingly restrictive policies concerning the entry and residence of aliens, family reunion and political asylum, etc. Although these policies did not halt migratory flows completely, they did considerably reduce them, thus stabilising the percentage of aliens in Western Europe: almost 20 million out of a total population of 380 million, with an average of 5 to 6%. However, this stabilisation disguises a number of "internal rearrangements" which had some very definite consequences. Some major changes were made in nationality structures (increased numbers of non-Europeans), family structures (bringing the numbers of women into line with the

numbers of men), in the increasing importance of young people (development of the second generation, with an increasing percentage of children born in the country of employment), and the general level of occupation, with increasing participation by women in employment (G. Simon).

This settlement process, which has thwarted all political attempts to return immigrants en masse to their countries of origin, has been accompanied by other changes, the effects of which are still being felt. The upheavals in Eastern Europe are generating migratory pressure mainly affecting Germany, Greece and Italy⁶. Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece have changed from traditional emigration countries into immigration countries, while traditional migratory "duos" such as Algeria and France or the Commonwealth and the United Kingdom, which are based on colonial links, are tending to split up. A further extraordinary paradox is that the border-closing policies introduced in the mid-seventies and constantly reinforced ever since, are accelerating this phenomenon. In accordance with a kind of law of interconnected vessels, some of the traditional immigration flows (virtually all of which went from the former colonies towards the former colonial power) are being diverted from their old destinations, which have become less easily accessible, towards other shores, which had, until recently, been untouched by such flows. When Maghrebis are turned back at the French border they try their luck in Italy or the United Kingdom, while the settlement of Sri Lankans, who have been turned away from the United Kingdom, is transforming the urban landscape of some parts of Paris. However, even if each European country is individually experiencing a constant expansion of the area of recruitment of "its" immigrants, there are still considerable disparities. For instance, the Federal Republic of Germany and France alone take in almost half the foreigners in Western Europe. But in all the countries, foreign populations are concentrated in specific industrial regions and around the major cities. Lastly, in all European societies, the non-European populations are gaining in demographic importance to the detriment of intra-European immigration.

The European cultural and religious environment

An increasingly deep-rooted religious diversity

The natural result of the history of migrations outlined above is that one of the salient features of today's Europe is the heightened diversity of beliefs (René Rémond, 1992). All the indications are that this diversity is set to intensify in the future, despite the immigration control policies that States are attempting to put in place, if only because the upheavals that sometimes occur in very distant countries have virtually immediate repercussions on the religious environment in Europe. For example, the situation in Algeria and Pakistan is inducing certain Muslim mystical confraternities to transfer some of their centres and communities to countries deemed more tolerant and hospitable. The same applies to some Christian minorities (eg. the Chaldeans in France and the Syriac Church in Sweden) which are increasingly represented in Europe owing to persecution, whether violent or not, in their countries of origin. All the indications are that the increasing disorder in the world will further enrich the religious map.

Since the end of the 1950s, this diversification has been extremely rapid as compared with the normal speed of religious development (R. Rémond). It is perhaps as much the speed as the extent of the phenomenon which is confusing the general public and government officials, who are, after all, accustomed to a stable religious landscape with one dominant religion (Christianity) and a few historic minorities (primarily Judaism). Lastly, we should note that the high social profile of these new European creeds almost invariably derives from social strata of working-class immigrant origin. In terms of their perception by the European public, arrangements for catering



for new religious needs and the ability of these religious communities to influence the major issues and developments, these sociological realities will make their presence felt for a long time to come.

Secularisation and "cultural secularism"

These "new European religions" have emerged in a shifting religious environment (René Rémond has noted several major trends, including an increase in unbelief and religious indifference, dynamism in the oriental religions and an expansion in sects). However, the religious landscape has two basic features: secularisation and peaceful relations between religion and politics.

Secularisation, in the sense of a weakening of the social influence of religion (Jean Baubérot), is a feature of all European societies and takes a variety of forms, particularly in all fields connected with private life and behaviour. The emergence and rise of the new minority creeds are taking place in a context in which privatisation and individualisation of religious sentiment (separation between, on the one hand, the fact of belonging to a denomination and, on the other, compliance with the obligations of and obedience to a religious institution) are increasingly obvious.

This context also embraces an enormous variety of institutional arrangements governing relations in each State between religion and politics, which reflect its specific national history. The work in the area has not yet been completed and legislation was being prepared on relations between the churches and the State during the visit to Sweden. Spain and Portugal, and more recently a number of central and east European countries, have adopted similar legislation. However, if Europe has a wide variety of institutional models for relations between States and churches, it also seems to have a similar type of "cultural secularism". Whether religious or not, almost all Europeans are convinced that, in their own interests, religion and politics should not encroach on each other's spheres: the public sphere for politics and the private sphere for religion. Respect for this separation has facilitated a lasting peace in relations that often used to prompt conflict (Christian Mellon, Project⁷).

Jean-Pierre Willaime gives a more detailed definition of the substance of this common heritage. It has the following characteristics: religious neutrality on the part of the State and the public authorities, recognition of religious freedom (including the freedom of non-religion), recognition of the independence of the individual conscience (men's and women's individual freedom vis-à-vis all religious and philosophical authorities) and critical reflexivity applied to all fields (religion, politics, science, etc).

Even though some conflicts still recur (eg. the debates on divorce in Italy and Ireland, on schools in France, on crucifixes in Bavaria), the established religions have adapted to these arrangements and in fact enjoy certain advantages deriving from the fact that they have existed longer. Their social, political and cultural weight is obviously incommensurate with that of the new minority creeds of immigrant origin.

The religious impact of European integration

Furthermore, the institutional arrangements governing relations between religions and the individual State are undergoing major change, not only because of the evolution of society

(secularisation, individualisation of religious sentiment, increasing religious diversity, etc) but also because of the dynamics of European integration.

According to Jean-Paul Willaime⁸, it is quite obvious that European construction, as implemented both by the European Union and the Council of Europe, does not comprise any programme aimed at homogenising relations between churches and the state in the various countries. Such relations are so closely linked to the specific history, culture and religions of each nation, that any attempt to homogenise them would probably be interpreted as an attempt at standardisation, to the detriment of the individual national community's identity. But the fact remains that such construction disrupts and challenges the various national traditions in this connection, in a number of different ways.

The relevant organisations (Council of Europe and European Union) have issued major declarations based on the international texts on human rights protection, declaration which, when ratified, become an integral part of each member country's national legal system. Moreover, the related institutions (eg. the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament) are gradually building up European case-law, which is having a distinct influence of relations between churches and states. Lastly, the appeal of European construction is inducing all the countries wishing to join in, to conduct reforms and adapt their legislation with a view to ensuring greater respect for freedoms, particularly freedom of conscience and religion as well as respect for minorities.

In a recent article⁹, Hervé Hasquin listed the main relevant reference texts:

1. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 10 December 1948), Article 18 which relates to freedom of conscience and religion;
2. the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Council of Europe, 4 November 1950), Articles 9 and 14;
3. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 16 December 1966), particularly Article 18;
4. the Final Act on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki, 1 August 1975); paragraph 1.a.vii is headed as follows: Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

Development over the past twenty years in Spain, Portugal, Italy and, to a lesser degree, Greece reflect this positive influence. Commenting on the transformations in Spain and Italy, for instance, H. Hasquin writes in the aforementioned article that the Catholic Church is losing its privileged status in both these countries: for the first time Italy (1984) and Spain (1992) have even recognised non-Catholic religious denominations; furthermore, the State no longer intervenes in the internal affairs of the Church, particularly for the purposes of appointments, etc.

European integration is quite obviously neither the only nor even the main factor behind these developments, but the fact that all the countries are involved in the European rationale forces them to reject "religious exclusivism" and imposes an explicit reference to universalism transcending the specificities of beliefs and practices, specific to each religious tradition (J. P. Willaime).



However, the European influence is in some cases more direct. For example, in May 1993, the European Court upheld a complaint by a Jehovah's Witness who had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment in Greece for proselytism. At the same time, the European Parliament called the same country to order regarding the registration of citizens' religion on their identity cards. Moreover, the French *Conseil d'État* made explicit references to the Convention in its judgments and opinions in the Islamic headscarf cases.

The European Court is therefore not only developing in a manner conducive to pluralism but is also the last resort, once all domestic remedies have been exhausted, for all those who consider that their rights in this field have been flouted. Does this mean that equality between the historic religions of Europe and the newly arrived creeds is now guaranteed?

Some recent research¹⁰ and ordinary press coverage of the various controversies has shown that the new European religions are having trouble securing the effective exercise of the rights theoretically available to them under the various institutional arrangements regarding freedom of religion. Nevertheless, the southern shore of the Mediterranean is already in Europe, right at the heart of its cities, whereas Europe is increasingly absent from the other shore. In my view, there are two perfectly parallel but totally opposite trends: on the one hand, societies which are becoming richer and more diversified and on the other, countries in which pluralism is drying up. On the northern side of the Sea, there are countries in which diversity is being established and intensified, albeit with periods of crisis and tension and, in the south, communities which might be described as enfeebled and in which there is less and less room for minorities or in any case, the latter do not see their future there.

Even if the tranquillity of the European countries is thus being disturbed by these new "fellow citizens", pluralism is still making headway, albeit with difficulty. However, the opposite is liable to happen on the other shore of the Mediterranean, and I feel that this is one of the challenges we will be facing after Barcelona. Thanks to the Barcelona Conference, the European Union, with its awareness of the disparities in development and concern about the instability of some countries (political turmoil, demographic pressure, migrations), has demonstrated its determination to play a more intensive and purposeful role in the development of the Mediterranean countries¹¹. This is a turning point, despite all the legitimate questions it is raising¹² because it is the first time the Mediterranean issue has been raised to the level of a fairly well-defined, political challenge, with a goal to be achieved, clear stages and proper resources allocated. Points for discussion and criticism could be pinpointed in virtually all sections of the European proposal, but the fact is that this is potentially a "Euro-Mediterranean grand design". True, it is unclear how to reverse the deep-rooted trends whereby the wealthiest societies become even richer, even if the process is painful, while others, which are facing enormous problems, become poorer and lose more of their leading players as each day passes. The image this inspires and it is by no means pleasant, is that of a slow, inexorable bloodletting. But this vision is not pessimistic: it is a reminder that the encounter with Otherness knows no boundaries.

NOTES

¹ Gildas Simon, "Géodynamique des migrations internationales dans le monde" (Geodynamics of international migration

worldwide), PUF, 1995, Paris, p. 429. Most of the ensuing data derive from this reference work.

² An estimated six million Europeans left for the Americas, South Africa and Australia after the Second World War.

³ Gildas Simon considers that this number should at least be doubled owing to the turnover and the permanent return of many immigrants to their countries of origin.

⁴ 300 to 400 individuals with Dutch nationality arrived in the Netherlands from Indonesia in the 1950s, accompanied by 12 000 Moluccans. Between 1945 and 1961, the Federal Republic of Germany took in 10 million refugees, displaced persons and deportees.

⁵ The Federal Republic of Germany signed agreements with Italy (1955), Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961) and Morocco (1963). France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg and The Netherlands canvassed the same countries, while some enterprises installed their own specific recruitment networks.

⁶ Three successive waves of Albanian refugees in Italy between 1989 and 1992; despite 330 000 expulsions between January and September 1992, there were still 200 000 Albanian refugees in Greece in 1993.

⁷ Project No. 240, winter 1994-1995: "Religion et politique, si loin, si proches" (Religion and politics: so far and yet so near).

⁸ Jean-Paul Willaime, "Églises, laïcité et intégration européenne" (Churches, secularism and European integration), in "Pluralismes religieux et laïcités dans l'Union européenne", (Religious pluralism and secularism in the European Union), Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut d'étude des religions et de laïcité (Institute for the study of religions and secularism), Brussels, 1994, p. 176.

⁹ Hervé Hasquin, "L'État et les Églises dans l'Europe communautaire", (the State and the churches in the European Community), in "Pluralismes religieux et laïcités dans l'Union Européenne" (Religious pluralism and secularism in the European Union), Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut d'étude des religions et de laïcité (Institute for the study of religions and secularism), Brussels, 1994, p. 176.

¹⁰ Eg. the Report by the Group of Consultants on Cultural and Religious Aspects of Equality of Opportunities for Immigrants, Council of Europe, MG-S-REL (95) 3 final. I was a member of this Group, which was chaired by Mr Jorgen Nielsen.

¹¹ A total of 4 700 million ECUs (FF 30 000 million) is to be allocated to prepare for the establishment of the free trade area, a process which will be painful for some economic sectors in the South, eg. textiles.

¹² In line with the market economy rationale (the amounts allocated are mainly aimed at attracting private investment to Southern countries), this co-operation bid is still less intense than the efforts made for the Eastern countries, even though the populations concerned and the needs are much greater. The political strand of the co-operation drive concentrates on immigration issues but deals with them mainly from the angle of controlling migration flows. Despite the proclaimed desire for a liberal system, some sectors are carefully excluded from the free trade area, eg. agricultural products, etc.



The specificity of Portugal in the context of Intercultural Dialogue

By Ms. Eva-Maria von Kemnitz, Doctor of Oriental Philology (Arab and Islamic Studies) and Museum Director



Since time, immemorial Portugal, a land of departures and arrivals due to its geo-strategic situation, has experienced inevitable contacts with many different cultures, this specific context having been responsible for a dialogue felt as a vital necessity.

As far as contacts with Islam are concerned, today's territory of Portugal was part of al-Andalus being referred to as "gharb al-aksa al-Andalus" (extreme Occident of al-Andalus). This means that, for more than five centuries, it integrated an Islamic state whose society lived and was governed according to Islamic principles and where Arabic was the language of culture and administration.

Within the framework of this Islamic state, different ethnic, religious and cultural groups lived together, all of whom enjoyed a clearly defined status ensuring their rights and duties and the freedom of religion for Christian and Jews alike.

The success of this century-long practice that implied mutual understanding and respect was manifest in the peaceful, although not always conflict-free, coexistence that led to prosperity and a flourishing of the arts and sciences.

The events that followed upset this existing balance, originating in a new political configuration of the territory and generating less tolerant attitudes. The most significant processes were the re-conquest on the one hand, and the eruption of the Berber movements which gave rise to new political regimes namely those of the Almoravids, and later of the Almohads, which strengthened the links binding Portugal's territory to North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The re-conquest which contributed to the birth of the Christian Portuguese state had been, in fact, a long and complex process of cultural saturation that moulded social and cultural characteristics of the country still present today but by no means signified a breakdown of the Arab-Islamic element. The Muslim population that remained, known as the Mudejares, benefited from a policy that applied the core of the rules that had once had been valid for the "dhimmi" minorities of the Islamic state. This situation ensured, to a certain degree, a continuity of the dialogue among representatives of different religions/cultures, a condition sine qua non for an effective functioning of a state composed of heterogeneous groups.

Moreover, the Christian Portuguese state incorporated into its structure numerous models of a military, economic and administrative nature copied from Arab-Islamic society. The success of the subsequent overseas expansion that put the Portuguese into contact with other Islamic peoples in Africa and Asia and with representatives of other civilisations was also largely due to the scientific legacy of the Arabs.

In Portugal, the period of relative freedom for minority groups ended in 1521 when the new code (Ordenações Manuelinas) revoked the specific legislation ordering conversion or ban on

those who refused to integrate into the Christian social tissue. The subsequent institution of the Inquisition in 1536 brought about the destruction of all manifestations of non-Christian cultures. However, it did not eradicate a certain spirit of tolerance and cultural understanding of the "Other" or improve an attempt to perceive the "Other" and his different customs and ways of living, another undeniable legacy of the Arabs. This attitude is present in numerous accounts dating from the time of maritime expansion and, more recently, was echoed by Gilberto Freyre in his sociological study "Casa Grande e Senzala". The author points to the Arab roots of Portuguese culture as being responsible, in his opinion, for the effective construction of a multiracial and pluri-cultural society in Brazil.

In spite of all the changes that ensued, the Arab-Islamic civilisation left a lasting imprint on Portuguese culture. The still existing heritage, by which we understand many material assets and non-material manifestations testifying to human achievements, comprises a wide range of phenomena. It includes remnants of material culture, linguistic influences in the field of lexicology (highly elucidative for the scope of the real civilisation influence of Islam) and toponymy, technical skills in agriculture, pottery, fishing, the weaving and tanning industries, culinary art and also traditions still vivid in popular literature and music.

A multi-ethnic society

Portuguese society of today still reflects its multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural composition inherited from a specific historical background. It also includes a group of Muslims as a result of recent political transformations.

The number of Muslims living in Portugal at present is about 30,000, mainly Portuguese citizens who came from overseas territories (Mozambique and Guinea Bissau) after 1974. Although ethnically different from the Muslims that once lived in Portugal, they share the same religious and cultural values. Several cases of conversion to Islam have been registered recently, testifying to the appeal of its spiritual message.

The legal framework grants freedom of religion and enabled the constitution of the Islamic Community.

However, in practice, Muslims and the approach to Islam are confronted with certain attitudes that reflect a secular animosity towards Islam and its culture. It dates back to the time of the crusades, which profoundly marked and distorted the collective image of Muslims giving place to many dangerous and far-reaching misconceptions.

This situation may be described as a lack of regular understanding and subsequent general lack of awareness with regard to the importance of the Islamic civilisation for the development of Portuguese culture; an ignorance concerning shared history and a lack of information concerning the Muslim legacy and its contribution to progress and enrichment of the cultural expression of the country itself as well as that of Europe.

This contradiction between the official acknowledgement of the principles of democracy and the traditional respect and tolerance in Portugal for other cultures and the current practice is striking. In a broad sense, this paradox can be explained by a blatant lack of education directed at enhancing the cultural understanding of Islam. Almost eight centuries of common history are



non-existent in history manuals, museums, etc. and the mass media, instead of presenting current events in an objective manner, exploit the sensational, violent and therefore negative side of the news derived from its real context, by repeating worn out stereotypes. They thus contribute to the dissemination of a biased image of Arabs and of Islam.

Naturally, it is a matter of concern at various levels and many initiatives have been developed aiming at debate and working out the necessary solutions.

Certain stages of progress can be registered such as more intense political and economic exchanges with the Arab world, favouring traditional exchanges with the Maghreb and the Mediterranean. Culture, however, continues to play the traditional role of a poor and neglected relative. Oriental studies and, in particular, Arab-Islamic studies as a regular and properly-structured university course do not exist despite the pioneer role of the Portuguese as a "bridge nation" particularly suited to establishing contacts with the non-European world and the organisation of a first official course in Arabic as early as 1795. A recent revision of school manuals now presents a short but objective account of the history of Islam in Portugal. Few international seminars to debate the dialogue between cultures and religions as well as history, inevitably in an exclusive circle of intellectuals, were organised. Initiatives aimed at the promotion of the Islamic culture such as, a survey of the Islamic heritage in terms of a movable patrimony with the aim of producing a critical catalogue of Islamic museum collections, and the creation of a respective data base or the recent adhesion to the programme "Musées sans frontières" that focuses on the Mediterranean itinerary of Islamic art and heritage, constitute the latest developments and do little to significantly change the existing situation.

All these initiatives, however relevant, remain isolated cases and therefore have a very limited impact, mainly in the form of solitary events without any follow-up.

It seems that a global action calling for everyone's participation and involving a challenge to all without any exception: politicians, decision-makers, artists, educational and cultural agents and ordinary citizens alike appears as the only plausible solution.

This is the type of global education that is needed, aimed at promoting a new concept of culture in order to meet the needs of today's society at a global level without any kind of exclusion.

Intercultural dialogue is considered to be an urgent necessity and a much better and more economic solution to maintaining peaceful coexistence than a military effort. The author of the very controversial political analysis of contemporary sources of conflicts, "The Clash of Civilisations", however pessimistic in his views on how to avoid conflict, openly acknowledges that culture has acquired a new dimension in the field of international relations.

This therefore means that all efforts should be centred on culture and on education through culture in order to encourage dialogue and promote the true knowledge of the "Other" and to enhance cultural understanding by implementing new strategies and innovative policies directed at all segments of society.

A common effort

The process of globalisation revealed that, on both sides of the Mediterranean, similar prob-

lems are being faced, with societies drawing on traditional values when seeking guidance on how to act. The question of national identity and its components has acquired a special significance. It is now being recognised that solutions based on intercultural dialogue are an indispensable condition for security and stability leading to balanced economic development and social welfare.

In the perspective of the necessary process of education, the priority target groups should include educational agents, i.e. teachers from both traditional and non-traditional learning institutions at all levels, representatives of the mass media who should be made aware of their civil responsibility and students at all levels of education.

Participants in this joint effort should also include cultural agents, artists, human rights defenders, representatives of Muslim associations who should have an important say in the matter. The training available should take into consideration the specificity of cultural identity in order to promote mutual respect and cultural understanding based on a sound knowledge of the differences in civilisation.

Opportunities offered by new technologies can easily diversify the language used in this constant educational process especially as far as informal education is concerned appealing, not only to cognitive capacities, but above all to the emotions that form human attitudes and behaviour.

Only then will it be possible to build a solid structure for a new global culture without any distinction as regards its origins and, at the same time, able to preserve the identity of its components.

It is also obvious that this effort, by its very nature, has to be multilateral.

If in Portugal and other Western countries the general perception of Arab-Islamic relations in the past and above all, at present is limited, the same applied to an insufficient understanding of the problems in the West, overshadowed by colonialism and, in some cases, by independent wars.

It is necessary to re-establish mutual confidence-building personal exchanges, in particular exchanges of young people who, by benefiting from opportunities to learn together, work together, practise sports or leisure together, might have a chance to discover the "Other" in a natural, unbiased way. They thus contribute to the construction of a new mentality, free of prejudices and misconceptions and who, as future citizens, conscious of their rights and duties might build a different world less affected by social or cultural exclusion and other negative phenomena.

There is undoubtedly a long way to go but it is certainly not excessive to hope that this Euromed Civil Forum held in Malta will constitute a turning point in this process and will contribute to clarifying the essential questions and define the strategies necessary to reach the common goal of promoting intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean, as a basis for fruitful partnership and co-operation.







Chapter 3

Cultural co-operation in the Mediterranean area





The Euro-Mediterranean cultural project: intentions and realities

By Mr. Paul Balta, writer and journalist



Paradoxically, the cultural dimension of the Barcelona Declaration adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Conference (27 and 28 November 1995) was widely ignored by the media, except in Spain and Portugal during the conference itself. Even academic and specialised journals highlighted the economic and political aspects¹ and did not touch upon the third aspect, that of "partnership in social, cultural and human affairs: developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies."

The first ministerial Euro-Mediterranean Conference after "Barcelona 1" was held in Bologna and attended by Culture Ministers (21-23 April 1996). Its theme was preservation of the cultural heritage. In spite of its symbolic significance and the importance of the resolutions adopted, however, only a limited interest was aroused by it outside Italy, to judge from the press reactions².

It was the colloquies during 1996, particularly numerous in the final three months of the year (marking "one year after Barcelona"), which helped to raise public awareness of the cultural project in the broad sense and led to publications³. Demonstrating both this development and a growing awareness, The Netherlands, which held the Presidency of the European Union for the first half of 1997, took the initiative of organising a conference in The Hague, on 17 and 18 March, on the third part of the Barcelona Declaration, attended by representatives of the 27 signatory states and of civil society. Overall meetings, discussions and articles have enabled an initial critical overview to be taken of the dynamic process started in Barcelona, with shortcomings being identified, the ambiguities of certain concepts being discussed and proposals being made.

On the eve of the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference, in Malta (and not in Tunis)⁴ on 15 and 16 April, it is necessary to reaffirm that unless its cultural dimension were brought amply and resolutely into play the Euro-Mediterranean project would lose the very element which lends it its originality. It might also very well lead only to the difficult birth of a free trade area within a completely unregulated system in the context of globalisation. In order to judge what is at stake, we must take a quick look backwards.

Irrespective of its shortcomings and the criticism to which it has been subjected, the Barcelona Declaration may, for many reasons, be considered to be the document on which the Mediterranean of the 21st century will be based. Not only is it the first agreement with the European Union signed by the Mediterranean non-member countries (MNCs)⁵, but it is also the most ambitious co-operation project with Europe since the countries of the southern and eastern shores became independent. It is not unhelpful to recall the main efforts which went before.

The Euro-Arab dialogue (1974-1990) by definition excluded any country not a member of either the EEC or the Arab League, so the United States did its best to sink it. At the same time, the political and economic aspects led to a dialogue of the deaf. In contrast, the dialogue on the cultural aspects was productive but no action was taken on the recommendations produced at the Hamburg Symposium⁶. In the end, the disagreement among the Arab countries resulting from the Gulf crisis and war (1990-91) was fatal to the whole Euro-Arab dialogue, which

had been crumbling over the years, in spite of France's efforts to breathe new life into it in 1989 and 1990.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) set up under the Helsinki Final Act (1975), had made it clear that "security in Europe... is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole", but, in the light of east-west rivalries and in order to avoid complications, the organisers ultimately failed to include the eight non-participant Mediterranean countries, the Maghreb states among them, although they had followed the activities and most had expressed a wish to be full partners. The plan to hold a Conference for Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), first mentioned by Italy in 1972 and intended to include the bordering states, came up against both French reluctance to include the United States and American reservations about European interference in the Israel-Arab peace process. So, the CSCM was never set up.

The "5+5" consultations (1989-91) were far less ambitious, being confined to the Latin "sisters" (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta) and the Maghreb "brothers" (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya). The aim was nonetheless to help to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace and co-operation. Yet, the cultural dimension, prominent during the preparatory meetings (1988-89), became diluted. The "5+5" process was then put on hold because of the lack of dynamism of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the repercussions of the Gulf War and the tensions with Libya which culminated in the UN embargo on Tripoli in 1992.

The final phase of the EEC's general Mediterranean policy was the new Mediterranean policy pursued from 1990 to 1995. The European Union had begun a rethink in the light of significant regional and international changes, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall (1989), the implosion of the USSR, the end of the cold war, the affirmation of the United States as the only superpower, the Gulf War, the break-up of Yugoslavia, the consolidation of Asia's "dragons" and the globalisation process.

The new Mediterranean policy was adopted by the European Council in December 1990. New lessons had been learnt for it but it was still dominated by the economic "credo". Viewed with hindsight, it looks like a legacy of the past: it continued the traditional economic co-operation policy but the financial protocols for 1992-96 were increased by 40% (not a negligible figure) as compared to the 1986-91 period, totalling ECU 2375 million as against ECU 1618 million⁷. The main innovation of the new policy was in fact the adoption by the Lisbon European Council, in June 1992, of the MED Committee's "Mediterranean programmes": MED-Campus (co-operation between universities and higher education institutions), MED-Media, MED-Urbs (co-operation between local authorities in Europe and in Mediterranean non-member countries) and MED-Invest (co-operation for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises).

The third aspect

Thus, the cultural dimension came into play! A dimension all too often ignored by political leaders, technocrats and industrialists in economic and social development programmes, especially in the Third World, with the outcome we all know. How much time was wasted, after the countries concerned achieved their independence, before it was realised that development did not consist merely of transfers of technologies and even less did it mean the setting up of ready-made factories? People have their cultural heritage and development must fit into this, being



adapted before being adopted. Viewed from this angle, the "MED programmes" are an example of decentralised co-operation. Yet, not until December 1994 was a decisive step taken. At that time, the EU's General Affairs Directorate noted a fact which amounted to a recommendation namely, that the Gulf crisis, the Middle East peace process and the situation in Algeria have served to reveal and to accelerate the need to go beyond the role of main economic partner⁸. This analysis played a significant role in the shaping of the "partnership" concept and in preparations, in conjunction with the MNCs, for the Euro-Mediterranean Conference. Thus "Barcelona 1" represents both the culmination of a process and the beginning of a new dynamism.

One of the main contributions made by the Barcelona Declaration has been the full integration of the cultural dimension into its philosophy, which, as we shall see later, cuts across the three elements of the declaration. These are: 1. Political and security partnership: establishing a common area of peace and stability; 2. Economic and financial partnership: creating an area of shared prosperity; 3. Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs (these are the headings for the three parts).

However, this approach was not obvious at the outset. In the first working document, drawn up by Brussels in March and April 1995 for participating states⁹, culture had been almost totally eclipsed by the European Union's security and economic concerns. In the third part, which had a simpler title referring to partnership in social and human affairs, the paragraph covering culture and the media consisted of only ten or so lines and it came after the paragraphs which dealt with migration, drug trafficking, terrorism and international crime. Religions, important components of many societies, especially around the Mediterranean, were mentioned only incidentally.

Sensitive to the criticism and suggestions made by intellectuals and diplomats on both shores, the European Council had reacted rapidly and effectively. The European Commission had instructed the Catalan Mediterranean Institute to organise the Euromed Civil Forum, in Barcelona (29 November-1 December 1995), while rethinking its own contribution¹⁰. In its work programme, on which the Barcelona Declaration was based, the third part was given a new title, as we have seen, and was reworked and improved.

It should be noted that, for the first time, a declaration binding on the states concerned emphasised the role of "civil society" and the "essential contribution" it can make to "the process of development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership". The concept of civil society contains ambiguities of course and there are differences in perception and practice in the bordering states. Nonetheless, this reference is an important one. At the same time, the paragraphs on civilisation and culture were placed at the beginning of the chapter, one stating that "dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary precondition for bringing the peoples closer".

It should further be noted that, in the first part of the Barcelona Declaration, the text concerning human rights is both more precise and firmer than it was in the first working documents. Signatories undertake to "act in accordance with ... the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ... develop the rule of law and democracy in their political systems, ... (and) respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and guarantee the effective legitimate exercise of such rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association for peaceful purposes and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, both individually and together with other members of the same group, without any discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, language, religion or sex".

The second part emphasises training, science, technology, scientific research and the setting up of scientific networks. Signatories also "recognise the key role of women in development and undertake to promote their active participation in economic and social life and in the creation of employment". Participants in several workshops at the Euromed Civil Forum¹¹ pointed out that, not only was it women who transmitted traditions but it was also they who helped to develop them. They were, in practice, mediators of the future.

Although I shall not enter into a philosophical debate, I must point out that the economy has never been (and should never become) an end in itself. Paraphrasing Hegel, who was referring to the law, I might say that the economy is made for humankind, not humankind for the economy. This is where the cultural dimension is at its most meaningful. We are of course dealing with intentions and declarations of principle but the Barcelona Declaration is, like all the great regional and international charters, a reference text. It is for states but also - and especially - for members of civil society, to take action to make this cultural dimension a reality¹².

A productive "rash" of meetings

Although some workshops prepared for their activities better than others, the Euromed Civil Forum, as a whole, was a major step forward in discussions and project planning¹³. The workshop on cultural dialogue, for example, made a number of general recommendations, the main ones being:

- the setting up, by Brussels, of a MED-Culture project. Each of the MED programmes should reserve a place for culture;
- the setting up, in each member state, of at least one "Maison de la Méditerranée" (Cultural Centre), providing information and a meeting place;
- the establishment of chairs in Mediterranean studies in universities of participating countries, so that the Baltic-Mediterranean axis relates not only to security, politics and economics but also to culture;
- the drafting of a history of the Mediterranean with the assistance of UNESCO and ALECSO, highlighting the issues common to those who live around the Mediterranean, but not neglecting their divisions, either;
- a revision of education systems and school textbooks so as to incorporate the Mediterranean cultural dimension.

The main practical projects among the approximately 50 put forward were:

- the preparation of a Mediterranean conference on human rights and encouraging various forms of dialogue between religions (some colloquies were held in 1996 and others are scheduled for 1997);
- the drawing up of a "White Paper" on stereotypes¹⁴;



- the implementation of a training course on Mediterranean themes for teachers, journalists and people who spread the cultural message¹⁵;
- the promotion of Mediterranean audio-visual programmes¹⁶;
- the fostering of mobility for artists, works and audiences (new networks are being added to existing ones);
- the encouragement of the setting up of networks of artists, architects, writers, etc, while existing ones are consolidated, one example being the Mediterranean Booksellers Network, which originated through co-operation between two private foundations, the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the *Fondation René Seydoux pour le monde méditerranéen* (Paris);
- the encouragement of language teaching (several proposals);
- the promotion of the setting up of a MED-Trad programme which could encompass existing and proposed projects, such as the Toledo School of Translators;
- the harmonisation of states' domestic legislation on intellectual property;
- easier access to books (several specific proposals).

"Barcelona 1"¹⁷ undeniably gave rise to a dynamic process on both sides of the Mediterranean, and even stretching to the shores of the Baltic! At the University of Tampere (Finland), the TAPRI (Institute for Peace Research), in co-operation with the Spanish Centre for International Relations, organised a colloquy (27 November - 1 December 1996) attended by about a hundred representatives of countries of northern Europe (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Russia and others) and of the Mediterranean Basin; the aim was to lay the basis for regular co-operation.

The "rash" of meetings in 1996 did serve some purpose. A settling process took place and gradually one theme came to dominate: what to do in practice, and how? Networks which had stood the test of time were consolidated or extended their field of activity. The Euromed Civil Forum acquired a permanent secretariat and, when a meeting was held to take stock at the Catalan Mediterranean Institute, on 27 November 1996, it was announced that, as recommended at the 1995 Euromed Civil Forum, there would be a standing committee and national committees to be responsible for follow-up. UNIMED (comprising some fifty Mediterranean universities) added a new dimension to its journal, *Rive*, which is published in Italian, French and English, in co-operation with other organisations from North and South. The "*Répertoire Méditerranéen*"¹⁸, the fifth edition of which (1993) described the activities of 511 Mediterranean research centres, is going to extend its (forthcoming) 1997 edition, with the assistance of the European Cultural Foundation, in Amsterdam, to centres in non-bordering states with an interest in the Mediterranean. It should also appear on the Internet. The fourth COPEAM meeting in Marseille (30 January - 2 February 1997), which looked at moving from strategy to action, creating, producing and distributing, has adopted an ambitious programme.

New networks have been created. Among them, by way of examples, the OMIR (a Mediterranean Information Centre and think tank), set up in 1996, which took over the Charter of

the Community of Mediterranean Peoples; the organisation responsible for the Mediterranean Charter, of which the text was signed in Madrid on 11 January 1997; the AMA (Mediterranean Architecture Association), which is to hold its next meeting in Marseille in April 1997; the association known as "Villes et Territoires méditerranéens", which is holding a forum under the same name in a southern port (October 1997) in order to structure the co-operation begun in 1995; the MED-Contact group, comprising experts from the ECF and the Felix Meritis Foundation, in Amsterdam; the FRS, in Paris; the Cairo Youth Center and a department of the University of Tunis which is monitoring developments in cultural co-operation and is to conduct an evaluation in Tunis in early April.

One large cloud hangs overhead. Following the comments made in late 1995 by the European Court of Auditors, mainly relating to MED-Urbs, the various programmes started early in 1995 - MED-Campus, MED-Media, MED-Invest, MED-Urbs and MED-Techno - were suspended until September 1996. According to officials, the suspension provided an opportunity to evaluate previous activity and to set new targets. The suspension has been extended in a way which seems unusual. The European Union representative at the fourth meeting of COPEAM did not really provide any enlightenment, so the General Assembly, in which Hervé Bourges, chairman of CSA and directors of television channels and radio stations were participating, passed a motion, regretting very much the repeated suspension of the programmes. They strongly recommended immediate resumption of the programmes, so that the partnership planned under the Barcelona process would remain meaningful and produce the expected results.

The second Euro-Mediterranean Conference, in Malta, would be a failure if it did not confirm the cultural dimension, which, as we feel we have amply demonstrated and proved, was one of the innovations of the Barcelona Declaration. It should not just call for the MED programmes to be restarted but also recommend the implementation of other initiatives, especially the setting up of a Euro-Mediterranean Youth Office, modelled on the Franco-German Youth Office, which has stood the test of time.

NOTES

¹ Among them, issue No. 153 of "Monde arabe. Maghreb-Mashreq", an excellent read, July-September 1996, Paris.

² It should also be noted that Mr. Douste-Blazy, French Minister for Culture, did not attend the Bologna conference.

³ Among them "Espace public méditerranéen et société civile", Mediterranean review of political studies, No 3, autumn 1996, Aix-en-Provence; Paul Balta, "Les thématiques culturelles de la Conférence euroméditerranéenne", "Annuaire méditerranéen", 1997, GERM, Rabat/Edisud, Paris, 1997 (to be published).

⁴ Tunis and Rabat had both offered to host "Barcelona 2". In the end, Morocco gave way to Tunisia but as the Syrians did not wish to find themselves alongside Israelis in an Arab country, a consensus was reached for the conference to be held in Malta.

⁵ The Mediterranean non-member countries are the states of the southern and eastern Mediterranean (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon), together with Turkey, Cyprus and Malta. The Palestinian Authority was a member of the "Barcelona 1" conference, while Mauritania was an observer.



⁶ "Dialogue euro-arabe. Les rapports entre les deux cultures". Symposium in Hamburg (11-15 April 1983). Edisud. La Calade Aix-en-Provence, 1986.

⁷ "L'Europe et la Méditerranée", "Confluences Méditerranée". No. 7, summer 1993. L'Harmattan. Paris.

⁸ "Éléments d'une politique de voisinage en Méditerranée: précédents, projets déjà en place, actions engagées". CFSP Unit. European Communities, General Affairs Directorate. 15 December 1994, Brussels.

⁹ Extensive extracts from this text were published in "Confluences Méditerranée", No. 15, summer 1995, Paris.

¹⁰ Paul Balta, "Le dialogue culturel", introduction to the forum of the same name. Euromed Civil Forum, Barcelona, 1995.

¹¹ The Euromed Civil Forum was divided into eleven groups, dealing with unrestricted cross-border trade, investment, tourism, technology and co-operation, transport and territories, universities and research, cultural dialogue, areas of media co-operation, the role of women, migration and, lastly, environment and energy.

¹² Paul Balta, "Les enjeux de la Déclaration de Barcelone", in "Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord", 1995, Ed. du CNRS, Paris, to be published in summer 1997.

¹³ "Vers un nouveau scénario de partenariat euroméditerranéen" (Barcelona, 1995). Euromed Civil Forum. Institut Català de la Mediterrania, Barcelona, 1996. These proceedings, a useful reference document, have also been published in English, Arabic, Catalan, Spanish and Italian.

¹⁴ Fawzia Al Ashmawi, "Étude comparative des manuels d'histoire des pays des deux rives de la Méditerranée" (Spain, France, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia), University of Geneva, Geneva, 1994; other studies are in progress.

¹⁵ Intensive seminars for young journalists from border states have been arranged by the CFPJ (Centre de formation et de perfectionnement des journalistes, 32 rue du Louvre, 75002 Paris), and some publications have followed.

¹⁶ The COPEAM (Mediterranean Conference of Television and Audiovisual operators) was set up in modest fashion in Palermo, in 1990, on the initiative of RAI (Italian radio and television) and the "Prix Italia". It was properly structured at the 3rd COPEAM, in Cairo, in 1996, thanks to RAI and the CMCA (Centre méditerranéen de la communication audiovisuelle, Marseille), which produces the magazine entitled "Mediterraneo".

¹⁷ The ministerial conference was preceded by an alternative Mediterranean conference (24-26 November 1995) attended by representatives of over 300 NGOs, by a meeting of delegates of Mediterranean towns and cities and by a CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Information and Documentation) seminar, attended by research centre directors. It was followed by the ECF (Euromed Civil Forum). See Claudine Rulleau, "La société civile euroméditerranéenne réunie à Barcelone", Rive, February 1996, Rome.

¹⁸ Published since 1982 by the *Fondation René Seydoux pour le monde méditerranéen*. In 1997-98, the Foundation, which was set up in 1978, is organising six two to three-week training courses for young Algerians, covering voluntary activity.

Cultural co-operation in the Mediterranean area

By Mr. Ridha Tlili, researcher, consultant on cultural development



Points to bear in mind

For some thirty years the Mediterranean has been a place for new ideas and new political, economic and cultural realities. Yet, the new approach remains a fragile and uncertain one, lacking clearly identifiable prospects. There are many reasons for this: the designs of large and medium-sized non-Mediterranean powers on the strategic area of the Mediterranean, the economic imbalance between the two shores, the conflicting interests of certain states in the region, the emergence of racism, fundamentalism and "ethnic legitimacy". And the Mediterranean region occupies a peculiar geographical position, a meeting point for Europe, Africa and Asia and, at the same time, a place of ethnic, political and cultural contrasts and clashes. In addition to these aspects, there is migratory pressure from south and east towards the north, there is a demographic imbalance and it bodes ill that some people say that the Mediterranean offers a perfect stage for a clash between civilisations because nowhere else in the world have there been so many conflicting identity references, such a large number of contrasting religious roots and such widespread exclusion and intolerance.

Yet, this fragility is based on an intangible fact: the Mediterranean area is of fundamental strategic importance to the European Union and to the southern states, on account of its geographical proximity, for security reasons and because of their economic interdependence. Hence the awareness of the need to lay the foundations for a new relationship between the two shores and to transform this fragility into a dynamic capacity for forward-looking solidarity, shorn of sectarian nostalgia.

But it is not easy to persuade people to drop representations of rejection which are rooted in history, widely supported and inspired by fanatical and revanchist ideologies. These representations must therefore be converted into links, through the opening of cultural gateways to the creative possibilities of universal human rights values, which will gradually see a Mediterranean awareness emerge.

Cultural gateways

It is in this spirit and in spite of the difficulties encountered by the Mediterranean project, that cultural co-operation has been central to this revival. This is why men and women on both shores are convinced that communication among the various Mediterranean cultures is very much part of the quintessence of a Mediterranean awareness, without which there will be no overall political project.

On the basis of this theory, they have managed to attain the sphere of the practical and the feasible, initially through their determination to engage in modest projects in order to recognise others. These others are those who, going beyond their specific identities, acknowledge a Mediterranean intercultural element, rich in tolerance and solidarity.



On the ideological level, these men and women began by backing the colonised peoples' efforts to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. Then they showed that cultural co-operation, despite a past of violence and rejection was still not only possible, but also necessary, vital, to remove the traces of all the years of bloodshed and obscurantism. Later, this ideological trend developed in various pragmatic forms, still conforming to the pertinent observation made by the Lebanese philosopher, René Habachi, who said that the Mediterranean was an inland sea, large enough to have a variety of people living on its shores but not large enough to separate them.

It is against this background that, throughout the Mediterranean area, informal initiatives have been taken, complementing co-operation agreements between the states, so as to make cultural content more appropriate to the changes which Mediterranean societies have been going through since decolonisation. This complementarity underlies the "Mediterranean concept" and the Mediterranean revival. Official and informal networks thus multiplied and, at the Mexico City conference (Mondiacult), UNESCO, after a long, slow process, responded to the challenge laid down in 1982 by the Mediterranean intellectuals and creative artists who met at Hydra. At the 117th session of UNESCO's Executive Board, in November 1983, it accepted the idea of setting up a liaison office for Mediterranean cultures. This was to be made responsible for helping member states to set up national centres for the Mediterranean region, specialising in one aspect or another of Mediterranean cultures. On this basis, the 1984-85 budget and programme made provision for a pilot project on intercultural relations in the Mediterranean area.

Subsequently, several member states have demonstrated their intention to set up specialised Mediterranean centres on national territory. Examples of some of the planned projects in this context are:

- the Centre for Mediterranean Cultures, for the development of creative craft work;
- the Assembly of Universities within the community of Mediterranean universities (Bari);
- the University of the Mediterranean (Valencia);
- the Centre for Andalusian Studies (Beirut);
- the Mediterranean Centre for Architecture and Town Planning (Istanbul).

Other projects were proposed during the same period (1983-85), including:

- a Mediterranean museum;
- a Mediterranean library;
- a Mediterranean urban research institute (Barcelona);
- a Mediterranean audio-visual institute;
- an itinerant two-yearly festival of plastic arts;
- a Mediterranean film festival (Bastia);
- an annual anthology of Mediterranean poetry;
- a Mediterranean history textbook.

In 1983, some intellectuals from both sides of the Mediterranean attended a meeting in Hamburg with officials of the League of Arab States and the EEC, at which they tried to lay down the outlines of a Euro-Arab dialogue. Since the Hamburg symposium, the first of its kind at an institutional level, several academic colloquies and meetings have been organised by associations and there has been a constant succession of conferences on both shores, including meetings at Granada, Toledo, Palermo and Tunis.

Still in the same spirit, there have been other noteworthy initiatives, such as:

- the "blue" plan of action for cultural development in the Mediterranean, which suggests three priorities:

- . the history of the Mediterranean,
- . technology parks,
- . discussions of future aggression.

- the City of Rome "peace boat", organised through the cultural association known as "Parallel 42". A sailing boat made a five-month tour of the Mediterranean, during which a message of peace was conveyed to fifteen coastal towns and cities, raising awareness of the need to come together as soon as possible so as to promote a number of initiatives;

- the Mediterranean cinema "Mostra", devised by the City of Valencia, which also chairs the get-togethers of Mediterranean authors;

- the various heritage conservation schemes of the City of Marseille and of the Marseille Mediterranean Association;

- the activities of Provence Regional Council, especially the setting up of a Mediterranean agency for development co-operation;

- Bastia's film festival of Mediterranean cultures;

- Montpellier Mediterranean Cinema Encounters;

- the Mediterranean communication agency (Marseille);

- the association for Mediterranean studies and civilisations, set up in Malta ten years before the Mexico City conference;

- the *Maison de la Méditerranée* in Aix-en-Provence;

- the initiatives of the Fondation René Seydoux, which also publishes the excellent Mediterranean directory, an essential tool for finding one's way around the Mediterranean institutions;

- the initiatives of the Robert Schuman Institute, including the international conference which looked at the Mediterranean as an area of cultures and civilisations;

- the activities of the International Institute of Mediterranean Theatre (Madrid);

- the activities of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, in Lisbon, particularly its Trans-Mediterranean Programme;

- the European Union's Meda programme;



- the initiatives of the Catalan Institute of Mediterranean Studies and Co-operation, which organised a major meeting in November 1995, the Euromed Civil Forum;
- the initiatives of the Tunis CEDODEC, especially the Mediterranean cultural practice study days;
- the activities of the European Cultural Foundation and of INTERARTS (Amsterdam and Barcelona).

In full swing

All the examples of organisations and initiatives mentioned represent in fact just a very small sample of what has been done over some twenty years. This huge amount of activity shows the scale of the huge intellectual and artistic movement towards Mediterranean cultural co-operation.

Characteristic of this movement have generally been, on the one hand:

- determination,
- spontaneity,
- generosity,
- a willingness to be obliging,

and, on the other hand:

- the ephemeral,
- dispersion,
- generalisation,
- discontinuity,
- the spectacular, prestige.

During the nineties, however, after informal discussions had taken place, such cultural co-operation initiatives have involved greater scientific rigour and a genuine concern for efficiency. Most promoters of cultural efforts have managed to centre their own initiatives on achievable, practical aims, in the light of identifiable targets and real possibilities.

However, the promoters of cultural efforts have realised that new approaches and new methods would have to be devised for cultural co-operation, in the face of a new situation, with increasing numbers of protagonists, the preponderance of the market economy, the poor functioning of culture policies in the light of social, scientific and technological changes, the constant fighting in the Middle East and the Balkans, new migratory pressures, unemployment, the sealing of the European Union's borders to large numbers of intellectuals and artists from the southern states, the granting of visas in often humiliating conditions, media and television indifference and the low level of funds available for cultural projects. It is in this context that the idea of cultural partnership took shape. The question of what kind of partnership remained, however. And how was the appropriate partner to be recognised? And what would be the objective?

The future

So now the word "partnership" has become crucial. The Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November 1995 was centred largely on the term. Every chapter had the word "partnership" in its title:

- Political and security partnership,
- Economic and financial partnership,
- Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs.

This partnership was actually perceived as a means of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean area of free trade and free cultural and social exchanges. In the cultural sphere, the Declaration emphasises that, in view of the importance of improving mutual understanding by promoting cultural exchanges and knowledge of languages, officials and experts will meet to make proposals for practical action covering the following fields, among others:

- the cultural and creative heritage,
- cultural and artistic events,
- co-productions (plays, films, etc),
- translations and other means of cultural dissemination,
- training.

Furthermore, greater understanding between the main religions present in the Euro-Mediterranean region will foster mutual tolerance and co-operation.

This brief paragraph indicates the main thrusts of long-term cultural co-operation. For the first time, every type of player with a role in society is among the partners, encompassing:

- official bodies,
- universities and institutions with similar status,
- associations and non-governmental organisations,
- the unions which represent culture workers,
- religious institutions,
- individuals.

On this basis, two points have to be made:

1. Euro-Med cultural co-operation will centre on two major themes of a general nature:

- culture and development,
- culture and identity.

2. Euro-Med cultural co-operation concerns both official bodies and civil society as a whole and this explains its benefits and originality.

The proposals on cultural co-operation put forward by the participants in the Euro-Med Civil Forum were very much centred on:



- human rights and the dialogue between religions,
- the image of other people in education systems,
- the rapprochement of artists and audiences,
- ongoing training and provision of information,
- knowledge through culture, within the framework of a major MED-TRAD programme modelled on the European Ariane programme.

The representatives of civil society regard training, the provision of information and civility, with a view to increasing awareness of Mediterranean citizenship as urgent priorities.

It is clear that in practice, the Barcelona Declaration and the co-operation proposals produced by the Euro-Med Civil Forum complement each other but the aims are twofold: both to boost progress and co-operation among the peoples of the Mediterranean and to foster Mediterranean citizens' awareness.

These twofold aims are achievable only if all those involved adopt a "code of conduct", which is necessary before a new stage of co-operation can be started. This will mean:

- identifying the priorities,
- co-ordinating and avoiding the dispersal of human and financial resources,
- consolidating what has already been achieved,
- tackling projects which are feasible,
- decentralising activities,
- jointly enhancing activities once they are under way,
- promoting get-togethers for reflection, analysis and evaluation,
- gradually specialising in a particular sector of culture.

Co-operation and solidarity

The code of conduct must also be part of a broader show of ongoing solidarity between the region's peoples, without which efforts at cultural co-operation will not go beyond a classic exchange. The question is which culture to teach at the end of the century. What can be done to overcome identity gaps and perverse lines of thought which bring danger (racism, neo-colonialism, rejection, fanaticism, ethnic nationalism...), which might well rapidly lead to a cultural and ideological gulf eliminating everything which draws the peoples of the Mediterranean closer together?

How might the cultural foundations on which the Euro-Med partnership is based gradually destroy the stereotypes which give rise to hatred and division, while at the same time increasing the influence of convergence factors?

In actual fact, these questions show that cultural co-operation in the service of solidarity among the peoples of the region is a transnational and forward-looking enterprise, requiring the commitment of all concerned, governments, civil societies, regional organisations, private firms, etc. They also show that culture teaches and educates, and extends beyond the memory or the identity of the memory. In other words, cultural identity alone cannot bring culture into a process of peace and solidarity among the peoples of the region. This is why it is necessary to combine cultural identity, which underlies memory, with the culture of identity, which enables us to look

ahead.

The main components of this culture of identity will be:

- teaching about tolerance,
- recognition of others,
- respect for the fundamental rights of men, women, children and peoples,
- a civility ethic.

Thus, in my view, the culture of the future, with these two components (cultural identity and the culture of identity), will be an inexhaustible source of solidarity and peace in the region.



Some thoughts about cultural exchanges, drawn from five years' experience of leadership of a culture circle

By Mr. Hassan Abbas, French Institute for Arabic Studies in Damas, leader of the *Cercle culturel du vendredi*



The thoughts which I should like to put before you are based on a fairly large amount of experience of exchanges of cultural ideas. My main aim, while I was acquiring that experience, was to start a dialogue between people from both sides of the Mediterranean.

In October 1992, a short time after I returned to my country following many years of study and work in France, I floated the idea of a cultural forum at the IFEAD (French Institute for Arabic Studies, in Damascus). The then head of the institute, Prof. Jacques Langhade, found the idea interesting and gave me the go-ahead. After five years, during which 85 evening events have been held, the forum is still operating and is increasingly a "must" for anyone with an interest in cultural life in Damascus, as well as for creative people seeking somewhere to express themselves, which is wholly part of civil society and free of any ties with the state.

For reasons connected with the running of the Institute, we have always held these activities on Friday (*vendredi*) evenings, which is why the name *Cercle culturel du vendredi* was chosen.

The IFEAD

The *Cercle culturel du vendredi* is held in a major research institute, the IFEAD, which was set up in Damascus in 1928, on the initiative of Jean Sauvaget and Louis Massignon. Its official purpose is "to promote and foster the study of every aspect of the civilisation of Syria and the surrounding countries from the Muslim conquest to the present day". It therefore has the permanent participation of around thirty research workers of all nationalities.

It is also the venue for an advanced course in the Arabic language, held every year since 1975. In recent years, this has been attended by between 30 and 50 students of all nationalities.

The cultural activities are attended in almost equal measures by these "tenants" of the Institute and by their Syrian friends and guests, some, but not all, of whom are French speakers. The audience is knowledgeable, interested and of an undeniably high cultural level.

The cultural activities within the *Cercle culturel du vendredi*

To date, 85 evening events have taken place. There have been musical evenings, discussions with writers, thinkers and artists, as well as evenings when films have been shown and followed by discussions with the producers. There has also been another kind of event where those attending may learn skills such as Arabic calligraphy, music, dancing and singing. We even put on a play, in which research students of nine nationalities took part. The Syrian media and audience gave this a tremendous reception.

Cultural exchanges with European countries have come into being thanks to these activities. Musicians, for example, have made contacts enabling them to perform in other countries (France, Sweden, Lebanon, etc.).

Thoughts resulting from these activities

Two sorts of remark stem from the discussions and exchanges to which these activities have given rise:

1. The first relates to cultural life within certain countries, especially those of the southern shore. In those states, where culture evolves in a state-controlled environment and where freedom of expression and of exchange are cruelly lacking, people experience an ineffable fear and their ability to take things in, to make judgements and to demonstrate tolerance, is warped. The culture of others, even if they are from the same country, is often rejected. Thus, the combined energies of all the peoples concerned are required, through a dialogue between cultures helping to reactivate civil societies which are crushed under the weight of central government. People cannot be expected to listen to what is being said on the opposite shore if they cannot hear their neighbours or even their own families.

2. The second remark is, in fact, several comments, more directly about the dialogue between the cultures in the Mediterranean area.

- We have noted that the level and nature of exchanges in the cultural sphere varies according to medium. The northern states, for instance, have an extremely well developed visual culture, unlike the southern countries, which suffer from a shortage of images. It is true that the stunning proliferation of satellite aeriels is slightly helping to narrow the gulf which divides the visual cultures on both shores. This solution, however, is rather pernicious, seeking to save the day through abundance and not through a cure. The only cure can come through helping these people to produce their own images, of themselves and of others. Submerging the people of the southern shore in images of the north certainly opens up the field of view but also engenders more frustration.

- There is also another medium in chronic imbalance, one quite obvious to anyone interested in cultural exchange. This is the book in translation. We have recently noted a tiny increase in the numbers of literary works translated from Arabic into French, Spanish and Italian. This can only be welcomed but there are still few writings of Mediterranean interest in the Arabic language. To my knowledge, only a short book by the great Braudel has come out in Arabic, whereas there is a need for the residents of the Mediterranean area to become aware of its reality. So, there is an urgent need to find a means of, firstly, creating an international Mediterranean library and, secondly, having this translated into the other languages.

- We have observed that, in the cultural exchange field, the musical medium enjoys the most success. Would it be too much to hope for more inter-Mediterranean musical get-togethers and music festivals to be organised?

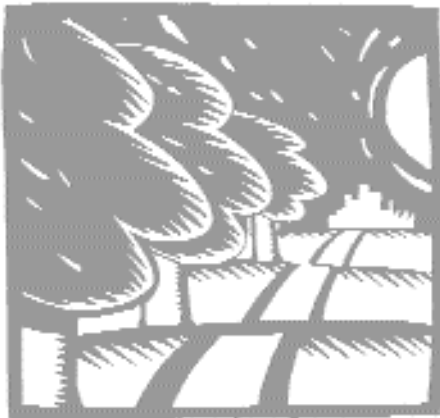






Chapter 4

The outlook: moving towards dialogue and tolerance in the Mediterranean





Prospects for Euro-Mediterranean relations

By Ms. Mona Makram-Ebeid, Professor of Political Science,
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By 2010, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have the potential to double their income, increase life expectancy by close to ten years and cut illiteracy and infant mortality by almost half. They could also become full partners in the global economy, using integration with Europe and within the region as a stepping stone to international competitiveness. Peace, macro-economic stability and attractive investment environment could attract billions of dollars of capital from national and foreign investors, the faster economic growth would reduce poverty and bring down unemployment, restoring hope to millions.

History, since the time of the Crusades, as was mentioned by Professor Stétié in his presentation, has been replete with European intimacy with the Middle East: a closeness that probably will be renewed in the future. It has been rightfully noted that "Europe has and is likely to continue to have a more sustained and durable political, economic, and cultural presence in the region than either the United States or the Soviet Union"¹. However, in dealing with the Middle East, European policies are torn between two visions: globalism and regionalism. The globalists are leaders involved in foreign affairs that are sensitive to their countries' position in the world while regionalists are more sensitive to their countries' bilateral relations. Consequently, globalists tend to approach the Middle East from an international perspective, well illustrated in the 1991 Gulf War, where globalism meant a joint Western effort to punish the aggressor².

Over the past few decades, the level of interaction between Europe and the countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean has significantly increased as a result of the growing interdependence between the two regions. The Southern Mediterranean countries need Europe's assistance to effectively meet the still very serious economic and social challenges confronting their societies and achieve a modicum of prosperity and stability. Europe, for its part, has become increasingly aware that it cannot shield itself from the negative fall-outs of the southern Mediterranean states' failure to successfully deal with their socio-economic and political problems. Europe also has a keen interest in ensuring that no military threat develops on its southern flank.

Because of these factors, the European Union has been paying greater attention to the region during the 1990's. But for the initiative to succeed, the nature of the challenges facing Europe and the Mediterranean must be fully understood. Furthermore, in order to maximise the benefits of co-operation, clear priorities must be set and the areas propitious to joint efforts must be identified.

The main objectives of the partnership are defined under three main headings in the paper submitted to and approved by the European Council at its meeting in June:

- . A political and security aspect
- . An economic and financial aspect
- . A social and human aspect.

I will deal with the third aspect and will attempt to contribute to the ongoing process of reflection and debate on the post Barcelona Conference. The aim is to find the best means of fostering

greater co-operation between the EU and the Mediterranean countries, thus helping them to tackle their common challenges more efficiently.

The Cultural Dimension

Historically, the Eastern Mediterranean region and the Arab Near East have tended to be instruments in the policies of the great powers, rather than ends in themselves. They have neither been full-fledged partners, nor have they been essential colonial targets. They were treated rather as a means for the attainment of specific ends. This instrumentalisation has been a constant for the past two hundred years and has aimed at furthering specific great power, domestic goals and/or broader international ones. Since the Treaty of Rome, the nature of the relationship, although multilateral, has remained constant. This can be seen in the successive incarnations of the EU's so-called "Mediterranean policy", intended to achieve three major goals: stem the migratory flow to the EU, counter US influence in the region and fight political Islam. However, lack of interest in the Northern European countries is wide-ranging while Southern Europeans seem more motivated by fear (illegal migration, Islamist upheavals, negative impact on Maghrebis living in Europe, etc.) than by clear vision.

Ensuing developments in the '90s, following the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War, included a revival of the Mediterranean "vision" in terms of regional economic co-operation. While not hostile or contradictory to the Middle East project, the European Union's Mediterranean initiative is definitely a rival favoured by most Europeans, especially those situated on its Northern shore³. Was it merely coincidental that the Barcelona Conference was convened exactly one month after the Amman Economic Summit? Ironically, the agendas of both conferences reflected conflicting and competing visions on the future of the Southern Mediterranean countries, including the Arab region. Furthermore, it was clear that part of the European side was completely opposed to the participation of the US. Clearly, Europeans view the Mediterranean basin as their sole economic and cultural realm of expansion. On the other hand, most Arab regimes, including Syria, which had refused to participate in both the Casablanca and Amman Summits, chose to disregard Israel's presence at the Barcelona Conference. They believed that encouraging the EU's closer involvement in a Mediterranean game could be beneficial to the Arabs by at least partially offsetting the US's strong bias towards Israel.

There are, however, gross disparities between the two shores of the "mare nostrum" in economic and technological capabilities, financial integration and trade. At present, their demographic weight is equal, i.e. about 200 million each but the gap in per capita revenues is wide (1 to 10 on average) and still widening. The South is also burdened by debt overhang of about 115% (over \$200 billion) of its GNP, with 20% unemployment rate in the mid-1990's, and only 3% annual economic growth. On nearly all socio-economic indicators and particularly the levels of human capital, the Southern Mediterranean countries have a far lower level than their northern counterparts. This unbalance has raised two contradictory arguments vis-à-vis the Mediterranean project. The first contends that because of this stark asymmetry, "partnership" would not work; and if a relationship were collectively institutionalised, it would be one of "hegemony" of the North and "dependency" of the South⁴. The counter-argument contends that precisely because of this unbalance and with geographic propinquity, socio-economic-demographic and security problems for both sides could not reach crisis point unless the two sides work and co-operate closely⁵. Proponents of the latter further argue that if there is hope for improving and fully integrating some 10 million Southern Mediterranean migrants in the Northern



countries in particular and in the European Community in general, it is through intensifying and upgrading this partnership⁶.

With few physical barriers to prevent the transport of goods, people and ideas across frontiers, Europe cannot avoid interdependence, for if economic and political failures occur in Algeria or Tunisia, the ensuing upheaval is likely to bring disaffected populations into Southern Europe.

The basic idea included in the paragraph termed "Partnership in Social and Human Affairs: Promoting Exchanges Between Civil Societies" is that the countries concerned should work to encourage the participation of civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. This will involve joint efforts in education and training, social development, policies designed to reduce migratory pressures, the fight against drug trafficking, terrorism and international crime, judicial co-operation, the fight against racism and xenophobia and a campaign against corruption. Further ideas include joint efforts with regard to culture and media, health policy, the promotion of exchanges and the development of contact among young people in the framework of a decentralised co-operation programme.

Underlined are the importance of dialogue between cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological level, deemed as an essential factor in bringing people closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.

The political, security, economic and financial aspects have met with the approval of the different parties participating at the Barcelona Conference. For example, the agreement on the creation of a free Euro-Mediterranean trade area by 2010 covering most trade and based on the opportunities offered and the obligations resulting from the World Trade Organisation. The social and cultural dimensions were the subject of long debates and discussions as the Arab and European views differ sharply on issues such as human rights, immigration, terrorism, the right to political asylum, civil society, etc...

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the European countries are not inclined to attribute great importance to the cultural dimension with the Arab countries due to its link with religion in the Arab and Islamic countries and its being seen as tied to the emergence of Islamic extremism. In this respect, France and other European countries who seem unable to evolve towards multiculturalism, view Islam in its Islamist form as a threat to the European order and prefer that exchange be limited to the flow of money and goods but have reservations in terms of people. On the other hand, the general political and cultural trends in the Arab/Muslim world are increasingly affecting the MENA region (through mimetism, contagion or on contrary rejection). But the domino effect approach is largely a fallacy.

The cultural aspect therefore presents a number of serious factors. It is enough in this context to mention two:

1. Dialogue between the European and Islamic civilisations as well as the role of religion in Islamic countries.
2. The portrayal of Arabs in the European media and in their school curricula.

Dialogue between the European and Islamic civilisations

With regard to the dialogue between the two civilisations, the Arabo-Islamic and Judeo-Christian Europe, there is a perceived cultural gap which serves to distance Europe from the Arab countries acting as an obstacle to finding common ground on which to approach difficult policy issues. There is mutual suspicion and fear which have, at their foundation, the historic clash that took place between Europe as Christendom and Arab, later Ottoman-Turkish power, which was Islamic⁷. In the millennium of Arab and Ottoman power, their threat to Europe was both physical - in South and Central Europe - as well as intellectual, ideological or rather, Islamic. With Ottoman power on the wane, the potential threatening influence of Islam receded. At the close of the twentieth century, however, there has been a revival of the idea of an Islamic threat although exactly what constitutes this threat is not obvious. Suffice to say that with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, some political elements in Europe consider "Islamism" as the new threat to the Western capitalist world, replacing communism. In other words, while Islam was formerly viewed in the West as one of the ideological bulwarks against atheist communism, in the absence of communism, Islam is seen as expansionist. It is in this context that Samuel Huntington's famous concept of "the clash of civilisations" pitting the Islamic and Chinese civilisations against Western civilisation, has appeared. This is also linked to the exaggerated impact of extremist Islamic movements in some Arab countries such as Algeria and Egypt. On the other hand, the Arabs on the southern shore of the Mediterranean bitterly remember the days of European imperialism and colonialism and later, Western interventionism.

Linked to the issue of dialogue is the issue of religion in the Arab/Islamic societies of the Southern Mediterranean. It is important that the Western countries understand the place of religion in these communities, as it is one of the main components of their national identity. As a religion not divorced from politics, Islam poses a rational political alternative. The consequence is that, in Middle Eastern politics, it is often necessary to frame political appeals in Islamic terms since Islam is a means of legitimising rule. It is not only Islam, however, that affects the politics of the region, although religion provides one of the frameworks for inter-Arab perceptions. Economic dependence, regional rivalries, domestic instability, insecurity have amply affected these perceptions and the failed promise of Western forms as the search for a successful strategy is pursued. On the other hand, some militant groups in both Algeria and Egypt (which are often funded by Iran and the Gulf states including Saudi Arabia) have become real threats to the stability of their respective governments. The likely reasons for their success is due, in great part, to declining economic and social conditions and to political and economic mismanagement and corruption. That is why care must be taken to keep the Islamic revival in perspective and take it in one's stride.

"Islamism" within its own terms is currently fundamentally undemocratic; while Islam as a religion has shown its ability to adapt to any political system. A misunderstanding, then, of Islam, may serve to distance Europe from the Arab region, widening a perceived cultural gap and acting as an obstacle to finding common ground on which to approach difficult policy issues. Furthermore, the process of modernisation and the uneven way that it has been carried out in Southern Mediterranean countries, have all but destroyed the cultural and ideological cohesion and integrity of these societies. Moreover, new ideological and cultural cleavages have developed, such as the modernists versus the traditionalists and the secular versus the Islamists. Each group claims exclusive legitimacy for its vision. However, the political landscape is not totally polarised. There is an emerging but as yet, weak force which aims at the synthesis of the secular/Islamist



and modernist/traditionalist visions in the context of what is described as Islamic Reformism.

Accordingly, it is suggested that one of the areas that should be assigned a high priority in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is to institutionalise a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue between the different religions of the region: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. This will enhance understanding, by the different parties, of the sensitivities of the "Other" and consequently overcome various ethnic, linguistic and sectarian differences, which in turn trigger extremism and blind fanaticism and will, at the same time, contribute to a dialogue between civilisations, instead of a "clash of civilisations".

The image of the Arabs in the West

In a recent study on "the Image of the Arabs and Islam in the Western Media"⁸ Mohammed Abed El Gabry, a prominent Arab thinker, has reached the conclusion that this image has changed over the years but is equated to three main aspects: Arabs-immigration-terrorism. When the Western media deals with Islam, it immediately portrays the Arabs and Iran but ignores the Muslims in Pakistan, Indonesia and Nigeria. Equally, it ties the immigration issue to Islam considering that these immigrants are the causes of unemployment and social problems. Finally, Western discourse about Islam in the media has been strengthened by the European's anxiety - when it was not clear hostility - towards Islamist revival with the result that for Western public opinion, probably stirred by the recurrent spectacular coverage of the "Islamic threat": terrorism and Islamism have become synonymous.

As for the image of the Arabs and Islam portrayed in European school texts, the Arabs are described as nomadic Bedouins, with no specific territory! Consequently, when the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict (which is all about land) is mentioned, no reference is made to a land specific to the Arabs and the Palestinians, nor the state of Palestine before 1948. Moreover, the history of Islamic civilisation is described as a series of continuous internal strife and divisions.

In general, Arabs are always portrayed negatively, often described as cowards, obsequious, dependent, fatalistic; whereas Europeans are characterised as being chivalrous, brave, etc... On the other hand, Arab textbooks contend that Muslims everywhere are targeted for annihilation, exploitation and humiliation by Western Christian powers and the Westerner is portrayed as the Crusader, the infidel, bent on colonising the Arab World and eradicating Islam. It follows therefore that it is unnecessary to have any contact with Western culture, described as an "alien" and corrupt culture which constitutes a threat to Islamic religious beliefs and tradition. In this context, much of the discourse revolves around Western "cultural invasion" of the Islamic world and indeed, the Islamic movement considers that the Mediterranean initiative is nothing but a European Judeo-Christian attempt to eradicate these movements in the Islamic world.

To conclude, there appear to be many misconceptions on both sides, grossly exaggerated on the European side. It is therefore of vital importance that there should be a cultural dialogue between the two sides. It is suggested that there should be a joint committee whose responsibility will lie in reassessing the national image on both sides. This will require great intellectual and cultural integrity.

The Social Dimension

If the goal of creating a partnership in social and human affairs, by promoting exchanges between civil societies, as expressed in the text of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, is to have any real meaning or substance, it is not sufficient to encourage the southern Mediterranean countries to proceed with measures to fight against drug trafficking, terrorism, international crime and illegal migration. The EU must also join in the endeavour by giving the highest priority to the following areas and issues in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership:

1. Help the Southern Mediterranean countries devise and implement mechanisms to combat terrorism, by paying particular attention to the resolutions adopted by the first international conference to combat terrorism which was convened in Manila, the Philippines, in February 1995, with the participation of 19 countries, including Egypt and some European countries. The document emphasised the necessity of extraditing perpetrators of violent acts of terrorism and cross-border subversions through the establishment of bilateral or international agreements.

Terrorist acts are either directed at a European government because of its perceived support to their internal enemy or against their own governments and their domestic rivals. The EU countries should, consequently, be more responsive to the calls of Southern Mediterranean leaders, to take strict measures against terrorists who reside on the soil of the EU member states and should thus refuse to grant them political asylum as this right should not be granted to criminals. On the other hand, forging a greater and more systematic Euro-Mediterranean co-operation in the fight against subversion and terrorism is very important.

2. Mass movements of peoples: refugees and immigrants. European interest in the Southern Mediterranean countries was triggered by security considerations directly related to the influx of Southern labour to the North. Fear of an "export of militancy and extremism" in light of a decline in economic and social development in the South lies at the core of such considerations. Today, the labour force from the Maghreb countries and Turkey constitute almost 10% of the European states' labour force. North African countries alone have 2.5 million immigrant workers in the EU members states. In this context, it is clear that the most important challenge facing Europe and the Mediterranean countries is to control and reduce the rate of population growth (as the latter is organically linked to migratory pressures) and to provide jobs for a youthful and still increasing population. Job creation in the Southern Mediterranean region is important for Europe also from the perspective of its own internal security because it would diminish the immigration pressures from the South.

Taking cultural particularities into account, Northern Mediterranean countries could contribute towards the development of technical and university education as well as vocational training programmes in Southern Mediterranean states. On the other hand, studying the feasibility of introducing common EU quotas for seasonal migrant workers, as well as creating institutional mechanisms to help channel their savings towards job-creating investments should be one of the priority areas for EU action, particularly in view of their inability to integrate Muslims of Middle Eastern origin settled in their midst. It is important to note here that 12 to 15 million Muslims live in Europe but the machinery to integrate these populations has ground to a halt. In France, Great Britain and Germany, several restrictive immigration policies crystallise this problem with the result that these communities are presently not considered as European Muslims.

In addition, Europe is now home to a growing younger generation born in Europe but as mentioned above, still identified by Europeans (and often by themselves) as alien. As these



groups struggle to bridge the gap between two cultures, their integration into European society has become a significant issue in domestic policy. Consequently, setting limits on the absorption of more immigrants, due in part to a rising xenophobia has become a political rallying cry for several right-wing groups throughout the EU. The need to restrict immigration leads directly to another foreign policy question: what kind of policies are needed to keep potential immigrants at home in circumstances that provide them some hope for improvement in the future? Should Europeans be faithful to their own values and traditions in urging more democratic, open regimes, even if they are likely to bring instability or even adversarial Islamic regimes? Or should they be silent in the face of increasingly authoritarian regimes that fail to address underlying issues but which nonetheless assure an enforced stability?

To conclude, the battle for a coherent and sustained EU effort on behalf of its Mediterranean partners is by no means won. The Barcelona Conference has tried to "provide the basis for a process which should develop". But what must be discussed is the formation of a rather stronger institutional framework than currently exists. This framework would ensure co-ordination between different sectors and comprehensive policies between both sides of the Mediterranean. In this context and in the light of the arguments discussed above, it is suggested that four areas be assigned the highest priority:

1. Encourage the development of civil society and non-governmental organisations, including professional associations, self-help, educational, social and other institutions. This development would help solidify a sense of national unity and purpose that would, in turn, help to stem the threat of rising ethnic, religious and social conflicts.

2. Establish a Euro-Mediterranean institute for democracy and entrust it with the implementation of a democracy-building programme similar to what has been undertaken in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This could become the instrument to direct the Northern and Southern countries of the Mediterranean to the establishment of peaceful coexistence in the social and cultural relations on both shores of the Mediterranean.

3. Europe needs a constructive and coherent policy towards the Middle East. It must invest in the Middle East in order to create the conditions conducive to a just and durable peace. The first step is to support the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

4. And last but not least, it is important to realise that women are at the core of a triple dynamic: demography, development and democracy.

NOTES

¹ Laipson, Ellen. «Europe's Role in the Middle East: Enduring Ties, Emerging Opportunities», *Middle East Journal*, 44, No. 1 (Winter 1990): p. 7.

² Salame, Ghassan. «Torn Between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean: Europe and the Middle East in the Post-Cold War Era», *Middle East Journal*, 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994): p. 229.

³ Alboni, Roberto, «Institutionalising Mediterranean Relations: Complementary and Competition», a paper presented at the Second Annual Conference of the Mediterranean Study Commission, Alexandria, March 30-31, 1995.

⁴ Abdel Fadil, Mahmoud, «Egypt, the Arabs and the Mediterranean Option», *International Policy (Arabic Quarterly)* No. 124 (April 1996): pp. 119-124. Also Gamil Mattar, «The Arab-Atlantic Partnership Initiative» in *Al Hayat (Arabic Daily)* (Feb. 16, 1996).

⁵ Sid Ahmed, Mohammed, «Divergence and Integration Around the Mediterranean» *International Policy (Arabic Quarterly)* Vol. 32, No. 124 (April 1996): pp. 88-94.

⁶ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, «Future Visions of the Arab Middle East». (Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies).

⁷ See Hourani, Albert, «Islam in European Thought», (Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Cambridge University, 1989). Also B. A. Robertson, «Islam and Europe: an Enigma or a Myth?», *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994).

⁸ For further discussion of this issue, see Phebe Marr in «The United States, Europe and the Middle East: an Uneasy Triangle», *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 2, (Spring 1994): p. 213.



The need for a Euro-Mediterranean journalism programme

By Mr. Jan Bierhoff, Executive Director of the European Journalism Centre



In order to be able to properly address the growing strategic importance of the Mediterranean and also because of the many requests for training support from the Mediterranean media, the European Journalism Centre, a further training outlet based in the Dutch city of Maastricht, intends to explore the possibilities for a tailored seminar and support programme for the entire region. The first step in this direction was taken when the Centre organised a special workshop for Middle Eastern and North African journalists, in preparation for the Barcelona Summit and then actually brought together this group of editors and journalists at the event, ensuring that they were given special attention during the meetings.

There are several reasons for the creation of such an action programme. These are, first of all, political: the necessity to provide good information on developing co-operation in a rapidly changing area and the significant role of journalists as seismographs of future political action. But there are also sociological reasons (better understanding and reciprocal recognition of each other's cultures and journalistic working methods) and the professional motive of improving contacts between media practitioners from both sides.

The strategic goals of a Mediterranean action programme for journalists are:

- to develop an ongoing dialogue between media leaders and professionals from the region;
- to bring relevant training actions closer to the region, geographically but also as regards language and culture;
- to proliferate the concept of further training for journalists (in co-operation with relevant media training structures in the region).

These goals entail the introduction of work conferences and further training programmes with a specific appeal to Mediterranean journalists and editors, the initiating and facilitating of co-operation between the existing regional mid-career institutions and the transfer of already established EJC training programmes in an appropriate form for the region concerned.

Information

There is, first of all, a need for factual information about each other's media systems and practices. Both the European and the Mediterranean media hardly ever leave their own sphere of interest. The programme could build a bridge-point between the East and the West of the region and between European journalists and their colleagues in northern Africa, the Middle East and also, to a certain extent, the Balkans. More accurate knowledge of each other's societies and culture, professional traditions and media styles would further mutual understanding and broaden the perspectives of the journalists involved.

Perceptions

All nations harbour images about themselves as well as of societies and cultures other than their own. The more complex these images are and the less they lend themselves to easy explanations, the more the public demands an anchoring point. Media are forming and transmitting many of these images and in this process, they tend to simplify the complex, thus reducing the knowledge of foreign societies to mere stereotypes. However, sometimes harmless, even entertaining stereotypes can also be extremely harmful to international understanding and co-operation. By bringing up coincidental experiences and deliberately neglecting facts and context, stereotypical reporting feeds prejudice, discrimination and mental immobility. The realisation of these effects is, for journalists, a pre-requisite for better coverage from and about the Mediterranean reality.

Training

Mutual understanding develops best in a professional context, through the exchange of ideas about existing media routines and via concrete training programmes to enhance the present performance levels. Journalists and editors learn from one another while discussing the tricks of the trade. By working together, they discover the lacunas in their images of the other and start building networks for lasting contacts. The experience of the EJC shows that professional co-operation within Europe naturally unfolds via roundtables on new media trends, via training in the use of modern communication technologies, the analysis of ethical standards and the joint preparation of cross-border reports and other further training elements.

Activities

The programme should be limited in scope and time (a pilot phase of 2.5 years), allowing concrete activities to begin shortly, while exploring the options for continuation. The programme should have a mix of meeting and also provide other forms of support. A provisional scheme of activities, to be discussed with the various beneficiaries, local training initiatives and other interested parties, would show the following:

Information

- inventory of the Mediterranean media landscape: facts, trends, contacts. The EJC has already developed a similar overview of west European media;
- programme newsletter to inform interested parties and potential participants and provide updates on media positions and journalistic performance in the Mediterranean basin;
- opening of an Internet website dedicated to interactive communication and information purposes.

Meeting

- two round-tables for media executives from Europe and the Mediterranean to discuss images of each others' societies and the role of journalists;



- two study-trips to each others' media in order to strengthen relations and gain on-site experience of different working routines.

Training

- availability of the EJC expertise and network (training contacts in all European countries) in order to support questions from Mediterranean initial and further training outlets as well as provide management support for these centres;
- two courses on professional standards for journalists and how to relate these to daily media practice;
- two workshops on the use of the Internet and other new media for foreign reporters;
- two courses on journalistic techniques for covering elections.

Organisation

The EJC would assume responsibility for overall project management and assessment of the seminar/course programme. Activities, with the exception of one study tour, would take place in the Mediterranean region.

For all these activities, different course venues could be explored but certain minimum conditions should be fulfilled. These are:

- appropriate accommodation with meeting/training facilities for seminars and workshops;
- a modern communication and administrative structure;
- adequate hotel facilities;
- good access for participants by air/road from major European/North African destinations.

About the EJC

The European Journalism Centre was founded in 1992 with the mandate to further the European dimension in the media; to enhance the quality of journalistic coverage European current affairs; to analyse and describe the developing European media landscape and to provide strategic support for the European media industry.

In order to meet this mandate, the European Journalism Centre has been serving as a central meeting place for editors, journalists and journalism trainers; as an active mid-career training provider, offering enhancement courses with European and international perspectives; as an information point on international media developments and as a support centre for various joint activities in the fields of media training, media research and media development.

In the three years since its official establishment, the Centre's activities have grown rapidly. In 1996, more than 1100 European editors, journalists and students of journalism took part in the

Centre's activities. In addition, a number of information, co-ordination and study activities were undertaken.

The European Journalism Centre has succeeded in building up a range of concrete activities and effective networks, based on cross-border co-operation and European integration. As such, the Centre is acting as a catalyst in European media circles, advocating open-mindedness concerning European integration and accurate reporting of European issues.

The EJC has become an active further training facility for journalists and post-graduate journalism students. In addition, the Centre now acts as a project partner for the European Institutions, other international bodies and national governments to execute media projects. The Centre also supports the development of democratic media in the CEE/CIS and other regions, in co-operation with local media institutions and EU delegations.

The EJC has achieved its goal of becoming a focal point for European journalism education (professional schools, universities, further training centres), to strengthen and deepen the European orientation of the next media generation. The EJC provides the permanent secretariat of the European Journalism Training Association and co-operates with it in mounting joint projects.

As a natural development of the above-mentioned activities, the EJC has been increasingly involved in professional media training and consultancies on a global level. Through UNESCO, the Centre has been preparing the setting-up of a global network of journalism training institutions in order to increase co-operation and distribute information between centres and institutions in both the industrialised and the developing countries.



Young people and youth organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

By Ms. Marisa Atienza, European Youth Forum



In Southern Mediterranean States, 65% of the population is under 25 years old and living in economic, social and cultural conditions which are progressively worsening. In contrast, young people in EU countries are not confronted with such extreme problems. They are, nevertheless, faced with problems posed by unemployment, exclusion, intolerance and racism.

The work of Youth Organisations

Co-operation between youth organisations in Europe and the Mediterranean has, for quite some time, been taking place on a bilateral level. Relations took a different turn in April 1994 when a Euro-Arab Youth and Students Dialogue for Mutual Understanding and Co-operation was initiated at an international conference held in Malta.

That first meeting prompted a range of activities that took place on different levels. "The Euro-Arab Young Women's Seminar" and the "Euro-Arab Training Seminar" were both created from the 1994 conference. The Council of Europe and the European Commission support international dialogue among youth organisations. The Youth for Europe Programme - Action D of the European Commission - supports a range of intercultural learning activities and exchanges between youth organisations in European Union and Mediterranean countries. Youth organisations are able to use these programmes as the basis for work on an Euro-Mediterranean level.

The Barcelona Process

The Barcelona Declaration underlines the importance of intercultural dialogue and understanding for young people by stressing "the essential nature of the development of human resources, as regards the education and training of young people, particularly in the area of culture".

During the first year of the Barcelona process, the field of youth were completely ignored. The potential offered by the Barcelona Declaration has remained unexploited. Lack of information, lack of expertise and lack of political will are some of the reasons why young people and their organisations did not immediately benefit from this "Partnership".

This state of affairs must be contrasted with long term reality: there can be no effective Euro-Mediterranean Partnership without the involvement of young people of the region.

Recommendations

To achieve a truly effective and participatory programme aimed at young people in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, young people clearly need to be recognised as agents of development and change and need to be empowered to become active actors in society. They are the present, not only the future.

In order to achieve this, we make the following recommendations:

- A general Euromed programme for young people should be created. The programme would involve young people in decentralised co-operation. It would include support for community centres and vocational training, as well as the development and strengthening of associations, groups and federations of young people on local, national and regional levels. (This idea was proposed at the "Conference on Governance in the Euro-Mediterranean Region", which took place in March 1997 in The Hague, The Netherlands).

- A Youth Exchange Programme should be set up to promote and facilitate intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among young people in states bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

- The European Voluntary Service Programme should be enlarged to include the Southern Mediterranean region. The programme should be reciprocal, allowing young Europeans to go to Mediterranean countries and vice-versa.

- To generate awareness of this process among young people, appropriate mechanisms for disseminating information should be set up.

- Global Education Programmes should be developed in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The programmes would include actions aimed at promoting intercultural understanding as well as actions aimed at raising awareness about issues of common concern, such as human rights or environmental issues.

- A Media Programme should be established especially for young people. The programme would focus on material produced by and for young people.

- An Euro-Mediterranean initiative should be created to fight racism and xenophobia and to promote tolerance.

- Youth policies should be developed in co-operation with young people. They should promote and allow youth participation in decision-making processes.

- A meeting of Ministers responsible for youth affairs should be held to develop a common policy on an Euro-Mediterranean level and to facilitate the co-ordination of national policies.

- An Euro-Mediterranean Youth Council should be established. It should consist of young people under the age of 30 from all signatory countries and should be composed of representative numbers of males and females. The mandate of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Council would focus on monitoring the implementation of the Malta Declaration inasmuch as youth is concerned and would disseminate information on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to youth organisations all over the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The European Youth Forum believes that, if the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is to carry on into the 21st century, it must invest in young people from Euro-Mediterranean countries.





Tolerance, equality among human beings

By Mr. Pierre Saurat, Chairman of *Routes méditerranéennes de l'histoire et de la culture*

As Chairman of *Routes méditerranéennes de l'histoire et de la culture*, I organise routes and itineraries which enable people to make a number of discoveries, cultural, architectural, humanitarian, and so on. The history of European culture begins in the East, and with it, humankind's adventure. By humankind, I mean people who regard themselves not just as part of a species or members of a group but also as God's creatures, made in his image and resembling him, essentially free and capable of accepting responsibility for their fellow human beings. Whether imagined or revealed, the single God of Jews, Christians and Muslims is a god who liberates those who believe in him. He frees the slaves of the totalitarian community, frees human beings from the repetition of natural cycles and gives meaning to what will become history. This gift of freedom is made in dialogue.

God speaks to a person who replies, evades or betrays. For that free person, God's word is remote, the word of the Synagogue, the Gospel, the Koran. Basic human freedom is governed by that justice which entitles the next person to freedom and guarantees him or her existence and respect, political power existing only so that this justice is done. Thus, people are free to think and to act. All are equal in the eyes of the creator, able to love their neighbours. In contrast with the adventures of Homer, human beings are no longer toys of the gods and they regard slaves as their brothers and sisters. But human freedom, in spite of divine law, may give rise to violent and murderous impulses or it would not be freedom. There can be no humanity without anguish and tragedy.

Much later, the people of the Christian West decided to emancipate fully themselves both from the Creator and from his lieutenants, feeling that God's gaze or at least the gaze of the institutions which were supposed to speak for him, weighed too heavily on them. Laying down their own rights, human beings became citizens, like the Greeks and Romans before them but to an even greater extent. The revolution of freedom and equality was still in the name of the law but that of a human law dictated by reason, always part of history, which it fulfils as progress continues. Soon, however, human and citizens' rights seemed illusory. People were free but some were freer than others and citizenship adapted all too well to proletarian masses excluded from the community. The new revolutionary trend contrasts political and religious illusions and the various forms of alienation and exploitation with the hope of entirely human people, universal, reconciled with themselves and capable of meeting their own needs in egalitarian fashion: the human accomplishment marking the end of the story.

It is through education and exchanges that citizenship will be able to gain acceptance in the human mind and especially through the will of young people once their elders have managed to define the outlines of citizenship. Over the long history of humankind, the holders of dominant power have variously paved the way for and sometimes more or less jointly created, the fragility of empires. Many times the world was bloodied and then totalitarian ideologies completed the blood bath. Yet the conscience ultimately gained the upper hand. Not enough, however, to slay the monster of indifference. Fortunately, the education society is on the brink of a further leap forward and it must make sure that we are finally convinced that civilisation cannot exist without values.



Schools are clearly the best places for this new identity to be built up and young people must be aware of the prominent role they must play in social and cultural integration. So humanitarian values must be taken into account by schools and youth movements during children's formative years. In the circumstances, how can the humanitarian challenge be taken up other than by constantly recalling that diversity, far from threatening each person's identity, is actually the foundation on which it rests and draws?

Modern people are under an obligation to share and are subject to many influences. Interculturality, so common in developed societies, shows that, while foreigners who integrate certainly enrich their lives with an increased range of values, entering a broader citizenship, they thereby ultimately open up real citizenship wherever the rigid ideas of another age still prevail, wherever the walls of received ideas jealously preserved still stand.

Everyone should understand citizenship as a basis for democracy. Young people everywhere must be a prime subject of concern, each one able to flourish with his or her own identity untouched, with access to independence and to an awareness of personal responsibility. Thus, potential intelligence can crystallise, structured thought be given expression and the young person emerge into human specificity and be prepared to learn how to play a future role in society.

On these bases, it is necessary to prepare new responses, relying, for instance, on an analysis of key human rights documents such as Magna Carta, the American Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of 1789, the United Nations Declaration and the European Convention. Further examples of human rights activity are Voltaire's on religious intolerance, Lincoln's on slavery, Ghandi's on non-violence and Nelson Mandela's against apartheid and there are many others. Literature and the cinema provide us with food for thought on numerous subjects, as do historic towns and monuments, all of which offer memories and messages of peace, love and, therefore, tolerance which leave a permanent mark.

And this is where my proposal comes in. I would like to organise with you a tolerance route. In the Mediterranean basin, as elsewhere, there are in fact many places where such a route could be organised, with the help of young people, taking in historic spots, places associated with culture and other sites, if we bear in mind the main principles I have just mentioned. The other intended proposal I am working on is a route of faith. As I envisage it, this route will retrace the history of the three monotheistic religions born in the Mediterranean area. It will highlight the inter-relationships between the three and also spotlight other religions and cultures which have come to us from other parts of the world. It will tell the story of the three major monotheistic religions, starting in Jerusalem, the city which symbolises the alliance between God and the Jewish people, the holy city where Jesus Christ was crucified for Christians and the holy city where Mohamed was transported beyond the seven heavens.

The route of faith will start in Jerusalem and follow various itineraries before returning to the city which will thus, for ever, let us hope, become the city of human heritage. The route of faith will highlight the importance of the three main monotheistic religions, which are now followed by practically half of the world's population, having influenced every one of the planet's peoples and civilisations and which still help to forge their cultural identity. It will emphasise the fact that the three religions signify three cultures. These religions have sometimes sought to understand each other but have more often fought one another. The aim is, therefore, to

find out what either caused their separation or made possible the cohesion between Christians, Jews and Muslims. Jerusalem must make a contribution to their reconciliation, so that peace can finally be established in our world.



A culture of peace

By Mr. Riad Malki, Director of Panorama, Centre for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development, Ramallah

I would like to share with you some of my experiences and thoughts on two topics. One, which was raised at the beginning and the second, which I would like to introduce. The first topic deals with dialogue and regardless of whether it is religious, cultural or political dialogue, I want to emphasise the Israeli-Palestinian situation as reflecting the whole Mediterranean on-going conflict between two entities or two peoples or two cultures.

We have been involved in dialogue at all levels, at least at a cultural, youth, religious and political level but our involvement was very limited in terms of the individuals involved. We were a very small group of people who thought that we had the courage and maybe the vision to be pioneers in terms of promoting dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. What happened is that we failed as pioneers. We never developed ourselves into the mainstream in terms of dialoguing and the result was, therefore, very limited. Every time there was a crisis at a political level, it extremely affected the pace of the dialogue taking place outside political circles. That is why it is very important to emphasise here that cultural as well as other types of dialogue are an introduction to political dialogue.

Dialogue is not only political. We also believe that for dialogue to continue it requires minimum confidence. If this confidence does not really exist, then the whole exercise might be useless and fruitless. At the same time, if we limit our experience to this pioneering group without expanding it to include everybody - and I mean everybody from grassroots to the common person in the street, to cover all social layers and to cover all topics - then the whole exercise of dialogue is pointless. It would be as if it were carried out in secrecy, outside the regio, as if we are doing something wrong. This is because we are a selected group and we are not really able to extend this exercise to a wider audience of participants. Simultaneously, the whole issue of dialogue is very awkward when it takes place between the oppressed and the oppressor because there is no dialogue between the oppressor and the oppressed; the occupier and the occupied. There is only one channel of communication, they impose or they put their ideas and you have to discuss them but there is no two-way communication. That is why I always say that insofar as dialogue is very important to promote and to prepare the way for a political settlement, dialogue under situations like ours, under occupation, cannot be useful or fruitful. This is very important.

As regards the second topic, we have recently started to hear and read articles from different spectrums, on the so-called « culture of peace ». This is being heavily promoted every-where, in an attempt to introduce this concept to us as Palestinians, to the whole region, to promote a culture of peace. In this case, we always say that the culture of peace cannot be introduced before peace is achieved at a political level because we cannot really start promoting a culture of peace and suddenly discover that peace is not really sustained. As a result, peace cannot really protect the culture that we are promoting and developing. That is why, for the Europeans and the North Americans who are trying to visit the area and encourage us to talk about and to work into this culture of peace, what is really important and a precondition for this culture of peace is that there should be certain encouragement or conditions suitable for promoting peace

at a political level between the political leaders. Only then will it be possible to start looking into promoting this new concept of a culture of peace.

What comes to my mind is what happened in Egypt twenty years ago when the Israeli and the Egyptian governments reached a peace agreement but this peace was not comprehensive. It did not really include people and, as a result nobody, neither Egyptian nor Israeli leaders tried to promote this culture of peace after obtaining peace. As a result, we see that this peace is very cold. It is limited to a political but not social level.

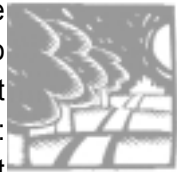
On the other hand, it is very important to stress that we cannot start promoting this culture of peace in the region - especially between Palestinians and Israelis - while we are, at the moment, in a political crisis. It seems that the whole issue of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is so slim and so dim that it might not be achievable as a result of the intransigence of the Israeli Government led by Mr. Netanyahu.

In order for me to give you some examples of what I am talking about in terms of a culture of peace as a precondition for promoting this concept, I saw three articles in the newspapers, regarding the whole concept of this culture of peace. One of them was a study and later a book (published by researcher and journalist called Rubenstein) about a city in the North of Palestine or in the North of Israel in Galilea, called Nazareth. The Israelis tried to build on the confiscated land of Upper Nazareth. They tried to bring Israeli Jews to reside in Upper Nazareth while, at the same time, preventing Palestinians already living in Nazareth from developing and building. What happened is that the Palestinians living in Nazareth started to move to Upper Nazareth and to reside there, buy flats and to live alongside Israeli Jews. Rubenstein, the researcher, spent five years observing the whole phenomenon and he interviewed all the people, the Jews, who resided in Upper Nazareth and he came to the conclusion that even the most liberal, the most progressive Jews living in Upper Nazareth, preferred not to live in the same neighbourhood as Arabs. And I am talking about Israelis and Palestinians in Israel who have been living together for over thirty years. So this is really a concept reflecting exactly how this culture of peace cannot really be translated into the daily life of people if the preconditions are not there, suitable for its introduction.

The second case I read was made by Professor Ariel Cohen, who is the deputy mayor of Jerusalem. East Jerusalem and the old city were occupied and later annexed to West Jerusalem and to Israel after 1967. But of course, when one goes to Jerusalem, it is possible to see that it is not one city but two separate cities, East and West. Professor Ariel Cohen was walking the streets of the old city of Jerusalem and he was shocked to see that all the alleys of the old city of Jerusalem were painted with Palestinian flags. He felt that this was really very dangerous to the whole concept of Jerusalem and the judaisation of the city of Jerusalem. Visiting tourists could get the notion or the perception that this city, the old city of Jerusalem, was a Palestinian city and not an Israeli controlled, occupied, annexed city when they came to the old city and saw the Palestinian flags. He was very angry. When he returned to the municipality he asked the Mayor, Almert, as well as the Minister of the Interior, Ilie Suiza, to introduce legislation to force each and every Palestinian in the old city to raise an Israeli flag over his shop or his house in order for tourists to get the impression, the "wrong impression", that the city is Israeli and not Palestinian, when walking the alleys of the old city. So, this is a second example of the whole notion of this culture of peace.



The third notion, or the third example, that I want to share with you was made by an Israeli professor (and I am alluding always to the Israelis and not to Palestinians) called Daniel Berthal who works at Tel Aviv University. He carried out a study of school textbooks used in Israeli schools, in the different parts of Israel: North, South and Centre and he reviewed 142 textbooks from the different elementary and secondary schools in Israel, on topics such as history, literature, geography and civil society. And he came to the conclusion that, firstly, these books which have been used for the last 30 years and continue to be used until today, describe the Arab as an aggressive, stubborn soldier or as an ignorant, awkward peasant. This is what he discovered in his analysis and also, that the Arab person is looked at in a very negative way with certain notions of racism. He says that even after more than 20 years since the first peace agreement between the Israelis and the Arabs (the Camp David Agreement of 1979, the Peace Agreement with Jordan in 1994, and the Oslo Agreements with the Palestinians in 1993) the concept of peace between Israel and the Arabs is being taught until today as an imaginary concept and not a realistic one. In no way do these school textbooks make any reference whatsoever to the peace agreement with Egypt or to the peace agreements between Israel and the rest of the Arab countries.



This brings me to my conclusion that, when you talk about a culture of peace, it becomes irrelevant if we just look into what is taking place right now, if we just relate that to certain activities, certain dialogue meetings or conferences rather than really trying to create a total change in the whole concept of the individuals starting with leadership downwards. As a result of that, I would like to propose a recommendation and the recommendation calls for the creation of a centre, a Mediterranean centre to promote the concept of peace based on working through people rather than working through governments, so that it is people-to-people peace. As regards this centre, we could start by having two offices, one in East Jerusalem and one in West Jerusalem. We could start as Palestinians and Israelis and we would like to see another office in Europe in order to make the link, possibly in Toledo or anywhere else where there is a certain history in terms of promoting this kind of exchange.

The Israeli-palestinian dialogue

By Mr. Asbjørn Løvbraek, Middle East Unit,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

I would like to pick up some of the issues that Mr. Malki raised, in other words, talk specifically about the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and how people to people co-operation can be worked into that dialogue. I think he raised two very important issues.

Firstly, how to broaden the dialogue beyond the pioneers and to involve more actors in the process. And, secondly, the links between people to people co-operation and the overall political level dialogue.

There is a programme which the government of my country, Norway, is supporting to enhance Palestinian and Israeli dialogue and relations. One of the interesting aspects of this is that it is linked to the overall peace process. So you are talking about very concrete activities to bring Palestinians and Israelis together but carried out within the framework of the overall peace agreement. We had the Oslo Accord in 1993; the Declaration of Principles. We have also the Interim Agreement, which was signed in September 1995. Within this Interim Agreement, there is a specific annex, which talks very concretely and states and here I quote "the two sides shall co-operate in enhancing the dialogue and relations between their respective peoples in accordance with concepts developed in co-operation with the Kingdom of Norway". So, there is this overall framework linking this people-to-people co-operation to the peace process.

We are all obviously aware that the peace process has its ups and downs. We also know very clearly that not all aspects of the Interim Agreement of September 1995 have been implemented. But I would like to share with you some very short notes on the efforts which we are involved in, by trying to implement this people-to-people programme. We have had a structure set up to facilitate the exchange. It is based on a very practical co-operation where there is a joint planning group for which Norway has provided the secretariat. The secretariat will integrate the programme of activities by co-ordinating operations and reporting. It also functions as the joint contact for the Israeli and Palestinian publics and hosts planning group meetings and other common programme activities. This is at the concrete operational level.

There is then, at a higher, more politicised level, a steering committee which includes representatives from the Norwegian Government, the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government.

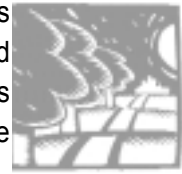
Activities are specified to ensure a greater exposure to the peace process and its current situation and predicate results. Secondly, to foster public debate and involvement. Thirdly, to remove barriers to interaction and, fourthly, to increase people-to-people exchanges and interaction with all the fields specified in this particular annex to the Interim Agreement.

We are trying to define a very broad area of co-operation that includes youth and adult dialogue as well as seminars, culture, environment and media and lastly, communications.

Another question relates to what has happened. We have had a fairly good level of response.



There have been a number of public announcements that individuals and groups could take initiatives, contact a partner (e. g. a Palestinian organisation could contact partners in Israel and vice versa) and jointly formulate an application to this programme. We have already had over 170 applications. About thirty projects are under implementation or have already been completed.



With reference to the point that Mr. Malki made, we have in fact now seen a broadening of the project because the first round of applications was very clearly and very understandably coming from the individuals and organisations that were pioneering this type of contacts earlier on. The second round of applications was based on a very broad advertisement in November-December of 1996 and brought in a number of individuals and groups, which those who had worked on this project had not heard of. So, clearly a number of new actors were brought into the picture.

The final point is, of course, to look at what is happening to this kind of programme in a situation of political crisis. The question arises as to whether it is becoming more difficult to implement this kind of programme in the current crisis. The answer is "yes". If the question is whether it has become impossible, then the answer is "no".

I met with members of the Secretariat in Jerusalem just over a week ago. What they are saying is that, in a situation of crisis at the political level and with the disruption of the contacts between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, there are things that clearly have to be postponed. There are some activities that cannot take place. This applies at the level of administrative interaction, obviously with a breakdown in communications between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli side, which also affects a programme of this nature. At the level of emotional and intellectual involvement, there are clearly obstacles to realising some of the activities in a situation of crisis where the obstacles become larger at the practical level, with borders closed and travel permits denied to Palestinians to travel to Israeli-controlled areas. There are obstacles, they are greater than in situations where there has been progress in the peace process in the past. However, those who work in this process on the ground have assured me that there has not been a complete breakdown in activities. Certain activities are going on, planning is going on, project documents are being prepared and contracts are being signed. So, there is a slowdown rather than a complete breakdown of this type of process in the current situation.

Extracts from the discussions at the second workshop "Civil society and sociocultural policies"

Mr. Tudor Lomas

"... commitments have been entered into. In October 1995, 69 MED-Media projects were selected. People had submitted applications, on which they had expended both time and energy. They were told that a start would be made early in 1996, then later in the year, then in 1997. Even today, nothing has happened. Had such a thing happened in the world of business, it would have been a matter for the courts."

Ms. Giovanna Tanzarella

"... It has been realised that eyes are ever more firmly fixed on Brussels and that this does not reflect the reality of the exchanges involved in co-operation on the ground in the Mediterranean area. It must be realised that Brussels is a long way from the Mediterranean and that the Brussels universe is virtually inaccessible to the people of the area, the associations and all who are involved in practical co-operation."

"... Meda has been described as standing for Mediterranean Assistance. As you realise, there is a difference between the concepts of assistance and partnership and this is perhaps food for thought, the fact that some Euro-Mediterranean partnership arrangements and the operating, or future operating, rules are referred to as Mediterranean Assistance. It is an interesting point."

"... asking for the European Union to make a qualitative assessment of the MED programmes is one thing. Another is the existence of a problem with information and the dissemination of information..."

"Networks have been described as probably most appropriate to the situation in the Mediterranean, and it has therefore been said that encouragement should be given to professional networks..."

Mr. Ahmed Jernai

"... I wish to ask the representatives of civil society, whatever their activity, to get away from this European Union constriction, with the gods of the European Union holding the power and the money, on the one hand, while on the other, beggars work for a considerable time on projects to be submitted to those gods, who will either allow these projects to be carried out or not. In my view this is scandalous, for I am a citizen of both shores."

Mr. Marc Segui

"... I would like to know what kind of dialogue there will be in the media when civil servants face journalists, or when journalists who can say whatever they wish, and sometimes say any old



thing, face others who might be killed or sent to prison if they say anything..."

Ms. Marisa Atienza

"... most people share the same concerns and the same frustrations, as well as, to some extent, the same hopes and criticisms. I believe that it is very important to work together and co-ordinate efforts, for nobody will come to the door if just one person knocks. If a hundred people say the same thing, they receive an answer."

Mr. Thierry Fabre

"... I think that, if we wish to construct a common cultural project, we must have a common view of the Mediterranean. Not an abstract one but one based on hard work in each country, involving speeches, texts and representations. That is my first proposal. How are we to reach a common view of the Mediterranean by studying these representations?

My second proposal derives from the idea we discussed with Paul Balta, the idea of setting up Mediterranean cultural centres (maisons de la Méditerranée). I feel that it is important to encourage the emergence of cultural centres reflecting the Mediterranean dimension in the different countries and these should be part of each country's cultural, political and social fabric. Thus, the Mediterranean idea will exist, will become firmly rooted and will make it possible to have centres for cultural resources, information and training, performances, cultural events, singing, and so on. All these Mediterranean cultural centres should obviously be inter-connected and, if they are to be given a name, I suggest that they be known as a 'Mediterranean alliance for culture'.

My third proposal is linked to the subject of movement already referred to this morning. Cultural movement is only possible, in my view, if people and ideas also move around. Values and models take shape only if people are free to move around. At the moment, a veritable fortress Europe has emerged, a development I regard as extremely damaging. If the point of Euro-Mediterranean partnership is to build a bridge across the barriers ahead, it seems to me that it has to be a bridge which can be used, or it is meaningless, or just a delusion... Everyone with a practical role in the projects realises that mobility between the two shores of the Mediterranean is both a significant issue and an unavoidable obstacle. Therefore, unless the obstacle can be removed, there can be no partnership. So I believe that politicians have to be persuaded that there are two separate issues: immigration and mobility and that mobility is vital to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership."

Ms. Giovanna Tanzarella

"... a consistent cultural partnership strategy worthy of the name must take account of the fact that the cultural dimension is an integral part of any co-operative action, whether political or economic..."

Mr. Tudor Lomas

"....I have another proposal to make. When we re-launch all the Mediterranean programmes, I suggest that alongside Med-Media, Med-Campus and Med-Urbs, we also set up a Med-Youth programme. I firmly believe that youth issues have been neglected at this and previous forums I

have attended. For example, if we take a country like Great Britain, we see that the question of women's rights has changed there from being a marginal issue ten to fifteen years' ago to become a focal topic today. This shift was made possible by the fact that those who, fifteen years' ago, were already convinced of the importance of women's rights are now counted among the decision-makers. If youth questions become a Euro-Mediterranean issue, then concrete results could be apparent in this region we all dream about, ten to fifteen years from now."

Mr. Marc Segui

"I don't think recommendations are possible without at least some notions of human rights. I think the notions "right of expression" and "right of opinion" are fully justified in this context."

Ms. Rabea Naciri

"... two surveys have shown the ambiguous and paradoxical attitude of young people to Europe in general. On one side there is resentment, linked, according to the survey findings, to the visa issue. The young people concerned in fact know that there is virtually no chance of their being allowed to leave their country or to go to Europe, so they feel resentment. On the other side, there is nevertheless an attraction. Europe and the West cannot be said to have been rejected out of hand. Much is drawn from Europe. There is a wish to imitate westerners and to adopt a number of western values, but at the same time, the mistake is made of throwing the baby out with the bath water."

"... I should be in complete agreement about a number of proposals relating to young people... It must be clear from the outset that there must be (50%) female representation in each project. That is very important to our countries, making exchanges possible between young people of both sexes, who have few opportunities to get together, there being few places in our countries for socialising."

Mr. Franco Marziale

"... non-governmental organisations work mainly on out-of-school education. Their work necessarily involves learning how to do, rather than learning how to be. It is very important to learn how to do things. As we have already seen, true partnerships must be created in fields where civil society treats young people like the other groups of the population, giving them the same position, respect and partner status. Thus power must be shared, a different kind of solidarity must be shown and emphasis placed upon out-of-school education, which plays an extremely important role..."

Mr. Tudor Lomas

"I fully agree that, given the circumstances surrounding the Med programmes, a review of the procedures, arrangements and mechanisms was necessary. I can't believe, however, that it takes 18 months to set up new European mechanisms. As far as I'm concerned, 18 months denotes either a lack of responsibility or incompetence..."



Ms. Marie-Christine Aulas

"... it would be desirable for the series of meetings, seminars and colloquies over the past few months, enabling some of us to leap from one get-together to the next, to be carried over into the geographical areas covered by our organisations and for some people to act as information relays..."

Mr. Ahmed Bedjaoui

"We are, of course, very close to the Meda programmes and have a very legitimate wish to see all of them started again but we are not the only ones. In my view, if I may say so, we need to show solidarity with every programme and we must make the same initial demand for all the MED programmes; it is reassuring for us to learn and hear, even if confirmation is required, that the Commission is minded to announce, here at this Malta conference, its intention to restart all the MED programmes as soon as possible. This should certainly be noted."

"The second thing, as already stated here, is that these programmes must also have defined aims - and this I suggest as a member of the committee. People have spoken on the definition of targets. Both targets and methods need defining. Where the methods are concerned, we must bear in mind the fact that we are using European taxpayers' money, which we must all take care of. Of course there is an initial, running-in period, which explains, without justifying, a certain amount of clumsiness. ... Attention must also be paid to all the groups benefiting from the programmes. Meaning those for whom the programmes exist, who must receive the planned service. These groups must be borne in mind."

Ms. Judith Niese

"... to continue where my colleague, Jacques Giraudon, left off, when he told you that it would be possible for regular meetings to be held of the Civil Forum, I believe that you should, in your message, emphasise the importance of regular meetings under the aegis of the Commission. I mean, rather than initiatives which are private or run by associations, here, there and everywhere in Europe and in the Mediterranean area, a real programme supported and recognised by the Commission. The meetings could even be mostly sectorial or they could be held at the year's end, or periodically, or - why not? - in time for the third ministerial meeting, that is likely to be held in Germany. Items could be prepared for it in advance, already more specific and practical where implementation of this partnership is concerned."

"I should also, at the same time, like to warn you about a tendency I myself have noticed when taking part in this kind of meeting: the concept of civil society as viewed by NGO representatives is a very limited one. We have some elements of participation by civil society in the first and second parts of the Barcelona document. Do not forget that civil society also includes the networks of research institutes, such as Euromesco. The private sector, in the second part of the Barcelona document, is part of civil society, too. So do not restrain yourselves in any messages you might like to convey to the Commission: if you wish to criticise the lack of action where civil society is concerned, remember that these components of civil society have nevertheless played a part in forging the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership."

Ms. Marie-Christine Aulas

"... As a French national, I noticed that there are two strategic research institutes in the Euromesco network, the French Institute for International Research and a Strategic Research Institute in Toulon. Civil society plays no part in these, at best academic and even frankly, military institutions. I therefore think that this simply was not one of the best possible examples. The Euromesco network has nothing to do with civil society. Does the Commission have its own, relatively precise, definition of civil society?"

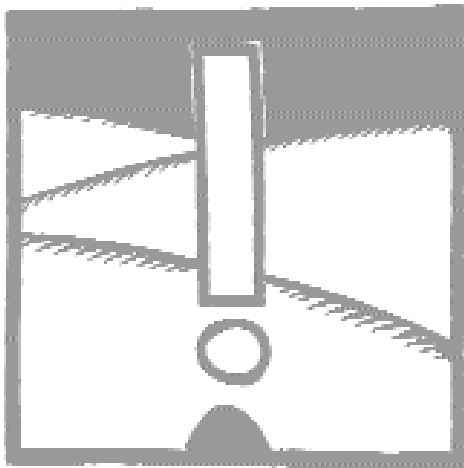
Ms. Judith Niese

"... it seems to me that the vital element is the partnership of which we are speaking. Not a bilateral partnership but a decentralised element enabling all members of society, institutions, associations and NGOs to carry out and propose activities, as well as to benefit from the available funds, not only through their governments. This is a vital element and it is true that one of your tasks here is to start to define civil society according to your perceptions."

Ms. Giovanna Tanzarella

"... some recommendations are to be drafted. Some have circulated, produced by the international committee following up Barcelona, the Catalan Institute, The Hague and the others I have mentioned, as well as the document produced by the contact group for the recent Tunis meeting. Each have their own dynamics, I believe, which must be respected. It is not here and now that we should try to put them all together, rearrange them and issue a single text, which I feel would almost amount to manipulation. I think they must be pooled and account taken of all of them when we produce more general recommendations. They sometimes overlap and sometimes complement each other, retaining their own identity."





Recommendations

Group 1

Multicultural interaction: moving towards dialogue and tolerance

Group 2

Civil society and socio-cultural policies





Recommendations of group 1

Multicultural interaction: moving towards dialogue and tolerance



Participants in group 1 of workshop 3 of the Euromed Civil Forum discussed interculturality: dialogue and tolerance.

They noted that culture clash theories and ideologies were based on a past of incomprehension and rejection of others.

The perception of others adhered to stereotypes which were obstacles to any positive and multicultural dialogue.

Emphasis was placed on the need to take account of civil society in a plural, diversified and representative expression. It was pointed out that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership could not be harmoniously built up if dialogue between peoples remained stalled.

Participants focused on the following recommendations:

1. Dialogue between religions should be developed, not just in the theological sense but also to cover the issues facing society.

2. The human rights culture should be reaffirmed along the lines laid down in Barcelona. No specific work framework had to date been defined. A Mediterranean conference on the subject should be planned, encompassing the whole Euro-Mediterranean area.

The progress made in building the Euro-Mediterranean area enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration should not mask the dangers to peace in the region.

3. In this context, it was recommended that a Mediterranean centre be set up to promote a culture of peace among peoples. If this project were to be realised, an office would have to be set up in East Jerusalem, another in West Jerusalem, and a third in a European capital.

4. The translation into Mediterranean languages of political, philosophical, literary and scientific works should be encouraged.

5. A real and objective knowledge of others should be developed during school and university education, so as to avoid prejudices, stereotypes and interpretations based on cultural antagonism.

6. Immigration should be recognised as a factor of cultural and human enrichment.

7. Equal status for women should be made part of the general democratisation process on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

8. The role of women in the process of building the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should be strengthened, as they have a key role in a three-way dynamic process: development, demography and democracy.



Recommendations of group 2

Civil society and socio-cultural policies

Participants in group 2 of workshop 3, meeting in Malta on 12 April 1997 during the Euromed Civil Forum, considered cultural policies, which they approached from the youth, education and media angles. In this respect, the Barcelona Declaration was an innovative element, encompassing civil society and committing states to common policies intended to ensure harmonious development of the Euro-Mediterranean region. Participants stressed the need to work together on a representation of the Mediterranean projected from inside.

Any Euro-Mediterranean cultural policy had to be based upon the principles of partnership and concerted action, with a view to an ongoing dialogue being started among the various parts of civil society, on the one hand, and the national and regional authorities, on the other. In this context, participants emphasised the importance of citizens' mobility for the building of every kind of partnership. What was more, respect for human rights and a strengthening of freedom of expression were acknowledged to be necessary conditions for sustainable political, economic and social development of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

At the end of their discussions, participants agreed on the recommendations listed below:

1. In the youth field

- A general Euro-Mediterranean youth programme should be drawn up, with the aim of involving young people in decentralised co-operation, with equal representation of the sexes.
- Appropriate instruments should be created to disseminate information to young people.
- A Euro-Mediterranean youth council should be set up.
- An initiative intended to combat racism, xenophobia and social exclusion should be promoted.

2. In relation to cultural education

- The instruments for providing information on cultural co-operation (data banks, directories, information exchange sessions and so on) should be promoted.
- The emergence of cultural centres embracing Mediterranean culture should be promoted in all Euromed countries; these could be known as "maisons de la Méditerranée".
- Instructor training covering attractive methods of presenting information should be developed, as should cultural exchanges between people from both sides of the Mediterranean.
- Joint action should be fostered, designed to go hand in hand with the building of long-term projects prepared by various occupational categories and particularly by young people.

3. Relating to the media

- Encouragement should be given to dialogue between media professionals of the Mediterranean region, through exchanges of journalists, the joint production of training programmes, etc.

- Journalists' complete access to information should be fostered, so that they may play their role in educating and informing the public.

- Complementing the promotion of Euro-Mediterranean communication through the media, the setting up of communications networks among members of civil society on both shores of the Mediterranean should be encouraged (data banks, Internet and so on), so as to promote existing activities.

- The participants in the Malta Euromed Civil Forum extremely regretted the long suspension of the Med programmes and recommended that these be revitalised as soon as possible, so as to ensure that information flowed and communication took place between the main (governmental and non-governmental) parties actively involved in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Nevertheless, they agreed that transparency should prevail in the provision of information, that management should be meticulous and that this revitalisation should be in line with the needs of the Euro-Mediterranean countries.





Appendices

Programme
List of participants



Programme

Friday, 11 April

Arrival of participants

Saturday, 12 April

9.00 a.m. Official opening and plenary session

. Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and National Culture of Malta

. Mr. Jos Lemmers, Executive Director of the North-South Centre

. Mr. Mohamed El Mili, Director General of ALECSO

. Dr. John Buttigieg, Permanent Representative of Malta to the Council of Europe

. Ms. Gema Martín Muñoz, Professor of Sociology of the Arab and Muslim World at the Autonomous University of Madrid

. Mr. Franco Marziale, Director of the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe

. Ms. Fifi Benaboud, Co-ordinator of the North-South Centre's Transmediterranean Programme

11.00 a.m. Workshops

1st Workshop - Multicultural interaction: towards dialogue and tolerance

. Moderator: Mr. Salah Stétié, writer and poet, Honorary Ambassador of the Lebanon, former Secretary General of the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

. Rapporteur: Princess Maria-Teresa de Borbón Parma, Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Madrid

. Presentations:

- Ms. Gema Martín Muñoz

- Mr. Mohamed Saghir Janjar, Deputy Director of the King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saoud Foundation for Islamic Studies and Humanities

Debate

2nd Workshop - Civil society and socio-cultural policies

- de la
- . Moderator: Ms. Marie-Christine Aulas, *Forum des Citoyens Méditerranée*
 - . Rapporteur: Mr. Ahmed Bedjaoui, President of REMFOC (Europe-Maghreb Network for Professional Training in Communication)



. Presentations:

- Mr. Paul Balta, writer and journalist
- Ms. Marisa Atienza, European Youth Forum

Debate

3.00 p.m. Continuation of workshops

Debate

Drafting of recommendations

6.00 p.m. Plenary Session

- . Presentation: Mr. Ed van Thijn, Professor at the University of Amsterdam and Former Dutch Minister for the Interior

6.30 p.m. End of session

. Presentations:

- Mr. Salah Stétié
- Mr. Jos Lemmers

Sunday, 13 April

9.00 a.m. Plenary closing session of the Civil Forum

Presentation of recommendations

Official closing ceremony



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Graphic Charter

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Illustrations

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Printing

Multitema - Produções Gráficas

Lisbon, July 1999.