

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP

**MONTHLY CALENDAR
OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

September 2001 Edition

Also available on : http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations



European Commission

***EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS***

SUMMARY

I – CALENDAR OF PRIORITY ACTIONS OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS

- Committee for the Barcelona Process
- Political and Security Partnership
- Economic and Financial Partnership
- Partnership in Social, Cultural and Human Affairs
- Other Events

II – INFORMATION SHEETS ON FUTURE MEETINGS

- Proposal for the Second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Environment

III – CONCLUSIONS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation, Brussels, 20-21 June 2001
- 3rd Meeting of SMAP Correspondents, Brussels, 25-26 June 2001
- Regional Forum: “The Role of Women in Economic Development : the equality dimension between men and women in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership”, Brussels, 13-14 July 2001

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

**CALENDAR OF PRIORITY ACTIONS
OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
5-6 November 2001	Euro-Mediterranean meeting of Foreign Ministers	Brussels	None

COMMITTEE FOR THE BARCELONA PROCESS

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
7 September 2001	Euro-Med Committee	Brussels	None
18 October 2001	Euro-Med Committee	Brussels	None
19 October 2001	Euro-Med Committee: Special meeting on Economic Dialogue	Brussels	None
6 December 2001	Euro-Med Committee	Brussels	None

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

POLITICAL AND SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
6 September 2001	Senior Officials Meeting	Brussels	None
17 October 2001	Senior Officials Meeting	Brussels	None
22 October 2001	Ad hoc meeting on Migration and Human Exchanges	Brussels	None
16-19 November 2001	XIth Information and Training Seminar for Euro-Mediterranean Diplomats	Malte	None
5 December 2001	Senior Officials Meeting	Brussels	None
To be confirmed	Seminar on National Legislation on Terrorism	Berlin	None

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
26-27 September 2001	Euro-Mediterranean meeting of Government Experts on Economic Transition	Brussels	May 2001 Edition
30-31 October 2001 (To be confirmed)	Plenary Meeting of the Industrial Co-operation Working Group	Brussels	None
End 2001 or early 2002	Preparatory Meeting for Ministerial Conference on the Environment	Malta	Enclosed
First half 2002	Second Ministerial Conference on the Environment	Greece	Enclosed
To be confirmed	Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Information Society	Brussels	March 2000 Edition

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

PARTNERSHIP IN SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HUMAN AFFAIRS

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
1-2 October 2001	Training of legal practitioners	Galatasaray	July 2001 Edition

OTHER EVENTS*

Date	Event	Location	Sheet
19-20 October 2001	Euromed Civil Forum	Brussels	July 2001 Edition
25-26 October 2001	EIB Forum on Co-operation across the Mediterranean	Sorrento	None

* Not all these events have been formally approved by the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona process.

**PROPOSAL FOR THE 2ND EURO-MEDITERRANEAN
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

Submitted by Greece in agreement with the European Commission and with the co-sponsorship of Malta and Sweden

1. Context and description of the activity :

- Environmental protection, foreseen as one of the possible co-operation fields under the Economic and Financial Chapter of the Barcelona Declaration (1995), *remains among the 6 priority issues of the Euro-Med Partnership* (identified at Malta and reiterated by the Stuttgart and Marseilles Foreign Ministers Conferences).
- The Helsinki Declaration (1997), as well as the Short and Medium-Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP) adopted by the Euro-Med Environment Ministers, foresee *meetings at ministerial level as part of the follow up mechanism* to review the Med environmental policy and the implementation of this Programme. Furthermore, NGOs (at the Civil Forum in Marseilles, November 2000) were very strongly supportive of the idea of having a Ministerial Conference on the Environment as soon as possible, to discuss a coherent and sustainable strategy.
- Convening the proposed Ministerial Conference in July 2002 would give the opportunity to the Euro-Med Partnership to make a substantive *contribution to the World Summit for Sustainable Development* (Rio +10), scheduled for mid-2002. If the World Summit takes place at a later stage the proposed Ministerial could also be convened later in 2002.
- *Substantive issues* to be considered at the 2nd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on Environment :
 1. Review of progress of the SMAP implementation
 2. Strategy for environmental integration and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, including environmental considerations in the creation of the Euro-Med Free Trade Area (E-MFTA).
 3. Aspects of more efficient co-ordination and coherence between the different environmental Fora, Programmes and Conventions applying in the region.
- The Ministerial Conference will be prepared by the host country in *close cooperation* with the European Commission and the EU Presidency at that time. *A preparatory meeting* will take place in Malta in the second half of 2001 or in the beginning of 2002, to discuss the working documents which will be presented to the Ministerial for adoption. A second round of preparatory discussions could be foreseen, if need be, as part of the agenda of the 4th *SMAP Correspondents meeting*

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS

(to be convened a couple of months before the Ministerial). The preparatory meetings will also give input to the last Prep Com for the World Summit.

- *Consultations* with major Programmes (e.g. Mediterranean Action Plan/MAP) and Organisations (e.g. World Bank, EIB, Convention Secretariats) active in the field of the Mediterranean environment, as well as with the NGO Steering Committee created on the occasion of SMAP, will take place as usually to ensure consensus on the Strategy.

2. Objectives of the activity :

The aim would be to adopt a *Euro-Med Strategy* on environmental integration and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, which would orient the actions of governments and main stakeholders at national and regional levels. The Partners could draw lessons from the implementation experience so far and build on the existing mechanisms and programmes, in order to mainstream their efforts, increase efficiency and improve performances aiming at sustainable development in the region. Such efforts would also contribute in making the environment and trade policies mutually supportive, in order to achieve a sustainable E-MFTA.

3. Respect of criteria for regional activities :

The Conference and the preparation meeting will be open to all Partners and will specifically address regional environmental issues, as a follow up to the Barcelona Euro-Med Conference of Foreign Ministers (1995) and the Helsinki Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1997).

4. Funding :

This Ministerial Conference will take place in Greece for 2 days. A meeting of high officials including the SMAP Correspondents could take place one day before the Ministerial Conference starts, if there is still need to finalise the documents for adoption. A total of 90 participants are expected. The preparatory meeting will take place in Malta in the second half of 2001 or in the beginning of 2002, with approximately 60 participants. The cost of the Ministerial Conference and the preparatory meeting-beyond the contribution of the two host countries-would be of the order of 250.000 Euro.

5. Contact points

1. Mrs Maria Peppas
Ministry of the Environment, Regional Planning and Public Works
Athens-Greece
Tel. :(301) 641 17 17
(301) 646 79 11
Fax.:(301) 645 67 58
e-mail: deu@minenv.gr

2. Mr Dionysios Lelos
Minister Plenipotentiary in charge of the Euromed Partnership
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Athens- Greece
Tel.: (301) 368 11 95
Fax: (301) 368 11 90
e-mail: lelos@mfa.gr

**Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on
Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation**

Brussels, 20-21 June 2001

SUMMARY

The meeting of the Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation was held in Brussels and attended by all the representatives of the Southern Mediterranean countries with the exception of Jordan, whose representatives presented their excuses as they had another meeting in Amman, and Egypt. On the European Union side, apologies for absences were received from the representatives of Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Ireland.

On the private sector side, the representatives of UNICE, UEAPME and Eurochambres, now full members of the Working Group, played an active part at the meeting. The Southern Mediterranean representatives of the UNIMED Business Network were also invited to attend the closing session.

This was an important feature of the Working Group's meeting as it provided an opportunity for an exchange of information between national authorities and private sector representatives.

The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- to explain the latest developments regarding Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation, and in particular the result of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Trade Ministers;
- to present EuropeAid Cooperation Office;
- to take stock of progress made in the regional industrial cooperation programmes since the Working Group's previous meeting in Paris on 22 and 23 November 2000;
- to discuss the orientations for axis 4 of industrial cooperation (improving the climate for development of SMEs).

The quality of the discussions across the range of agenda items testified to the participants' interest in actively pursuing the dynamic and constructive dialogue that has driven the conception and implementation of Euro-Mediterranean projects.

FIRST WORKING SESSION: 20 JUNE 2001 (10 A.M. - 1 P.M.)

The meeting was opened by **Mr Lohan**. The first to speak was **Mr Webb** (DG RELEX) who explained the latest developments in the Barcelona process. He reminded the meeting of the commitments entered into by foreign ministers at the meeting in Marseilles to speed up negotiation of the Association Agreements. Mr Webb gave an overview of the situation: the agreement with Egypt had been initialled and should be signed shortly; the agreement with Jordan had not yet come into force as two Member States of the European Union had yet to

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

ratify it; the negotiations were continuing with Algeria, Lebanon and Syria for a rapid conclusion of the agreements.

On South-South cooperation, Mr Webb welcomed the initiative announced in Agadir on 8 May by Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt to create a free trade area. The Commission would offer any technical assistance required for this initiative.

Mr Webb outlined the main issues dealt with by the Trade Ministers at the Euro-Mediterranean meeting in Brussels on 29 May 2001:

- the desire for a concerted approach to the multilateral aspects of trade, particularly with a view to preparations for a new cycle of trade negotiations in the WTO;
- the need for harmonisation of legislation to fully exploit the Association Agreements' potential;
- the need to make the service sector more efficient in certain Southern Mediterranean countries; the ministers recommended a Euro-Mediterranean Working Group be set up on services;
- the importance of harmonising the rules of origin to underpin economic integration: the ministers called for a working group on rules of origin to be set up to examine the arrangements and timetable for extending the pan-European origin cumulation system to all Mediterranean partners.

Mr Webb indicated that the work of these Working Groups and the Industrial Cooperation Working Group would be exploited to ensure close coordination, particularly in relation to projects under the Euromed Market programme. He went on to say that given the urgent need, underlined by ministers, to set up a working group on rules of origin, the Commission had suggested that the Mediterranean partners be invited to attend the next meeting of the Origin Committee to be held in Brussels in early July.

On MEDA II, Mr Webb reminded the meeting that the financial allocation approved by the Member States was €5.35 million for the period 2000-2006. The new Regulation had been drawn up keeping in mind programming and strategic considerations, i.e.:

- long-term (6 years) strategy documents
- medium-term (3 years) indicative programmes
- annual financing plans (to be presented to the Member States via the MED Committee).

This programming approach applied both bilaterally and regionally and the following priorities had been set: transport, energy and telecommunications, especially the interconnection of infrastructure and networks; cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs focusing on the control of illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

Mr Webb concluded by indicating that a Euro-Mediterranean meeting of foreign ministers would be held in November in Brussels specifically to discuss component three of the Barcelona Process and that foreign ministers would be meeting in Spain in the spring of 2002 (Barcelona V).

There was then a discussion on issues linked to MEDA II, the allocation for regional cooperation, method of selecting projects at bilateral level and the new programming approach.

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Commission representatives replied to questions, explaining that the 10% allocated for regional projects and 90% for bilateral projects would be maintained but was flexible, and that the method of selecting projects had always been based on dialogue with beneficiaries to identify projects. The programming approach was being implemented.

A presentation of EuropeAid Cooperation Office was then given

Mr Papadopoulos informed the meeting that EuropeAid had been set up on 1 January 2001 and this new Directorate-General was responsible for drawing up and managing all the EU's external aid programmes, including MEDA but not pre-accession programmes. EuropeAid had been set up under the reform of the Commission's External Relations departments, a reform designed to ensure projects were more thoroughly prepared and that programmes got underway without delay. It had been agreed that the programme cycle would be reunified and EuropeAid set up to ensure a division of tasks between strategy definition (External Relations DG) and concrete actions/financing plans (EuropeAid). The creation of EuropeAid also went hand-in-hand with a decision to devolve procedures to the Commission's delegations in partner countries. Mr Papadopoulos explained that EuropeAid consisted of eight directorates, of which five were operational directorates responsible for a geographical area. Directorate B (Southern Mediterranean, Middle East), which was headed by Richard Weber, made 2 500 payments a year on average totalling €400 million. Unit B/3, which Mr Papadopoulos was in charge of, had 10 project managers for all Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation and institutional building projects. This number would rise to 23 by the end of the year, allowing them to implement projects that had been held up, including industrial cooperation projects. Mr Papadopoulos undertook to ensure that industrial cooperation programmes got the green light as soon as the new recruits were in place.

He also outlined the regional programmes in the pipeline which will go to the MED Committee meeting in September: transport (€20 million); information society (€20 million); MEDSTAT II, statistics programme of relevance to industrial cooperation (€30 million); water management (€40 million); risk capital fund of the EIB (€100 million), etc.

The meeting then discussed EuropeAid's role in drawing up bilateral programmes, the role of DG Enterprise, MEDSTAT and the need to rapidly implement programmes approved by the industry ministers at Limassol.

Commission representatives replied to questions and explained the breakdown of responsibilities between the External Relations DG, EuropeAid and sectoral DGs, giving examples of information documents on EuropeAid and MEDSTAT, confirming the commitment to implement industrial cooperation programmes by the end of the year.

Discussions then turned to the progress report on the programmes on "investment promotion", "innovation, technology and quality" and "Euro-Mediterranean market instruments and mechanisms".

Ms Kardacz announced that the contract to implement the project to set up a network of Euro-Mediterranean investment promotion agencies had finally been signed the previous week by the French agency for international investment; internal problems had delayed its signing. She noted that the French agency was the team leader of a consortium of investment promotion agencies consisting of Sviluppo Italia and Moroccan and Israeli agencies that will be working together to implement actions under the programme. These actions aimed to

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

increase the institutional capacity of Mediterranean investment promotion agencies, to facilitate networking between Euro-Mediterranean agencies and to promote investment.

Ms Bela Matias explained the programme's provisional timetable:

- By the end of July 2001 a general work programme would be submitted by the head of the Programme Management Unit to the Commission. This work programme would detail work to be undertaken throughout the programme (36 months) in terms of objectives, activities, and human and financial resource needs. It would also contain an implementation timetable.
- By the end of September 2001 a work programme for the first year would be submitted to the Commission.
- In October 2001 a meeting of the Steering Committee was scheduled for discussion of the documents prepared by the Programme Management Unit before approval by the Commission.
- In early November 2001 work could commence if the implementation timetable was observed by the Commission's partner, the head of the Programme Management Unit.

Ms Kardacz reminded the meeting of the conclusions adopted by the Industry ministers at the Limassol Conference concerning implementation of a programme to set up a Euro-Mediterranean investment promotion agencies network. They called on the members of the Working Group to mobilise national investment promotion agencies to cooperate actively in the programme's implementation.

In response to the progress report members of the Working Group stressed that the team leader should make every effort to avoid overlap with projects already underway under national technical assistance programmes (Italy) or under programmes launched by international organisations such as UNIDO.

In reply the Commission noted that complementarity between the programmes should be sought by the head of the API consortium implementing the Euro-Mediterranean programme. It also pointed out that experience of international organisations could be useful and this was why their representatives had been invited to meetings of the Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation. It referred to the guidelines for the activities of the members of the Working Group and committees of experts, which stated that international organisations had observer status and therefore it could not put up candidates for the committees of experts. Nevertheless, representatives of the academic world, financial circles and international organisations could be invited to meetings of the committees of experts at the Commission's suggestion and where appropriate.

Moving to the Innovation, Technology and Quality programme (Euromed ITQ) and the Euro-Mediterranean Market Instruments and Mechanisms (Euromed Market), **Ms Kardacz** reminded the meeting that EURADA will be responsible for management of the innovation component of Euromed ITQ and CEN (European Standardisation Committee) for the quality component. These two organisations had been contacted and contracts would be negotiated shortly.

As regards the Euromed Market programme Ms Kardacz informed the meeting that the approach suggested by the Commission at the previous meeting in Paris, namely to make a consortium of national cooperation agencies under the leadership of the German agency GTZ,

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

had been criticised as being tantamount to renationalisation of Community assistance in non-Community countries. The Commission was therefore considering an alternative solution, which was to make the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) responsible for management of the Euromed Market programme.

The EIPA was a training institute run by a policy council consisting of representatives of the 15 Member States and the Secretariat-General of the Commission and by an academic committee consisting of Directors-General of the national training centres of the public administrations of the 15 Member States. Its experience was mainly in the Eastern European countries but it was also involved, via the European Centre for the Regions in Barcelona, one of its subsidiaries, in a project to set up a Euro-Mediterranean network of national training centres for public administrations.

Ms Matias then mapped out the next stages of the Euromed ITQ and Euromed Market programmes.

A grant contract for the Euromed ITQ programme would be negotiated in detail with CEN and EURADA after the summer once new colleagues were familiar with the dossier. This would mean the contract would be signed in the autumn and projects would start up in 2002.

For the Euromed Market programme, the Commission had entered into contact with the EIPA (in particular the European Centre for the Regions), to see whether this institute could implement such a programme. If it could, the Commission would submit a proposal to the EU Member States since the body implementing regional industrial cooperation programmes had to be selected in agreement with the Member States. The aim of presenting the institute at the meeting of the Working Group was to inform Member States delegations present and get their reactions to the proposal. If there were no objections from the Member States, a contract could be negotiated and signed before the end of the year.

The most likely scenario for implementation of the two programmes was:

- negotiation of grant contracts with CEN, EURADA and EIPA in September 2001;
- creation of Programme Management Units and presentation by their coordinators of programming documents (triennial work plans, project timetable and detailed work programme for the first year) to the Commission within two months of signing the contracts, i.e. December 2001;
- discussion of the programming documents with members of the relevant steering committees in December 2001/January 2002;
- official approval by the Commission of programming documents after the relevant steering committees have met;
- implementation of projects early 2002.

Mr Kabarakis (DG Internal Market) outlined how the Euromed Market programme would be implemented with a management body (most likely the EIPA), a steering committee and the National Focal Points. The latter would be appointed by the members of the Working Group on the basis of one National Focal Point per delegation.

Their role would be:

- to ensure appropriate participation in the activities of the programme;
- to monitor activities at national level;
- to propose participants for the programme, whether they be members of national administrations or other bodies, in particular the private sector;

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

- to cooperate with the Commission, the management body and the steering committee in implementing the programme.

National Focal Points should be appointed by 30 September 2001. Proposals should be sent to DG Enterprise, Unit A/2 (fax + 322 296 60 26)

Discussions then turned to the choice of programme manager for the Euromed Market programme (EIPA), which was approved by a number of Member States who called for official consultations of members of the Working Group representing the countries of the European Union in parallel to those of the permanent representatives. A number of delegations also asked the Commission to give them a standard profile for the National Focal Points. They stressed that there should be synergy between the Euromed Market programme and the work of the Working Group on rules of origin. A number of questions were then put concerning the actual start-up of the two programmes.

The Commission representatives agreed to ask the EU members of the Working Group who so wished for written confirmation of approval of the choice of the EIPA to manage the Euromed Market programme. They would also send all representatives a standard profile for National Focal Points. They noted that the Working Group on rules of origin would meet in July, well before the Euromed Market programme entered its operational phase. Finally they confirmed that the two programmes, Euromed ITQ and Euromed Market, were officially scheduled to begin in 2002.

SECOND WORKING SESSION : 20 JUNE 2001 (3 P.M. – 6 P.M.)

This session began with a progress report on the project to strengthen Southern Mediterranean industrial zones

Mr Saublens, Secretary-General of EURADA, presented the conclusions of the seminars held in Cergy Pontoise/Boulogne-sur-Mer in October 2000, Malaga/Seville in January 2001 for planners and in Brussels, in February 2001 for managers. The next seminar would be held in Shannon in October 2001. As regards study awards/study visits he said that use could perhaps be made of targeted technical assistance to meet a well-defined need. These one-week visits had been requested by 19 participants at the seminars. Requests for tutorials (2 x one week by an expert from an EU Member State in the industrial zone of the beneficiary MED) had been received from Algeria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Malta and Morocco at 15 June 2001.

Mr Saublens asked members of the Working Group to send him their proposals for study awards before 15 November 2001 and for tutorials before 15 September 2001. Members of the Working Group were asked to send any comments they had on the draft Guide to Good Practices by 31 July 2001.

Finally, Mr Saublens informed the meeting of the steps that had been taken by the Commission to tailor the work programme to actual demand without changing the budget allocation: extension of the implementation period to May 2002, organisation of an additional seminar, adjustment of the number of awards/study visits and maintaining the number of tutorials by changes to the methodology.

Discussions then focused on the continuation of the pilot project under a larger-scale programme. This project had been welcomed by several Southern Mediterranean delegations,

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

which confirmed that it was extremely useful and had been carried out satisfactorily by EURADA. A number of pertinent comments were made about the Guide of Good Practices.

The Commission pointed out that an evaluation would have to be made at the end of the pilot project and suggested that the members of the Working Group consider drawing up a concept paper for the follow-up.

The meeting then moved on to axis 4 of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: improving the climate for development of SMEs.

Mr Lohan ran through the main points emerging from the Working Group's previous meeting in Paris. He outlined the results of the evaluation and replies to the questionnaire sent to members of the Group in December 2000. This questionnaire had also been sent by UNICE to members of the UNIMED Business Network, and this had produced extremely useful additional information. He then distributed the discussion notes prepared for the meeting, which underlined a change in direction in the Working Group's activities towards policy analysis and away from technical assistance. He suggested that members of the Working Group give their views on the Commission's main proposals for axis 4 of industrial cooperation:

- a study of national policies for SMEs;
- selection of specific areas where comparative analysis of best practice could be undertaken and where Community benchmarking could prove useful;
- development of a permanent system to ensure transparency and information exchanges on specific policies and measures to promote SMEs.

He also stated that these initiatives would help the Working Group focus its work on policy issues rather than technical assistance and find other areas of work once its remit came to an end. Finally he suggested that the next meeting of the SME Committee of Experts deal with the terms of reference for the study of national SME policies and selection of specific areas where comparative analysis of best practice could be undertaken.

In the **discussions** that followed the delegations offered numerous constructive views and reactions, although opinions differed in some cases. The discussions can be summarised as follows:

- Most members of the Working Group agreed that a study of SME policy be undertaken on the basis of a common framework to be defined in the terms of reference, taking account of any existing comparable studies; areas of further study suggested included access to finance and obstacles to company growth.
- The reactions of members of the Working Group to the comparative analysis of best practice were much more mixed as results of benchmarking, which was a long and costly process, were not always tangible. The question of whether the recommendations should be implemented also remained open; in the Euro-Mediterranean framework it would have to be done mainly through bilateral programmes.
- A number of remarks were made by private-sector representatives on the permanent system of information exchange as they wished to develop synergy between existing networks of

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

chambers of commerce, craft associations and industrial federations. They also wondered whether a permanent SME Observatory for the MED countries might not be useful.

In conclusion, Mr Lohan said that written contributions from members of the Working Group would be welcome and would be used in drawing up the terms of reference. This would be done at a meeting of the SME committee of experts on Monday 29 October, before the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation Group's next meeting. He also asked participants to provide any useful information on existing studies in this area and suggestions as to areas where comparative analysis of best practice could be undertaken.

These contributions should be sent to DG Enterprise by the end of September.

THIRD WORKING SESSION: 21 JUNE 2001 (9.30 A.M. – 11.30 A.M.)

This session began with an information briefing on the Committee of Experts.

Ms Kardacz ran through the selection criteria, which had been used to choose experts for the four committees and for the members of the bodies representing the private sector. She also reminded the meeting that the role of steering committees was set out in the guidelines for committees of experts approved by the members of the Working Group after their Paris meeting.

A number of **questions** were put about the travel and subsistence expenses of private sector representatives and the participation of a representative from a Southern Mediterranean employer organisation in the Euromed Market Expert Committee.

In reply the Commission stated that the financing of private sector representatives' travel and subsistence costs would be discussed internally. Once the regional organisation had been set up, representatives of Southern Mediterranean organisations would be involved.

The meeting continued with an information briefing on the programme of meetings under the Spanish Presidency.

The Spanish delegation gave a provisional date for the next Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Industry Ministers: 9 and 10 April 2002 at Malaga. Malaga was an important technological centre and so the ministerial conference could usefully focus on innovation and technological cooperation. The central theme would probably be the building of the Euro-Mediterranean market.

Mr Lohan said that the conference should also consider a new remit for the Working Group. The action programme approved by the ministers in Limassol would be implemented in 2002. It would then be time to consider what the Working Group should do next and this would be discussed in depth at the next meeting in October. This role should also be discussed with private sector representatives at the next Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Summit to be held in Istanbul (date yet to be set but before the ministerial conference).

Mr Laurent then underlined the importance of this discussion of the Working Group's future remit. He pointed out that its members had been the source of original and important ideas

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

such as the Euromed Market programme. He also underlined the role of programming for regional projects: large-scale programmes clearly defined on the basis of priority areas of work. Regional projects were catalysts for ideas, which could then be implemented at bilateral or sub-regional level. Finally, he informed participants that the next meetings of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers would be held on 5 and 6 November 2001 for Chapter 3 of the Barcelona process and on 22 and 23 April 2002 for Barcelona V.

A number of delegations floated the idea of a Euro-Mediterranean meeting of Directors-General for Industry to prepare the Ministerial Conference. The idea of sectoral subregional programming was also raised.

In reply the Commission stated that they were considering holding a meeting of Directors-General for Industry. The Ministerial Conference in Limassol had shown that a meeting of senior officials on the margins of the conference was useful. Sectoral subregional programming might be considered under the Working Group's future remit.

CONCLUDING SESSION: 21 JUNE 2001 (11.30 A.M. – 1 P.M.)

The Southern Mediterranean members of the UNIMED Business Network attended this session. The head of the delegation, **Mr Périgot**, noted that one of the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean network was the creation of a confederation of local employer associations in the Mediterranean. He announced that work was well underway. This confederation would serve as a reference point for national authorities and the grassroots.

Mr Lohan summarised what had been agreed at the meeting:

- The steering committee for the investment promotion programme would probably be meeting in October to examine the programming documents drawn up by the Programme Management Unit.
- Contracts for the “innovation, technology and quality” and “Euro-Mediterranean market instruments” programmes had yet to be negotiated. The respective steering committees would meet in December 2001 or January 2002.
- The contract for the development of industrial zones project would be extended to May 2002. A new programme would be considered after evaluation of results.
- A different approach had been proposed for axis 4 of industrial cooperation, namely an in-depth analysis of national SME policies and selection of areas where comparative analyses of best practice could be made. The Committee of Experts would meet on 29 October.

In conclusion, the speakers noted that alignment of legislative frameworks was a key area of the future Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which was meant to address not only national authorities but also the private sector. This meeting had provided an opportunity to involve private-sector representatives more closely in its work. It was hoped that this initiative would continue in future by combining meetings of the UNIMED Business Network with those of the Working Group. **The next meeting of the Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation will be held in Brussels on 30 and 31 October 2001.**

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Annex: deadlines for contributions and timetable of main events

31 July 2001	Deadline for sending comments on the draft guide to good practices for industrial zones to : Mr Christian Saublens EURADA Tel +322.218.43.13 Fax +322.218.45.83
15 September 2001	Deadline for sending proposals for tutorials to Mr Christian Saublens
30 September 2001	Deadline for sending names of National Focal Points for the Euromed Market programme (Member State + MED Partnership) to DG Enterprise - Unit A/2 Fax +322.296.60.26
	Deadline for sending written agreement for the Commission's proposal to make the European Institute of Public Administration responsible for management of the Euromed Market programme (Member States) to DG Enterprise - UnitA/2 Fax +322.296.60.26
	Deadline for sending contributions for axis 4 SME (Member States + MED Partners) to DG Enterprise - Unit A/2 Fax +322.296.60.26
	Deadline for sending proposals for the future remit of the Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation Working Group (Member States + MED Partners) to DG Enterprise - Unit A/2 Fax +322.296.60.26
October 2001 (date yet to be set)	Meeting of Steering Committee on Investment Promotion in Brussels
29 October 2001	Meeting of SME Committee of Experts in Brussels
30-31 October 2001	Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation Working Group in Brussels
5-6 November 2001 (p.m.)	Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers on Chapter 3 of the Barcelona Process
15 November 2001	Deadline for sending proposals on awards/ study visits under the industrial zones project to Mr Christian Saublens - EURADA
December 2001 /January 2002 (date yet to be set)	Meeting of Steering Committee for "Innovation, Technology and Quality" and Steering Committee for "Instruments and Mechanisms of Euro-Mediterranean Market" in Brussels
February/March 2002 (date yet to be set)	Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Istanbul
9-10 April 2002 (date to be confirmed)	Fourth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Industry Ministers in Malaga
22-23 April 2002	Fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers (Barcelona V) in Valencia

3rd Meeting of SMAP Correspondents

Brussels, 25-26 June 2001

FLASH - REPORT AND CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUSIONS

The Correspondents of the Euro-Mediterranean Partners for the Short and Medium-Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP / environmental programme for policy and funding orientation at regional and national levels) met for the third time, in Brussels, on 25-26 June 2001. The Network of the SMAP Correspondents was complete for the first time, since all Partners had appointed national Correspondents. Over 60 people including representatives of several Commission services attended the meeting. Members of environmental NGOs (the "Steering Committee"), representatives of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and the Mediterranean Environment Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) were invited as observers.

The **major agenda items** were:

- 3) Review of the implementation at regional and national levels

(Information was exchanged on the implementation of the SMAP policy objectives in the form of brief National Reports, which were presented in oral and written form)

- 4) Terms of Reference for the SMAP Correspondents

(The participants discussed the Terms of Reference for the Correspondents Network. The ToR were intended to reflect the new more substantial role the Correspondents are invited to play in order to give impetus to the SMAP)

- 5) Information on the selection process of proposals submitted under the SMAP 2000 Call for Proposals / Orientations for future work

(The meeting was informed about the selection procedure applying to the regional projects and focused the discussion on orientations for future action, in a joint effort to improve performance)

- 6) Preparation of input for the Ministerial Meeting scheduled for Mid-2002

(The participants welcomed unanimously the Greek invitation to host the 2nd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on the Environment in mid-2002 and exchanged some first views on the preparation of this event)

- 7) Environmental integration, in particular in view of the EMFTA

(The need for environmental integration in particular at national level and for a sustainable EMFTA was clearly stressed)

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

On the basis of the discussions, the Chairman of the meeting (DG Environment) drew the following **conclusions on the follow-up** of the joint activities for the Euro-Mediterranean environment:

- (1) The SMAP Correspondents will send to the European Commission by the end of July 2001 comments and/or additional information in order to complete their *National Reports*. To allow for comparison it was agreed to follow the suggested outline, which will be adapted to the conditions in EC-MS and non-EC Med Partners. The National Reports will be used by the Commission to prepare a Compendium, which will be put on the SMAP web site along with the National Reports.
- (2) On the basis of these National Reports and the experience gained from the implementation, the EC will prepare a first *Regional Interim Report* to be discussed at the 4th SMAP Correspondents meeting and reviewed at the 2nd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
- (3) All members of the SMAP Correspondents Network (including the NGO Steering Committee) would continue systematic efforts to enhance *visibility of the SMAP activities*.
- (4) There was a general acceptance of the *Terms of Reference for the SMAP Correspondents Network*, with a few modifications proposed during the discussion. It was made clear that these ToR are not legally binding; they are seen as a tool facilitating the joint work and can be adapted to new needs and conditions in the future.
- (5) The *SMAP Correspondents assisted by National Institutes* are expected to increase activities at national level (information, contacts with other Ministries, national NGOs, environmental projects in NIPs, etc), mobilise potential interested applicants and encourage preparation of projects of high quality, better-focused activities and more coherent and sustainable policies. The Commission undertook to make some financing available for the work of the National Institutes, which have yet to be designated.
- (6) On the basis of a brief oral presentation, there was no objection on the proposed *orientations for the next phase of regional SMAP* (to be reflected in the 2002 Call). The proposals which are under discussion within the Commission, envisage that joint work would focus on more visible results, including through projects related to the 5 SMAP priority fields, Environmental Performance Evaluations of countries volunteering for such an exercise, and Training Courses for Project Managers.
- (7) The *EC* will try to *improve the effectiveness* of its procedures, including through an envisaged regional monitoring unit.
- (8) The members of the NGO Steering Committee were invited to promote environmental integration in the context of the forthcoming *Mediterranean Civil Forum* (Brussels, 19-20 October 2001), which for the first time does not foresee a separate meeting of environmental NGOs.
- (9) On the assumption (since confirmed) that there would be no objection of the Euro-Med Committee on the proposed *2nd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on the Environment* (to be held in Corfu or Rhodes, Greece, in the first half of July 2002), participants were invited to send to the Commission at their earliest convenience input for the evaluation of SMAP implementation, as well as for the proposed strategy on environmental integration. The Commission, in co-operation with the host country and the EU Presidency at the time, and taking into consideration the inputs sent by

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

participants, will prepare a draft strategy paper as a basis for discussion and adoption by the Ministers. The exact agenda of the Conference will be announced, in co-operation between Commission and host country. The dates for the Experts' Meeting in Malta to prepare the Conference will be defined as rapidly as possible. There will be a broad consultation process, as usual, involving in particular the NGO Steering Committee, the MAP Secretariat and Contracting Parties, METAP, as well as Secretariats of major relevant Conventions.

- (10) The 4th *SMAP Correspondents meeting* would probably also focus on the preparation of the Ministerial Conference in order to finalise the documents for adoption. As a result, it should be held in the first quarter of 2002 and not in June as in the past. The exact dates will be announced in due course.
- (11) After being updated on on-going activities in different contexts related to the EMFTA and the environment, the meeting expressed its satisfaction over the Commission's intention to launch a *Sustainability Impact Assessment of the EMFTA* by the end of this year, ensuring complementarity with the relevant on-going studies.

**Regional forum:
"The Role of Women in Economic Development:
the equality dimension between men and women in the Euro-
Mediterranean partnership"**

Brussels, 13-14 July 2001

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

There is a common need of European societies and those of the southern coastal states of the Mediterranean for research into and construction of a Euro-Mediterranean region of shared prosperity adhering to the requirements of peace, security and sustainable development and concerned with reducing the wide gaps which exist between and within the countries concerned.

It is within this context that the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership by the heads of governments in November 1995 in Barcelona should be placed.

The Barcelona Declaration set out the framework within which relations between Europe and the countries of the southern Mediterranean¹ could best be developed. It was based on three elements:

- A political partnership able to define an area of peace and stability.
- An economic and financial partnership capable of creating an area of shared prosperity.
- A social, cultural and humanitarian partnership providing development of human resources and mutually enriching cultural exchanges.

However, achieving these objectives should not exclude women who have always contributed to the development of society and to the economy all over the world. In the Mediterranean countries, as is the case in the European Union, this situation is still too often underestimated due to the under representation of women in politics and decision-making.

The Barcelona Declaration acknowledged: *"the key role of women in development"* and undertook in its programme of action *"to promote their active participation in economic and social life and in the creation of employment and the improvement in living and working conditions"*.

Since the launching of this partnership, several experiments to encourage equality between men and women have been undertaken. Although rather few in number, these welcome initiatives should result in a consistent policy, capable on integrating women in economic development by taking full advantage of their potential.

¹ Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Since 1999, following a prior initiative of the Portuguese government, the Belgian government undertook to set up a regional cooperation process for women. This initiative was transformed into organising a **"Euro-Mediterranean conference on the promotion of women in economic development"** in March 2000 with the financial support of the European Commission.

On the basis of the conclusions of this conference and in the framework of its Presidency, Belgium agreed to support the launching of a specific regional programme for women in the context of the Barcelona process.

During the Euro-Mediterranean conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs which was held in Marseilles in November 2000, the need for the setting up of such a regional programme under the social pillar of the partnership was once again examined.

The European Commission gave its agreement to launch this regional programme for the year 2000. The Belgian Presidency agreed to organise a meeting of government experts and representatives of civil society to encourage reflection on the main aspects of any future regional programme. The regional forum **"The Role of Women in Economic Development: the equality dimension between men and women in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership"** is the result.

On 16 June 2000, a preparatory meeting was held bringing together one expert per country of the partnership of the southern Mediterranean and four European experts. Basing themselves, on the one hand, on an analysis of the situation of women in the twelve Mediterranean countries and, on the other, on a review of relevant experiences in the European Union, the meeting managed to lay down the basics for a future Euro-Mediterranean regional programme which would be submitted for discussion during the Forum.

The aim of the Forum is:

To make recommendations on the main lines of the regional programme with a view to promoting the role of women in economic development by means of a Euro-Mediterranean regional programme which would be implemented by the European Commission during 2002. An analysis of the various mechanisms and approaches to gender mainstreaming within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

The conclusion of the Forum will be presented during the Ministerial Conference of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which will take place under the Belgian Presidency on 5 and 6 November 2001, to underpin strategic reflections of the European institutions for the launching of the regional programme.

The present document suggests a general framework around which discussions held during the Forum of July 2001 could be based and subsequently worked out. This would include the following four themes:

- Access to and participation of women on the labour market***
- The establishment of enterprises (micro, small- and medium-sized) by women***
- Financial tools***
- Education and vocational training***

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Thanks to the preparatory work done, a diagnosis of the situation has been drawn up for each of the four themes and an initial start to recommendations begun.

However, this approach will have to be placed in the context of women's participation in political life and their representation in decision-making bodies. As the national reports underlined, the participation of women in economic life cannot be separated from their political empowerment representing a fundamental condition for recognising the diversity and scope of women's contribution to economic life.

ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN ON THE LABOUR MARKET

a. Impact in terms of gender and equality of labour legislation and its implementation

From a legal point of view, the civil and political rights of women are recognised by the constitution or the law in most Euro-Mediterranean countries. Generally speaking, these rights have been ratified by the principal international conventions (UN, ILO). The main problems today are mainly connected to the lack in implementation of existing legal provisions. Rights relating to staff regulations are still faced with major difficulties due to different perceptions of traditions and religious prescriptions which may hinder genuine access of women to equal treatment. Stereotypes of the roles and responsibility of men and women stand in the way of specific legislation especially when it comes to implementation. The population's ignorance of the existence of legislation encouraging equality and women's lack of knowledge of their rights are additional aggravating factors. Effective mechanisms for following up and implementing these rights are also missing. Lastly, positive action is rarely implemented.

From the socio-economic point of view, there has been a steady increase in women's participation on the labour market over the last 15 years in the Mediterranean partner countries. Nevertheless, this participation remains at a lower level compared to men.

Evolution of level of women's activity in the ten Euro-Mediterranean countries, 1980-1997

COUNTRY	TOTAL WORK- FORCE ('000) 1997	ANNUAL GROWTH OF WORKFORCE %: 1980-1997	LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN % MEN 1980	LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN % MEN 1997	LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN % WOMEN 1980	LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN % WOMEN 1997
Algeria	9 416	4.0	41.1	46.9	11.1	16.7
Egypt	23 817	2.6	50.7	51.4	18.9	22.1
Morocco	10 748	2.6	47.7	51.0	24.1	27.1
Tunisia	3 562	2.9	48.0	52.1	20.1	23.9
Lebanon	1 068	2.1	44.5	49.6	12.6	19.1
Jordan	1 671	5.3	39.2	43.8	7.2	13.4
Israel	2 446	3.1	49.6	50.8	25.2	33.9
Cyprus	369	1.5	62.1	59.3	32.3	37.1
Malta	139	1.0	58.8	55.5	15.1	20.0
Turkey	29 359	2.7	53.6	58.6	30.4	34.7

Information taken from national reports presented during preparations for the Forum 2001 and from the International Labour Organisation, Report on World Employment, 1998-99, pp. 233-237.

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS

An examination of the development of women's employment per sector of activity underlines the existence of a strong horizontal segregation: practically absent from industrial employment, paid employment of women is mainly concentrated in the administrative, educational, health, agricultural and social services sectors.

The major growth of the tertiary sector, which encourages the feminisation of employment, does not reflect this: women occupy hardly 10% to 20% of management and administrative positions throughout the world.² Tertiary employment is, moreover, characterised by a strong vertical segregation: office jobs, mainly occupied by women, are classified at the lower end of the ladder and are less well paid when compared to workers. When it comes to equal qualifications, women find it more difficult than men to obtain executive and management positions. In addition, the salaries of executive female staff increase at a slower rate than those of men.

The availability, mobility and development of women's careers are strongly hindered by family constraints. The task of looking after children and dependents is assumed by women due to the absence of a collective care infrastructure.

As some national reports observe, conservatism in society and in administration is a serious obstacle; the fact is, however, that greater access for women to decision-making positions could lead to a significant renewal as regards both occupancy of leading posts and the way in which policies are worked out.

In certain countries, the economic opening up has made local production vulnerable notably in the textile sector which employs a high proportion of female workers. As a result of economic reforms, the privatisation of the public sector where employment is relatively "feminised", has led to an increase in female unemployment. The problem of female unemployment is mainly an urban phenomenon and affects a large sector of women with university degrees.

The effects of globalisation on the local labour market combined with the speed of technological change reinforces the tendency of dichotomy of the labour market. Equality has far from been achieved on this segmented labour market. The first segment consists of high-level and well-paid positions reserved for a very well qualified workforce, mainly men. The second segment covers low wage, temporary employment occupied by a female workforce with intermediate qualifications. These female workers, who are hardly qualified or not qualified at all, are excluded from this so-called "regular" labour market with no other choice than to work in the informal sector.

² ILO, Every woman is a worker, 25 October, 1995.

b. Under-evaluation of female employment

Statistics relating to the level of activity of women should be interpreted with care as a large part of female activity is concentrated in the informal sector and consequently comes under hidden statistics. Questions of definition and measuring informal work are not included in the definitions and official procedures for the collection and analysis of data relating to economic activity. In these circumstances, evaluating the value and the nature of informal, non-remunerated economic activities of women, especially those women who live and work in a rural environment, remains uncertain and very approximate. Generally speaking, it is the actual levels of employment and female activity which are under-evaluated. The levels of female inactivity deserve to be investigated and better documented.

The efforts made by the UNDP³ (United Nations Development Programme) to overcome this difficulty should serve as a model for action in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries. The expertise newly acquired by Eurostat for gender mainstreaming the tools and statistical analysis of the EU Member States must be reinforced. It should be the subject of exchanges and experience sharing between the partner countries. All the countries are concerned, to varying degrees, with integrating an approach in terms of gender and equality for measuring and evaluating both the operation of the labour market and the impact of equality in economic, social and fiscal policies. Encouraging the implementation of gender mainstreaming, notably by taking full advantage of and strengthening existing expertise, should have the following objectives:

- make the statistics relating to the diversity of working conditions and female employment in the various partner countries visible;
- make a better estimate of the value of the contribution of female workers to socio-economic development in every partner country and in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- take better account of the scope of inequality which still characterises the working conditions and the work of women and especially improve the effectiveness of devices and measures implemented guaranteeing equal rights.

c. Reconciling family life and professional life

In the Euro-Mediterranean countries, domestic tasks are mainly done by women. When they start working, they end up in badly paid jobs at the bottom of the professional ladder.

In most countries, the lack of collective structures enabling better reconciliation for various aspects of social life (family, professional, cultural and political) is a major obstacle to the quantitative improvement of female employment and to the qualitative improvement to the working conditions of most women. The creation of a more favourable environment for such reconciliation appears vital in most partner countries. In-depth investigations could be made into what is needed, in every partner country in terms of child care and after school structures, working time arrangements and the equal distribution of family responsibilities between men and women.

³ References to annual reports of the UNDP Programme

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Relating to decision-making

- Setting up mechanisms to guarantee equal representation of women in all decision-making bodies by means of positive action (e.g. progressive quotas);
- Organising awareness raising and information campaigns on the rights of women and equality between men and women;
- Creating accessible legal assistance structures both in terms of costs and location for women suffering discrimination;
- Supporting and strengthening women's organisations which monitor respect for and promotion of equality between men and women and for equal access to economic, social and cultural freedoms;
- Creating a monitoring tool for equality of labour legislation based on statistical objectives and follow-up indicators;
- Training members of various executive and legislative authorities in the use of this instrument and in the interpretation of results.

Relating to the under-evaluation of female employment

- Improving and harmonising procedures for collecting and processing statistical data relating to the employment market (employment, under employment and activities in the informal sector);
- Providing a breakdown according to gender of all statistical data produced by governmental institutions, private and public companies and university research centres taking account of the approach in terms of gender and equality in data processing, analysis and interpretation of results;
- Highlighting informal female employment and making it more professional;
- Fighting inequality of wages and salaries;
- Social protection for women especially in the rural environment.

Relating to the reconciliation of family and professional life

- Setting up mechanisms for the application of legislation relating to maternal and parental leave by trying to create a more evenly balanced distribution of family responsibilities;
- Developing measures for working time arrangements which take equality between men and women into account;
- Developing networks and structures for care of small and older children and looking after dependents and making these structures more professional in nature.

Vertical and horizontal desegregation of the labour market

- With the aim of fighting horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market, identifying professional job creation sectors and developing adequate measures to increase and improve opportunities and conditions of access and participation of women in these professions;
- Recognising and making full use of women's professional qualifications;
- Developing positive action with a view to increasing the presence of women in executive and management positions.

CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ENTERPRISES BY WOMEN

The reasons for women to set up their own companies are :

- the need for greater independence than that which they derive from pursuing their own occupations;
- circumstances of professional life which are always linked to the need to earn a living;
- the impossibility of finding paid employment in spite of a long search for work.

To set up a company, particularly micro-enterprises, a factor in the economic enhancement of women, a gender analysis of the dynamics of their creation and development and conditions for their success or failure appears to be essential. The rare studies of this problem relating to the partner countries indicate that the conditions for creating and exercising entrepreneurship are quite different for men and women. The existence of companies managed by women varies considerably depending on the sector of activity with female entrepreneurs mainly represented in the service sector.

Worldwide it is estimated that today there are 500 million people working in micro enterprises. Data for North Africa highlight women's dynamism in this sector. Census statistics are, however, rather approximate in nature as the setting up of micro enterprises are seldom in the form of legal entities and their activities are often in the informal sector.

In addition to the many tasks in the agricultural and domestic sector (cooking, cleaning), women are also involved in such activities as weaving, sewing, knitting, embroidery and carpet making as well as other forms of handicraft. The micro enterprise encompasses various facets with a predominance of work done at home.

The main obstacles to the creation and development of micro enterprises managed by women are the absence of financing facilities and systemised credits and the difficulty in setting up and then extending commercial networks.

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

However, other barriers can be mentioned such as:

- The presence of a large number of micro enterprises in the informal sector;
- The weak financial structure (weak capitalisation, poor accountancy management and the lack of differentiation between family and company budgets);
- The lack of management and marketing methods and a formal bookkeeping system;
- Technological backwardness;
- The absence of marketing circuits for the domestic market and for exports;
- The lack of training and staff qualifications for SMEs;
- Weak quality control and a lack of product standardisation (quality labelling).

Actions aimed at developing female entrepreneurship should be based on the following:

- Greater participation of women in social, economic and political life;
- Support for women's associations for the development of the partnership between the NGOs of the north and the south;
- Setting up of networks;
- The development of a partnership between NGOs and institutions;
- Financing and credit facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Relating to participation of women in the setting up of companies

- Setting up of professional federations and a regional network for business and professional women;
- Creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Chamber of Commerce for women;
- Distribution of models of successful female entrepreneurs;
- Creation of business incubators;
- Setting up of one-stop information centres;
- Exchange of information on best practice.

Development of micro enterprises

- Enhancing the value of work and goods produced by women;
- Development of production and retail cooperatives;
- Access to the Euro-Mediterranean market;
- Support for NGOs active in developing micro enterprises.

FINANCIAL TOOLS

It should be noted that the activities of banks is concentrated on the 25% of the world population that is economically active. Less than 2% of low-income entrepreneurs have access

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

to financial services⁴. These telling figures illustrate the difficulties of access to credit with which women are confronted who only have weak resources. In addition, in the developing countries, they mainly turn to other women to obtain credits with all the constraints that this implies.

In the struggle against poverty and the exclusion of women in economic development, it should be noted that all countries see micro-credit as one of the possibilities for women to create their own employment, a micro enterprise or even small or medium-sized enterprises, in an urban, peri-urban or rural zone.

When it comes to the financing of micro enterprises, apart a few countries, those in the Mediterranean zone still have to catch up with areas such as Latin America, Asia or even certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Viable and competent micro-finance institutions (IMFs) have been rather successful and have been running for more than 20 years. It is no longer necessary to mention the example of the Grameen Bank.

a. Women's access to micro-credit

The informal work of the woman at home or the rural woman are only socially acknowledged to a limited degree. Women's continual state of underdevelopment keeps them outside the circle of influence and decision-making in all fields. Although they sometimes occupy a major, decision-making position in agricultural production and management of land and acquisitions, they do not have the possibility of contributing to the development of economic and agricultural policies which concern them in the main.

At the same time, in the handicraft sector where most of the time they represent the largest part of the workforce, access to micro-credit also allows them to develop micro, even small enterprises employing several people. Currently, the goods produced are mainly traditional and of variable quality. One of the main obstacles to the proper development of these activities and the creation of SMEs is due to the lack of financing and systemised credit facilities.

It is certain that greater autonomy thanks to the possibility of obtaining credit and developing more structured activities contributes to the emancipation of women and the growth of their overall empowerment in society.

Moreover, socio-cultural obstacles linked to traditions, too restrictive family codes, the fear of committing themselves to credit demands, the lack of information and financial tools are obstacles for women taking advantage of micro-credit.

Where they exist, the IMFs work together the most with associations that support women in their objectives or even economic survival by training, consciousness raising campaigns and information.

⁴ World Bank, World Forum, The missing links, April 1995.

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

A consistent programme of support for micro-credit should also strive to achieve these objectives.

b. Creation and development of micro-credit

What is needed is financial bodies giving loans to micro entrepreneurs without requiring any guarantee. Their status is very varied from a bank to a non-profit making organisation, from a cooperative to a simple informal association of private donors. They give loans from around 300 to 500 euros but these can go as high as 1 500 to 2 500 euros for the largest institutions and only 70 to 100 euros in the smallest institutions.

Rather surprisingly but confirmed by the passing of time, the IMFs represent a low risk sector: payback levels are 95% to 98% in spite of the extreme poverty of beneficiaries. There are around 7 000 micro-credit institutions worldwide. They currently affect more than 15 million people.

Their potential market is estimated at 500 million people. The aim is 200 million over the next five years.

A genuine strategy to benefit micro-credit, specifically directed towards women, encouraging the economic development of countries in the Mediterranean zone, is the wish expressed in all the national reports of the twelve southern countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

One of the main obstacles to the creation and development of women's participation in economic development in the region is poverty and the crying lack of financing and credit facilities.

Moreover, there are currently some twenty efficient institutions and based on this potential, some 200 to 300 others. These institutions should be the ones used to create programme that would take account of the three levels of action - the legislative framework, professionalising women's work and financing.

Some countries in the Mediterranean region are already well advanced and have created the legislation needed for the development of micro-financing. However, most of them have only taken a few isolated and half-hearted initiatives. The lack of an adequate information system on micro-credit and following up how the IMFs are performing, the lack of local expertise and the weakness of technological tools enabling the setting up of useful networks, are a major handicap to the development of this sector and the working out of action programmes and their follow-up.

The three levels of possible action are:

- A legislative framework (banking legislation): to fight against usury, harmonising the status of the IMFs and allowing them to enter established financial circuits. This framework would encourage them to become more professional which in turn would allow them to have recourse to financial instruments of the market. This has been set up in some countries but not everywhere and more often than not, incompletely.
- Professionalisation: this is needed for the large majority of IMFs already doing well or with potential in order to give them access to credit lines and capital donations.

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

- Financing (credit lines and capitalisation): this should be created for the already professionalised IMFs or ones that are about to become professional. It means the development of an audit and rating system for IMFs and includes the creation of local, national and regional funds. Two types of funds should be set up to support this action - financing funds and rating funds.

The financing of such a programme could be done under the auspices of large-scale international cooperation agreements and more especially through Community financing (e.g. the MEDA programme or Mediterranean Development Assistance Programme).

Nowadays in the Mediterranean region, only a very small number of IMFs have access to credit lines. More often neither their status nor existing regulations allow them to do so. Furthermore, all the IMFs need financial instruments, credit lines and loans to continue to exist and develop. The few commercial possibilities are offered by local financial markets via commercial banks that demand guarantees that the IMFs generally cannot give.

The development of local refinancing micro-credit funds is expressly recommended at national, regional or sub-regional level for countries in the Mediterranean region. They enable institutions to have access to micro-credit refinancing sources and offer genuine ways of fulfilling their crucial role of support for private initiatives and local economic development in underprivileged areas. However, this cannot be done without a certain level of technical assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Relating to micro-credit institutions

- Developing a consistent statutory and non-statutory framework;
- Developing the professionalisation of micro-credit institutions (management, training, financial viability, evaluation);
- Improving the long-term financial possibilities for micro-credit institutions (guarantee funds);
- Improving the availability of micro-credit institutions (mobile branches);
- Creating networks of micro-credit institutions;
- Raising awareness of gender links;
- Getting the business world and female business managers involved;

Other financial bodies

Cooperatives and banks managed for and by women

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

Women's concerns

- Overcoming socio-cultural obstacles;
- Adequate financial information and a proper framework for women;
- Developing informal work;
- Forming associations on the ground working closely with women and encouraging the micro-credit activities of NGOs;
- Setting up networks for associations involved in micro-financing;
- Initiating and reinforcing supportive guarantors.

4. EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

a. Literacy and educational provision

Great efforts are currently being made by the public authorities to educate women. However, there are a number of obstacles to full participation of women in the educational system. Action is half-hearted in relation to social demand and to the requirements of sustainable development. In the southern partner countries of the Mediterranean, illiteracy still affects about 25% of women in urban areas and between 30% and 60% of women in rural areas.

Some national reports say that proper examination of the current situation in female education is difficult given the lack of systematic data broken down by gender.

Four priority action areas can nevertheless be identified: literacy, educational provision, non-formal education in rural and peri-urban areas and values provided by the educational process.

Educational aims ought to be two-fold:

- Guaranteeing access and keeping women in education and effective training systems adapted to the level of literacy and schooling;
- At the same time, allowing a culture of equality to take root by means of values on which the educational process is based.

The challenge is greater as the social return on educating women and young girls is higher than it is for men and young boys. An educated woman need not be considered only as one that has opted for a reduction in the size of her family, better care for her children, sending both boys and girls to school and better protection of environmental resources but also as an active woman who see her capabilities reinforced, both individually and collectively, and who is able to exercise power in both public and private life.

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

It appears that providing girls with an education is much more sensitive to family characteristics and to the educational availability than it is for boys, e.g.:

- the mother's level of literacy;
- how near the school or college is to the home;
- equipment available in schools;
- the proximity of educational infrastructures;
- direct costs: equipment, textbooks;
- the existence of awareness raising campaigns;
- the emphasis on civil society.

For this reason, the approach to literacy must be viable and targeted to benefit women and girls. A special effort must be made when designing such a campaign in terms of gender, action, organisation, school courses, content, coordination mechanisms, follow-up and evaluation.

At the same time, NGOs and local participants should be more involved and non-formal education developed. These are types of non-traditional education offering structured training in a non-institutional environment based on pupil-oriented programmes, with the possibility of extending participation under a flexible organisation which uses innovative methods.

Besides this reinforcement of access to education and training, the challenge today consists of redefining the educational institution as a lever for democratic construction which includes promoting a culture of equality.

b. Vocational training

Vocational training is the area where disparities between the various partners in the southern Mediterranean countries are the greatest. The variations in levels of literacy, education or levels of activity of women are a reflection of these differences. This makes common strategies difficult to pin down.

Nevertheless, a whole series of obstacles to education which have already been identified are also evident in vocational training.

This is more specifically concerned with ignoring the negative impact on equality as a result of too rigid organisational structures (lack of flexibility for timetables and programmes, the location of training centres), the use of stereotyped educational material not adapted to the realities and current challenges of the labour market and the lack of qualification and sensitivity to the gender issue in both the public and the private sectors when it comes to educational provision. The national reports have identified the following problems:

- Lack of access to information on training sources;

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

- Discrimination against women in accessing certain training courses, concentration of women in traditional branches of activity reinforcing professional segregation;
- Inadequate links between training programmes and the employment market;
- Difficulty in finding employment for young, qualified females;
- Lack of life-long training required for confronting socio-economic and technological changes;
- The cost of training which in some countries is paid for by the private sector;
- Difficulty in getting recognition for women's abilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding literacy and educational provision

- Setting up quantitative, qualitative and administrative data collection, detailed and broken down by gender;
- Implementing an approach in terms of gender for literacy and schooling campaigns;
- Developing programmes and an educational infrastructure available to girls;
- Actively supporting NGOs in the field of non-formal education;
- Promoting positive images of women.

Regarding vocational training

- Identifying sectors and professions where there are vacancies;
- Train the trainers in gender issues;
- Training courses for women in professions usually reserved for men;
- Adapting training courses to the specific needs of women;
- Organising consciousness raising campaigns for everyone involved in professional life;
- Drawing up a regional inventory of positive experiences in training women;
- Actively supporting NGOs in the field of vocational training;
- Developing training centres specifically for women.

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE REGIONAL FORUM
“THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
THE EQUALITY DIMENSION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN THE
EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP”**

Brussels, 13-14 July 2001

The participants of the regional Forum, which was organised in Brussels on 13-14 July 2001, on the initiative of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union with the support of the European Commission, concluded the following:

There is a common need for European societies and those of the Southern shores of the Mediterranean to jointly look for and build a Euro-Mediterranean region of shared prosperity adhering to the objectives of peace, security and sustainable development in order to reduce the wide gaps which exist between and within the countries concerned.

The Barcelona declaration set out the framework within which Europe and the countries of the southern Mediterranean could best be developed.

However, achieving these objectives can only succeed by the involvement of women who have always contributed to the development of society and to the economy of all over the world. In the Mediterranean countries, as is the case in the European Union, this situation is still often underestimated due to the under representation of women in politics and decision-making.

The aims of the Forum were :

- To make recommendations on the outlines of a specific regional program to promote the role of women in economic development.
- To make an analysis of the various mechanisms and approaches to gender mainstreaming within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.
- To present the conclusions of the Forum at the Ministerial conference of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which will take place under the Belgian presidency on 5 and 6 November 2001.

This specific regional program should offer :

- Capacity building and awareness raising mechanisms;
- Channels for disseminating knowledge ;
- Frameworks for exchanging experiences and good practices;
- Parameters and indicators to monitor the active participation of women in economic and social life;
- New perspectives to improve the living and working conditions of women;
- Partnerships between all relevant actors;
- Financial instruments and resources.

The specific regional program should contain 4 strands :

- Access to and participation of women on the labour market;

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP
MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS**

- The setting up of companies run by women;
- Financial tools;
- Education and vocational training.

1. Access to and participation of women on the labour market

- Create a monitoring tool for equality in labour legislation based on statistical objectives and on indicators.
- Support and strengthen women's organisations which monitor the promotion of equality for women and men and their equal access to economic, social and cultural freedoms.
- To improve and recognize informal female employment's image and to turn it professional.
- Identify professional job creation sectors and develop measures to increase and improve opportunities.

2. The setting up of companies run by women

- Develop formal and informal networks for business and professional women;
- Create supporting structures to stimulate women's enterprises (e.g. business incubators, one stop information centres, co-operatives, start-ups...)
- Develop tools to professionalize the work and the products of women (marketing, quality, design...)

3. Financial tools

- Develop tools to monitor credit development and the distribution of financial resources in relation to companies run by women;
- Support measures to develop and sustain micro-credit initiatives;
- Support commercial partnerships between banks, investment institutions and women business associations.

4. Education and vocational training

- Develop instruments (e.g. mentoring and coaching) to widen the vocational training system embracing all knowledge and professions (new technologies and engineering...) and to take into account the specific situation of women ;
- To develop tools to achieve better interaction between training programs and labour market specific needs.

In conclusion, the above recommendations reconfirm the necessity of the launching a specific regional program for women.

This specific regional program concerns only the first part of a two track policy for sustainable action in favour of equal opportunities of women and men as part of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

The other part demands the integration and implementation of the gender dimension in the bilateral co-operation and in the all other pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. In that respect, the first pillar referring to a political partnership able to define an area of peace and stability is essential. The role of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution has to be recognised.

The rapid conduct of the assessment of the implementation of the Council Regulation n°2836-1998 on the "integration of gender issues in development co-operation" is a very important step to be made.