

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT
Marrakech, 15 December 2005

Ministerial Conclusions

Transport Ministers of the European Union and the Mediterranean Partners thanked the Moroccan Government for hosting the first Euro-Mediterranean (Euromed) Ministerial Conference on Transport in cooperation with the UK Presidency of the EU and with the European Commission. They welcomed the results of the Euromed Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Barcelona on 27-28 November 2005, in particular the transport provisions of the 5 year Work Programme adopted on this occasion.

Ministers considered that this first Ministerial Conference, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration, offered a timely opportunity to take stock of the transport situation and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and give a new impetus to Euromed transport cooperation within the Barcelona Process. They recognised the need to intensify cooperation in this field of the Partnership in order to contribute to sustainable economic and social development in the region. The European Neighbourhood Policy also considers transport cooperation as one of its priorities.

The Ministers

1. affirmed their commitment to achieving the main objectives of the Barcelona Process, in particular, in the field of transport, the setting-up of an integrated multimodal Euro-Mediterranean transport network contributing to the strengthening of exchanges between the EU and the Mediterranean Partners, and among the Mediterranean Partners themselves.
2. welcomed the fact that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) will contribute to intensify the cooperation towards more integration between the EU and the Mediterranean Partners, including in the transport sector, and supported the implementation of ENP Action Plans which have already been adopted while encouraging the elaboration of Action Plans with the remaining Mediterranean Partners.
3. welcomed in this respect the Blue Paper on Transport in the Mediterranean region, a shared document elaborated in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, which identifies the main orientations for the development of a Euro-Mediterranean integrated transport system in the next few years.
4. took note of the Final Report of the High Level Group on the extension of the trans-European Transport priority axes to neighbouring countries, in particular its implications for the Mediterranean region. This report identifies, in complementarity with the Blue Paper, a limited set of major transnational transport axes and priority projects and provides recommendations on the financing of infrastructure and on horizontal priorities.

5. noted the European Commission proposal to develop the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument which will become the new EU financial instrument for the region from 2007.
6. highlighted the contribution of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) to the financing of transport projects and invited it to pursue the mobilisation of its various instruments, in line with the present conclusions.

Achievements

7. welcomed the transport sector reforms already achieved by the Mediterranean Partners, in particular in terms of market opening and separating regulatory functions from operational ones.
8. acknowledged the accomplishments of regional cooperation to date, in particular the regular dialogue established through the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum and its working groups, and the launching of several projects in the framework of the MEDA programme, notably the Euromed Transport Project, the Euromed GNSS Project (EGNOS / GALILEO satellite navigation programmes) and the SAFEMED Project (maritime safety and security in the Mediterranean region)¹.
9. welcomed the new MEDA regional projects under preparation along the key priorities agreed by the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, notably the Euromed Intermodal Project (Motorways of the Sea) and the Euromed Aviation Project (safety, security and air traffic management)¹.
10. called for a strengthening of bilateral cooperation including through the new impetus given by the European Neighbourhood Policy and stressed that bilateral and regional cooperation should reinforce each other.
11. welcomed in this respect the progress achieved as regards the opening of aviation markets with some Mediterranean Partners.
12. emphasized the importance of sub-regional cooperation in the field of transport² in order to take advantage of complementarities at sub-regional level and experience pilot initiatives in market integration.
13. welcomed in this context the setting-up of a Joint Transport Office between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, with the objective to facilitate and stimulate the cooperation between the two Parties regarding transport infrastructure planning and development.

¹ The projects referred to are the list of all regional transport projects financed under the MEDA programme.

² Notably the Transport Ministers Group of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

Future developments

14. affirmed their conviction that the setting up of an integrated, efficient, safe and secure transport system in the Mediterranean region is key to the development and stability of the region and the increase of intra-regional trade.
15. highlighted the need for a common framework in order to accompany the continuation of the transport sector reform process and to guide the future developments of the Euromed Transport cooperation.
16. in this respect expressed their support for the guidelines of the Blue Paper on Transport in the Mediterranean region and agreed on the need to take steps to implement the recommendations included in it, and in particular:
 - Institutional reform: pursue the modernisation and strengthening of administrative capacities, as well as the organisational restructuring of the sector aiming in particular at separating the regulatory, management and operational tasks.
 - Infrastructure networks and financing: give priority to the realization of missing interconnections (both at North-South and South-South levels) and to the main transnational axes and projects identified in the framework of the High Level group exercise and the MEDA regional transport network planning exercise; ensure technical and administrative interoperability; mobilize national, regional and international sources of funding, notably EU resources, on the identified priority projects; promote a safe environment for national and foreign private investors, experience innovative financing mechanisms and encourage public private partnerships.
 - Maritime transport: continue with the port reform process aiming at making port management and port services more efficient; work towards ensuring freedom of navigation; implement international standards on maritime safety and security and approximate the legislation in this field with EU regulations; strengthen the capacities of maritime administrations in relation to port state control and flag state implementation and improve the means and capacities of the Mediterranean Partners in order to strengthen the monitoring of shipping along the coasts as well as to provide efficient maritime transport services; support an enhanced role of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the Mediterranean region, including the possibility for Mediterranean Partners to participate as observers in EMSA activities, in accordance with the relevant rules.
 - Multimodal transport: develop port hinterland connections and cooperation between ports in order to promote “motorways of the sea” projects; enhance the role of railways in the multimodal system by restructuring the sector and developing the network (in particular, as regards freight, rail-port links); modernize the road freight transport industry through, inter alia, improvement of the licensing mechanisms, approximation of market conditions taking into consideration international and European standards, and progressive replacement of the numerous existing bilateral agreements by more

comprehensive agreements at regional or sub-regional level; simplify and harmonise border crossing procedures (in particular customs procedures), and implement advanced transport logistics, in particular logistical platforms and EDI technology.

- Air transport: cooperate with a view to reinforcing aviation relations covering the opening of market access issues and aiming at promoting regulatory convergence and technical cooperation, notably on safety, security and air traffic management issues, including the extension of the Single European Sky to the Mediterranean Partners; promote the role of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, including the possibility for Mediterranean Partners to participate as observers in EASA activities, in accordance with the relevant rules, provided they have concluded an aviation agreement with the EU; work towards the longer term objective of a Euromed Common Aviation Area.
 - European GNSS programme (Galileo and EGNOS): take advantage of the opportunities offered by Galileo to the Mediterranean region, in particular in terms of transport safety and security; increase the involvement of the Mediterranean Partners in the Galileo project, through the direct participation of some Mediterranean Partners into the programme, as well as through the Galileo Euromed Cooperation Office based in Cairo and the Euromed GNSS project.
17. emphasised the importance of EU support in implementing these recommendations.
18. asked the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum to come up by the end of 2006 with a Regional Transport Action Plan for the next five years in order to implement the recommendations included in the Blue Paper and in the Final Report of the High Level Group.