

# report

## THE 5+5 DIALOGUE AS A **MECHANISM OF INTEGRATION AND REGIONAL COOPERATION**

For a common reflection on the Western Mediterranean



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## THE 5+5 DIALOGUE AS A **MECHANISM OF INTEGRATION AND REGIONAL COOPERATION**

For a common reflection on the Western Mediterranean

23<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona

The 5+5 Dialogue is a sub-regional forum of informal character for the Western Mediterranean that since 1990 has brought together five countries from the northern side (Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal) with five other countries from the southern basin (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia).

For a long time, the bilateral and multilateral bonds between countries of the Mediterranean have been even stronger between the countries of the western sub-region. In this context, the actions promoted by the 5+5 Dialogue are not strictly limited to an intergovernmental nature but have been opened to the creation of progressive synergies with other organisations of the European and regional arenas, such as the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Arab Maghreb Union.

The involvement and activity of civil society is important to achieve the ultimate purpose of being a harmonic, inclusive and sustainable social and economic development for all the people around our sea



Opening session. From left to right: Fathallah Sijilmassi, Ignacio Ybáñez, Senén Florensa and Karim Medrek.

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However, the involvement and activity of civil society is important to achieve the ultimate purpose of being a harmonic, inclusive and sustainable social and economic development for all the people around our sea.

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There is a huge opportunity for the 5+5 Dialogue to deepen its integration into different areas and accompany this process with an agenda of research shared by specialised think tanks of the region. It is for this reason, and in accordance with the Valletta Declaration signed by the Heads of State and Government from the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean, that the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) has the honour to host the conference with the hope not only of contributing to the reactivation of the cooperation within the Western Mediterranean but of a global integration across the Mediterranean through the establishment of a network of research centres from the 5+5 countries to encourage debate, spread reflection and promote integration and regional cooperation in the Western Mediterranean.

It is clear that a network of research centres of these characteristics will provide an optimal platform to jointly implement research projects, promote capacities and share ideas and proposals with the policy-makers of the 5+5 Dialogue. A better understanding will emerge from the collaboration of different initiatives in the challenges we face, the needs and the trends that can be addressed with sub-regional cooperation.

Think tanks and research centres are generally well positioned to transfer the demands of civil society to the sphere of public decisions. Taking into account the consideration that the 5+5 Dialogue maintains an eminently intergovernmental nature, the exchanges between the network and the co-presidency of the 5+5 Dialogue, institutions of regional and sub-regional areas, and the follow-up of the different ministerial conferences will be one of the methodological focal points of the network.

The informal character of the 5+5 Dialogue, even being one of the main reasons that has allowed the initiative to progress, strengthen and broaden, generates

dispersion and hampers the exchanges with civil society. The creation of an independent but seriously collaborative network will help to spread and disseminate the initiatives of the 5+5 Dialogue to public opinion, and to strengthen the knowledge of the challenges and trends on a regional scale.

In order to pursue this objective, the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) invited think tanks and public diplomacy institutions to take part in the I Med Think Forum 5+5 that took place on 23rd and 24th May at Palau Pedralbes in Barcelona.



Ignacio Ybáñez, Fathallah Sijilmassi

### Political Dialogue, Regional Security and Stability

The 5+5 Dialogue is an exemplary initiative of sub-regional cooperation that works well. The geopolitical framework of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean strongly supports such initiatives, far from the tumult and conflict of the Middle East that probably could not provide a framework for dialogue. In addition, the 5+5 Dialogue offers a perfect balance between northern and southern partners in the Western Mediterranean, which also benefits dialogue. It is open to cooperation with international organisations and multilateral frameworks in the region, but it is also clear that there is one last step to take, that of integrating civil society into this process.

The holding of the I Med Think Forum 5+5 is the expression of this will to create new spaces of dialogue and working together around multiple sectors, such as regional security and stability.

Analysing the structure itself, participants agreed that a stronger institutionalisation of the 5+5 Dialogue should be replaced by a smarter use of

The holding of the I Med Think Forum 5+5 is the expression of this will to create new spaces of dialogue and working around multiple sectors, such as regional security and stability



Roberto Aliboni (IAI), Nuno Severiano Teixeira (IPRI)

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the agenda. The forum needed to focus on a number of important issues: security, mobility, education and involvement of civil society. As a matter of fact, a meeting on Libya in the framework of the Western Mediterranean Forum took place two years ago and it was a positive development for the 5+5 Dialogue, as dealing with difficult issues such as Libya gave prominence, visibility and real meaning to the Forum. Moreover, societies and civil societies are particularly relevant to enhance political dialogue.

There is a need to improve coordination between the 5+5 Dialogue and the European Union, which could help strengthen coordination of the 5+5 with the European Neighbourhood Policies. A more substantive relation with the Senior Officials of the Union for the Mediterranean could also be helpful in this regard by bringing together the Senior Officials from both systems.

#### Security and Stability in the Mediterranean Region and its Neighbourhood

The issue of the stability of the South came up as a focal point during the Forum, since its impact in many other fields puts in jeopardy the shared progress, prosperity and integration between the 5+5 countries. By analysing the stability between the Maghreb countries involved in the 5+5, many rising challenges and threats can be detected.

It is necessary to consider violent extremism as an anomaly in the functioning of the system

In this respect, a revision of the state of security on the southern shore of the 5+5 Dialogue's member states was conducted. Libya was identified as the centre of the insecurity. Its destruction has enormously weakened the security architecture of the region. A new and already planned military intervention would only aggravate the situation in the region, particularly in the Sahel. Moreover, the Tunisian process of democratisation needs to be consolidated with time and effort but the risk of destabilisation by Salafists and Jihadists is still very much alive.

The Algerian case was seen as very different, but its stability is confronted by internal threats to its borders, the Islamisation of the country and a major economic crisis linked to the considerable reduction of income.

Additionally, in a much more consolidated position we have Morocco, the most stable country in the Maghreb. Change is taking place moderately and the country is progressing economically but it has to face several shared challenges with its neighbours.

The region is familiar with trafficking of all kinds. Corruption is actually part of the organised traffic and there has been a lack of political interest in regulating some illegal activities. Much of the economy is also beyond the control of states, which sometimes choose to maintain cross-border trafficking (fuel, subsidised food, cigarettes or hard drugs). There is also human trafficking that accompanies the unprecedented increase in migration, a topic that was discussed throughout the Conference.

Security can no longer be considered a unilateral matter but a value of shared neighbourhoods

#### Improving Defence Cooperation and the Fight Against Terrorism

Defence, in direct correlation with security and stability, was regarded as another priority for the 5+5 Dialogue. Among the problems that the Western Mediterranean countries have to work on, violent extremism has probably demanded more cooperation between neighbours, especially in the last decade, where the process of globalisation has left internal security compromised. The I Med Think Forum 5+5 between experts from both shores of the Western Mediterranean offered a space to explore the best ideas in the fight against violent extremism.



From left to right: Dahan Ahmed Mahmoud (IMSS), Roberto Aliboni (IAI), Nuno Severiano Teixeira (IPRI) and Mansouria Mokhefi (IFRI).

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The 5+5 Dialogue will serve as a space of coordination to act together in the fight against violent extremism to form a secure community, for there is no doubt that its establishment would strengthen the capacity of countries to face the challenge.

When talking about a secure community, some argued that the pillar elements should be the predictability of behaviour of the decision-makers, compatible values between decision-makers, and the capacity to act in unison in the face of urgent challenges.

Some advised that it is necessary to consider violent extremism as an anomaly in the functioning of the system. The exposure of the frustrations, the religious and ideological motivations, the psychological, social and economic factors, which underlie the doctrine and the discourse of the extremist groups, constitutes a relevant step towards the understanding of the underlying causes of this world phenomenon, complex because of its multiple dimensions and its inextricable causes. Only coordination between national and international actors with a multidimensional strategy, by working on prevention while maintaining the pressure on the terrorist in the field, can result in the effective fight against violent extremism. Security can no longer be considered a unilateral matter but a value of shared neighbourhoods.



View of the plenary session during the welcome speech at Palau Pedralbes, Barcelona.

## Economic and Development Challenges

During the third session, participants looked at three outstanding economic and developmental challenges in the region: the effects of global warming, poor integration between the Maghreb countries and lack of security and stability on the southern shore of the Mediterranean as it has an impact on the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Indeed, when it comes to trade and investment, Western-Southern Mediterranean countries fail to attract FDI, as compared to regions such as Latin America or South-East Asia, due to the situation of insecurity and instability. Trade, which is essential for economic development, is still too irregular and chronically imbalanced. Discussants agreed that the 5+5 countries need to sign more symmetrical and sustainable trade agreements, boosting employment creation. Meanwhile, South-South trade needs to be enhanced. The northern shore of the Mediterranean also needs to learn how to deal with chronic unemployment for youths and women, fiscal deficits, inequality and poverty.

Within the trade and investment framework, the GTMO 5+5 - The Transport Group of the Western Mediterranean - was presented as an example of 5+5 cooperation. GTMO works through a cooperation protocol, defining priorities at the institutional level around a two-yearly ministerial meeting and a rotating presidency. It is partly successful because it enjoys important ministerial support and engagement, and cooperation takes place in an effective way, yielding desirable results. Yet, it fails to fulfil its potential due to the lack of integration in the region (e.g. in 2013, 128 million tons of goods were exchanged between southern EU states, whilst only 6 million tons were exchanged with Maghreb countries). Opportunities are being neglected by Southern European countries towards the Maghreb. More sharing of best practices is needed.

Opportunities are being neglected by Southern European countries towards the Maghreb

It was also argued that if the 5+5 region wants integration to speed up, stronger cooperation is needed. It is nevertheless certain that the EU, particularly after the enlargement process to central and eastern countries, faces increasing integration



Third plenary session. Eduardo Orteu (Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment), Mohamed Behnassi (CNRES),

challenges. Part of its population fears that further integration might bring job insecurity, whereas cooperation, on the other hand, is more socially accepted.

Regarding the environmental challenges of today's economic and energy model in the Western Mediterranean, those more affected are again the southern countries as

they are still very dependent on fossil energies and will most certainly suffer directly and indirectly from the resource wars that will be fought over scarce resources such as water, oil and gas, further worsening the regions' security situation. A new post-carbon model is needed for Western Mediterranean countries in order to be more resilient for the consequences posed by global warming.

In this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 suppose a transformative agenda both for the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries, in terms of production choices, consumption, investment, chosen technologies and materials and because of the incorporation of non-state actors in the efforts towards those goals. On the other hand, if a real political compromise is reached and respected to limit the warming to 2°C, the benefit will be double for the Western Mediterranean region: a more sustainable development, together with greater stability and security. However, the prisoner dilemma around global warming policies stops some from cooperating towards that goal.

Another issue concerning global warming for the Western Mediterranean is environmentally-driven migration

Another issue concerning global warming for the Western Mediterranean is environmentally-driven migration (natural disasters but also heavy rains or draughts, chronic food insecurity due to climate conditions, etc.). The Mediterranean stands at the crossroads of three continents and is thus a transit area for migration flows. Since sub-Saharan Africans are among the most

vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while its population continues growing, Maghreb countries - traditionally countries of emigration - are increasingly becoming immigration countries or transit ones.

### A Common Strategy for a Sustainable Water Management

Water, in all its aspects (resources, infrastructures, models of sustainable management), was a focal point during the session. It was closely related to energy, not just when talking about renewable energies such as hydro power, but also because of water's impact for refining, cooling, agriculture, and its need in many other sectors. Therefore, it was argued that a common water policy is essential among 5+5 members. This common water policy should be based on the following three pillars: a good governance (how to improve water policy and enhance sustainable development), capacity-building (how to foster cooperation), and promoting water management improvement (in a more balanced way while preserving biodiversity). When planning for water management, it is important to bear in mind the different water uses and the increasing water demand as the population grows in the region. Cities need to be more resilient with better water infrastructures to absorb the stress of demand because of the rural exodus and rising temperatures. National water plans should look at being replicable by others in the region, while enhancing capacity-building. Northern Mediterranean countries should provide guidance on financing to southern ones and help them develop projects that also contribute to socially sustainable development. Other fields of cooperation in this matter would be lowering the certification costs and simplifying bureaucratic procedures, while increasing investment in education and human capital, and creating an environment of trust among the 5+5 member countries.

National water plans should look at being replicable by others in the region, while enhancing capacity-building

In this respect, the joint Spain-Algeria Initiative for Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean was presented as an example of best practices and effective cooperation when dealing with a common and shared challenge. This initiative was fostered during 2013 and originally exposed during the 1st Western Mediterranean Economic Forum that took place in Barcelona that same year.



Third plenary session. From left to right: Rym Ayadi (EMEA), Jordi Bacaria (CIDOB), Alberto Palacios (CETMO) and Eugenia Ferragina (CNR-ISSM).

In summary, both Northern and Southern Western Mediterranean countries share the same geography and long-term challenges in many fields, such as economic competitiveness, promotion of sustainable development, better management of some scant resources, energy and development of new infrastructures, and dealing with the effects of global warming.

## Social Challenges, Migrations, Education and Youth

The countries of both shores of the Mediterranean region are confronting very similar social challenges, such as a high unemployment rate, particularly between youths, lack of economic competitiveness, a very low innovation index, problems in the education system, lack of cooperation in the health field and weak long-term plans for dealing with migration fluxes, as well as many others. Some were already dealt with indirectly during the first sessions of the conference, since they are all directly or indirectly related, but social challenges need to be approached head on. The 5+5 Dialogue has historically worked around more technical questions, such as water management, but has traditionally positioned itself as an actor also concerned about social matters. And this fact is even more important now, in a context where the Arab uprisings left some traces that have created difficulties (security, political dialogue...) but at the same time it represents an opportunity to build a new and more inclusive economic and social model. The role of Europe is not only to provide an accompaniment and support reforms for the Southern Mediterranean, but it is necessary to have an equal North-South dialogue, and the EU also has much to learn. These challenges could be transformed into opportunities through cooperation but it is important to note that development is not a transfer of resources from the rich North to the less rich South, which has clearly not worked. During the Forum, participants repeatedly advocated finding shared spaces of interest in order to address similar challenges.

However, these challenges could be transformed into opportunities through cooperation

### The Promotion of a Common Space of Education and Research in the 5+5 Dialogue

Among all the essential themes discussed, youth was largely debated during the conference, as it was considered a major concern for the 5+5 societies. The new generations have been suffering more directly



Fourth plenary session. Larabi Jaidi (Mohamed V University), Roderick Pace (IES - University of Malta).

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the effects of the economic recession in the past years and some sectors are in danger of marginalisation and vulnerability. There are many factors concerning them directly, such as access to and quality of education, immigration, health, and unemployment.

The approach to education and research was not exclusively through the concept of the *knowledge economy*, as a connection between the laboratory and the production line, but it was substituted by the use of *knowledge society* as a wider concept, emphasising the importance of a more balanced and representative scope.

There are many preconceptions that have pushed migration to the top of the European policy agenda, asking for short-term policies aimed at controlling and limiting migration influence

When talking about regional programmes and access to funds, participants agreed that there was a lack of projects for youth in the Mediterranean space, of social projects to create opportunities. The inception of youth programmes and initiatives under the umbrella of the ENP or the UfM was defended as a great chance to advance in facing common challenges from a regional perspective.

Opportunities for youths could be created for economic purposes, but also to continue promoting the progressive construction of a space of dialogue between cultures and civilisations through new generations. In this respect, both northern and southern countries should engage in long-term plans beyond electoral or economic cycles.

Mobility through the scholar system was defended as the right path to follow and, in fact, the work of the last 5+5 ministerial meetings was recognised as a first step to achieve this goal. The promotion of a common space of education and research should come from free mobility and agreements between governments and universities to make the exchange of students possible.

Helping universities and education centres improve their capacity and resources will also be important. The southern countries have to review their education system and policies to adapt to the steady growth of the youth population,



Fourth plenary session. From left to right: Rafael Vilasanjuan (ISGlobal), Daniele Frigeri (CeSPI) and Larabi Jaidi (Mohamed V University).

which will increase the demand for services at all levels and will put immense pressure on existing education institutions. The Arab region has to address the issue in order to enhance the education system and allow young Arab generations to become a human force able to actively participate in a comprehensive development process.

#### Managing Migration in the 5+5 Countries beyond the Security Approach

Migration was viewed as a focal point during the I Med Think Forum 5+5, especially in the light of the recent events that have taken place in the Mediterranean, which have shown us the need for a more coherent approach among policies, resource allocations and initiatives in the short and long-term objectives. In terms of migration, the 5+5 region comprises countries of destination, countries of origin and transit, and constitutes an area with potential complementarities among countries. There is a need to believe in the win-win opportunities for both migrant receiving and origin countries as well as for migrants, but it is still an objective, not a reality. Migration through development lanes has to be reconceptualised in terms of human mobility and sustainability, and labour movement can take a part in the process.

In recent months, the increasing migration flows have been interpreted and imposed as a security threat in some circles. There are many preconceptions that have pushed migration to the top of the European policy agenda, asking for short-term policies aimed at controlling and limiting migration influence.

Borders were not created to stop health problems, they were created just to stop people, but health issues travel, and we need to understand that there are some challenges that need to be tackled together

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Nonetheless, as defended by the discussants, the reality is that migration in Europe will increase (economic migrants, workers and refugees). At this point, it is very important to consider how and at what level local, national, regional and international governments can support migration and make it a development opportunity.

Some long-term recommendations were made, such as the search for a new mobility system, the promotion of inter-ministerial coordination and the reduction of institutional segmentation on policy competences within and between the 5+5 countries. Development aid cannot slow migration but it can serve as a catalyst to promote the benefits of human mobility, therefore enhancing south-south initiatives. It is also important to think about the reorientation of the political focus on low-skilled migration, which has greater impact on poverty reduction.

In this respect, focusing on job opportunities to employ migrants in decent jobs linked to their skills, as well as providing access to adequate and sustainable work, particularly among youths, will also be a priority. Public initiatives should be implemented that engage the diaspora employed in sectors of trade and investment, also working through financial institutions and with inter-bank agreements.

The I Med Think Forum 5+5 has the purpose and the ambition to become a space of dialogue on the areas of cooperation within the 5+5 Dialogue, a platform for joint research, dissemination and external communication that will redound to the benefit of the 5+5 Dialogue

#### Encouraging a Common Strategy on Health in the 5+5 Countries

When talking about development during the last session, it was approached from a completely different perspective to how it has traditionally been done in the past. The health field, which usually does not have a space for discussion in the classic structure of Mediterranean conferences, is actually a very good observatory that can be used when comparing differences and challenges between countries.

Health is a sector of common understanding and shared interest between northern and southern countries, and in fact the gap between the 5+5 members is much smaller in the health sector than others. For instance, the main causes of mortality in Spain and Morocco, France or Algeria are the same on both sides of the Mediterranean (cancer, cardio-vascular diseases, obesity...).

There are still many challenges that need to be addressed jointly. One of the biggest threats to effective cooperation, much related to the fields of education and research, is the lack of knowledge exchange. There is an absence of transferring and sharing of research results, which affects the capacity to react to the demographic evolution and epidemiology changes, especially in the South. The health systems and protocols sometimes cannot keep pace with the demographic transition that is taking place.

Nevertheless, borders were not created to stop health problems, they were created just to stop people, and health issues travel with people. That is why discussants advocated the need for better understanding and coordination between countries, to tackle challenges together. And many were identified and discussed, such as environmental problems, pollution, water or food security, infectious diseases and migration.

As stated during the conference, the reality is that health is currently being approached only on the national level and there are no supranational solutions. There has to be a more comprehensive geographical look that takes into consideration countries and international institutions. Some infectious diseases such as Ebola or Zika in other regions have been an example of the lack of the capacity to respond together in order to achieve shared goals that cannot be accomplished individually.

### For a Common Reflection on the Western Mediterranean

The last session of the conference was devoted to summarising what had been said and to bringing together the reflections of all the participants on the issues discussed, and also to fulfil the mandate expressed by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the 5+5 Dialogue convened in La Valetta in October 2012, which invited the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) to launch a network of think tanks associated with the 5+5 Dialogue.

The representatives of the thirty-three research think tanks and public diplomacy institutions that were present during the I Med Think Forum 5+5 decided to endorse a Final Declaration, which set the conditions for the establishment of the network. The I Med Think Forum 5+5 has the purpose and the ambition to become a space of dialogue on the areas of cooperation within the 5+5 Dialogue, a platform for joint research, dissemination and external communication that will redound to the benefit of the 5+5 Dialogue. The representatives of the co-presidency of the Western Mediterranean Forum supported the initiative and invited the newly-established network to formalise it with the decision-makers gathered at the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Affairs to be held in the autumn of 2016 in France.



I Med Think Forum 5+5 family photo. Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona.

## FINAL DECLARATION

Following the views expressed at the official Declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the 5+5 Dialogue in October 2012, the **1st Med Think 5+5 Forum** has been convened in Barcelona for 23 and 24 May 2016 at the invitation of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). The conference brings together representatives of thirty-six research think tanks and public diplomacy institutions from member states of the 5+5 Dialogue, fourteen residing in one of the Southern Mediterranean states and twenty-two residing in one of the Northern states. Participants in the Forum have been welcomed by the representatives of the co-presidency of the 5+5 Dialogue, currently exercised by France and Morocco, the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union, as well as the authorities of the host country.

The Forum entitled “**The 5+5 Dialogue as a mechanism of integration and regional cooperation**” has been structured around three consecutive sessions: 1/ “Political dialogue, regional security and stability”; 2/ “Economic and development challenges”; 3/ “Social challenges, migrations, education and youth”.

It has been noted that:

- The Western Mediterranean Forum, here referred to as Dialogue 5+5, is the only homogeneous geographical grouping that convenes together the members of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) with its immediate neighbours of the northern side of the Mediterranean (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain).
- As an informal sub-regional and intergovernmental forum officially established in 1990, but reconvened on a regular basis since 2001, it forges cooperation in fields such as political dialogue, security, defence, transport, migration, water, renewable energies and environment, education and research, tourism, health, trade and investment.
- The informal and flexible nature of the 5+5 Dialogue has prompted a sound development of its ministerial formats and high-level working groups, not only by a rapid expansion of the number of thematic areas of cooperation, but also by cementing a useful partnership with the different regional cooperation organisations such as the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Union and the Arab Maghreb Union.
- As the core platform of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, it not only represents a model of co-ownership in which the principles of the Union for the Mediterranean

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and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are built upon and fully reflected, but it can serve as a practical model for greater regional integration.

It has also been stressed that:

- The current challenges that the region is facing in terms of political transformation, security, stability and peace require more multilateralism and not less. In this respect, the 5+5 Dialogue offers a permanent and useful platform of political dialogue through which cooperation can be achieved at the highest level possible. However, there is a need to engage more actively in regional security issues to favour a stronger neighbourhood.
- Development challenges that are burdening the region require urgent solutions that can be realised more easily by boosting regional integration. The 5+5 Dialogue constitutes an undeniable ally to South-South cooperation and integration. In this regard, integration cannot only limit itself to an ideal objective if the region wants to reduce the endemic inequality gaps that have traditionally persisted and increased between the northern and southern states of the 5+5 Dialogue.
- Persisting social challenges such as youth unemployment, the existing high disengagement from the labour markets, insufficient job creation with an adequate supply of educated workers, the large but inadequately skilled supply of young workers with unrealistic employment expectations, as well as the weak regulatory framework can be better combated with regional integration.
- A greater and more effective involvement of civil society in the 5+5 Dialogue is a precondition for a more genuine space of co-ownership within the partnership. Moreover, regional integration must also be built from a bottom-up approach, and therefore the role of respective civil societies here is of the utmost importance.
- A reinforced cooperation and coordination of the 5+5 Dialogue with the existing regional and sub-regional multilateral partnerships, as well as the multilateral financial institutions operating in the region, is vital in order to continue fostering complementarities and optimise the existing policies, programmes and resources.

Likewise, the participants in the Forum have recalled that the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the 5+5 Dialogue, convened in La Valetta in October 2012, invited the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) to launch a network of think tanks associated with the 5+5 Dialogue, an initiative that:

*“Acknowledges that public opinion, civil society organisations and social networking are increasingly acquiring relevance and importance in the policy making process, underlines the importance of think-tanks and public diplomacy institutions in*

*analysing regional trends and drivers for change, and welcomes the initiative by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) to set-up a sub-regional network of the think-tanks of the 5+5 countries to develop research on how to promote regional integration and cooperation between the countries concerned"*

Accordingly, **they have decided to set up a network of think tanks, research and public diplomacy institutions, in which all institutions represented at this Forum are invited to participate.**

This network, here referred to as "Med Think 5+5", is established with the support of the European Institute of the Mediterranean, an institution that will host its technical unit at its premises in Barcelona and will finance the costs associated to the network, its activities and its research activities. Other sources of funding may be pursued appropriately.

A **scientific committee** composed of experts of a maximum of six institutions: three from the southern states and three from the northern states of the 5+5 Dialogue will be established in the course of the second half of 2016. This committee will plan the different activities of dialogue and research of the network.

It is foreseen that in the second half of 2016 a document of internal rules of the network, as well as a working plan for the next two years (2017-2018) will be examined by the scientific committee.

The network is expected to respond to three basic needs within the system of the 5+5 Dialogue:

- To become a **platform for dialogue** on the various thematic areas of cooperation within the 5+5 Dialogue
  - To become a **platform of joint research** amongst the research think tanks and public diplomacy institutions associated with the initiative
  - To become a **platform of dissemination and external communication** that will redound to the benefit of the 5+5 Dialogue
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- Firstly, as a **platform for dialogue**, the network intends to serve as a forum for debate and exchange of views on the thematic areas of cooperation within the Dialogue 5+5. Associates of the network organising conferences will become an asset for the dissemination, impact and outreach of the research activities. Furthermore, it will actively promote dialogue among associates and interaction between northern and southern participants.

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In this context, as a network of research institutes and think tanks, it will improve the understanding of key challenges, needs and trends that impact on the sub-regional cooperation scheme that the 5+5 Dialogue represents. Moreover, dialogue activities are the most useful tool to increase the ownership of policy-making processes, since they allow research institutions to transfer their messages to decision and policy makers.

A multi-stakeholder **Med Think 5+5 Forum** will be organised every year with the aim of enhancing dialogue, networking and contacts among key players in the region. This Forum will have an active participation of all associates of the network with designated researchers and experts. Representatives of the rotating co-presidency will be invited to address the Forum, alongside the focal contact points within each Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the member states of the 5+5 Dialogue, as well as representatives from the regional and sub-regional institutions.

In particular, it is proposed that a next meeting of the Med Think 5+5 Forum is held in the context of the UfM Regional Forum in November 2016 together with other think tanks' regional networks such as EuroMeSCo.

Additional activities, such as **seminars or symposia**, will be organised throughout the year in connection with the research packages undertaken.

- Secondly, as a **platform of joint research** the network will be able to provide a sound and comprehensive output to the policy-making leadership of the 5+5 Dialogue. The possibility of conducting papers and joint research packages among the different associates of the network will lead to increased research capacities of the think tanks by bringing together relevant researchers from southern and northern think tanks of the member states of the Dialogue.

The scientific committee of the network will decide in contact with the rotating co-presidency of the 5+5 Dialogue and based on the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on Foreign Affairs and those of the sectorial ministerial conferences the subjects on which research packages will be conducted. Three research packages will be conducted annually, peer-reviewed by the technical unit and published in the framework of the network.

The Annual Forum Med Think 5+5 will serve as a platform to present the results of the research packages and pre-examine those to be conducted in the succeeding year. As indicated, seminars or symposia might well be organised in relation with these research packages if needed.

- Thirdly, as a **platform of dissemination and external communication**, the network will ensure visibility and impact of its outputs. Communication and dissemination will be key aspects of the network and will complement the work undertaken in research and activities. Just as we acknowledge that the informal and flexible nature of the 5+5 Dialogue has become one of its virtues by strengthening and maintaining the initiative, it is also certain that as an eminent intergovernmental forum it sometimes lacks the capacity to reach out to public opinion. The establishment of the Med Think 5+5 will help give visibility not solely to the research initiatives undertaken by its associates, but also to the whole Dialogue system.

A **web tool** will be created with a triple objective: disseminate the mission, objectives and activities of the Med Think 5+5, disseminate the official ministerial meetings of the 5+5 Dialogue, disseminate the network's own publications, and those of the associates related to the scope of the network.

In addition, a **newsletter** with information and documents from the web tool will be edited and sent to public decision makers, research institutions, experts, academics and civil society.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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