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The Monitoring Committee for RTD

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Abstract. The history of Barcelona process for Science and Technology coincides somehow with the activities of the MoCo, the Senior Official Forum that was created to monitor and strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in Research and Innovation. The role and the results achieved so far by the MoCo, which celebrates its 17th year of existence, are discussed with a view to contributing to better face the main future challenges, integrate and coordinate research and innovation actions and find proper solutions to bottlenecks and problems that still hamper the process toward the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean research and innovation area.

Keywords. Barcelona Process – Mediterranean region – International cooperation – Governance – Research – Innovation.

Le Comité de suivi pour la Recherche, la Technologie et le Développement (RTD)

Résumé. L'histoire du processus de Barcelone pour la Science et la Technologie coïncide en quelque sorte avec les activités du Comité de Suivi (MoCo), la tribune officielle de hauts fonctionnaires créée pour surveiller et renforcer la coopération euro-méditerranéenne en matière de recherche et d'innovation. Le rôle et les résultats atteints jusqu'à présent par le MoCo, qui célèbre ses 17 ans d'existence, sont examinés dans le but de contribuer à relever les défis majeurs de l'avenir, intégrer et coordonner les actions de recherche et d'innovation et trouver des solutions adéquates aux goulots d'étranglement et aux problèmes qui entravent encore aujourd'hui le processus de création de l'Espace euro-méditerranéen de la recherche et de l'innovation.

Mots-clés. Processus de Barcelone – Région méditerranéenne – Coopération internationale – Gouvernance – Recherche – Innovation.

I – Background

The need to establish a Monitoring Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in Research and Technological Development (MoCo) was recognized by the Euro-Mediterranean Science and Technology Ministerial meeting in Sophia Antipolis in March 1995¹. The Committee was formally set up in the framework of the Barcelona Declaration in November 1995.

The Barcelona Declaration was the founding act of a comprehensive partnership between the European Union (EU) and twelve Southern Mediterranean countries². This partnership aimed to turn the Mediterranean into a common area of peace, stability and prosperity through the reinforcement of political dialogue, security as well as economic, financial, social and cultural cooperation.

As stated in the Work Programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration (EC, 1995), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Science and Technology focused on:

- promoting research and development and tackling the widening gap in scientific achievement taking into account the mutual interest;
- stepping up exchanges of experiences in the scientific sectors and policies which might best enable the Mediterranean partners to reduce the gap between them and their European neighbours and to promote the transfer of technology;

- helping training scientific and technical staff by increasing participation in joint research projects.

II – Role and Mission of the MoCo

The MoCo is composed of senior officials and representatives (delegates) of the Ministries responsible for Research from both EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs)³ as well as of EC representatives. Its first meeting was held in Barcelona in 1995, immediately after the Barcelona Conference.

Since November 1995 the MoCo has convened regularly⁴ - usually once a year. Before the launching of the Union for Mediterranean (UfM), in 2008, the MoCo was mainly under the responsibility of the EU Member State holding the chairmanship of the EU Council. It set the Agenda in consultation with the European Commission that was in charge of the Secretariat of the Committee. After the launching of the UfM, the MoCo followed its rules and the agenda was mainly set by the countries holding the UfM co-presidency⁵.

As underlined in the Annex of the Barcelona Declaration, the main mission of the MoCo is to make recommendations for the joint implementation of the policy priorities agreed at ministerial level. Since 1995 the MoCo has played a crucial role in the development of the Euro-Mediterranean scientific cooperation by:

- acting as a forum for the exchange of information, views and recommendations on RTD policy in the Mediterranean region;
- identifying issues of regional importance to be addressed by RTD and requiring cooperative Euro-Mediterranean activities;
- monitoring and commenting on RTD policies, development and activities in the Euro-Mediterranean context;
- supporting and preparing the Ministerial Meetings on Research and Higher Education;
- reporting to the Ministerial Meeting on Research and Higher Education for issues concerning science and technology.



Figure 1. The 12th MoCo meeting. Istanbul, 6-8 November 2008.

III – Integrating Research in the Mediterranean region: past bottlenecks and future perspectives

Many programs and initiatives have been launched within the EU 5th, 6th and 7th Framework Programmes for RTD and in the context of the MEDA instrument, such as SMAP – *The Short and Medium Term Priority Environmental Action Programme*; EUMEDIS – *The Euro-Mediterranean Information Society Initiative*; EMWIS – *Euro-Mediterranean Information System on the know-how in the water sector* – Euromed HERITAGE – *Regional Programme for Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage*, to favour the scientific and technological cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In parallel, Netri-Med was launched in 2002 in Antalya, as a network of public research institutions of Euro-Med Countries to support the MoCo policies and actions.

However, several changes occurred over the years which affected the Barcelona process and the output of its joint committees:

1. a period of intensified tensions in the Middle East;
2. the eastward expansion of EU that today counts 27 members including the former MPCs Malta and Cyprus, and four potential candidates negotiating their accession (including Turkey);⁶
3. the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003;⁷
4. the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008.

The MoCo adapted to all the above changes trying to focus, as well as possible, on its main objectives.

At the same time other challenges appeared:

- i. The difficulties faced in organizing ministerial conferences on research (as it was envisaged and pursued for other issues of the Economic Partnership of Barcelona Process, i.e. Ministerial for water, energy, etc.) due to political issues at regional but also at community level. The first and last, so far, was the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Research organised in Cairo, in 2007⁸.
- ii. In 2007-2008, following the Cairo Declaration, a forum of experts and representatives of Higher Education was convened, but not formally established, with the mandate of establishing with the MoCo regular relations and complementary activities. Notwithstanding the common will, after the MoCo meeting in Alicante (2010), the process has not been implemented so far. Hence all the efforts to have two panels, one for research and innovation and another one for higher education, have so far not been successful.
- iii. Need to have additional funds to organize the MoCo meetings.
- iv. Lack of a secretariat, which could ensure continuity between the MoCo meetings. This is a particularly important aspect for a Forum where the representatives of the Ministries may change over time.

To face some of the above problems and strengthen cooperation in the Euro-Med area, some Ad-Hoc MoCo Groups, involving EU Member States and non-EU Med Countries, have been launched to allow more in-depth analyses to be endorsed in the plenary sessions.

Moreover many projects have been carried out since 1995, thanks to the co-funding of EC, with a focus to favour dialogue in science, technology and innovation, integrate research on a multilateral

and multidisciplinary scale and help the MoCo and the European Commission address issues of common interest (Table 1).

Since INCONET instruments under the capacities programme of FP7 allowed to have multi-annual projects acting as dialogue platforms to strengthen and support the bi-regional cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation, the MIRA project was designed so as to support the MoCo actions. The MoCo acted as Steering Committee of the MIRA project to assess needs and priorities, while MIRA provided the Committee with a Secretariat, giving it the possibility to ensure the continuity of its functioning.

This has been proved to be very useful in the period of transition from “MEDA – 1st phase of Barcelona process” to “UfM – 2nd phase of Barcelona process”, occurred in 2008-2009, when the Ministries of Foreign Affairs were also directly involved and when the importance to build upon the past was a must.

Table 1. Project co-funded by EC supporting the MoCo strategies and activities.

Acronym	Title	Website
RTDI2000	Euro-Med Forum on Scientific and Technological Research as a tool for regional integration and for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership	www.cordis.eu
ANTA2001	The Second Forum of the High Representatives of Euro – Med RTD Public Institutions as a tool for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership	www.ist-world.org
ASBIMED	Assessment of the Bilateral Scientific Cooperation between the EU Member States, Accession, Candidate and Mediterranean Partner Countries	www.estimate.ird.fr/article80.html
ESTIME	Evaluation of Scientific and Technological capabilities in Mediterranean countries	www.estimate.ird.fr
EUROMEDA NET	Opening up the European Research Area to the Mediterranean Countries	www.euromedanet.gr
INNFORMED	Innovation foresight for MEDA Partners in European Research Area	www.innformed.org
ERA-MED	Strengthening the European Research Area in Mediterranean Countries	www.eramed.gr
MED7	Thematic workshops for the definition of the science and technology Euro-Mediterranean policy within FP7	www.ist-world.org
EUMED CONNECT	To accelerate the rate of connection between Research and Universities in the Euro-Med area	www.eumedconnect.net
MIRA	Mediterranean Innovation and Research Coordination Action	www.mira.eu

Source: M. Rossano, elaboration from working documents of MoCo and projects website.

IV - Analysis of the MoCo conclusions and recommendations

The MoCo has played an important role in identifying the priority areas of EU-Mediterranean RI cooperation, especially within the European Framework Programmes for RTD (FP4, FP5, FP6 and FP7). Synergies and complementarities with other instruments of bi-regional cooperation have also been explored by the MoCo (e.g. with MEDA and the ENPI) inter alia with a view to the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area planned for 2010.

The recommendations for the period 1996-2008 were mainly focused on:

- finding synergies and complementarities among instruments;
- clustering projects;
- enhancing capacities of RTD institutions and favouring networking;
- giving to European and Mediterranean Partner Countries' research institutions a more prominent role in the Barcelona process;
- addressing actions answering to specific priority issues of common concern.

1. The typology of recommendations

The MoCo recommendations for the 2008-2012 period are analysed below in terms of corresponding typology by using the conclusions of each MoCo meeting. In some cases the minutes are clear, while in other ones they are expressed as an acknowledgement or an agreement to be taken into consideration in future. Apart from the recommendations dealing with the functioning of the MoCo and its instruments and status, the main outputs have been divided per year and per object (Table 2).

Table 2. The MoCo recommendations for the 2008-2012 period.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Object</i>
2008	Develop competence building activities in the scope of the Capacities Programme (FP7)	Capacity Building/ FP7 tools
	Strengthen research activities in universities and research organizations	Capacity Building
	Identification of regional priorities	Defining Priorities or establishing a Research Agenda
	Preparation of joint activities between the EU and MPCs	Strengthening scale, scope, impact
	Increase complementarities between the EU and national programmes	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Favour the use of European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Favour the use of available FP7 tools	FP7 tools
	Reinforce FP7 National Contact Points	FP7 tools
	Reinforce the e-network	Infrastructures
Favour the participation of MPCs in the People programme	Mobility	

Year	Recommendation	Object
	Develop specific programmes aiming at facilitating the brain circulation	Mobility
	Implement mobility programmes linked to the development of centres of excellence in MPCs	Mobility
	Promote balanced exchanges of researchers	Mobility
	Reinforce the role of RTD in the Barcelona Process	Role of RTD in the Barcelona Process
	Assess MIRA activities	Steering MIRA
	Identify good practices in the frame of bilateral and multilateral cooperation	Supporting Good Practices in cooperation programmes
2009	Develop competence building activities in the scope of the Capacities Programme (FP7)	Capacity Building /FP7 tools
	Identify measures for strengthening of research activities in the universities and research organizations of the MPCs	Capacity Building
	Build on ST priorities of regional nature	Defining Priorities or establishing a research agenda
	Favour implementation of joint activities between EU and MED Countries	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Increase complementarities between EU programmes and national programmes	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Pay attention to interactions with Higher Education Policies	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Build on existing bilateral cooperation programmes as a framework for multilateral activities	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Favour the use of European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Launching of calls targeting specifically the MPCs	FP7 tools
	Increase the use of all available FP7 tools such as SICAs, target calls, twinning	FP7 tools
	Sustain and reinforce the FP7 Contact Points in the MPCs	FP7 tools
	Reinforce electronic network	Infrastructures
	MPCs more actively engaged in the ERA activities	Integration of MPCs in ERA activities
	Prepare a document detailing bilateral and multilateral regional cooperation achievements since 2007	Ministerial Conference
	Support the preparation of the Ministerial Conference	Ministerial Conference
	Stimulate the participation of MPCs in the PEOPLE programme and particularly in the IRSES scheme	Mobility
	Implement mobility programmes linked with the development of centres of excellence in the MPCs aiming at the reintegration of researchers in their respective countries	Mobility

Year	Recommendation	Object
	Promote balanced exchanges of researchers	Mobility
	Reinforce the role of RTD in the Barcelona Process	Role of RTD in the Barcelona Process
	Reinforce the role of the MoCo in identifying regional priorities	Role of MoCo
	Share good practices identified in the scope of bilateral and multilateral cooperation	Supporting Good Practices in cooperation programmes
	Support the activities of MIRA project, and above all those aiming at developing the Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Space	Steering MIRA
2010	Invite the countries to provide brief information on national developments in the research sector in line with the Cairo Declaration	Ministerial Conference
	Prepare a brief paper on the stocktaking of achievements since the Cairo Declaration	Ministerial Conference
	Support activities of MIRA	Steering MIRA
2011	Encourage the evolution of bilateral cooperation between UfM Member States to Regional (Multilateral) cooperation	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Support demand-driven and impact-driven cooperation based on the principles of co-ownership and co-funding	Strengthening scale, scope and impact and enhancing complementarities between instruments
2012	Optimise the use of all relevant programmes and instruments (national, bilateral, EU, regional, bi-regional as well as those of international financial institutions)	Enhancing complementarities between instruments
	Establish a medium to long term RI agenda building on the report of the Barcelona Conference	Defining priorities or establishing a research agenda
	Support the networking of NCPs in FP	FP7 tools
	Invite MIRA to self-evaluate the project	Steering MIRA
	Move from bilateral approaches to a more strategic "region-to-region" approach	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Support the importance of an ERA-NET/ERANET PLUS focusing on the South Mediterranean region	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Develop joint activities in view of implementing the RI agenda	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Support a joint bi-regional programme based on Art. 185 of the EU Treaty	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Explore the feasibility of a joint bi-regional programme based on Art. 185 of the EU Treaty	Strengthening scale, scope and impact
	Contribution of International Financing Institutions to common research agenda	Strengthening scale, scope and impact

Source: J. Bonfim, elaboration from the MoCo meetings conclusions.

As can be seen from Table 2, some recommendations are replicated two or more times. This reveals their importance as well as the persistence of factors that gave rise to such recommendations.

The following table (Table 3) summarises the results of the number of recommendations by type, thus displaying the “intensity” of the different typologies for the overall time period under analysis (2008-2012).

Table 3. Number of occurrences of main typologies of recommendations for the 2008-2012 period.

<i>Focus/Objective</i>	<i>Number of occurrences</i>
Strengthening scale, scope and impact (of cooperation activities)	9
Enhancing complementarities between instruments	8
FP7 tools	7
Mobility of researchers	7
Capacity building	4
Supporting Ministerial Conferences	4
Steering MIRA	4
Defining Priorities/Research Agendas	3
Infrastructures	2
Supporting good practices in cooperation programmes	2
Role of RTD in the Barcelona process	1

Source: J. Bonfim, elaboration from the MoCo meeting conclusions.

2. The degree of implementation

The reinforcement of the role of RTD in the Barcelona Process has been approached step by step but there is still room for progress. The same statement is applicable to the recommendations regarding the integration of the MPCs in ERA activities.

The MoCo recommendations can be divided in two types:

- i. recommendations related to policy design and creation of new instruments;
 - ii. recommendations related to the reinforcement and optimization of existing instruments.
- i.) In assessing the first type of recommendations (“policy design and creation of new instruments”), it is useful to remind that they require some time to be implemented. One reason for “delays” may be also associated with the difficulties in obtaining suitable conditions to fund new initiatives. The definition of priorities and/or the establishment of research agendas have not been developed by the MoCo internally but have evolved positively through the contributions of MIRA and other events or projects co-financed by the European Commission. It is a fact that the identification of priorities for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is typical of periods of transition between two different Framework Programmes. This has always constituted a main concern in recommendations of 1997 (FP5 starting in 1998) and in 2003-04 (for FP6, 2004-2007). The conclusions of the 11th MoCo meeting, held in Vienna in 2006, were above all focused on the recommendations of two working groups, dealing with the instruments and priorities of the forthcoming FP7 (2007-2012) and with the ENPI instrument. Recommendations aiming at strengthening the scale, the scope and the impact of cooperation activities reached a limited degree of implementation as related to the existing potential. Hopefully the announcement at

the Barcelona Conference (April, 2012) of an initiative based on art. 185 of TFEU (or a similar one) is going to boost the degree of implementation of such typology of advice.

- ii.) A significant number of recommendations of the second type (“reinforcement and optimisation of existing instruments”) had a better degree of implementation. Competence building through strengthening research activities in universities and research organizations has evolved positively even if there is room for actions with larger impact. Concerning the use of FP7 tools and other instruments that could further accelerate the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in ST, very positive developments have been noticed. In particular, cooperation activities involving mobility patterns (in the scope of FP7 and beyond) have been pursued. An important challenge would be to increase the scale of such activities (for example providing more possibilities for multilateral activities involving mobility). On the contrary, a slow advance has been observed in the development of complementarities with other policies and instruments for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation (such as ENPI): almost every year since the 2nd MoCo meeting, the issue was repeated in the MoCo conclusions. Progress on this aspect is desirable for future RI activities.

V – Future challenges: towards innovation

The forthcoming FP, named *Horizon 2020*, and the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation, held in Barcelona in April 2012, call for a renewed partnership based on the principle of co-ownership and co-funding but also on deep involvement of stakeholders and innovation representatives, that is to say business associations, SMEs and others.

Most attempts to involve economic and industrial issues in the MoCo activities failed because of many difficulties, including the effort of coordination and management required at both national and international levels, having to deal with actors, policies and instruments of different Ministries: Ministry of Research, Ministry of Industry and Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc.

Nonetheless, despite this complexity in expressing views and actions of such a large diversity of actors, it is urgent to take steps along the following:

1. more coordination at national level on innovation and technology development issues;
2. monitoring of innovation actions, creating, for example, an ad-hoc group;
3. more structured two-way exchanges with the SFIC (Strategic Forum for International Cooperation). In that respect, the EU Member States that are both members of SFIC and MoCo could play an important role.

All these steps involve a certain understanding of the actual barriers to innovation policies and to envisage common actions to remove them.

To what extent this can be turned into a success will – of course – depend upon the efforts of all members but also on the capacity to include the actions of MoCo in a revised partnership, impacting on the socio-economic life of the countries concerned and being more in line with the needs and expectations of the civil society.

Strangely enough, many of these views and principles have been discussed as early as 1995 but the integration and concrete translation of values into concrete actions takes time. Several pre-requisites would be needed:

- i. political willingness from both European and South and East Mediterranean sides;
- ii. necessity to cope with the limited capacities of absorption of the knowledge economy at all levels (individuals, research and innovation organizations and governments);
- iii. national policies creating a favourable environment for knowledge creation where shared experiences are the leading factors, while avoiding cultural barriers to mobility and cooperation;
- iv. overcoming the bilateral relations between EU institutions, on one side, and one single Mediterranean partner country, on the other; such a policy has been introduced by ENPI framework and has somehow weakened the South–South cooperation process.

VI – The Monitoring Committee between past and future: assessing the results and the impact

The MoCo has been evolving along with the changes that occurred in the environment of cooperation on ST between the two regions. Its longevity permits to reflect in general terms on the results and impacts that have been achieved over time, and to identify the challenges that it will face in the near future. We welcome the fact that the MoCo has been able to meet regularly for a long time with the mandate to take stock and evaluate the progress of the Barcelona Process.

When assessing the cooperation process all along its existence, the MoCo has proved to be rather effective when focused on its monitoring functions. This is reflected by the in-depth discussion on the cooperation activities and recommendations for action that takes regularly place in its meetings. The question arises on how efficient it has been in fulfilling its objectives and finding proper solutions to the issues and needs of the region concerned.

An important element to be taken into account when assessing the MoCo effectiveness is represented by contextual conditions (political, financial, programmatic, etc.) in the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries. In order to examine the degree of implementation of the MoCo recommendations and analyse the ongoing difficulties, it would be necessary to have a detailed and in-depth description of these conditions.

Moreover, many recommendations need time for maturation before the phase of implementation. The INCO-NET MIRA and other instruments allowed the MoCo to turn some recommendations into concrete actions.

At the same time, the MoCo secretariat could be optimised in providing more information about developments on the ongoing cooperation on a regular basis, i.e. not only immediately before the MoCo meetings.

Undeniably, the MoCo helped achieve the following:

- the mobilisation of thousands of researchers from both regions to work on joint RTD projects;
- the involvement of MPCs' researchers in international research networks;
- the strengthening of scientific capacities;
- an ongoing dialogue on RTD and innovation policies.

Despite undeniable achievements, there is a general feeling that this cooperation has not fully achieved its objectives. The main drawback usually pointed out is the failure to have a real impact on the economic development of MPCs. In other words the Research-Innovation articulation in MPCs has not been really boosted by the Euro-Med scientific cooperation.

At least two reasons can explain this shortcoming:

1. The first reason is that international cooperation is only one element of a global strategy for promoting research and innovation in a given country. It must be stressed that the implementation of coherent policies for research and innovation in MPCs has been more difficult than expected and this may have prevented some of them from fully benefitting from the European instruments.
2. The second reason is that during the last two decades, programmes specifically oriented towards the promotion of innovation in the MPCs have been less supported than, for example, for countries of Central and Eastern Europe before their accession to the European Union.

VII –Conclusions

Dynamics of RI cooperation in the Euro-Med region has evolved over the last few years. There is evidence that this trend will continue to increase in coming years and it will be based on a strong demand for more integration and coordination of single state national RI policies coming from both EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries. This is an additional challenge that the MoCo will face in short and medium term.

Innovation strategies and policies need to be taken more into account by the MoCo, along with the interfaces with the Higher Education area.

In parallel, there is room for more systematic dissemination of information of the ongoing cooperation activities, and more links should be ensured with SFIC and other relevant bodies.

The UfM policy and the new role taken by the European Commission in 2012 should be directed to support cooperation between EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries, while spurring South-South cooperation. The support of the MoCo in the organization of Ministerial Conferences on a more regular basis will be an important element as well.

Finally, it should be stressed that no cooperation can really cope with future challenges if there is no shift from a vision based on competitiveness to an approach towards the well being. Unless RDI competitiveness and competition are combined with social and employment-creating programmes, it will only contribute to increase social *malaise*, both in EU and MPCs. The knowledge environment and RDI may play a role only if political and social dialogue start to share the same comprehensive language at both national and international levels.

Notes

- ¹ European Research and the Mediterranean, Sophia-Antipolis, France 21-22 March 1995.
- ² In 1995 the Mediterranean Partner Countries included: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey.
- ³ See *Guidelines for the functioning of the Monitoring Committee*, as adopted by the members of the MoCo in Cyprus on 12 and 13 December 1996 and as amended in Vienna, Austria on 30 June 2006).
- ⁴ It met in Spain (1st, 1995) Italy (2nd, 1996), Cyprus (3rd, 1996), Netherlands (4th, 1997), Malta (5th, 1998), Germany (6th, 1999), Tunisia (7th, 2000), Sweden (8th, 2001), Egypt (9th, 2003), 1st Ad-Hoc MoCo meeting in Naples (Italy, 2003), 2nd Ad-Hoc in Amman (Jordan, 2005), Tunisia (10th, 2005), Austria (11th, 2006), Turkey (12th, 2008), Morocco (13th, 2009), Spain (14th, 2010), Hungary (15th, 2011), Belgium (16th, 2012), Malta (17th, 2012).

- ⁵ The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was launched in Paris in 2008. It has been welcomed as a way to re-launch the Barcelona Process. Along with the 27 EU Member States, 16 Countries around the Mediterranean are members of the UfM: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. A “rotating” co-presidency is envisaged: 1 from EU MSs and 1 from MPCs. It is a fact that the co-presidency has been held by France and Egypt until February 2012. From 1st March 2012, EC represents EU Member States while Jordan represents the MPCs. The UfM also has a functional secretariat, based in Barcelona, a Secretary General and six Deputy Secretary Generals. Projects address areas such as economy, environment, energy, health, migration and culture. Among the key-initiatives of UfM: 1. Depollution of the Mediterranean Sea; 2. Establishment of maritime and land highways that connect ports and improve rail connections; 3. Joint civil protection programme on prevention, preparation and response to natural and man-made disasters; 4. Mediterranean solar energy plan; 5. Euro-Mediterranean University, inaugurated in Slovenia in June 2008; 6. Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, which supports small businesses operating in the region.
- ⁶ The remaining 9 MPCs becoming a subgroup of the 16 neighbour countries at the EU's new borders.
- ⁷ With the enlargement of EU, involving also Malta and Cyprus (as concerns the Mediterranean area), new instruments and policies were conceived for “neighbouring Countries”, bordering with EU. The EC Communication “*Wider Europe – Neighborhood: A new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors*” and the “New Policy of Neighborhood” launched in 2003, established new instruments that replaced MEDA and TACIS programmes. The new ENPI for the Mediterranean area targets the same countries as MEDA: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, plus Libya.
- ⁸ Since the second Ministerial conference in Brdo was cancelled due to eruption of Eyjafjallajökull volcano, no other Ministerial Conference has been held until now.

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