



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General
External Co-operation Section

BACKGROUND PAPER

OSCE relations with Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

This paper provides an overview of the main features of the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue:

History and Background

The long-standing relationship between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (currently Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia), goes back to the very beginning of the Helsinki process. The fact that some OSCE participating States border the Mediterranean and that the countries of the Mediterranean region share historical, cultural, economic and political ties with the OSCE area, makes clear that there is a Mediterranean dimension to European security.

In the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, participating States included a Mediterranean chapter in which they stated their conviction that “security in Europe (...) is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean (...)”.

Further, they declared their intention to promote the development of good-neighbourly relations with the Mediterranean Partners and to encourage the development of mutually beneficial co-operation in the various fields of economic activity. They sought to increase mutual confidence so as to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean area as a whole. The inter-linkage between security in Europe and the Mediterranean region has been underscored time and again in subsequent CSCE/OSCE documents.

The OSCE’s ongoing Mediterranean dialogue is mainly based on the following OSCE documents:

- **Helsinki Final Act (1975), chapter on “Questions relating to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean”**

“(...)security in Europe is to be considered in the broader context of world security and is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole, and that accordingly the process of improving security should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world, and in particular to the Mediterranean area” (...).

- In the **follow-up meetings** of the CSCE after Helsinki, the Mediterranean States were invited to make oral and written contributions. A number of specific meetings were held on Mediterranean issues mostly relating to the economic, social, environmental, scientific, and cultural fields, to which the Mediterranean States were invited to participate (Valletta, 1979; Venice 1984; Palma de Mallorca, 1990; and Valletta, 1993).

- **Charter of Paris (1990)**

The participating States maintained that they “will continue efforts to strengthen security and co-operation in the Mediterranean as an important factor for stability in Europe”.

- **Helsinki Summit Document (1992)**

The states, “(7) Recalling the provisions of the Final Act and other CSCE relevant documents and consistent with established practice, the non-participating Mediterranean States will continue to be invited to contribute to CSCE activities. (8) Measures to widen the scope of co-operation with non-participating Mediterranean States are set forth in Chapter X”:

Chapter X: MEDITERRANEAN

“(1) The participating States recognize that the changes which have taken place in Europe are relevant to the Mediterranean region and that, conversely, economic, social, political and security developments in that region can have a bearing on Europe. In this context, the CSO will seek to relate issues regarding co-operation in the Mediterranean to the goals of the CSCE process and will examine, as appropriate, practical modalities for possible contributions to the CSCE by non-participating Mediterranean States.

(2) The Chairman-in-Office of the CSO is encouraged to foster contacts with non-participating Mediterranean States in order to establish an effective information exchange.

(3) Non-participating Mediterranean States will be invited to future review conferences to make contributions concerning security and co-operation in the Mediterranean.

(4) A CSCE Mediterranean Seminar will be convened under the auspices of the CSO in the course of the year following his Follow-up Meeting. It will meet for a duration of no more than five working days. The date, location and agenda will be decided upon by the CSO.

(5) The Seminar can be attended by non-participating Mediterranean States, to which invitations will be extended.

(6) The agenda of the Seminar may comprise topics such as the environment, demographic trends or economic development and other areas of bilateral and multilateral co-operation between CSCE participating States and non-participating Mediterranean States reflecting the general framework of principles of co-operation in the Mediterranean region as provided for in the Final Act and other CSCE documents. The Seminar will not produce a document with commitments binding on CSCE participating States”.

- **25th Committee of Senior Officials**

In March 1994 in Prague, at the **25th Committee of Senior Officials**, after examining requests from five countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia), the participating States decided to invite the Mediterranean countries to a series of CSCE activities in order to forge a closer relationship. These included: Ministerial Council meetings, Review Conferences (which convene prior to Summits), regular meetings with the OSCE Troika and, on a case-by-case basis, to seminars and other ad hoc meetings in which they had a special interest. Mediterranean States were given access to all CSCE official documents and the right to submit views to the Chairman-in-Office. Jordan became a Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation in May 1998.

- **Budapest Summit (1994)**

A significant development in the OSCE-MPC relationship took place upon the adoption of a decision at **Budapest Summit** on the Mediterranean in December 1994 which states that:

“1. The non-participating Mediterranean States have had a long-standing relationship with, and have shown keen interest in the work of, the CSCE since its beginning. Reaffirming their conviction that strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean is important for stability in the CSCE region, the participating States welcome the agreements recently concluded in the Middle East peace process. Recalling the Helsinki Document 1992 and confirming subsequent relevant decisions, the participating States decide to intensify the

dialogue with the five non-participating Mediterranean States referred to in the decision taken by the 25th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.

2. To this end, and responding to the interest shown by these non-participating Mediterranean States, they take the following decisions:

(a) An informal, open-ended contact group, at the level of experts, will be established within the framework of the Permanent Council in Vienna. This group will meet periodically to conduct a dialogue with these non-participating Mediterranean States in order to facilitate the interchange of information of mutual interest and the generation of ideas.

(b) Building on the tradition of Mediterranean seminars already in existence within the CSCE, the participating States decide to hold a seminar in 1995 on the topic of the CSCE's experience in the field of confidence-building measures. The participating States also envisage holding future seminars on topics of mutual interest. They welcome the offer made by the Arab Republic of Egypt to host the above seminar, and encourage the other four non-participating Mediterranean States to make similar offers.

(c) The Chairman-in-Office will conduct during his/her term in office high-level consultations between the CSCE, represented by the Troika and the Secretary General, and the non-participating Mediterranean States.

(d) In order to consider the proposals that originate in the contact group, seminars and high-level consultations, the Chairman-in-Office will invite during the course of the year representatives of these non-participating Mediterranean States, as appropriate, to any meetings of the Permanent Council solely devoted to "Mediterranean Issues", or to the Senior Council when "Mediterranean Issues" are placed on the agenda. The Chairman of the Forum for Security Co-operation, with the consensus of the participating States, may also invite representatives of these non-participating Mediterranean States to meetings devoted to "Mediterranean Issues".

- **Lisbon Summit 1996**

The **1996 Lisbon Summit Document** makes reference to the Mediterranean region and its Partners, as follows: "We are committed to further developing the dialogue with our Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. In this context, strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean is important for stability in the OSCE region. We welcome the continued interest displayed by the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Japan, and the Republic of Korea in the OSCE, and the deepening of dialogue and co-operation with them. We invite them to participate in our activities, including meetings as appropriate". Under the decision on the Development of the Agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation it is stated that the "The participating States will consider extending, upon request and within existing resources, the FSC's experience to partner States in the adjacent Mediterranean area".

From the Security Model to the Charter for European Security

The Lisbon Summit Declaration on a common and comprehensive Security Model for the twenty-first century, Heads of State or Government stated that "we value our co-operation with regions adjacent to the OSCE region, giving particular attention to the Mediterranean area".

Decision (MC (6). Dec/5) on guidelines on an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security, adopted during the **1997 Ministerial Council meeting in Copenhagen**, states that:

"5. Ministers agree that participating States, through a Document-Charter, will *inter alia*, undertake the following: ...

(j) Recognizing the indivisibility of security, they affirm that strengthened security and co-operation in adjacent areas, in particular the Mediterranean, as an important factor for stability in the OSCE area. They will consider

closer co-operation with all partners for co-operation in order to promote the norms and values shared by the OSCE participating States, and to encourage them to draw on OSCE expertise”.

The **Charter for European Security** was adopted at the Istanbul Summit on 19 November 1999. Under Chapter V on “Our Partners for Co-operation”, Heads of State or Government stated the following:

“48. We recognize the interdependence between the security of the OSCE area and that of Partners for Co-operation, as well as our commitment to the relationship and the dialogue with them. We emphasize in particular the long-standing relations with our Mediterranean partners, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. We recognize the increased involvement in and support for the work of the OSCE by our Partners for Co-operation. Building on this interdependence, we are ready to develop this process further. Implementing and building on the Helsinki Document 1992 and the Budapest Document 1994, we will work more closely with the Partners for Co-operation to promote OSCE norms and principles. We welcome their wish to promote the realization of the Organization’s norms and principles, including the fundamental principle of resolving conflicts through peaceful means. To this end, we will invite the Partners for Co-operation on a more regular basis to increased participation in the work of the OSCE as the dialogue develops.

49. The potential of the Contact Group and the Mediterranean seminars must be fully explored and exploited. Drawing on the Budapest mandate, the Permanent Council will examine the recommendations emerging from the Contact Group and the Mediterranean seminars. We will encourage the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to draw on our expertise in setting up structures and mechanisms in the Mediterranean for early warning, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention (...).

- **2001 – PC DEC 430**

Mediterranean

- Develop and intensify existing dialogue, particularly through the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs)
- Invite the MPCs to participate, as in October 2000, in the section of the Permanent Council that discusses relations between the Contact Group and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

- **The Bucharest Ministerial Council Decisions 2001:**

Under Decision No. 1, the ‘Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism’ states that “Participating States/Secretariat: Will strengthen co-operation and information exchanges, both formally and informally, with other relevant groups, organizations, and institutions involved in combating terrorism. (...) Will broaden dialogue with partners outside the OSCE area, such as the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and Partners for Co-operation in Asia, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League, the African Union, and those States bordering on the OSCE area to exchange best practices and lessons learned in counter-terrorism efforts for application within the OSCE area” (MC(9).DEC/1).

Under Decision No. 3, ‘Fostering the Role of the OSCE as a Forum for Political Dialogue’ states that “Where appropriate, the Sub-Committee may invite representatives of the business community, business associations and relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations, the academic community, and non-participating States, particularly Partners for Co-operation, to participate in its meetings” (MC(9).DEC/3).

Participation of MPCs in OSCE activities

The Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation are invited to attend relevant meetings, including the implementation meetings of all three dimensions of the OSCE, i.e. the politico-military, the economic and the human dimensions (indicative list below):

- Summits
- Ministerial Council Meetings
- Review Conferences
- High-level consultations and meetings between the OSCE Troika, the Secretary General and the Mediterranean Partners
- Contact Group meetings with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, within the framework of the Permanent Council with MPCs ^{*)}
- In the past two years, Partners have been invited to the section of the Permanent Council that discusses the relationship between the Contact Group and the MPCs.
- Political/Military Dimension:
 - Opening and Closing Sessions of the Annual Implementation Meeting;
 - Since 1997, the follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security;
 - Other meetings organized by the Forum for Security Co-operation such as the recent “Workshop on the implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons” (February 2002); and the “Expert Meeting on Combating Terrorism within the politico-military dimension of the OSCE” May 2002.
- Economic Dimension:
 - Preparatory Seminars;
 - The Economic Forum.
- Human Dimension:
 - Supplementary Meetings organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (held in Vienna);
 - The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (held in Warsaw);
 - ODIHR Seminars
- Mediterranean Seminars and other Seminars
- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meetings: Annual and Winter Sessions

MPCs have the right to submit their views, on issues of mutual interest, to the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE, who will circulate them to all participating States.

OSCE Mediterranean Seminars

Seminars are usually attended by high-level representatives from participating States, the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, and various international organizations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, thus leading to a cross-fertilization of ideas and recommendations. While generating impetus into the dialogue, the OSCE Mediterranean Seminars provide the opportunity to devote time to exchanging views, recapitulate on proposals made, and contribute to further developments in the OSCE-MPCs relationship.

^{*)} The meetings of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs), which have convened since 1995, provide the opportunity for participating States and the six Mediterranean Partners to advance the ongoing dialogue. Though the Contact Group meetings are informal, OSCE participating States, and Mediterranean Partners are regularly represented at ambassadorial level. The Contact Group was established within the framework of the Permanent Council in order to facilitate the interchange of information of mutual interest and the generation of ideas (Budapest Summit 1994).

- “*The OSCE Experience in the Field of Confidence-Building*”, September 1995, Cairo, Egypt;
- “*The OSCE as a Platform for Dialogue and the Fostering of Norms of Behaviour*”, June 1996, Tel Aviv, Israel;
- “*The Security Model for the Twenty-first Century: Implications for the Mediterranean Basin*”, September 1997, Cairo, Egypt;
- “*The Human Dimension of Security, Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law*”, October 1998, Malta;
- “*Implementation of Human Dimension Commitments*”, December 1999 in Amman, Jordan;
- “*Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region*” October 2000, Portorož, Slovenia;
- “*The implementation of OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension commitments: The OSCE experience and its relevance for the Mediterranean Region*” October 2001, Dubrovnik, Croatia;
- “*Media and the New Technologies: Implications for Governments, International Organizations and Civil Society*” 4-5 November 2002, Rhodes, Greece.

(Consolidated Summaries of all the Seminars are available on the OSCE web site: <http://www.osce.org>)

Experts’ Workshops

Upon a request from the Mediterranean Partners, since 2000, workshops gathering experts from the MPCs and participating States have been organized in Vienna by the Section for External Co-operation/OSCE Secretariat:

- Workshop for Experts “*Overview of OSCE activities*”, Vienna, 17-19 June 2000 (full report SEC.GAL/95/00);
- Workshop for Experts, “*Challenges and Opportunities in Economic Development*”, Vienna, 25-26 June 2001 (full report PC.DEL/500/01);
- Workshop on “*Freedom of Expression and New Technologies*”, Vienna, 7 October 2002, (organized by the Section for External Co-operation in conjunction with the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Press and Public Information Section).

Participation in OSCE activities at the operational level

- According to PC. DEC/233 adopted in June 1998, the Permanent Council, (...) decided that:
 - OSCE Missions will, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with modalities to be established by the Missions and the Secretariat, receive representatives sent by Partners for Co-operation for short-term visits;
 - the ODIHR will make arrangements for inclusion of observers sent by partners for co-operation in election monitoring or supervision operations organised by the OSCE, and will establish appropriate modalities for such participation.
- P.C. DEC/430 adopted in June 2001 takes note of and welcomes the report on recommendations concerning future applications for partnership that states:

“1.2 Greater involvement by the partners in the OSCE’s activities:

- Sending of observers from the partners to electoral missions of ODIHR;
- Secondment by partners, on a voluntary basis, of mission members to OSCE field missions;

- Possibility to invite the partners to take part in some confidence-and security-building measures (CSBMs), including activities provided by Vienna Document 99, organized by the participating States, through the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC); the agreement of the OSCE participating States which will take part in this CSBM activity will be required. At this stage, this specific recommendation does not enjoy support by all OSCE participating States.”

- **Other activities:** Internships with the OSCE Secretariat (usually for graduate students and young diplomats) are also open for candidates from the MPCs.
- Candidates from the Mediterranean Partner States are welcome to apply for participation in the “Researchers in Residence Programme” designed to give researchers working on OSCE or OSCE-related topics the opportunity for carrying out research in the OSCE archives in Prague.
- Through an outreach programme, the OSCE Secretariat intends to organize starting next year visits to the Mediterranean Partner States. During such visits, a team from the OSCE would hold training sessions and briefings on the OSCE and co-operation with the Mediterranean Partner States for Diplomatic Academies and other academic institutions, such as universities, apart from carrying out meetings with representatives of the Foreign Ministries.

Liaison with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

The Section for External Co-operation at the OSCE Secretariat is responsible for maintaining contact with representatives of the Mediterranean Partners with a view to facilitating the flow of information. This Section advises and supports the Chair of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners in carrying out its tasks. Furthermore, the Section maintains an inventory of proposals forwarded by both OSCE participating States and the MPCs on the enhancement of the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue.

For any further information, you may contact

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