



***State of play of the European Neighborhood Policy.***  
**Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and  
Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy  
(CFSP/CSDP)**

**By Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the  
Mediterranean**

Riga, 5 March 2015

Dear Minister Rinkevics (*Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Republic of Latvia*)

Dear Co-panelists,

Dear members of Parliament

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I would like at the outset **to thank the President of the Saeima** (*Latvian Parliament*), and the two Chairmen of both the Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee, for organizing and inviting the UfM at this Conference.

It is a great pleasure to be here today, among such distinguished participants, and to be given the opportunity to exchange with you on such an important issue.



We are fortunate to engage in these discussions coinciding with **the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.**

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Latvia for an already successful EU Presidency.

You will easily understand that I will focus my intervention on the Southern Neighborhood, but let me start by stating strongly that we need to look at our region from a holistic approach, thus integrating the EU and both its Eastern and Southern Neighborhood within a broad perspective of growth, stability and security.

This is the reason why I am happy to be here today and eager to hear and know more about the Eastern partnership perspectives, as well as sharing with you some ideas regarding the UfM.

It is bearing in mind this holistic approach that we, at the UfM, have built strong partnerships with the Council of the Baltic Sea States in order to work together in areas of cooperation and synergies. We identified common projects and initiatives which could be of interest to both regions as it has been the case for example in maritime affairs, environment and transport,

In the same spirit, I have had the opportunity to engage a multiple and very fruitful consultations with countries such as Sweden, Finland, Germany, Poland and the Baltic states and many others in the region, because we are all engaged in the collective management of our environment.



As far as the Southern Neighborhood is concerned, **the year 2015 is undoubtedly crucial**, since in parallel to the ENP review and the context in the region we are also celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Process, whose acquis forms the basis of Union for the Mediterranean.

---

At this stage I would like to highlight six underlining dimensions that are increasingly essential in the Euro-Mediterranean region:

- 1) **The need for global and balanced approach between security and development.** There is no doubt that security related issues rank very high in the priorities in our region : terrorism, radicalism, illegal migration, crisis in Libya and Syria and all the related impacts and consequences need to be addressed urgently, collectively and efficiently.

But it is important that all these issues be dealt with a comprehensive approach in order to tackle them consistently and permanently.

The global and balanced approach between security and development needs to be confirmed for at least three reasons:



- long term stability lies in growth and development,
- There are crisis in the region but there are also encouraging success stories and many pillars of stability. We should indeed bear in mind the numerous opportunities existing in the region, in the form of large business opportunities and potential reinforced economic competitiveness, both in the region and beyond. I have in mind Africa and the Gulf countries. This economic bloc as a whole offers a real answer to the global challenges of competitiveness, job creation, economic growth and ultimately, to the well-being of the populations.
- Today more than ever, **inter-cultural dialogue** and the human dimension of cooperation should be placed at the forefront of our discussions in order to bridge understanding between people and fight all forms of racisms, intolerance and exclusions.

I am sure we are all fully convinced that **tangible and truly sustainable answers to existing security challenges must be found in economic growth, social progress and prosperity.**

2) **The principle of co-ownership.** I would like to recall that **the Union for the Mediterranean is the only institution gathering together the 28 EU member states,**



## **9 Arab Mediterranean countries, plus Israel, Turkey and the Balkans.**

But perhaps more importantly: all these countries meet around the same table with one main guiding principle: co-ownership. Co-ownership entails that the interests and aspirations of both Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries are taken into account. This is illustrated by the fact that the UfM is led by a joint Co-Presidency of the EU, from the North, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, from the South.

The UfM is the framework where the North and the South work together to **define a common agenda based on shared interests**. It is not the North working with the South, it is North and South working together. This shared conviction on the need to jointly address these common challenges explains why, in the framework of the UfM, we have witnessed in the last years the revitalization of this institution and **the regular holding of UfM ministerial conferences**, which have strongly contributed towards building a common Mediterranean agenda on a wide range of fields, notably women empowerment, transport, industrial cooperation, environment and climate change, and digital economy, enabling us to develop many concrete regional projects and initiatives in these areas.

We need to consolidate this positive trend and enlarge it to new strategic issues. The informal ministerial meeting between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries on



April 13th in Barcelona will be an important step in this direction.

**3) Coherence with the European Neighborhood Policy.**

Thanks to the holding of the Northern Co-Presidency by the European Union in March 2012, we are working closely with the EU institutions and we do it consistently with the European Neighborhood Policy. I would like to praise Mme Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn commitment to the UfM and the Southern Neighborhood as well as that of all our colleagues at the EeAS and the Commission.

I am convinced that the current review of the ENP will allow us to further reinforce this partnership and thus fully draw on existing synergies.

**4) The need to build on existing instruments and to strengthen the synergies between them based on a result oriented approach.**

I know that every now and then, there is always the temptation to rethink the model. But today if we look at the needs, priorities and challenges of the people we work for, the key words are actions and results.

I believe we can all collectively work within the framework of the existing institutions but we certainly need to strengthen the synergies and complementarities between those institutions.

This is why initiatives such as Amici for the funding of investments in the region are so important. This is also why



I support the initiative by some member states, such as Spain, to organize before the end of this year a high level meeting of all the institutions engaged in euro mediterranean issues.

And I am sure that the ENP review will retain this approach as a strong pillar.

5) **The need to promote regional integration.** if we take the UfM zone as a whole- that's it, all 28 EU member states plus the 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries- and consider it as an economic bloc, taking into account all exchanges that take place within this zone: then 90% of trade exchanges take place between EU countries, 9% between EU countries and Southern Mediterranean countries, and only 1% between Southern Mediterranean countries.

This figure points directly to the main challenge the Euro-Mediterranean region is to face in the years to come: regional integration. It **should be the underlying objective on any endeavour in the region**, not only as a driver for economic growth in the South (and in the North as well, of course), but also as the best guarantee for political stability.

I would also enlarge the perspective by saying that, whether on the level of economic potential or on the level of political stability in the Sahel-Sahara region, the Europe-Mediterranean-Africa junction is today more evident than ever before.

6) a **multi-stakeholder approach.** The ability to establish close interactions with all actors and stakeholders of the region is crucial to move cooperation forward.



In this respect Parliamentarians hold a very important role. We have regular and intense interactions with the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM. As you may know, a meeting of the delegation of the European Parliament to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean will take place next week in Strasbourg, in the run up to the Summit of UfM parliaments to take place next 11/12 May in Lisbon. I would like here to praise the role of Martin Schultz as the President of the European Parliament in his strong and efficient support to the UfM and the euro-mediterranean partnership. I am also committed to work with the different relevant committees of the EP and of the PA UfM, and would like to pay a special tribute to Elmar Brok.

I am also convinced of the need to continue working with all Euro-Mediterranean actors and stakeholders. We pursue our objectives by encouraging consensus building, developing regional and sub-regional networks, and fostered dialogue and exchange among all stakeholders from the Mediterranean region.

In doing so, we strive to strengthen our relations with our **institutional partners**, namely with those belonging to the UfM institutional framework, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), and the Anna Lindh Foundation, and also with a **wide range of partners** directly related to the operational activities, with the aim of achieving greater leverage.

-----

Let me conclude by saying once more that the importance of the challenges and opportunities must lead us to a





Union pour la Méditerranée  
Union for the Mediterranean  
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

---

comprehensive global strategic approach for the whole region. Year 2015 is the right moment to take right decisions.

Thank you for your attention.