



Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research and Innovation Gateway

## **EMEG (Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group)**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> EMEG meeting and report on “Euro-Mediterranean Research and Innovation policy and policy dialogue in relation to societal challenges”**

*Stocktaking of regional Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on  
Research and Innovation*

#### **1. Introduction**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> EMEG meeting is planned in Tunisia (Sousse) on 22-23 September 2014 and will focus on the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on research and innovation, with the aim of identifying ways and means for policy and policy dialogue to ensure impact on the MedSpring thematic challenges in water, food and energy.

The aim of this document is to present the results of the preparatory activities to the EMEG meeting (carried out by the EMEG Co-ordination team), namely a **critical stocktaking of Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on Research and Innovation**. The stocktaking is aimed at providing a comprehensive frame of policy objectives and targets agreed and outlined in major bi-regional and multi-lateral policy dialogue events undertaken in the last years.

The main outcome of such analysis is an overview of main objectives, problems and results (the latter being not necessarily achievements) of Euro-Mediterranean RDI policy dialogue.

#### **2. Methodology**

The stocktaking has been carried out in two main steps:

1) Desk analysis based on:

- Literature review, including a stocktaking of FP7/H2020 (1<sup>st</sup> call) published topics
- Relevant outcomes from the MedSpring Open Consultation and 1<sup>st</sup> EMEG meeting: Position Paper (June 2013)
- Civil Society insights, collected through an Open Consultation via web (instant pools, live twitter, video-messages, ...) launched through the Agora (May-June 2014)

- EMEG experts inputs, collected through an ad-hoc on line consultation as well as in validating problems and outcomes (May-June 2014).
- Declarations and minutes of policy dialogue events.

2) Stakeholder meeting (held in Brussels on 28 April 2014), which gathered Euro-Mediterranean key actors of Research and Innovation as well as main MedSpring partners, including the EC, having a specific session on EMEG activities on R&I Policy Dialogue.

### 3. Stocktaking

Following the launch of the Barcelona Process in 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on Research and Innovation has been developed through several bi-lateral and regional cooperation initiatives supported by EU Framework Programmes, which contributed to start building the basis for a long-term policy dialogue. In addition to this, in recent years, some key Euro-Mediterranean events have spelled out important and ambitious objectives.

A major and milestone initiative is the **Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences on Higher Education and Scientific Research**, held in Cairo in 2007. It represents the highest level of research policy dialogue in the Mediterranean, since North and South ministers were directly involved and committed their countries to the achievement of concrete objectives. On this occasion, ministers recognized that Education, Research and Technical Development Infrastructure (RTDI) did not receive sufficient attention in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and agreed on the creation of a *common research area through the enhancement of MPCs participation in the Framework Programmes*, taking into account their particular needs, areas of mutual interest and benefits.

Another pivotal initiative is the **Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation**, held in Barcelona in April 2012, which put an emphasis on the need to establish a renewed partnership in R&I, based on co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefits. Also, the Conference conclusions underline the importance of moving away from a “bilateral” approach and build on a more strategic “region to region” approach. On that occasion, the EC announced the preparation by interested EU Member States and South Mediterranean countries of a bi-regional programme based on Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), that would be a major initiative contributing to the implementation of the common agenda.

The policy dialogue framework is completed by the **Group of Senior Official (GSO) for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD** (former MoCo), whose periodical meetings conclusions and recommendations represent a high level response to the challenges to be faced in order to boost cooperation. GSO/MoCo has also the task of making recommendations to the EU for the joint implementation of RTD policy priorities. The last MoCo/GSO meetings agreed on the need of revisiting the past achievements of cooperation on the basis of the principles of partnership, co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefits. Also, Senior Officials highlighted the need to establish a medium/long term common R&I agenda.

Last but not least, an input to the development of Euro-Mediterranean research policy dialogue derives from the position paper circulated after the **1<sup>st</sup> EMEG meeting** (Lisbon, June 2013), which gives some recommendations on concrete actions to be adopted for ensuring a good governance of Euro-Mediterranean research cooperation.

In addition to this, other joint objectives for reinforcing cooperation on Research and Innovation have been identified by **Science & Technology Bilateral Agreements** signed between the EU and some Mediterranean Partner Countries<sup>1</sup>. Such objectives range from the promotion of a knowledge-based society, to the mutual access to research programmes, the achievement of mutual benefits, the protection of intellectual property rights. Under these Agreements, periodical meetings of the Science & Technology Committees are organized to further orient joint activities in line with the needs and specificities of the country concerned.

Based on the objectives formulated and announced in all the above mentioned events, meetings and documents, MedSpring has undertaken a clusterization which lead to the identification of two major categories of objectives:

**1) Strategic Objectives** (objectives which are deemed to be the ideal frame of Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue in Research and Innovation). These objectives are:

- a) Fostering long-term and stable cooperation
- b) Ensuring a participatory approach in national and EU research programme designin
- c) Developing programmes tailored on country needs
- d) Encouraging MPCs participation in EU research framework programmes
- e) Ensuring North-South co-ownership in programmes' designing and implementation

**2) Operational Objectives** (objectives which should be reached through the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on Research and Innovation). These objectives are:

- a) Higher Education
- b) Mobility
- c) Capacity Building
- d) Technology Transfer
- e) Uptake of research results

The set of “Strategic objectives” has been presented to the civil society engaged in MedSpring through an Open Consultation, where participants were asked to prioritize such objectives, to

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<sup>1</sup> Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan.

express an opinion on their degree of achievement and to identify problems and possible solutions for their achievement.

Following the identification of objectives, some positive factors and problems have been systematized through an assessment of the main results of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the last few years. They are briefly exposed below:

### **1) Positive factors**

- a) Progresses towards the establishment of an Article 185 initiative for the Mediterranean
- b) 3 Mediterranean Partner Countries are in the top 20 Third Countries with the highest number of participant in approved projects in FP7
- c) About 7% of the topics of FP7 call were specifically addressed to the Mediterranean Partner Countries
- d) Some key issues for the Mediterranean such as “Food” and “Environment” are well addressed in the first Work Programme of H2020
- e) There is more involvement of the civil society in recently approved projects in the Euro-Mediterranean region

### **2) Problems**

- a) The organization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation is still on hold
- b) There has been no increase in the % of Mediterranean Partner Countries participants from FP6 to FP7 (remained at about 10%)
- c) Low number of topics (3) addressed to Mediterranean Partner Countries in the first Work Programme of H2020 (about 0,5%)
- d) Key issues like health and energy are not directly addressed by H2020 calls oriented to the Mediterranean

## **4. Conclusions**

The results of the stocktaking carried out by MedSpring indicate that the policy dialogue on Research and Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region was built under important and rather ambitious objectives, which are fully sharable indeed. The Ministerial Conference held in Cairo in 2007 can be considered as a milestone and gave further impetus to the process and lead to some progresses in terms of number of joint activities implemented in key and strategic challenges for the region. Nevertheless, some bottlenecks have occurred in the process, due to multiple and complex reasons, which resulted into a partial achievement of both “strategic” and “operational” objectives.

The role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> EMEG meeting, thanks also to the inputs received from the Open Consultation, is to discuss the general objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue in R&I, giving concrete suggestions on how to overcome the current barriers in order to develop sustainable actions which are really co-owned.