

Go-EuroMed Final Project Conference
'Making the Most of the Mediterranean Union'
Brussels, 27th November 2008

Opening Speech by Jean-Michel Bear
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for this kind invitation! I am glad to be among you to congratulate you for the work done over the last three years by the Free University of Berlin and their partners from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

The GO-EuroMed project, ("*The Political Economy of Governance in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*"), aims at assessing results and performance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as implemented under the Barcelona Process, which started in 1995 and whose main objective was the political and economic stabilization of the Mediterranean basin.

The timing of this conference is certainly very relevant, as EU-Mediterranean relations are currently in the spotlight of the EU efforts to improve governance in a multilateral environment of international relations. The boost given to these relations by the recently launched Union for the Mediterranean gives even more salience to this project.

In addition, this conference takes place only three weeks after the EuroMed Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting in Marseille on November 3rd-4th, where Ministers have decided to give further impulse to the Euro-Mediterranean relations, by reinforcing its institutional structure and defining a set of topical fields of cooperation to be pursued in 2009 (Political and security dialogue, Maritime Safety, economic and financial partnership, social, human and cultural cooperation and Higher education and Research).

As you can understand from this list, it is clear that the Mediterranean area covers most of the challenges highlighted in our Research "Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities programme". GO-EuroMed is thus very relevant for these challenges. Another project funded by DG Research, whose name is RAMSES II, is also relevant. RAMSES II, a network of excellence with an EC contribution of 3,4 millions Euro, aims at creating a network of research centres in Human sciences on the Mediterranean Area, by promoting research programmes among the different partners.

I would also like to let you know about our current efforts to support research in and for the Mediterranean area. In the current Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities work programme for 2009, we have included a topic on "*Foresight on the long term challenges for the Mediterranean area*"¹ addresses the economic, social and political issues in the Mediterranean area with a medium term perspective (2025).

Among the subjects to be covered in this research project, I will just mention:

- * Democracy and stability;
- * Trade and tourism;
- * Demography and migration;
- * Agriculture, water and fishery;
- * Energy and climate change

The European contribution for such a project could be up to 2.7 millions Euros. The deadline of the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities Call for proposals is the 13 January 2009.

What we expect is thus that a strong consortium develops evidence-based and frank scenarios about the future of the region. Frank scenarios? Yes! We are not in need of routine but in need of visions. We are not in need of implicit prejudices but in need of explicit realism and true political will for action.

Let me conclude by reminding all of us that we have to go forward and build a prospect that is different from today's reality. I am confident that the findings of the project will today provide a useful and enriching contribution for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership as supported by the Union for the Mediterranean.

I wish you all a fruitful conference.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ **SSH-2009 - 7.1.2. Foresight on the long term challenges for the Mediterranean area.**

The Mediterranean area is of strategic importance to the EU, in both economic (trade, tourism, energy, water, agriculture and fisheries), social (demography, migration) and political (security, stability, democracy) terms. The political situation in the region is characterised by persistent tensions due to the Middle East conflict, the war in Iraq and its spill-over to other countries, regular upsurges of terrorist activity, and in some countries domestic political tensions of different origins. In the economic domain, a combination of fast demographic and labour force expansion and slow economic growth is resulting in high unemployment and stagnant incomes. The prospects for long-term economic growth are further threatened by the non-sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. The foresight exercise will aim at analysing trends and drivers for the Mediterranean region, setting up a number of background scenarios of its evolution towards 2025, and exploring scenarios for a closer cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean region. Qualitative and quantitative impact assessment of the scenarios on the economy and the society will have to be characterised with advanced adequate tools including some eventual additional development.

Funding scheme: Collaborative project (small or medium-scale focused research project); Coordination and support action – expert group