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End aid now: a prospect of financial synergies for a long-term Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on science, technology and innovation

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Abstract. The Mediterranean region has traditionally been an area of interest for the EU external relations. Several cooperation initiatives have been focussed on this region, within the framework of a “Mediterranean dimension” encompassing security, economic, social and political aspects. In 1995, the Barcelona Conference reinforced this framework in order to create a “shared peace, prosperity and security” area. This ambitious goal, re-launched by the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), has not been fully achieved yet. With particular reference to Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), the EU cooperation policies with the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs), supported by different co-funding tools, have not completely defined a harmonized institutional and regulatory co-ownership framework at multi-lateral level. This partial failure is mainly due to a poor governance of STI Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and to the political scenario that has characterized the area in the past 20 years. The objective of this paper is to give food for thought on the rethinking of Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation policies and tools by proposing a new governance that might ensure the sustainability of such cooperation. Considering the current political, social and economic conditions of the Mediterranean region, the first section of the paper describes the background of Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation. In the second part emphasis is laid on stocktaking and critical assessment of co-financing instruments such as ERA-NET, ERA-NET plus and Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The third section highlights the need to renew the EU STI cooperation policy in the Mediterranean region on the basis of co-ownership and co-funding principles, through shared actions able to support co-development.

Keywords. Euro-Mediterranean relations – Cooperation in Science – Technology and Innovation – Co-ownership – Governance.

Mettre fin maintenant à l'aide : une perspective de synergies financières pour une coopération euro-méditerranéenne en matière de science, technologie et innovation

Résumé. Traditionnellement, la Méditerranée a représenté un espace très intéressant pour les relations extérieures de l'UE. En effet, de nombreuses initiatives de coopération ont été entreprises en faveur de cette région, dans le cadre d'une “dimension méditerranéenne” qui réunit divers aspects concernant la sécurité, l'économie, la société et la politique. En 1995, la Conférence de Barcelone a renforcé ce dispositif en vue de contribuer à la création d'une zone de “paix, sécurité et prospérité partagée”. Cet objectif ambitieux, relancé par l'Union pour la Méditerranée (UpM), n'a pas été entièrement réalisé. En particulier, dans le domaine de la Science, de la Technologie et de l'Innovation (STI), la politique de coopération entre l'UE et les pays partenaires méditerranéens, soutenue par plusieurs instruments de cofinancement, n'a pas défini un cadre institutionnel et réglementaire de copropriété harmonisé au niveau multilatéral. Cet échec partiel est dû principalement à une faible maîtrise de la coopération euro-méditerranéenne en matière de STI et au scénario politique qui s'est dessiné dans la région ces 20 dernières années. L'objectif de ce travail est de réfléchir à une refonte des politiques et des instruments de coopération euro-méditerranéenne en STI, en proposant un nouveau cadre de gouvernance qui puisse assurer la durabilité de cette coopération. Compte tenu des conditions politiques, économiques et sociales actuelles dans la région, nous allons dresser dans un premier temps l'état des lieux de la coopération euro-méditerranéenne en STI. Ensuite, nous allons proposer une évaluation critique des instruments de cofinancement tels les ERANETs, ERANET+ et les initiatives basées sur l'article 185 du Traité sur le Fonctionnement de l'Union Européenne. Dans une troisième partie, l'accent sera mis sur la nécessité de renouveler la politique de coopération en STI dans la région Méditerranéenne, sur la base des principes de copropriété et cofinancement, à travers des actions communes visant à soutenir le codéveloppement.

I – Introduction

“Events happening in neighbouring Arab countries since the start of the Arab Spring are in continuous development and need the revisiting of EU policies in the Mediterranean” (Hollis, 2012). Inspired by this comment by Rosemary Hollis, the authors of this paper intend to present a critical overview of Euro-Mediterranean relations, with a particular focus on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). The paper is divided into three parts. The first describes the background of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and identifies its main weaknesses; the second carries out an assessment of existing Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation tools; the third aims at identifying a good governance scheme for a renewed and sustainable cooperation.

II – Background

Even if it might sound trivial, one could state that the main problem of the Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation lies in the word “cooperation” itself, at least as it has been interpreted so far. In fact, cooperation, defined by the Oxford dictionary as “*the action or process of working together to the same end*”, can hardly be considered at present the right expression to describe the state of play of Euro-Mediterranean STI relations. As we will see later, this is not due to the *object* of cooperation *per se* (Science, Technology, and Innovation) but rather to the *actors* of cooperation: the EU on one side and the MPCs on the other.

Thus, a critical assessment of Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation cannot be carried out without considering the political framework that has given an impulse to the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process since 1995 in Barcelona. As a matter of fact, a weak political framework cannot sustain a stable cooperation, in any of the thematic areas touched by the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. For this reason, a short outline of the current policy framework is necessary to carry out a constructive analysis of STI cooperation.

Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation can be divided into two main categories: bilateral and multilateral. At the bilateral level, it is based on agreements concluded between the EU and a single MPC. These agreements are authentic international agreements, and rule the respective roles and commitments of the two parties to achieve specific objectives. So far bilateral Science and Technology cooperation agreements have been signed by the EU with Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Bilateral STI Agreements between the EU and the Mediterranean countries associated to the 7th Framework Programme, Turkey and Israel, are also in force.

In general, STI bilateral agreements focus on strengthening the bilateral policy dialogue and promoting mutual cooperation on common challenges. Even if their importance is significant, and witnesses the willingness of the parties involved, they are not fully relevant to the analysis carried out in this paper, since they are not representative of regional cooperation.

At the multilateral level, STI cooperation falls mainly within the broader scenario of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, which has been characterized by **three major policy initiatives**, whose main traits are shortly described below.

The first is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched with the Barcelona Conference in November 1995. The new framework of relations inaugurated in Barcelona was divided into three main pillars: i) Political and Security Dialogue; ii) Economic and Financial Partnership; iii) Social

Cultural and Human Partnership. Cooperation in science and innovation has been included in the Economic and Financial pillar, and an article of each Association Agreement concluded by the EC with MPCs has been devoted to “Scientific, technical and technological cooperation”.

The second policy initiative is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2004. The ENP was established with the objective of strengthening EU relations with Southern and Eastern neighbours, in order to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines in the region and to offer to EU neighbours a privileged relationship based on common (or at least claimed to be so) values. Among the objectives of the ENP, there is the integration of scientific communities and the opening of the European Research Area (ERA) to partner countries. To this end, specific sections of ENP Action Plans include actions related to science, technology, research and innovation, tailored on partner countries’ needs and conditions. Within the ENP context, in May 2011 the EC presented a new approach to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the neighbouring countries (COM(2011)303 final). In terms of research and innovation, the EU suggests to work towards the establishment of a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space (CKIS), which pulls together policy dialogue, national and regional capacity-building, cooperation in research and innovation and increased mobility of researchers.

The third initiative is the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), known as a “re-launch” of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, inaugurated in 2008. UfM includes all 27 EU member states and 16 partners’ across the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Its main aim is to infuse a new vitality into the Partnership and raise the political level. Higher education and research are included among the six key areas of cooperation of UfM.

In addition to these three initiatives, that constitute the policy and legitimate basis of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, some other key-elements – specifically focused on STI and Research and Development (R&D) – should be recalled to complete the framework.

First, the conference of Lisbon of 2000 and the Lisbon Agenda for Europe’s competitiveness, jobs and growth recognize the strategic importance of higher education, scientific research and innovation. In this regard, with particular reference to the Mediterranean, an EC Communication of 2008 (COM (2008) 588 final) setting out a strategic European framework for international cooperation in science and technology calls for a stronger involvement of the MPCs in the ERA.

Second, higher education and research were addressed by an *ad-hoc* Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference held in Cairo in 2007. This conference represents the **highest level of political dialogue**, since North and South ministers were directly involved and committed their countries to the achievement of concrete objectives. At the Cairo Conference Ministers recognized that education and Research and Technical Development Infrastructure (RTDI) did not receive enough attention in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and agreed on the creation of a common research area through the enhancement of MPC participation in the Framework Programmes, taking into account their particular needs, areas of mutual interest and benefits. Also, Ministers announced that the integration of MPCs in the European Research Area (ERA) was to be achieved by (*inter alia*) exploring the **possibility for co-financing by MPCs in FP7**.

Third, the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation, held in Barcelona in April 2012, laid emphasis on the need to establish a renewed partnership in RI, based on co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefits. Also, the Conference conclusions underlined the importance of moving away from a “bilateral” approach and building on a more strategic “**region to region**” approach. In Barcelona the EC announced the preparation by interested EU Member States and South Mediterranean countries of a bi-regional programme based on **Article 185** of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) that would be a major initiative contributing to the implementation of the common agenda. On the same occasion, the EC recognized that the success of the cooperation initiatives lies in the commitment of the EU Member States and MPCs,

which should be obtained through a new Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial conference on Research and Innovation.

Last but not least, the policy framework is completed by the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD (MoCo), whose periodical conclusions and recommendations made by senior officers represent a high level response to the challenges to be faced in order to boost cooperation. MoCo has also the task of submitting recommendations to the EU for the joint implementation of RTD policy priorities. The last MoCo meeting, held in Brussels in June 2012, agreed on the need to revisit the past achievements of cooperation based on the principles of partnership, co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefits. MoCo also agreed on the need to establish a medium to long term common RI agenda.

The policy framework outlined above has led to a cooperation that can be defined “perfectible”. Of course, since the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in 1995, many cooperation objectives have been reached and significant progress has been made thanks to the contribution of several initiatives and projects, especially on RI cooperation. On the other hand, as for the whole Barcelona Process, now evolved into UfM, the translation of principles into practice reveals that the relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean suffer from some **structural weaknesses**.

First, despite the efforts, such a relationship is not a “peer-to-peer” one (Attinà, 2003). Second, the significant amount of resources invested in this partnership is not producing the expected results, and is therefore partially ineffective (Youngs, 2006).

The consequence of these weaknesses, as pointed out by Shoefthaler, is that “*cooperation*” has often become “*assistance*” and partners have divided into “*donors*” and “*beneficiaries*” (Shoefthaler, 2006). Perhaps this has produced some short-term good results, but will worsen the gap in the long run, contributing to the future instability of the region.

For this reason, a strategic re-thinking of Euro-Mediterranean relations is needed in order to turn the existing “framework” into good governance, which will ensure long-term, stable and sustainable cooperation. In particular, in our view a further thought on STI cooperation is necessary and of utmost importance for two key reasons:

1. The opening of global economy has caused a growing competitiveness of MPCs and consequently the shift from a resource-based towards a knowledge-based economy is a necessity, not a choice (Sid Ahmed, 1998). A telling case is the one of Chinese imports that represent a strong incentive for increasing innovation in Maghreb countries (Gerraoui and Richet, 2004). There is no doubt that the capacity to innovate helps countries achieving advantageous positions in key industrial and service sectors.
2. The increasing necessity of MPCs to adapt their products and processes to international standards, following the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA). In this regard, the standardization pathway changes according to the category of goods (Pasimeni *et al.*, 2007).

Having said that, the re-thinking of Euro-Mediterranean STI relations should start from existing cooperation tools (this is why we used the term “perfectible”), in particular the ones that entail co-financing synergies. In fact, co-financing is the only way to guarantee an effective cooperation scheme, based on co-decision and co-ownership. Despite the principles, reality teaches that when money is in play, who pays can have a say and sit in the driving seat. The following paragraph will provide an assessment of the main existing EU co-financing tools available today for the Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation: the ERA-NET scheme and initiatives based on Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

III – Stocktaking and assessment of main co-financing instruments

Since the Lisbon Conference, science and research have been considered an integral part of the European development strategy and key topics to promote growth and competitiveness in the EU. Meantime, at the beginning of this century the effects of globalization have become evident in the Mediterranean area in terms of wider international trade, a larger variety of products, joint ventures among enterprises, greater integration, increasing of capital movements. In fact, in the last 10 years, there has been a strong growth of international flows of private capitals toward developing countries that had political repercussions on the EU-MPC dialogue and cooperation. In order to maintain its own role in the region, the EU has to support STI initiatives having a big socio-economic impact and visibility in all Member States and MPCs.

The EU recognizes the importance of developing STI in order to guarantee competitiveness on the international markets, as claimed in the Green Paper of 2011 (COM (2011) 48). Horizon 2020, the future Research and Innovation Programme of the EU, envisages the improvement of the ERA to achieve the ambition of Europe in providing a critical mass² and an international profile to research excellence, on the basis of a large participatory approach.

In this view cooperation among EU, Member States and third countries is of utmost importance. In fact, cooperation has economic implications and favours the creation of good and stable diplomatic relationships that ensure peace and, indirectly, international security. Even if the present paper is not intended to analyze in detail the political and economic scenario, for the sake of completeness we deem it necessary to highlight the strategic role of cooperation with MPCs, thanks to the geographical position of the EU in the Mediterranean and the strong synergies existing in the region.

The following part of the paper aims at analyzing the existing coordination tools within FP7 in order to identify contributions and benefits that such tools can give for a full co-ownership in the EU cooperation with MPCs.

ERANET scheme aims at developing and strengthening the coordination of national and regional research programmes in Member States. This instrument was launched to contribute to restructuring the European research framework, by improving coordination actions, reducing the level of fragmentation of the research funding system, establishing a long-term cooperation and encouraging the mutual opening of national and regional research programmes (Pérez and Guy, 2010). Thanks to the success achieved by the ERANET scheme, ERANET-Plus was designed to encourage owners and managers of national and regional research programmes to collaborate. The added value of “Plus” is that the Commission provides an incentive for the organization of joint calls by “topping-up” the joint transnational funding with Member States funds.

Currently, 31 ERANET/ERANET-Plus are active within the FP7 addressing the Mediterranean area; they mainly focus on a specific research topic, although some of them address horizontal issues and innovation. Only one ERANET Plus (iMERA+) had a bridge function towards the implementation of a long-term and stable legitimate form of cooperation like Article 185.

MPCs participate in only three ERANET schemes (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in ARIMNET, Egypt in ERAFRICA and Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia in FORESTERRA), about 10% of the total. The main constraints of MPCs are the low capacity at thematic, coordination and financial level. Despite the intention and efforts of the EU to promote a shared vision with MPCs using instruments like ERANET and the two calls foreseen in the Work Programme 2013 for the extension of ARIMNET and the launch of an ERANET “capacities”, the above percentage is not sufficient to guarantee cooperation with MPCs based on co-ownership and co-funding principles. It seems that the EU and MPCs are not yet capable to establish a process of cooperation beyond a simply allocation of funds to promote North–South economic integration and development.

Article 185 of TFEU (ex Article 169 TEC) goes beyond the coordination of joint calls (like ERANET) and requires integration of national research programmes at three different levels: scientific, managerial and financial. This instrument entails the joint implementation of national programmes (or parts of these), and the commitment (scientific, financial and political) of Member States for the whole duration of the initiative. Article 185 initiatives have different characteristics concerning duration, funds, level of integration among partners and potential impacts that highlight governance gap and poor integration among Member States. Common issues of Article 185 regard financial and governmental rules; in particular, the heterogeneity of funding timetable and mechanisms in each country causes a gap in scientific integration and development of activities. Article 185 lays down a complex coordination scheme very expensive to manage, as confirmed by EMRP report (EMRP, 2012). In addition, the existing Article 185 does not set out a real financial partnership and shared governance with third countries other than EU Member States.

So far, approved initiatives based on Article 185 are five, four of which fall within FP7 (AAL on the improvement of quality of life, BONUS on science in the Baltic Sea region, EUROSTARS on research and development of SMEs, EURAMET on metrology, EDCTP on clinical trials). No Article 185 has been launched, so far, in the Mediterranean region, with the exception of EDCTP in which Third Countries do not support financially the initiative, but they can participate in an independent advisory body that recommends suggestions to the Dedicated Implementation Structure.

Although Article 185 is in its infancy because of the few initiatives approved, in our view it can be a good instrument to favor a **stable and legitimate EU-MPCs cooperation** thanks to the **long-term commitment** and financial integration required to partners for the whole duration of the initiative. To this end, the EU should envisage a stronger involvement of programme owners, policy makers, scientific and business communities and a more coordinated approach to research and innovation. It is also necessary to define rules that simplify the access to cooperation tools, favouring a **full integration of MPCs** at decisional, financial and scientific level. Such rules should be flexible enough to allow the countries involved to react and to adapt to new challenges or promising opportunities.

IV – Sustainability and governance for a renewed cooperation

Considering the strategic role of Mediterranean countries in EU external trade and the current economic and political context emerged after the “Arab Spring”, a stable and durable relationship should be established for an integrated development of the Mediterranean basin. The EU has to deal with new challenges, shifting from the usual fragmented cooperation to a full partnership with MPCs in research and innovation. As highlighted in the previous section a new approach to EU-MPCs cooperation policies based on co-ownership and co-decision principles is necessary and could be supported by *ad hoc* STI instruments ensuring long-term and stable cooperation. The key aspects of such cooperation are:

1. *Participatory approach* during the co-decision phase of cooperation in STI, on the basis of common priorities and challenges. These can be identified in synergies and complementarities among European MSs and MPCs' research programmes. Sustainable and long-term cooperation can be guaranteed by a bottom-up approach and by the involvement of the cross-border chain of research and innovation.
2. *Financial commitment* of MPCs for the whole duration of initiatives, in order to guarantee a wide participation in the decision-making process and a more active involvement in joint implementation. The sharing of responsibility and commitment among Member States and MPCs allows better integration, the enhancement of capacity building, knowledge and innovation, and the achievement of common benefits and mutual interests.

3. *Flexible financial and administrative rules*, that take into account the asymmetry of governance and financial procedures of European MSs and MPCs, as well as the respective fields of research and innovation and different coordination tools. A flexible harmonization of financial and governmental procedures is strongly encouraged by all involved parties.

In order to be effective, the re-thinking of Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation outlined above should be sided by the establishment of a new governance.

So far, the periodical “restyling” of the Barcelona Process did not apparently lead to tangible and stable results. For this reason, long-term solutions are needed to ensure that the Mediterranean region becomes an area of peace, political stability and shared prosperity. Such solutions should be able to face the following challenges:

1) Weak coordination between bilateral and multilateral level

At present, Euro-Med relations work both at the bilateral and multilateral level. Each level has its respective commitments, initiatives and specific projects. However, there is scarce coordination between the two regimes of cooperation. This generates a duplication of efforts and a dispersal of potential synergies.

2) “EU-directed” programmes and policies

Despite the intensions announced in several Euro-Med conferences and ministerial meetings, the cooperation initiatives, tools and policies in place are “EU-directed”³ and not demand-driven. As outlined above, the at times “assistentialism” approach of the EU is counterproductive for real cooperation. An assessment of the needs is crucial for the conversion of the donor-beneficiary relationship into a cooperative one. In fact, responsibility and political commitment derive from mutual trust and sharing of objectives.

3) Institutional and administrative asymmetries

The institutional dynamics and administrative systems of the countries on the two shores of the Mediterranean are undoubtedly different. Thus, effective cooperation initiatives should take such differences into account. This means focussing on capacity building, on the exchange of best practices and on the legal harmonization between the EU and MPCs in key sectors, including research and higher education.

4) Top-down approach

Besides the “Eurocentrism” that characterized the history of Euro-Mediterranean relations, a top-down approach to the design of cooperation instruments and initiatives has negatively affected the results and, in the medium run, has contributed to both political instability and the following uprising of the civil society in many MPCs. The involvement of target beneficiaries of policies and programmes in the phase of strategy definition is crucial to ensure their success. This is particularly urgent for research, higher education and STI cooperation.

5) Divergent EU strategies

The 27 EU Member States are far from having a single approach and common objectives for their external relations. All EU policies are the result of an endless negotiation process and an extemporary balance of different interests. This is reflected in the fact that the EU internal strategy for growth and its related objectives seem to be in contrast with the goals of Euro-Med

cooperation⁵. Also, a partial shift of the EU from what was declared in terms of principles and what was put into practice has contributed to its failure to hit some Euro-Mediterranean cooperation targets (Kausch and Youngs, 2009).

These challenges cannot be faced without a concrete and shared political commitment, based on high-level policy dialogue. Such a commitment should be the milestone of a new framework for Euro-Mediterranean relations. In particular, the EU Members States and the MPCs should translate into practice the principles (declared on several occasions) based on mutual trust and will: co-ownership, co-management, co-working, co-financing. Co-financing is the principle that might drive the others, since it requires clear commitment prior to the launch of cooperation initiatives. In this regard, on the EU side the main effort consists in balancing the national interests of Member States and in developing a coherent set of policies both at the internal and external level. On the MPC side, the main responsibility is to play to the maximum extent the “partner” role.

At the same time, cooperation tools should be structured by taking into account requests, opinions and needs of the civil society. This could give more legitimacy to the actions developed through the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, that will no more be perceived as “imposed” by EU bureaucrats or by MPC governments, but developed to meet the real interests of citizens. This objective can be achieved through the inclusion of specific (and mandatory) listening and feedback actions in all programmes launched in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

In addition, capacity building and a constant exchange of best practices and lessons learned is essential to overcome the institutional imbalances and to develop a harmonized administrative management of the sectors that are included in cooperation. Of course, considering the complexity and the heterogeneity of the territories involved, harmonization cannot be full but should focus mainly on financing and bureaucratic procedures.

Keeping this in mind, the pillars of the new governance for Euro-Mediterranean relations could be summarized as follows: co-financing, shared responsibility, coherence and synergy among initiatives, involvement of the civil society, flexible harmonization.

Still, this might not be enough. With a closer look, we can state that the objective is not governance itself, but the contribution to an **ethical and sustainable development** of the region, with particular attention to societal, environmental and economic dimensions (and their interlinkages) (Bogliotti and Spangerberg, 2005). As a result, a sustainable cooperation scheme should take into account these three dimensions and orient policy dialogue towards the need to provide viable solutions for today’s problems without worsening tomorrow’s perspectives.

V – Conclusions

Competitiveness and prosperity in the EU, particularly in the Southern European member states, depend on the socio-economic and political stability of the neighbouring countries. At the same time the socio-economic growth and political changes in MPCs impinge upon the EU, particularly upon Southern Europe’s socio-economic and market perspectives.

This urges to develop a new vision of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to support sustainable growth in the region. Cooperation in science and technology, more than in other sectors, is the way to create new opportunities for regional growth through North-South equal sharing and co-ownership of knowledge development and innovation prospect.

EU cooperation instruments like ERANET schemes and EU legal means, like for example Article 185, should become common actions to support EU-MPCs cooperation. As recognized by the EU in the Barcelona Conference of April 2012, an initiative based on Article 185 and specifically targeted to the Mediterranean region could be a big occasion to design a framework for stable and long-term cooperation. Despite many thematic, coordination and financial constraints of MPCs,

the EU should develop instruments to stimulate and attract (both financial and coordination) these countries in such initiatives: MPCs should play a role in designing the process from the early steps and occupy a driving position in implementation and financial support. As a matter of fact, a wider and substantial involvement of MPCs in co-financing and co-programming would help pave the way to their integration in the European Research Area and increase their research absorption capacity in view of a future association to the EU research programming. In this respect, it is worth noting that in the last years, within ERANETs, INCONETs and similar initiatives addressing Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, MPCs have met regularly at a high level (Ministries of Research) to develop a mutual understanding and vision on research governance. In this perspective, such a type of initiatives represents a solid basis to build a common approach and vision, which are necessary to enhance the adoption of common policies amongst MPCs towards the EU on a long term basis.

To achieve these objectives it is strongly recommended that the cooperation process should be based on a North-South participatory approach, including the civil society, in order to create a new governance of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Finally, the prospect of developing financial synergies and stable cooperation between the EU and MPCs has to take into account common societal challenges to make a clear-cut contribution to the sustainable development of the region.

Notes

- ¹ The 16 non-EU countries of UfM are: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey.
- ² The critical mass is intended by the EC as a combined level of research effort, partner support, and resources, which is sufficient to tackle with success common research and societal challenge.
- ³ The Eurocentrism of cooperation initiatives has been a constant trait of Euro-Med relations. Even the UfM, that is claimed to be based on co-decision, co-management and co-ownership, seems to have failed from the beginning, since related initiatives “mostly originated from EU side” (Aliboni and Ammor, 2009).
- ⁴ As far as the Mediterranean region is concerned some authors maintain that “by its actions the EU has favoured regimes and practices that ultimately proved intolerable to a broad stratum of the Arab society” (Hollis, 2012).
- ⁵ This is particularly clear in trade and economic relations. The logic of the free movement of goods, capital, labour and services which is at the basis of EU “shared prosperity” has not been applied to Euro-Med cooperation (Hollis, 2012).

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