

## Foreword

The history of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) goes hand in hand with that of Euro-Mediterranean policy itself, which the Institute has promoted at all times and whose anniversary we will commemorate in 2020. There are three turning points in our path that coincide with key moments of the Euro-Mediterranean policy. In the first place, the pact between Felipe González and Helmut Kohl in 1995 during the Cannes summit allowed an agreement between all European leaders that led to the implementation of an ambitious European policy towards the East, through the PHARE and TACIS programmes, and the South, through the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the so-called Barcelona Process.

Thus, the first major turning point was in 1995 with the holding in Barcelona of the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference and the most important final declaration, which launched the Barcelona Process. The basic aspiration expressed by the Barcelona Process of the EMP, which continues today, was the gradual construction of a space of peace, stability, shared prosperity and dialogue between cultures and civilisations in the Mediterranean. This space had to incorporate the Maghreb and Middle East countries, in addition to Turkey and Israel, in the Euromed scheme through their membership of (and possibly integration with, in the case of Turkey) the European Union (EU).

Along with this Ministerial Conference, the Catalan Institute of the Mediterranean for Studies and Cooperation, predecessor of the current IEMed, organised during that semester the 1st Euromed Civil Forum, commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and the Spanish EU Presidency. The forum, held in the Catalan capital, brought together 1,211 civil society representatives from thirty-eight countries and deeply affected the entire Barcelona Process.

The second turning point was in 2002 at the Valencia Ministerial Conference, also under the Spanish Presidency. During the event, the progress achieved to date was reviewed and a major action plan was approved. Once the main association treaties had been signed and the MEDA programmes were in operation, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) of the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) were launched, among many other measures. The Institute mentored this evolution of Euro-Mediterranean policies by actively participating in the generation of knowledge and in collective reflection by invigorating the role of the actors involved. Moreover, it became the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and integrated into its governing bodies, as well as the Government of Catalonia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Barcelona City Council.

The third turning point was in 2008, with the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the agreement to base its Permanent Secretariat in Barcelona. In this way, a new period of the EMP was initiated in which the Institute included in its terms of reference this renewed drive towards strategic projects of a regional Euro-Mediterranean scope. Meanwhile, the IEMed continued contributing to the bilateral dynamic of Euro-Mediterranean relations,

strengthened by the creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, which envisaged the possibility, for each country, of intensifying its relationship with the EU depending on its will. In this framework, the IEMed participated actively in the reflection on the advanced status of Morocco in 2008.

This is how the IEMed, in addition to its multiple activities, surveys, European projects and publications, has become an internationally recognised think tank specialised in Euro-Mediterranean culture, politics and development. Similarly, the IEMed is a vector of the main networks of Euro-Mediterranean civil society. It is the coordinator and headquarters of the EuroMeSCO Network, focused on applied research on issues related to Euro-Mediterranean politics and security, as well as the Spanish Network of the ALF and the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation (FFEM), which promotes gender equality on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Notable in this line of encouraging dialogue between the two Mediterranean shores is *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, which will soon celebrate twenty years as a six-monthly journal of multidisciplinary thinking. The issue that we present today, "Civil Society in the Mediterranean Mirror", provides an analysis of the different challenges facing civil society in the North and, mainly, in the South. Given the complex context of the region, full of difficulties but also of opportunities, in the dossier we examine the potential of civil society as a determining factor for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean region. To this end, we have had the contributions of prestigious experts from both shores who have wanted to join this initiative.

The dossier comprises three interconnected sections: 1) Social Movements: Beyond Demonstrations; 2) Intercultural Movements: Women, Climate Change, Migrations and Refugees; and 3) Art and Communication: Spaces of Civic Memory. The issue ends with an interview with Gabriel Garroum, a young man whose interculturalism emerged after having visited his family during the Syrian war, along with his colleague Xavier Segura.

In this regard, it is painful to note that over the past twenty-five years Europe's response to the accumulation of conflicts, needs and expectations has been insufficient, although Euro-Mediterranean policy has moved in the right direction. In addition, the dramatic nature of the current situation in much of the Arab world, especially in Libya, Syria and Iraq, means that this policy can even be called tragically insufficient. We undoubtedly are facing a paradigmatic shift that appears as a germ of a new reality, beset by climate change and the need to reform our predatory consumption of nature.

The link between the individual and the community involves the will to structure society based on the responsibilities of individuals and institutions themselves. After twenty-five years of the Euromed Civil Forum, the proposals for strategic actions regarding regulatory harmonisation, training, network exchange and impact studies remain valid.

Although, on the one hand, authoritarianism has not disappeared on the southern shore and the excluding populisms on the northern have increased, on the other, it is increasingly clearer that sub-state cities, due to their closeness to citizens, can promote mental changes. Indeed, they can cover areas of development the central administrations do not reach and promote open and responsible societies using the new technologies and social innovation dynamics. In this respect, Mediterranean civil society, by means of the momentum of the changes in each of the countries in the region, has an increasingly decisive role.

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