



2019 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

Tirana, 24 October 2019

Opening session

09.00–09.30 Opening remarks

Chair: H.E. Mr. Gent Cakaj Acting Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania

Speakers:

- 1. H.E. Edi Rama, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs*
- 2. H.E. Gent Cakaj, Acting Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania*
- 3. H.E. Lukáš Parížek, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic*
- 4. H.E. Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs Arab Republic of Egypt (TBC)*
- 5. H.E. Dr. Ayman Hussein Abdullah Al-Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (TBC)*
- 6. H.E. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for Mediterranean*

Intervention

Your Excellency, Edi Rama, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania

Your Excellencies

Gent Cakaj, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania and current Chair of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group;

Lukas Parizek, State Secretary of Slovakia, current Chair of the OSCE;

Sameh Shoukry, my dear friend and Minister of my home-country, Egypt;

Dr. Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan and Co-President of the UfM



my Dear Colleague and friend Thomas Greminger, Secretary-General of the OSCE

Dear Ministers and Heads of Delegation to this 2019 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

Last year, in Malaga, I had the opportunity, together with my dear friend SG Greminger, to set the foundations for a structured and meaningful cooperation between the Union for the Mediterranean and the OSCE, through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding, on the margin of the 2018 OSCE Mediterranean Conference, in which I also had the honour to participate.

A cooperation based on convergent interests, on common challenges in concrete areas, where our joint-initiatives can have a stronger impact and contribute to the development of our respective mandates and objectives.

We are aware of our differences, both in geographic scope as in the object of our mandate, the OSCE dealing mainly with security issues, the UfM more focused on development and the implementation of the SDG's at the regional level.

But we used those differences in our mandates as an incentive to identify complementarities and promote synergies in the areas and sectors where our interests are coinciding.

And fortunately, there are a lot. We should not forget that the Final Act of Helsinki of 1975 had actually a Mediterranean Chapter.

And even if that was not the case, today's events in Europe and in the Mediterranean clearly demonstrate the immediate correlation between stability and security in Europe and in the southern Mediterranean region.

Furthermore, we all understand that we cannot address security and stability issues without understanding what lies beneath, what we normally call the root causes of instability.



That's why it is not surprising to see OSCE focusing on questions like Youth development, Digital Economy, Sustainability and Climate Action.

Because we have, as societies but also as a region, to guarantee that our Youth are part of the solution and have a saying in guaranteeing the best conditions for their future, through education, through employability and entrepreneurship and a coherent transition to Digital Economy 4.0, a regional coordinated effort to promote renewable energies and respond effectively to the effects of environmental and climate change.

And these are some of the areas where the UfM is focusing its work, particularly as a platform, at the Euro-Mediterranean level, where Government and other main actors and stakeholders, like the UN agencies and other international organizations – but also at different levels, the Academia, NGO's or the private sector representatives – can aggregate their efforts and work together to foster a better economic and social environment for all our region.

Ministers,

The correlation between development and security is clear, and I am glad that the UfM and OSCE have been developing a solid relation based on those complementarities.

The Memorandum of Understanding that the UfM and OSCE signed last year allowed us to go a step further, beyond the participation in meetings and support to initiatives, to actually developing a joint project on "Prevention of climate and environment security threats in the Mediterranean", a subject of the highest importance and that, fortunately, is gaining an increased visibility and a central place in the international agenda.

Our joint-efforts on Climate Action come at a crucial moment, when our region is facing a real climate emergency.

Just last week, during the 4th UfM Regional Forum, we presented to our Ministers of Foreign Affairs the first ever scientific assessment report on climate and environmental change at the



The Secretary General

Euro-Mediterranean level that was commissioned by the UfM and the UN Environment Program to MedECC – the large network of more than 600 Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change.

And the preliminary results are alarming.

Our Mediterranean is one of the main climate change hotspots in the world.

The minimum threshold of average temperature increase of 1.5 degrees has already been exceeded and if we don't act quickly and with determination, the impact to our entire region can (and will) be frightening.

Thus the importance and timeliness of our joint UfM-OSCE project.

I am very happy with the way our institutions are developing this project together, because this clearly illustrates the pathway that should be followed by international organizations.

Because one plus one can be more than simply two.

That is the way forward, and I am glad that the UfM and the OSCE have decided to walk it together.

The way that the Union of the Mediterranean has been involved in the works and debates of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group is another good example of our active contribution.

It has been a pleasure to engage with the different Chairmanships, notably with Minister Cakaj [Sakái] and his team, and before that with Slovakia and Italy, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to join you here in Tirana as you commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Mediterranean Contact Group.



The Secretary General

I believe that OSCE should continue to value this mechanism as it represents simultaneously the demonstration of OSCE's interest and engagement with the Mediterranean and also the best platform for a serious debate with southern and eastern Mediterranean countries on strategic issues of common interest.

I would like, once again, to thank Albania for their excellent work as Chairman of the Mediterranean Contact Group and wish Minister Cakaj, a very successful Chairmanship of the OSCE – You can count on the UfM;

I would also thank Secretary General Greminger, that, with his vision and stamina, has been a great partner in the development of these cooperation bonds.

And I would like to finish by reiterating to all of you, and to future Chairmanships of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group, our full commitment to helping the OSCE further reinforce its links with its Mediterranean partners and contribute to the stability of the entire Euro-Mediterranean region.

Thank you very much