

Message from the Secretary General Nasser Kamel



2020 marked a milestone celebration for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and dialogue with the 25th anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, otherwise known as the Barcelona Process, launched on 28 November 1995.

Looking back, the creation of the Barcelona process seemed to mark a zenith of a strong regional transformation towards cooperation and multilateralism between both shores of the Mediterranean.

But as we are taking stock of what has been achieved in the last 25 years as well as reflecting on the future of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, the world as we know it is rapidly changing in the face of unprecedented challenges and pushes us to rethink the systems that



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we depend on.

Indeed, in the span of the same year, the pandemic of COVID-19 has spread to every corner of the world, and has pushed us into a historic crisis, the severity of which has not been seen in almost a century.

The socio-economic repercussions of this crisis will be extremely far-reaching, and will likely unfold for years to come, exposing and exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries.

This reality, valid at a global scale, is nonetheless a more urgent one for the Mediterranean region, where conditions of fragility and exposure are further concentrated, notably with high levels of socio-economic inequality, as well as a pressing climate change emergency, with the rise of temperatures progressing 20% faster than the global average across the region.

Resilience must therefore be at the heart of each and every action we undertake from now on.

The outbreak of the pandemic, coupled with the landmark 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process were stark and uncompromising reminders, in 2020, of the need for reinforced tangible cooperation across borders, between sectors and among citizens and their representatives.

As coronavirus leaves parts of the world more fragile and vulnerable, it also precipitates the need to think through the preservation and reinvigoration of smart and fruitful multilateral partnerships.

We must learn the right lessons of the past 25 years, building on our region's inherent diversity and ensuring no one is left behind. We will overcome these challenges, but it is essential that we do it together.