

Twelve Questions about the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation

The Barcelona Process explained

Background note – Q&A

Q1. When and why was the Barcelona Process launched?

For many years the EU had cooperation agreements with countries in the Mediterranean, but no single policy for the region. In November 1995, following a [European Council](#) decision, a Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers was held in Barcelona. It marked the starting point of the [Euro-Mediterranean Partnership](#), also known as the Barcelona Process, after the name of the city.

The then 15 EU Member States (today 27) and 12 Mediterranean countries (9 after Cyprus and Malta joined the EU and Turkey began accession negotiations) agreed on the [Barcelona Declaration](#) laying down the foundations of a new regional relationship, aiming at achieving peace, stability, economic growth in the region and social cooperation.

Q2. What does the Barcelona Declaration foresee?

The [Barcelona Declaration](#) defines the specific objectives of the Partnership and sets out three cooperation areas:

- A Political and Security dialogue to achieve a common area of peace and stability based on respect for human rights and democracy.
- An Economic and Financial partnership and the gradual construction of a [free-trade area](#) by 2010, to create a zone of shared prosperity and to support economic transition in the partner states
- A Social, Cultural and Human partnership to encourage understanding between peoples and cultures and exchanges between civil societies.

In 2005 [migration](#)  was added as a fourth key sector. – FROM RELEX website

Q3. Who takes decisions?

The [Ministers of Foreign Affairs](#) meet periodically to monitor the application of the Barcelona Declaration and define actions. Over the past few years, more and more ministerial meetings are taking place to tackle specific policy aspects. In 2008, 11 Euro-Med Ministerial meetings will take place in sectors such as culture, information society, water, industry, trade, ECOFIN, foreign affairs. More than 55 meetings at senior official and expert level will also take place to harmonise policies and regulatory frameworks, and converge towards EU standards and practices.

In November 2005, the Heads of state or government of the Euro-Med Partners celebrated a decade of cooperation. They supported a [new work programme](#), to run for five-years.

Q4. How does the Partnership work?

The Partnership works on two levels, the bilateral, that is between the EU and the Partner Country, and Regional, between the EU and countries of the region.

Bilateral cooperation: The EU carries out a number of activities with each country, with which it has an [Association Agreement](#). The Agreements vary but have certain core aspects in common such as political dialogue, respect for human rights and democracy, competition rules, state aids and monopolies, and economic, social and cultural cooperation including migration.

Information about bilateral projects is available on the [Delegation websites](#).

[Regional cooperation](#): This cooperation with all the Partner Countries represents one of the most innovative aspects of the Partnership as it tackles political, economic and cultural issues such as industry, energy, the environment, finance and agriculture, important to many of the Mediterranean Partners. Regional cooperation supports and complements the bilateral actions.

[ENP + Action Plans](#): The process is being reinforced through the European Neighbourhood Partnership (ENP) and the tailor-made Action Plan agreed with each country. The EU and the country jointly define an agenda of political and economic reforms by means of short and medium-term (3-5 years) priorities. The incentives on offer, in return for progress on relevant reforms, are greater integration into European programmes and networks, increased assistance and enhanced market access.

Q5. What funding is allocated to this Partnership?

To finance the Barcelona Process, the EU set up a financial instrument that became known as [MEDA](#). The first phase, [MEDA I](#), covered the period 1995-1999, and had a budget of €3,435 million. The second phase, [MEDA II](#), with an increased budget of 5,350 million euros, started in 2000 and was completed in 2006.

MEDA commitments per country can be found in the [“European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument \(ENPI\) Regional Strategy Paper \(2007-2013\) and Regional Indicative Programme \(2007-2010\) for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership”](#) (Annex III).

Since 2007, the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) replaced MEDA. The ENPI is the financial instrument for the ENP, in which all MEDA partners participate along with six countries on its southern flank (ENP East). For the budgetary period 2007-2013, the EU has made available 12 billion euros, an increase of 32% in actual value, to support reforms in the ENP partner states.

Most of the technical and financial assistance for the 5-year programme agreed in 2005 will come from the [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument](#) (ENPI), [European Investment Bank](#) loans as part of the [Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership](#) (FEMIP) and bilateral contributions from Member States.

Q6. Are there funds coming from other budgets or other financial sources?

The [“Facility of investment”](#) within the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy will begin to finance loans to ENP partners in 2008. The Commission will support this instrument with 700 million euros (over the period 2007-2013) for projects of common interest relating primarily to energy, the environment and transport. The programs can be bilateral or regional.

A number of other European Commission thematic budgets also cover the Mediterranean such as the [European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights](#), [Humanitarian Aid](#), the environmental programme, [Life-Third countries](#) and the EU's research and development programme, the [Seventh Framework Programme](#).

The Euro-Mediterranean [Facility for Investment and Partnership](#) (FEMIP), set up in 2002, is providing over € 2 billion in loans to Mediterranean Partners.

Q7. What is EuropeAid's Regional Programme?

Following the political commitments made at Barcelona, money was set aside and programmes were engineered. Subjects of mutual interest within the policy areas were identified, projects were tendered and activities took off, through what is known as the Regional Programme. [Regional cooperation](#) is open to all the southern partners.

Regional Programmes, managed by [EuropeAid](#), operate in all three domains of the [Barcelona Declaration](#). They received 10 percent of the total MEDA budget. The financed projects are managed by the European Commission (Brussels Headquarters or Delegations), while decisions on the programmes are taken at the Euro-Mediterranean Senior Officials meeting.

Information about the projects and programmes funded through the Regional Programme can be found in a publication known as [Info Notes](#). The [EuroMed Info Centre](#) is funded by the Regional Programme.

Q8. What is the new budget for the Regional Programmes?

The allocation for the Regional Programme, in the period 2007 – 2009, is 343,3 million euros, according to the [“European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument \(ENPI\) Regional Strategy Paper \(2007-2013\) and Regional Indicative Programme \(2007-2010\) for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership”](#). A breakdown by sector can be found in this document (Annex I).

Q9. Are there political criteria in order for a country to benefit from the ENPI Partnership?

The ENPI reflects the Commission's position that technical and financial assistance will be policy driven. Funds allocated to individual country programmes will depend on their needs and absorption capacity, as well as their implementation of agreed reforms. EC assistance priorities are identified, together with the country, in Strategy Papers, more detailed 3-year Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) and annual programmes. An Action Plan with each partner country is also adopted.

A Governance Facility has been set up, as an additional source of ENP money awarded to those who make the greatest progress in meeting their governance objectives.

All relevant documents are available on the [ENP website](#).

Information on the basis and areas of cooperation can also be found in the proposal for a Regulation [“laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument”](#)

Q10. What has been achieved?

[Speaking](#) at a Euro-Med Foreign Ministers meeting, in 2007, External Relations and ENP Commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, said “we have many achievements to be proud of”. Here are some she outlined:

- We are moving closer to a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area - the largest free trade area in the world covering more than 740 million consumers;
- We have agreed a Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism;
- Following last year's Ministerial on 'Strengthening the Role of Women in Society' we have been working intensively on implementing the five-year Framework of Action.
- Education has been a priority sector in our partnership and we have allocated €15 million from our Erasmus Mundus Programme for grants for nearly 600 Mediterranean students.
- All these achievements have been underpinned by the ENP. Under the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership instrument, €725 million have been committed to 30 new programmes in 2007 alone.

Some more achievements:

- The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly was established in 2004
- Confidence building measures are promoted, such as civil protection and the Euro-Med and the Media initiative, in which over 500 media practitioners are engaged.
- The signature of the Charter for Small and Medium enterprises in 2004 by Industry Ministers
- The integration of the Maghreb electricity market, the progressive establishment of a Mashreq gas market and the promotion of energy projects between Israel and Palestine are examples of energy cooperation.
- Successful programmes such as Euro-Med Heritage and Euro-Med Youth have been operating for more than 10 years. Networks have been created in many areas, including institutes of economic research (FEMISE), political science institutes (EUROMESCO), investment promotion agencies (ANIMA), transport, energy, environment, local water management (EWIS), information technologies etc. (More in the Regional Programme's [Info Notes](#)).
- The creation of the Civil Forum and Civil Society Platform has helped structure the activities of civil society and provide a better interface with the official activities of the partnership.

Q11. How does the ENP affect the Partnership with the Mediterranean Countries?

The ENP and the Euro-Med Partnership share the same basis, the bilateral Association Agreements with countries. Working through the structures of the existing Association Agreements, the ENP builds on the potential of the existing relationship and breaks new ground.

With many goals in common, the Euro-Med Partnership pursues a multilateral track whereas the ENP provides additional focus and impact through a bilateral approach of mutual commitments to implement reforms and modernisation conducive to closer economic integration and political cooperation. It is therefore a valuable complement to the Euro-Med Partnership as it allows each country to develop closer links with the EU, based on its particular needs and capacities.

Q12. How does the proposal for a "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" affect the Partnership?

With the [Conclusions](#) approved at their last meeting (June 2008), the EU heads of state or government clarify that: "The Mediterranean region is an area of vital strategic importance to the European Union in political, economic and social terms. The Barcelona Process has been the central instrument for Euro-Mediterranean relations since 1995 and has allowed the strong promotion of multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Building on and reinforcing previous successes, the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" will inject further momentum into the Union's relations with the Mediterranean. It will complement ongoing bilateral relations which will continue within existing policy frameworks."

In May, the European Commission adopted a [communication](#) with proposals for upgrading relations with its Mediterranean partners, through the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'. The EC has proposed an outline of structures, which aim at giving renewed vitality and visibility to the EU's relations with Partners in the Mediterranean region. These structures include the setting up of a Secretariat and the creation of a permanent committee of Euro-Mediterranean representatives. The policy paper also outlines ideas for the kind of projects that would constitute visible and tangible efforts at improving the lives and livelihoods of the region's citizens.

Information Sources

EuroMed Info Centre - <http://www.euromedinfo.eu/>

EuropeAid Cooperation Office - http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

External Relations - http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index.htm

ENP website - http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/welcome_en.htm

Council (EU-Med) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=396&lang=EN&mode=g

Publications

Regional Programme – [Info Notes](#) on projects and programmes funded

Videos (including [The EURO-Mediterranean Partnership - bringing people closer together](#))

