

### **PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST EXPECTED AFTER PARIS SUMMIT \*\*\***

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 14 - The day after the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean the attention of all is not on the future of the new entity but rather on that of the promises of peace sealed by the handshakes of the leaders of the Middle East. Israel, the Palestinian National Authority and Syria, in peace for a day, crowned Sarkozy's dream and now they will have to convince their countries and all other sceptics who do not see other than empty words behind the emphatic statements of Paris. The historic statement which Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert pronounced yesterday, "Peace has never been so close", shook the public opinion on the four continents and caused the sceptical reaction of the Israelis ready to bet that Olmert said that knowing it could be one of his last international appearances, given the fact that his Government is increasingly weak and his exit out of the political stage looks ever closer. Contrary to the scepticism on the southern coast come the praises of the European countries, united in defining Sarkozy's deed "a diplomatic success". The "steps ahead and the opening for peace" which the British media describe couple with the Spanish dailies which speak of "Mediterranean overwhelmed by peace". All dailies feature the photograph of French President Sarkozy who embraces Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). Surely, there are doubts also in Europe on the risks that the good promises may not be followed by facts, but Europe's diplomatic tradition imposes not to abandon any opportunity, by also elaborating on the fragile hopes. "We are just at the beginning", the German media warn which also voice the doubts on the "surprising rehabilitation" of Syrian President Assad, perhaps too hasty because it concerns a country that "does not have a clear policy". The uncertainties of those who do not believe that peace in the Middle East is closer as of yesterday are also aggravated by the backstage unveiled by French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner today, on the Israeli-Palestinian quarrel on the definition of "national state" to be inserted in the final declaration of the summit. The Israelis wanted a reference to a "state for the Jewish people", while the Palestinians opposed this and demanded the wording in question to take into account the problem of the return of the Palestinian refugees. In the end, no definition was inserted, so as to overcome the impasse. But if one can only sit and watch on the developments in the Middle East, what will be actively employing in the next months the diplomats of the 44 Euro-Mediterranean countries will be the organisational aspect of the Union for the Mediterranean. The states must define the headquarters of the secretariat (among Tunis, Rabat, Valletta and Barcelona) and to find the funds to launch the six grand projects which, if completed, will make the Mediterranean the sea which all peoples of the world will envy. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-14 18:27

### **MED UNION: IT IS ALREADY A HISTORIC SUCCESS, KOUCHNER**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 10 - The Paris summit for the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean "is already a historic success", French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said speaking of the meeting that will gather some 40 Mediterranean heads of state and government in the French capital on Saturday and Sunday. "There were many obstacles," Kouchner said, recalling the need to "convince" Spaniards, Italians and Germans, as well as the Turks and the "countries from the southern coast". The difficulties also included the problem of convincing all potential participants in the Union that "the presence of Israel is natural". According to the minister, the union is "a great idea" because "the Mediterranean is the centre of all major problems of the years 2000". "Development, migrations, peace, dialogue between civilisations, access to water and energy, environment and climate change: the fundamental game for our future is played south of Europe." But history is not made in one day: "Time is needed. Nothing will be completed in the evening of July 13,"

Kouchner said. The key principles of the Union for the Mediterranean will be three: "constant dialogue at the highest level with meetings every two years, a partnership with a secretariat and equally shared presidency between the two coasts, priority to the concrete projects". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-10 16:40

#### **MED UNION: UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN IS REAL**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) was born under the lucky star of the handshaking between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority and the return of Syria on the stage of international diplomacy. The French President Nicolas Sarkozy is satisfied: "It is an historic moment, we will make the Mediterranean an area of peace and we will build there what we have built through the European Union". The UFM, inaugurated today by 43 Euromediterranean leaders, will become operative by the end of 2008 and its final assets will be decided by the Foreign Ministers in November. "The greatest success of the summit is the participation: the Arab countries sat next to Israel. The second success is that we approved unanimously the final document," Sarkozy said so dispelling rumours according to which Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) had left the conference room when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert delivered his speech. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 20:59

#### **MED UNION: ASSAD, UP UNTIL 2 YEARS FOR PEACE WITH ISRAEL**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - Syrian President Bashar al- Assad announced that it could take from six months to two years to reach a peace agreement with Israel if the parties, who have held indirect negotiations, are really interested in having direct talks. "Signing a peace accord with Israel ... it's a question that requires six months to two years maximum if both parties are serious in engaging direct talks," Assad said talking to French television France 2. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 20:47

#### **MED UNION: SARKOZY, FUNDS ARE NO PROBLEM IF THERE'S STABILITY**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - "It will not be a problem to find the funds to realize the great projects of the Union for the Mediterranean, now that there is an agreement to give stability to the region". The statement was made by French President Nicolas Sarkozy after the press conference at the end of Paris' summit. "The funds are even more than you believe", he underlined explaining that so far the investments for the Mediterranean were blocked by "lack of confidence in the region". But, according to the President, "today's summit gives the greenlight to everyone's commitment for peace, thus the investments will increase even more". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 20:41

#### **MED UNION: CHAOS AT GRAND PALAIS, NO INTERNET CONNECTION**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - A big political success of the Union for the Mediterranean launched today in Paris by French President Nicola Sarkozy, but also a day of chaos for citizens tourists and journalists. In particular, the press room was not well-equipped and the Internet connection went out of order. Many journalists were forced to go back to their offices due to the lack of seats in the press room. Moreover, the speeches of the political

representatives were behind closed doors and several tv monitors were switched off. The ones still working had to deal with wi-fi connection that was on and off all day long, while the Internet connection did not work at all causing many damages to the journalists. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 20:02

#### **MED UNION: SARKOZY ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF UFM (2)**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - Sarkozy announced the foundation of the Union for the Mediterranean formed by 43 countries, half an hour later than scheduled. At the press conference, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak sat next to Sarkozy. Mubarak co-chaired the summit. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 19:54

#### **MED UNION: SARKOZY ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF UFM**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced the official launch of the Union for the Mediterranean in a press conference at Paris' Grand Palais. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 19:44

#### **MED UNION: SPAIN PROPOSES BARCELONA AS SEAT OF SECRETARIAT**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Moratinos put forward the candidacy of Barcelona as the seat of the Secretariat of Union for the Mediterranean. "I proposed Barcelona as the seat of the Secretariat of the UFM," Moratinos said to journalists. Barcelona, the minister said, has been the birthplace of the Euro-Mediterranean project. "There are other candidates but from now till November, when the official decision will be made, we'll have to gain a total consent", he added. Besides Tunisia and Spain, Morocco and Malta are to be candidates to host the seat. France expressed its preference for a country of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 19:40

#### **MED UNION: BARROSO, I'LL DISCUSS WITH EU PARTNERS ON SYRIA**

(ANSAméd9 - PARIS, JULY 13 - On the relationships with Syria, "legitimized" in Paris with the foundation of the Union for the Mediterranean, the President of the European Commission José Manuel Durao Barroso will discuss with the 27 partners in order to decide a possible development of the relations between Brussels and Damascus, at the moment still frozen. Talking to by some journalists during a break of the summit, Barroso at first tried to put on the same level the participation and that of other countries. "President Sarkozy invited the leaders of the region - he said - and it was a good idea to invite Damascus too. It's a fact that Syria, together with other countries, decided to take part in this initiative with its President and that shows the importance attributed to the initiative". After a few questions on the same topic underlining the different relationships between Damascus and Paris and Brussels, Barroso announced "on the relationships we'll discuss with all member states". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 18:52

### **UNION MED: ARAB LEAGUE APPOINTED PERMANENT OBSERVER**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean accepted to give to the Arab League the role of permanent observer at the Union for the Mediterranean. The announcement was made in Cairo by Abdellalim el Abiad, spokesman of the Secretary General of the panarab organization. Abiad also underlined that the Arab countries of the Mediterranean managed to include the Araba peace initiative in the Middle East in the final document of the summit, which is taking place in Paris. He also defined as "advanced" the European position on the peace process, compared to the US one. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 18:15

### **MED UNION: BARROSO, PEACE IN THE EU AFTER WAR GREAT EXEMPLE**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - "Europe after the war was completely divided, there was the Iron Curtain. Today we are all together and we share the same values. The EU is an excellent inspiration for the Union for the Mediterranean and for those countries that have not known peace yet". The statement was made by the European Commision's president José Manuel Barroso, during a break from the waorks of the Paris' summit. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 17:35

### **MED UNION: POTTERING, IT'S NO ALTERNATIVE TO TURKEY'S ENTRY**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) it is not an alternative to Turkey's EU membership, the President of European Parliament Hans Gert Pottering said today in Paris speaking on the fringes of the summit for the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM). According to the President "the foundation of the UFM has never meant to be an alternative to Turkish EU membership. They are two different things and they keep on being it". "The developments in Turkey - he added - are something that we must consider carefully, but happy that the Turkish Premier Erdogan is here today together with the other leaders". As fa as the summit is concerned, Pottering called it "a great success" which is taking place in a friendly atmosphere". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 17:26

### **MED UNION: MUBARAK, LET'S OPEN NEW PHASE OF PEACE IN MIDEAST**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - It's an appeal to peace and to dialogue in the Middle East the satetemtn made by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak today in Paris at the opening of the summit for the Union for the Mediterranean. "I ask Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Israeli Premier Ehud Olmert to keep walking in the path of peace negotiations in order to realizea total and global peace, to establish an indipendent Palestinian State and to open a new page of peace in the Middle East," Mubarak said. The Egyptian President, who believes "it is necessary learning from the past to understand the erasons for failure", hopes that "a new phase of peace in the Middle East will be opened". "Southern people must deal with many challenges - he added - education, food, health, social security. I ask you all to take these challenges into consideration". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 17:19

### **MED UNION: SARKOZY, UFM CAN BECOME LIKE THE EU**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - "What we have created in the European uninon we can create it for the Mediterranean. As of today we have to be united in order to build an area

of security, solidarity and justice". The statement was made by the French President for Republic Nicolas Sarkozy opening the works of the summit for the Union for the Mediterranean. In his opening speech, Sarkozy explained that "there are no divisions between North and South of the Mediterranean, we all have same rights and duties". The new Union will be based on a "solidarity spirit coming to us from geography and history," he added. "We share same peace values, that is why we'll be able to create a stable Mediterranean, free from wars," Sarkozy underlined. "Now, we all have to get involved to overcome problems - he concluded - there are no differences between coastal and non coastal countries. We all have the same responsibility to exploit this historic opportunity". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 16:11

### **MED UNION: SARKOZY AND MUBARAK OPEN SUMMIT**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The works of the summit aimed at the launching the Union for the Mediterranean has kicked off in Paris. After welcoming the 43 guests at the entrance of the Grand Palais, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy along with the Union's co-president Hosni Mubarak, started off the summit. At two presidents' left sit the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the European Commission President José Manuel Durao Barroso and the President of the European Parliament Hans Gert Pottering. Follow, in alphabetic order, the European representatives of the Northern shore of the Mediterranean. To Sarkozy and Mubarak's right, next to some European leaders, sit the leaders of the Southern shore also in alphabetic order together with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas, African Union's representatives, EIB, World Bank and Organization of the Islamic Conference representatives. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 16:01

### **MED UNION: DRAFT CONCLUSIONS; ACCORD ON TERRORISM FOUND**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The heads of States and governments of the Euromediterranean countries reached an agreement on a condemnation to terrorism. "The Union for the Mediterranean are determined to eradicate the phenomenon, combat its sponsors and deal with all situations that contribute to its diffusion," it's written in the new draft conclusions. The agreement was made possible by including, in the final declaration, of the formula proposed by Arab countries that is " the Union for the Mediterranean rejects any attempt to associate religion or culture with terrorism". A reference to the "full application of the Code of Conduct on countering terrorism," was also added. The Code was already approved by the Euromediterranean countries but it has never come into force because of the obstructionism of several Arab countries, including Syria. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 14:07

### **MED UNION: THE 'BIG DAY' KICKS OFF AT THE GRAND PALAIS**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 13 - The 'big day of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has began this morning at Paris' Grand Palais. The Union will be officially launched this afternoon by French President Nicolas Sarkozy at the presence of 42 head of states and governments. 18,000 policemen deployed around the historic building located between the right shore of the Seine and the Champs Elysees and around the most sensible spots of the French capital. The mobilisation will last 48 hours because the leaders present at the summit will also take part tomorrow in the celebrations for July 14. The Union for the

Mediterranean will be formed by 44 countries, based on the principle of codecision of the two coasts and aimed at the carrying out of concrete projects. The only unjustified absence from the summit is Libya, of Gaddafi who rejected the project, calling it "an evil idea and an insult to Arab and African countries". Algeria, until two days uncertain about its participation in the summit, has decided to take part after obtaining a promise that there would be no group photo on which President Abdelaziz Bouteflika would be forced to appear together with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-13 12:59

### **MED UNION: NORTH, SOUTH EQUAL PARTNERS, NOW FUND HUNT STARTS**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) which will be launched on Sunday in Paris will be formed by 44 countries, based on the principle of codecision of the two coasts and aimed at the carrying out of concrete projects: these few elements are enough to make it an organisation completely different from the first Euro-Mediterranean partnership, or the Barcelona Process, which at Sunday's summit will be replaced by the new structure promoted by French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The fiercest critics of the Barcelona Process, that is, the governments of South Mediterranean countries, have always complained of the decision-making mechanism concentrated exclusively on the directives of Brussels and little open to their initiative. In fact, it was always the rotating presidency of the EU to call the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meetings and prepare their agenda, and the financial instrument of the Barcelona Process, the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) of the European Investment Bank (EIB), was again related to Brussels. With the UfM South and North Mediterranean countries will finally have the same right to initiative and decision-making: the Union will have a rotating double North-South presidency with two-year term and a permanent secretariat. The first presidents of the organisation will be France (it is still unclear whether its term will end in December to be replaced by the next president of the EU) and Egypt. The competition for the seat of the secretariat is still open and on Sunday it will be announced whether it is won by Tunis (boycotted by many for Tunisia's bad record of human rights abuses), Rabat or Malta, or Barcelona will be the compromise choice. All decisions will be made by the heads of state and government of the North and South Mediterranean countries, which will meet every two years, just like foreign ministers, in order to have a meeting capable of making decisions and giving recommendations every year. There are already the first indications for common projects, the core of the new organization: clean the Mediterranean by 2020, connect all countries in the region with sea motorways, use solar energy and create common civil protection to deal with the numerous emergencies in the area (boats carrying illegal immigrants, oil spills). More ideas will be presented on Sunday, such as the Italian-Spanish proposal to create a development agency for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The fund hunt will start on Monday already: the task is entrusted to the secretariat which will have to seek funding mainly from the private sector, although the European Commission does not exclude the possibility to provide some funding from the EU budget. Soon after a Mediterranean investment bank will be created, modeled after EIB, which will fund the major projects and will manage the savings of UfM member states. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 17:01

### **MED UNION: EU COMMISSION TO TRANSLATE SUMMIT IN 29 LANGUAGES**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The summit of the Euro-Mediterranean countries, which will be held in Paris's Grand Palais on July 13, will be available to listen in 29

languages. In fact, the European Commission has provided, for the first time, a service of interpreters who will simultaneously translate in 29 languages. All the participants will thus be able to express themselves and listen to the speeches in their mother tongue. In order to ensure a constant communication among the speakers, the European Commission has prepared a team of 88 interpreters. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 17:21

#### **MED UNION: UFM NOT TO FORGET RIGHTS, AMNESTY TO SARKOZY**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - Concern that the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM), which will be established with the Paris summit on Sunday, risks excluding human rights from its intervention scope is contained in the letter sent to French President Nicolas Sarkozy by Amnesty International. "Since the beginning we have saluted the Barcelona Process as an opportunity to raise the attention towards human rights, though aware of the existent lacks in this respect and of the scarce involvement of the civil society in the project," the organisation wrote. Amnesty's wish is that "the respect of human rights should be the principle on which all the relations between the EU and third countries will be based and that the UFM develop a monitoring system in all the member states to highlight existent deficiencies". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 16:56

#### **MED UNION: DRAFT CONCLUSIONS; NO ACCORD ON TERRORISM**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The countries on both sides of the Mediterranean are split in the definition of terrorism to be included in the final declaration which will be read in Paris on the occasion of the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The information is contained in the draft conclusions of which ANSA has obtained a copy. The European countries want to include "a condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and the determination to eradicate the phenomenon and combat its sponsors". However, Arab countries disagree with this formula and have proposed to include instead "firm condemnation and rejection of any attempt to associate religion or culture with terrorism". Moreover, they want the final declaration to contain a reference to the "end of occupations and oppression of peoples". The Euro-Mediterranean heads of state and government will reach an agreement on the final version of the political declaration on Sunday morning, before the summit at which UfM will be launched. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 14:43

#### **MED UNION: CONCLUSIONS DRAFT; COMMITMENT TO MIDEAST CONFLICT**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The leaders of the Euro-Mediterranean countries are committed to work for a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and encourage all parties to continue with the negotiations for the creation of two states, an Israeli one living in security and a Palestinian one, sovereign and democratic, according to the draft declaration of the Paris summit that will give life to the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) next Sunday of which ANSA obtained a copy. According to the closing declaration draft, the final status of the two sovereign states must be accepted by both parties. The discussion on the impact the conflict had on the previous partnership still remains open. The EU states would like a more explicit reference to the "blockade" that the conflict imposed to the Euro-Mediterranean over the past years, while the Arab States reject such definition as they do not want to take alone the full responsibility for the failure of the

Barcelona Process. The heads of state and government will resolve all disputes on Sunday morning in Paris in their last meeting before the summit. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 14:40

### **MED UNION: DRAFT CONCLUSIONS, THREE NEW STRUCTURES OF UNION**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The Union for the Mediterranean will have a co-presidency (the EU state will chair for six months while the Mediterranean one will be in charge for two non-renewable years), a secretariat with technical competences and autonomous statute and a permanent committee in Brussels which will coordinate the works and emergency situations in the area. These are the main points of the Union for the Mediterranean on the basis of the draft which ANSA has obtained. According to the draft conclusions of the Paris summit which will launch the Union for the Mediterranean on Sunday, the composition of the new institutions will be decided at the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministers next November. Contrary to what was previously announced, the funds of the Union for the Mediterranean will come partly from the EU budget. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 13:05

### **MED UNION: MEDITERRANEAN WILL BE REGION OF PEACE, FRATTINI**

(ANSAméd) - TEL AVIV, JULY 11 - While Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is preparing to leave for Paris tomorrow for the summit which will launch the Union for the Mediterranean where Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will also be present, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini assures daily Haaretz that the Union for the Mediterranean will turn the area into a "region of peace". Frattini gave the long interview during his recent visit in Jerusalem. The Union for the Mediterranean will help directly and indirectly the Middle East peace process, Frattini expects. "It will create preferential conditions for rapprochement and for invigorating the negotiators," Frattini explains. "The fact that Syrians and Israelis will sit at the same table is a source for optimism. We can already expect a very important political achievement." Frattini also adds that "a rare opportunity has been created here to achieve a settlement and to transform the entire Mediterranean Basin into a region of peace, development and security - a region that will succeed in bringing about the retreat of all those elements that are leading to Islamic radicalization, violence and terrorism, all those phenomena which you here in Israel are so familiar with, to our great regret." The minister points out that with the Union for the Mediterranean the European presence in the region will grow, but not necessarily to the detriment of the presence of the United States. "We need a great deal more Europe, but not at the expense of less USA. More Europe and more USA, working together and playing the same role for realizing the same goal," Frattini said. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 12:40

### **MED UNION: HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS LAUNCH AN APPEAL**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - Making the Union for the Mediterranean a social pact involving the people rather than only an agreement of economic and commercial type is one of the messages launched by the human rights organisations and trade unions gathered in Casablanca, Morocco, ahead of the Paris summit, which will launch next Sunday the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM). At the end of the meeting, the participants called upon the heads of state and government, who will participate in the summit and the French presidency of the EU Council in particular, for the Union to be based on respect of

human rights, especially the freedom of expression, and to fight discrimination especially against women. The participants also expressed their hope that the UFM will contribute for the development and stability of all involved countries and that the NGOs will be regularly consulted and involved in the decision making process. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-11 11:26

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: ITALY, FRANCE SET UP INFRAMED FUND**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 10 - French state-owned bank Caisse des dépôts et consignations (Cdc) and its Italian counterpart Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia have announced the launch of a fund for investment in the infrastructure of Mediterranean countries which will become operative in 2009. According to the two banking institutions, this is a "contribution to the Union for the Mediterranean" which President Sarkozy will launch on July 13 at the Grand Palais in Paris in the presence of representatives of more than 40 countries. The objective of InfraMed is to collect 600 million euro which will be invested indirectly in local funds funding infrastructure or directly in already existing projects, mainly in the sectors of transport, energy, environment. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-10 20:00

### **MED UNION: EP PRESIDENT WELCOMES THE UFM MODEL**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 10 - "The European Parliament is very pleased that the model of the Union for the Mediterranean (Ufm), which it always defended, involving all members of the European Union, is what was finally achieved", European Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering said ahead of the Paris summit for the Mediterranean, on July 13. "With the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership enters a new phase, it will become stronger, more efficient, and closer to citizens. I strongly underlined the need for an enhanced parliamentary dimension of the whole process" he added. On the day before the Summit, the EP and Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) President will chair an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly's Bureau, that will approve a declaration that highlights the role of EMPA as the legitimate parliamentary body of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'. The declaration will be presented by President Pöttering to the Council President. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-10 19:22

### **MED UNION: LIBYA OUT, ISRAEL, PALESTINE IN TOGETHER \*\*\***

(by Chiara De Felice) (ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 10 - The only unjustified absence from the summit in Paris which will launch the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) will be Libya because the remaining 44 countries from the two coasts of the Mediterranean will be represented: from Mauritania to Turkey for the South, from Portugal to Lithuania for the North, the Euro-Mediterranean leaders have answered to the appeal of French President Nicolas Sarkozy and on Sunday will greet the birth of the new partnership and will attend the handshake between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, together for the occasion. Sarkozy has arranged things so that on July 13 not only the birth of the Union is celebrated but also the dress rehearsal for the reconciliation in the Middle East: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will sit next to PNA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and also Syrian President Bashar al Assad will return for the first time on the table of international diplomacy after the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the accusations for Syria's alleged direct involvement in the case. Turkey also

has put rancour aside and on Sunday Prime Minister Tayyp Erdogan will smile from the Grand Palais in Paris together with the others, comforted by the promise of the president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso: Ankaràs membership in the UfM was not an alternative to the EU membership talks, he said. However, the Turkish know that they will have to settle accounts with France which wants them in the UfM but does not want them in the EU and is ready to do everything to slacken Turkey's talks with Brussels. Syria, Israel and PNA, the southeast countries most uncertain in their response to Sarkozy, bring to 44 the number of countries which will be part of the UfM, five more compared to the Barcelona Process or the Euro-Mediterranean partnership because the West Balkan countries and Monaco also have been invited. All Maghreb countries have joined the initiative, except for Libya of Gaddafi who rejected the project, calling it "an evil idea and an insult to Arab and African countries". Algeria, until two days uncertain about its participation in the summit, has decided to take part after obtaining a promise that there would be no group photo on which President Abdelaziz Bouteflika would be forced to appear together with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. Everyone has agreed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has blocked the first Euro-Mediterranean partnership should not ruin the festivity of the 44 leaders. We would have to see whether the dress rehearsal of the Middle East reconciliation which Sarkozy is preparing for Sunday will be only an act or a prologue to a new course. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-10 17:37

#### **MED UNION: MARKED BY SARKOZY ANNOUNCEMENT, BENSAAD**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 10 - The Union for the Mediterranean is "marked by an original sin, related to its own announcement," Ali Bensaad, Algerian university professor at the French university of Provenza, said in an article published by daily Le Monde. The Algerian scientist refers to the speech held by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Toulon on February 7, 2008. This speech, "the matrix of the project", focused on the "obsession to control the South", besides the partial rehabilitation of the colonisation "ruled by Sarkozy a dream of civilisation, rather than a dream of a conquest." According to Bensaad, on the same occasion the French president excluded the possibility for a potential membership of Turkey in the European Union, offering "as a palliative" the membership in the Union for the Mediterranean. "How is it possible not to conclude that the concept of the Mediterranean behind the idea of Sarkozy is of a periphery of Europe, whose governance is entrusted to an unbalanced partnership?" Bensaad writes. Making out of the migratory question the first of its pillars, the Union for the Mediterranean "further expands the scissors which separate the North and the South," and reflects "a priority reversal compared to the intentions of the declaration from Barcelona," the document signed in 1995 by the leaders from the two coasts and which has been the basis for the regional policy ever since. Among the fundamental issues of the declaration: the development, the promotion of human rights and the integration in the Mediterranean area. "The Barcelona Process failed, because it has not been provided with the necessary economic means in order to achieve its ambitious goals," Bensaad explains. In the past ten years "the EU invested in the countries from the South thirty-fold less than in the countries in Eastern Europe." The result: "the Mediterranean is the region with the biggest gap between the North and the South, but also the only one where it keeps growing." And this "is the only real motive for a contrast in the region, certainly not a claimed cultural split that anyone would like to neutralise," the scientist concludes. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-10 19:04

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: ARABS WANT MIDEAST WITHOUT WMD**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 10 - The Arab States want to include in the final declaration that will launch the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) a phrase that will refer to the absence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East, including Israel, EU sources said. The Arab governments, led by Egypt, called upon their colleagues in the UFM to include in the final document an explicit reference to a "Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction". Currently negotiations are underway because the clear hint of Israel (considered by many holder of such weapons, although their existence have never been confirmed) could trigger certain friction between the Israelis and the governments of their neighbouring states. The final declaration of the Paris summit will also include a detailed list of the projects to be launched as soon as possible. (ANSAméd).  
2008-07-10 17:53

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: GERMANY TO HELP BUILD SOLAR PLANTS**

(ANSAméd) - BERLIN, JULY 10 - A few days before the Paris conference for the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean, Germany announced that it will help the construction of solar power plants in the EU neighbouring countries which are at the Mediterranean. "We have the technology, our partner states have sun, the advantage will be for everybody," Minister of State for Foreign affairs, Guenter Gloser (SPD), told today German news agency DPA. Gloser added that the Union for the Mediterranean will bring ahead other concrete projects, such as development of the transport networks and stimulating small and medium-sized enterprises. The minister added that for these goals new offices will not be created and financed because "the contrary opinions in the EU Parliament are too many". The German minister confirmed that an agreement on the central seat of the Union for the Mediterranean and on the structure of the envisaged double presidency has not been reached. Probably, according to Gloser, these points will be discussed in November in Madrid during a summit of the foreign ministers of the states of the Union for the Mediterranean. (ANSAméd).  
2008-07-10 17:33

### **MED UNION: IT IS ALREADY A HISTORIC SUCCESS, KOUCHNER**

(ANSAméd) - PARIS, JULY 10 - The Paris summit for the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean "is already a historic success", French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said speaking of the meeting that will gather some 40 Mediterranean heads of state and government in the French capital on Saturday and Sunday. "There were many obstacles," Kouchner said, recalling the need to "convince" Spaniards, Italians and Germans, as well as the Turks and the "countries from the southern coast". The difficulties also included the problem of convincing all potential participants in the Union that "the presence of Israel is natural". According to the minister, the union is "a great idea" because "the Mediterranean is the centre of all major problems of the years 2000". "Development, migrations, peace, dialogue between civilisations, access to water and energy, environment and climate change: the fundamental game for our future is played south of Europe." But history is not made in one day: "Time is needed. Nothing will be completed in the evening of July 13," Kouchner said. The key principles of the Union for the Mediterranean will be three: "constant dialogue at the highest level with meetings every two years, a partnership with a secretariat and equally shared presidency between the two coasts, priority to the concrete projects". (ANSAméd).  
2008-07-10 16:40

### **MED UNION: LE MONDE PUBLISHES OPEN LETTER TO LEADERS**

(ANSAMed) - PARIS, JULY 10 - An open letter of encouragement to the heads of state of the Union for the Mediterranean was published by daily Le Monde, with the signatures of former French Prime Minister Alain Juppe, former European commissioner Chris Patten, former French minister Hubert Vedrine, former president of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers Romano Prodi, and former Algerian Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche, among others. The text, edited by French-Algerian journalist Akram Belkaid and French economist Erik Orsenna, opens with an appreciation as regards the Union for the Mediterranean: "Finally, an initiative on the level of the challenges of globalisation! The world's economic areas which function are the ones able to unite the north - the countries endowed with methods and technologies - with the south - the countries whose markets are in full growth," citing the examples of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The four big challenges indicated are energy, climate, the demographic situation (the aging of the population in the northern Mediterranean and an end to the demographic transitions in the south) and lastly the political one: "a new social pact in the north and the progress of democracy in the south". All goals are urgent: "We have thirty years to make it, without an alternative: either we unite, or we isolate. Time presses; have the courage needed to make from this summit scheduled in Paris the recognition of a historical tie and the beginning of a common destiny". (ANSAMed).

2008-07-10 17:32

### **GREECE-SPAIN: KARAMANLIS, ZAPATERO FOR MEDITERRANEAN UNION**

(ANSAMed) - ATHENS, JULY 10 - The Prime Ministers of Greece and Spain Costas Karamanlis and Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero confirmed today their support for the Mediterranean Union proposed by French president Nicolas Sarkozy at the end of a meeting in Athens which focused mostly on bilateral and European issues. Zapatero, who met earlier today Greek President Karolos Papoulias, arrived to Athens yesterday for his first official visit to Greece. The two leaders told a news conference at the end of the talks that they discussed issues of bilateral interest, the future of the European treaty in the light of the Irish 'no', the problem with illegal immigration and the problem with environment with particular reference to the collaboration in the sector of renewable energy. According to the Spanish media, the promotion of the Spanish investments in Greece in the field of wind energy was one of the objectives of Zapatero's visit. The media suggested also that the visit was aimed at favouring an eventual sale of six frigates to the Greek Navy in a deal in which Spain competes with France and Germany. Zapatero and Karamanlis will continue their talks at a work lunch where they will discuss international issues. Before leaving from Athens, the Spanish prime minister will also meet centre-left opposition leader and president of the Socialist International George Papandreou. (ANSAMED).

2008-07-10 15:12

### **MED UNION: ARABS WANT REAL PARTNERSHIP, ISLAM EXPERT**

(ANSAMed) - PARIS, JULY 10 - Anybody who has a common sense cannot reject the principle of the Union for the Mediterranean, an old and deep aspiration of the populations, and an unique way to be done in the context of the threats and uncertainties of the globalisation which leads to the opportunities of a common world in particular around the Mediterranean. But the difficulties and obstacles, both in the south and north, are still many, and it does not seem that this project is the one of a partnership between the European Union and the Arab World wished by the Arabs. This is the opinion of Mustapha

Cherif, a famous Algerian theologian, former minister and ambassador, who from the pages of Le Monde solicits for "a diagnosis without satisfaction and a vision of the future", indispensable for the research "of a new regional and international order with less inequality". The project of French President Nicolas Sarkozy - about which Algeria is still puzzled even if President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, announced that he will be in Paris on July 13 for the launch of the initiative - has according to Cherif, "the merit to give us an opportunity to reformulate the fundamental questions concerning the relations between the populations in the region". But the obstacles are numerous, and among those for the south he mentions "the level of development in flagrant asymmetry with the EU countries which complicates from the beginning the possibility for a union", "the insufficiency in the field of cooperation and integration between the southern coast", "the illiteracy, the uncontrolled demography, the brain drain, the illegal immigration". As regards the north, Cherif mentions within the main obstacles "the discriminatory policy to the people of the south", "Islamophobia", "the impotence or complicity in the main conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian drama which takes hostage any project of partnership", "the EU refusal to recognise the misdeeds of the colonisation". Another defect of the project, Cherif adds, is its limitation to technical projects such as sea pollution and sea motorways, certainly interesting for everybody while "we believed too much that similar project would be a project of a partnership between the EU and the Arab World". "The EU-Arab dialogue was forgotten, the concept of Arab World and Maghreb seems to have disappeared, we are not against a global approach, but on condition that the EU launches a real process of partnership, negotiation and regulation of the conflicts and convinces the Quartet to change and examine the proposal of peace made at the Arab summit in Beirut in 2002". (ANSAMed).

2008-07-10 16:26

#### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: SARKOZY AND MUBARAK TO CO-CHAIR SUMMIT**

(ANSAMed) - PARIS, JULY 10 - French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who also holds the EU's rotating presidency, and his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak will co-chair the summit which will launch the Union for the Mediterranean in Paris on Sunday, the Elysee Palace said yesterday. Sarkozy will meet on Saturday both Mubarak and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, it was specified. The summit will unite in the French capital on Sunday afternoon all heads of state or government of the European Union together with most of the leaders of the countries lying on the Mediterranean. "On the sidelines of the summit President Sarkozy will hold a series of preparatory meetings with various leaders present," the French presidency added. (ANSAMed).

2008-07-10 09:17

#### **EUROMED: EMPA BUREAU TO MEET IN PARIS AHEAD OF UFM SUMMIT**

(ANSAMed) - BRUSSELS, JULY 11 - The enlarged Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) is to adopt a declaration on Saturday positioning EMPA as the parliamentary wing of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). This message will then be relayed by European Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering to heads of state and government at the UfM inauguration summit, to be held in Paris on Sunday. Chaired by Mr Poettering, the Bureau is composed of Jordanian Parliament Speaker Abdel Hadi Al-Majali, Italian National Assembly Speaker Gianfranco Fini, and Moroccan Parliament Speaker Mustapha Mansouri. Members of the European Parliament Tokia Saifi (EPP-ED, FR) and Edward McMillan-Scott (EPP-ED, UK) will take part in the enlarged Bureau

meeting as, respectively, chair of the EMPA political affairs committee and chair of the working group on the rules of procedure. (ANSAmEd).

2008-07-11 09:43

#### **EUROMED: EMPA BUREAU TO MEET IN PARIS AHEAD OF UFM SUMMIT**

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2008-07-10 09:08

#### **MED UNION: KARAMANLIS-ZAPATERO DUE TO MEET TOMORROW**

(ANSAmEd) - ATHENS, JULY 9 - Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis will meet tomorrow in Athens his Spanish counterpart Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, government sources said today. According to the media, apart from the bilateral subjects the talks will focus mostly on the Mediterranean Union proposed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and supported by both countries. According to PASOK sources, Zapatero will meet left-wing opposition leader and president of the Socialist International (SI) George Papandreou. Zapatero did not attend the 23rd SI congress recently held near Athens. (ANSAmEd).

2008-07-09 19:40

#### **MED UNION:REVISED AND CORRECTED SARKO'S IDEA BECOMES REALITY**

(By Chiara de Felice) (ANSAmEd)- BRUSSELS, JULY 8 - It was the idea of French President Nicolas Sarkozy since his election in 2007 and on Sunday it will finally become reality with some alterations: it has taken only a year to create the Union for the Mediterranean, the project which few wanted but today everyone approves, and Sarkozy will make history as the president who united the Mediterranean expanding its borders to the Baltic Sea. Although the Union, which will be launched on Sunday at the forthcoming summit in Paris, would be a revised and corrected version of Sarkozy's initial project, the French President will receive the patent and the honours: he is the host of the summit which he called already a year ago - though he did not yet have the approval of everyone and particularly of the EU - he is the one to negotiate with the heads of state of South Mediterranean countries, and he has managed to overshadow Tony Blair, special envoy for the Middle East, if the rumours for French mediation for exchange of prisoners between Israel and Hamas are confirmed. Sarkozy is also given credit for completely reforming one of the European policies in only a year, as Financial Times wrote two days ago. The new Union will replace the Barcelona Process, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in 1994 which entered a standstill soon after due to the obstructionism of some southern countries and the influence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When Sarkozy launched the idea to establish the Union for the Mediterranean in the spring of 2007 what he had in

mind was an organisation modelled on the EU joined only by the coastal countries. He immediately employed his diplomacy to seek the approval of the governments of South Mediterranean countries, confident in the participation of North Mediterranean countries, given the good relations with Spain and Italy. It was not Zapatero and Prodi to hinder the plans of France - in December 2007 they officially backed the initiative in the declaration of Rome - but Angela Merkel's Germany, an unexpected obstacle since with its opposition it did not make obvious the desire of a leading position in the sea on which Berlin does not have a natural outlet. Merkel demanded and obtained a decision that the Union would include non coastal countries as well, and managed to convince more sceptical governments such as those of Britain, Poland and the Baltic countries that being excluded from the new 'club Med' would be dangerous. The European Commission, which agreed with Sarkozy's inspiring principle but opposed to Brussels' exclusion from the new organization, also supported the proposal for an expanded Union. This is how during the EU summit in the spring of 2008 the European leaders agreed on the formula which will be launched on Sunday and bears the compromise name 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'. (ANSAmEd).

2008-07-09 18:17

### **MED UNION: POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF BARCELONA, FM GHEIT SAYS**

(ANSAmEd) - CAIRO, JULY 9 - Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul-Gheit said Egypt sees the initiative of French President Nicholas Sarkozy as a positive development in the Barcelona process. In an interview with Al Ahram daily newspaper today, Abul-Gheit said that the French initiative has gone through several stages before reaching its current form which is still being probed by all 44 partners. It is necessary to assert Egypt's early view of the initiative, he said, adding that the main difference between the new framework, namely "the Union for the Mediterranean and the Barcelona is the increasing number of member states and the activation of the joint ownership principle. This means that the southern Mediterranean states play key role in the new initiative, he said. One of the main differences as well between the current initiative and the Barcelona process is the joint presidency in which two states co-chair: one from the European Union and the other from southern Mediterranean, he said, pointing out that both states enjoy the same kind of authority. As for Israel's being the only side benefiting from the union in terms of giving it an easy and free chance to normalize relations with the Arab states, Abul-Gheit said the title 'union' does not mean any kind of political or economic union. "Everyone is well aware that Israel still occupies Palestinian and Arab lands so how can any Arab state be united with Israel?", he questioned. Egypt has been keen from the start on asserting the need to find a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, he said. Gheit also referred to the global food crisis, saying it will be the main topic on the agenda of the Paris summit. Egypt is coordinating stands with France and Spain to reach an agreement on specific steps to be taken in dealing with the crisis at the level of the Mediterranean, he added. (ANSAmEd).

2008-07-09 15:34

### **MED UNION: GADDAFI SAYS NO TO COLONIAL PROJECT**

(By correspondent Fausto Gasparroni) (ANSAmEd) - TRIPOLI, JULY 9 - "A harmful idea both for Europe and for the Northern African countries". A project in "colonial" spirit, which threatens to "deteriorate problems such as illegal immigration and terrorism". A heavy "attack" against the Arab and African unity. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi hardly beats about the bush in his firm rejection of the new Union for the Mediterranean, which will be

launched next Sunday at the Paris summit after being vigorously promoted by French president Nicolas Sarkozy. Four days before the official launch of the new organisation, Gaddafi gathered dozens of journalists from various countries in one of the government offices in Tripoli to reiterate the reasons for his "No" to the idea which Sarkozy plans to use for re-launching the ¿process of Barcelona¿ and strengthen the link and the cooperation between the two coasts of the Mediterranean. According to Gaddafi, who appeared at the meeting with the press in an elegant white suit and a dark shirt, the discussion is not on "the friendship" between Libya and the Arab and African States and the EU and the European states, which is being developed by constantly searching for new ways of collaboration. Sarkozy is in fact defined a "friend and brother" by Gaddafi. But the Libyan leader believes that between the desirable "partnership activities" and the necessary "exchanges of services" and the idea of a federative process and an actual union there is still much time to pass. Strong motive for the Libyan leader's opposition is the rift that has opened both within the Arab League and the African Union over the participation of part of the two organisations' members in the new Mediterranean Union with Europe. Gaddafi even believes that "African countries should be banned from joining the Paris project" because there are resolutions of the African Union, such as the one adopted in Khartoum, that do not allow the member states to join other international associative entities. And this is "a subject that the African Union must deal with", Gaddafi said. The project, according to Gaddafi, was conceived "in too strong misbalance" towards the European component compared to the presence of the countries from the southern coast. "Out of 34 member states, only seven or eight are from North Africa, from Egypt to Mauritania," he pointed out. Gaddafi would favour an associative project of the type 5+5 or 6+6, which was supposed to be in the origins of the 'Barcelona Process'. "What has Libya to do with countries such as Ireland or Finland?", he asked pointing a finger at the heritage of a "Roman cartography, of colonial and imperial type, aimed at demonstrating that North African countries belong to Europe". And if Europe - and Angela Merkel's Germany in particular - wanted that the Union for the Mediterranean is joined not only by Mediterranean countries in order not to break the unity of the EU, Gaddafi rejects the idea "launching a message to his neighbours such as Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco" to break the African unity, with the participation in the conference in Paris "only of North African countries". "This project divides Africa and I reject this division which is racial and racist," Gaddafi exclaimed. He has expressed similar thoughts on the respective division of the Arab League. "We are aiming at friendship with Europe but we lack the same culture, the same religion or politics," he said. In the hour-long news conference Gaddafi presented motives for various divergences from the European policies, such as the role of Israel, the territorial demands of the latter, the Palestinian question, the problems of the "Asian part of the Arab world". He also spoke of the different attitudes of Libya and Europe towards Kosovo, Cyprus, Abkhazia and Georgia, the situation in Lebanon and Iran. Besides denying any responsibility on the part of Libya and North African countries on issues such as illegal immigration, Gaddafi also expressed fears of negative repercussions on the front of terrorism. "For Europe Islamic extremism is a motive for a project for colonisation and a new crusade against Arab and Muslim countries. The Union for the Mediterranean is an idea which has Christian and Colonial origins. Jihad militants will see it as a provocation to which they should react," he said. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-09 18:56

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: BAD FOR EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA,GADDAFI**

(ANSAméd) - TRIPOLI, JULY 9 - The Union for the Mediterranean, which will be launched in Paris on Sunday, is a project "harmful to both Europe and the North African countries".

Four days before the official launch of the initiative, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi once again slammed during a news conference in Tripoli the new entity proposed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy to relaunch the Barcelona Process, because, according to Gaddafi, it undermines Arab and African union and is characterised by a "colonial" vision. According to the Libyan leader it is necessary to "ban the African countries from joining the project of Paris", since, he said, resolutions of the African Union forbid the member states to join other international entities. The project also threatens to aggravate problems such as illegal immigration and terrorism, according to Gaddafi. "The jihadists would see it as a provocation," he said. "Yes to partnership activities between the countries of the two coasts, yes to exchange of service, but this Union is an inadmissible idea," Gaddafi added. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-09 13:22

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION TO OVERCOME BARCELONA FAILURE, S. CRAXI**

(ANSAméd) - ROME, JULY 9 - The project of the Union for the Mediterranean of French President Nicolas Sarkozy comes from the "idea to re-create a project of strategic partnership with the countries of the Mediterranean area, a project which wants to start from the Barcelona Treaty, but also to overcome its limits and, in fact, the failure". These were the words of Italian Foreign Ministry undersecretary Stefania Craxi in an interview with Sherpa TV in view of the Euro-Mediterranean summit to be held on Sunday in Paris. It is a good idea, the one Sarkozy had to be launched at this summit" - the undersecretary explained - and does not rule out some 'trick' from France in wanting to play a leadership role in the Mediterranean in 'election key". According to Stefania Craxi the summit must involve the Arab states in order to combat the risk of nuclear weapons in the Middle East because "extremism feeds on despair and lack of hope, there is no peace in places where people die of hunger". Italy, which "aims at a leadership role", will take to Paris two projects, the undersecretary reminds: "one that concerns the development of SMEs and another on common security of the Mediterranean". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-09 11:03

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: WE COULD NOT STAY OUT, ALGERIA**

(ANSAméd) - ALGIERS, JULY 9 - Algeria "could not afford to remain on the sidelines of a meeting such as the international conference which will unite 42 countries in Paris" but the "support to the Palestinian cause and to other Arab causes remains unchanged and cannot be traded". Thus Algerian Communication Minister Abderrachid Boukerzaza explained at the weekly news conference the announcement Nicolas Sarkozy made on Monday in Japan about the participation of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the July 13 summit in Paris for the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean. "Algeria played an essential role for the speeding up and deepening of the agreement to define the Arab positions on the project of the Union for the Mediterranean" and "could not allow itself to remain on the sidelines of this meeting", Boukerzaza said. Until last month the Maghreb state was advancing doubts on the project launched by Sarkozy and on the presence of Israel in the Union in particular. The Communication Minister underlined on that point that "since its independence Algeria has maintained a constant position without hesitations as regards the Palestinian cause and the situation in the Middle East". "Nothing has happened which could make us change this principle position," he concluded. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-09 09:22

### **MIDEAST: SHALIT, SARKOZY MEDIATES BETWEEN HAMAS, ISRAEL**

(By Safwat al-Kahlout and Aldo Baquis) (ANSAméd) - GAZA/TEL AVIV, JULY 7 - Surprisingly, the name of French President Nicolas Sarkozy appeared today in the contacts from a distance between Israel and Hamas on an eventual prisoners exchange. The Israeli military radio said that the two-year-long Egyptian mediation seems to have come to a standstill and Sarkozy is encouraged by the liberation of Ingrid Betancourt in Colombia and now wants to use his influence to help another fellow Frenchman in difficulty, Israeli-French corporal Gilad Shalit, who is held prisoner by Hamas in Gaza for the last two years. The right opportunity could appear in front of Sarkozy next week when he will meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the man who has been offering for years his hospitality to Hamas leader in exile Khaled Mashal. In an ANSA interview from Gaza, Ahmed Yusef, a close adviser to local Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, had nothing to object in principle to a French diplomatic intervention. However Hamas makes no discounts, neither to Paris. The price for Shalit's freedom remains the one demanded through the mediation of Egypt, a thousand Palestinian detainees in two groups. "There will be no release of Shalit for free," Yusef said. There are thousand families in the territories anxiously awaiting the liberation of their relatives, just like Shalit's family. Meanwhile a Hamas delegation is about to leave for Cairo to discuss with the Egyptian leadership the opening of the Rafah checkpoint (between Gaza and Sinai) as well as an eventual reconciliation between Hamas and al-Fatah. Hamas also plans to present the Egyptians with a list of violations to the truce in Gaza committed by Israel since June 19. Today two mortar rounds were fired from the Strip against Israel causing no victims. However, in general the situation is calm and the border crossings with Israel are open for the traffic of goods. Nevertheless a new tug-of-war between Israel and Hamas is underway in the West Bank. Israeli soldiers carried out a raid in Nablus in an attempt to close down four charity organisations, which according to Israel were funding the political activities of Hamas. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak issued an order proclaiming "illegal" 36 foreign charity funds which according to the Israeli secret services supply Hamas with tens of millions of dollars every year through a complex umbrella network known as the 'Union of Good', headed by Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi, fierce enemy of Israel. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-07 18:39

### **MIDEAST: HAMAS DOES NOT REJECT SARKOZY MEDIATION ON SHALIT**

(ANSAméd) - GAZA, JULY 7 - Hamas does not reject a possible mediation of French President Nicolas Sarkozy but reiterates that no matter the identity of the mediators, its demands for a prisoner exchange with Israel do not change, Ahmed Yusef, an adviser of former PNA prime minister Ismail Haniyeh, told ANSA today. Yusef was commenting information of the Israeli army radio according to which Sarkozy prepares to discuss with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Paris next week the question of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier held prisoner by Hamas for two years. Shalit has dual citizenship, Israeli and French. "There is not much difference for us who is working on the 'Shalit Dossier'", Yusef said. "The important thing is not to lose the vision of the main question: actually the way Shalit's family expect their son, likewise there are many thousands of Palestinian families who expect theirs." "If the presidents Sarkozy and Assad consider to intervene, there are no objections. But let's not forget the Palestinian prisoners," Yusef insisted. "A release for free (of Shalit) would not be fair. And our conditions for the prisoner exchange do not change," he concluded. In exchange for Shalit's release Hamas demands the freeing of one thousand Palestinian prisoners, in two groups of 450 and 550 people. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-07 15:28

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: SARKOZY INVITES ERDOGAN TO THE SUMMIT**

(ANSAméd) - ANKARA, JULY 8 - French President Nicolas Sarkozy called Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and invited him to the upcoming summit of the Union for the Mediterranean, Anatolia news agency reports. Erdogan informed Sarkozy that he will try to attend the summit despite his busy schedule. Most diplomats describe the Union for the Mediterranean as a separate entity that has no relationship to Turkey's EU membership process. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-08 14:02

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME TO JOIN SUMMIT**

(ANSAméd) - BRUSSELS, JULY 7 - The Mediterranean Action Plan, which is UNEP's Regional Seas Programme for the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP) will be represented at the 1st Summit of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean which will be held on 13 July, in Paris. Paul Mifsud, MAP's Coordinator, has been invited to the Summit by French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The project dimension will be the heart of the Barcelona Process-Union for the Mediterranean. One of the important projects that will be proposed at the Paris Summit is the de-pollution of the Mediterranean. Building on the Horizon 2020 initiative the de-pollution projects will address solid waste, wastewater and industrial waste. UNEP/MAP is directly involved in Horizon 2020 together with the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The projects include improvement in solid waste management and the construction/upgrading of wastewater treatment plants that will drastically reduce eutrophication and improve the quality of bathing waters thus enhancing the sanitation of 30 million inhabitants. The projects will also bring about a reduction in the generation of hazardous wastes as well as a reduction in polluted industrial emissions and releases primarily from fertilizers and metal industries. (ANSAméd).

2008-07-07 18:45

### **MED UNION: BARCELONA, 13 YEARS OF WASTE, STEFANIA CRAXI**

(ANSAméd) - NAPLES, JULY 7 - Thirteen years since the launch of the Barcelona Process "many resources have been wasted and Europe has not managed to dialogue even with that part of the Arab world defined as moderate", undersecretary at Italy's Foreign Ministry, Stefania Craxi, said in Naples today addressing a meeting organised by Fondazione Mediterraneo and Fondazione Craxi. "We still have two years to work together with the other countries towards the reaching of an equilibrium in the energy, environment, infrastructure and security sectors," Craxi added. But these issues too "risk becoming nonsense talks if the free trade area is not implemented as soon as possible," head of Italy's employers association Confindustria, Antonio D'Amato, said. An idea backed also by Euro-Med partnership coordinator for the Foreign Ministry, Cosimo Risi, according to whom "the business world must be able to count on a more functional trading system as the times of economy are ever faster than the ones of politics anyway ". (ANSAméd).

2008-07-07 14:54

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: BOUTEFLIKA TO ATTEND PARIS SUMMIT**

(ANSAméd) - ALGIERS, JULY 7 - Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika will take part in the July 13 summit in Paris for the official launch of the Union for the Mediterranean, the head of the French state Nicolas Sarkozy announced at the end of a meeting with his Algerian counterpart organised on the sidelines of the ongoing G8 summit in Toyako, the

APS agency writes. "President Bouteflika asked me to make the answer public. He will be present in Paris for the summit of the Union for the Mediterranean," Sarkozy said. "It is extremely important because Algeria will play a central role, he added, pointing out that the presence of the Maghreb country "is essential for the summit's success". Algiers has so far continued to demand the explanation of the "unclear points" of the project launched by Sarkozy, on Israel's presence in the Union in particular. Many French ministers, including Prime Minister Francois Fillon and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, went on official visits in Algeria in the past months in an attempt to obtain a definitive confirmation on Bouteflikàs participation in the Paris ceremony. Sarkozy also announced from Japan that the Algerian president will go on an official visit in Paris in 2009. (ANSAMed).

2008-07-07 12:40

### **MIDEAST: SARKOZY TO TRY MEDIATION WITH ASSAD TO FREE SHALIT**

(ANSAMed) - TEL AVIV, JULY 7 - French President Nicolas Sarkozy prepares to discuss with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad the release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, who has been held prisoner by Hamas in Gaza for two years, the Israeli army radio reported. France does not maintain contacts with Hamas. But Sarkozy's feeling - according to the broadcaster - is that Assad has enough influence on Hamas's political leader, Khaled Meshaal, who has been living in Damascus for years. So far Shalit's liberation in the context of a prisoner exchange has been negotiated between Israel and Hamas with Egyptian mediation. Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter has also offered his good offices for a message exchange. (ANSAMed).

2008-07-07 12:12

### **MED UNION: CONVENTION IN NAPLES ON SOUTHERN ITALY ROLE**

(ANSAMed) - NAPLES, JULY 4 - How Italy and particularly southern Italy can contribute to the establishment of the Mediterranean Union and which role can the southern small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play: these are some of the issues to be discussed on Monday in Naples during the international convention "The Mediterranean Union: the challenge of southern Italy". On the eve of the presentation of the project "Barcelona process: Mediterranean Union", scheduled to take place in Paris on July 13 - a note issued by the Mediterranean Foundation reads - it is fundamental that in the search for the map of the new geo-politics of the Mediterranean, and in the project Mediterranean Union, southern Italy finds its place with approaches and policies which can allow it to play the mediation role between the different levels of economic and technological development for which it was meant, due to its cultural tradition and social structure. The meeting, which will start at 9.30am, is organised in the headquarters of Maison de la Mediterranee by Mediterranean Foundation and Craxi Foundation. (ANSAMed).

2008-07-04 16:41

### **MEDITERRANEAN UNION: MERKEL TO ATTEND PARIS SUMMIT**

(ANSAMed) - BERLIN, JULY 4 - German Chancellor Angela Merkel will take part in the Mediterranean Union summit in Paris on July 13, the German government announced today. Merkel also accepted the invitation of French President Nicolas Sarkozy to remain in Paris the following day too and to attend the ceremonies for the French national holiday, July 14, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, according to a statement published in Berlin today. (ANSAMed).

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