



BACKGROUND

Factual information on the Euromed Partnership and the recent Barcelona activities

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The Barcelona process, launched by Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in November 1995, formed an innovative alliance based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and cooperation. The Partnership has been driven since by a common political will to build together a space of peace, security and shared prosperity. It has been successful in creating long-term political and institutional links between Europe and its Mediterranean partners; in establishing the foundations for free trade and in engaging Mediterranean partners in the path of reforms. The priority of the Barcelona process is to develop the regional dimension of the Partnership between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. With the European Neighbourhood policy working in complementarity and reinforcing the Barcelona process, through action plans agreed with the Partner countries, an added impetus has been given to bringing about a qualitative change in Euro-Mediterranean relations

Main activities in the framework of Barcelona Process since the Barcelona Euromed Summit

- **Implementation of the Five Year Work Programme started under the Austrian Presidency during the first part of the Year:**
 - **Euromed Trade Ministerial in Marrakech** on 24 March 2006 confirmed further trade liberalisation notably South-South and launched negotiations on services and the right of establishment
 - **Euromed Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance**, in Tunis (25-26 June 2006) focused on the improvement of public finances
 - **Seminar on "xenophobia, racism and the media" in Vienna** on 22-23 May 2006, discussed ways to address the issues raised by hate discourse and racism and respect for all religions and cultures
 - **Seminar on Economic Transition** (Brussels 6-7 June 2006) concentrated on the issues relating to participating in the internal market
 - **meeting of the Civil Forum (Marrakech 3-5 November 2006)** for the first time in a Mediterranean partner country, aimed at the reinforcement of the role of the civil society in the partnership

During the Finnish Presidency three important Ministerial conferences were very successful:

- **Conference of Ministers of Industry (Rhodes 20-21 October 2006)** agreed on priority areas for economic cooperation under the European Neighbouring policy and reinforcement of cooperation on competitiveness, market access, innovation and investment



- **A first Euromed Ministerial Conference on strengthening of the role of women in society (Istanbul 14-15 November 2006)** focused on promoting the full participation of women in the economic, political, civil, social and cultural life of the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- **Third Euromed Conference of Ministers of the Environment (Cairo, 20 November 2006)** which adopted a road map for de-polluting the Mediterranean Sea by 2020.

