



Press Release

Barcelona, 20 July 2011

PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Mr. Youssef Amrani, received today, July 20, 2011 the President of the Palestinian Authority Mr. Mahmoud Abbas at headquarters of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in Barcelona.

Barcelona- Mr. Youssef Amrani reaffirmed the promising prospects of the Union for the Mediterranean, in a regional context that provides new opportunities for the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, through the involvement of parliamentarians, civil society and youth.

The two officials stressed on the fact that resolving the Middle East conflict is one of the major priorities of the Mediterranean countries. Moreover, recently, the Union for the Mediterranean and after the approval of the member states to establish a desalination facility in Gaze, has commenced a new period, through the promotion and realization of projects that have direct impact on the lives of millions in the middle east and not only in Gaza.

In addition, Youssef Amrani commended the support of the European Council of 20 June 2011 to strengthen the regional dimension of the Mediterranean cooperation, another affirmation that the EU places de Union for the Mediterranean at the center of its priorities.

Also, the Secretary General reiterated on the importance of developing synergies, efficient and appropriate operational arrangements in order to successfully bring the Union for the Mediterranean as far as possible so that it becomes an engine of regional development. He also stressed that *“the Mediterranean is an obvious geographical economic need, political accountability and above all a strategic necessity”*.

Mr. Amrani also commented on the ongoing discussion on the future European Neighborhood Policy and its next financial perspective of 2014-2020: *“it is an excellent opportunity to provide the Union for the Mediterranean of better consistency, of a greater visibility, and an ambitious strategy that takes into account the new regional realities”*.