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**"The role of young people in the process of  
intercultural dialogue:  
how far are EMP agreement from concrete implementation?"**

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## **Introduction:**

The paper aims at analyzing the perception of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership among young people interested and committed in the process of intercultural dialogue both in their local environment and on an international level.

It intends to overview from one side the concrete commitment of the Mediterranean EU countries in terms of intercultural dialogue and youth sector and on the other side the effective possibilities given to young people in order to get to know different cultures by promoting international settings of exchange.

The approach has been based on a dual approach with an analysis of the agreements signed by the States in the Euro-Mediterranean context regarding the field of youth and a survey on the effective implementation of the accords through the perceptions of the direct beneficiaries.

The overview on the agreements analyses first the context of youth in the non-formal and lifelong learning context, then covering a general idea on the steps taken on the European level, to move to the Euro-Mediterranean sphere with a starting examination of the elements in the Barcelona Declaration and Process dedicated to the field of youth and a final explanation of the actions implemented with the Euro-Mediterranean youth programmes.

An intense effort has been made in the youth sector in the European context, and by the EMP it has been spread to the Euro-Mediterranean field, to get closer young people from the different shores of the Mediterranean basin, through sharing experiences and exchange cultural backgrounds, political views, religious beliefs in order to raise their awareness on the importance of their role in improving the present realities and shaping the future ones. But lots of things have to be improved, as still a deep chasm widens between the theoretical objectives of the EMP and the concrete implementation of its actions, especially regarding the practical difficulties young people face in realising the projects.

Therefore this paper intends to give voice to the other side of actors committed in the intercultural dialogue, realising a survey on three different levels: one will be run among trainers experienced in the field and the other among young people who participated to such events and the third one will include contributions of directors of the education departments of various training institutions committed in the EMP and dealing with the training activities for and with young people.

The survey has been realised through direct contacts and web networks, in order to reach a considerable number of voices.

# PART 1

## **The Theoretical analysis : what has been decided and done by institutions**

### The Youth context : life-long learning , non formal education and youth policies

The youth sector in the European context flourishes in the early 1990s with a starting in considering the non-formal<sup>1</sup> and informal learning a constructive part of the educational and personal development of young people. But often continuous misunderstandings among the terms of formal, non-formal and informal education have appeared, provoking not simply confusion but also an underestimation of non-formal education, as it has been often opposed to formal education as a minor approach to the formative process of young people, and levelled to the informal learning happening "incidentally" in daily life.

Many definitions have been given – by UNESCO<sup>2</sup> and the European Commission<sup>3</sup> – but a clear distinction and definitive definitions have not been ascribed yet to these sectors<sup>4</sup>. Non-

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<sup>1</sup> "Non-formal education has emerged as a term since the 1970s with the aim of achieving a better recognition of education and learning taking place outside of schools, university and evaluative systems", Training essentials T-Kit, Council of Europe Publishing, p. 13  
(see <http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/tkits/tkit4/index.html> )

<sup>2</sup> "Formal education (or initial education or regular school and university education)- Education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old. In some countries, the upper parts of this 'ladder' are constituted by organized programmes of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system: such programmes have come to be known as the 'dual system' or equivalent terms in these countries. Non-formal education- Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system, and may have differing duration " No definition of informal learning is given (UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education I S C E D 1997, see [http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/iscsed\\_1997.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/iscsed_1997.htm) )

<sup>3</sup> "Formal learning is typically provided by an education or training institution and leads to certification. It is structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and is intentional from the learner's perspective. Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, both structured and intentional. Informal learning is not provided by education and training institutions, does not lead to certification and is not structured. It is the result of daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It may be intentional but in most cases it is not (i.e. incidental/random)". European Commission White Paper "A new impetus for European youth", Commission of the European communities, Brussels 21.11.2001, p. 34, see [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/download/whitepaper\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/download/whitepaper_en.pdf)

formal education has indeed a proper organised methodology addressing to developing values, skills (often called “soft skills”<sup>5</sup>) and competences of young people in those fields usually not tackled by formal education: these individual skills "are not only related to employment prospects, but they contribute to the development of human capabilities and motivations"<sup>6</sup>. The range of interest varies from those topics mainly based on the acquisition of a personal and interpersonal awareness – linked to the identity and intercultural learning concepts – to those purely addressed to the organisational support for youth associations (teamwork, project and funding management as well as conflict resolution) passing through a wide series of thematic sectors, from human rights education to active citizenship and youth participation.

What differs mainly from the formal sector is the participative approach, with the “learner” becoming an active dealer of his/her learning process: the needs and knowledge of the learner are in fact the starting point of the educational process and the personality assume the pivotal support around which the experiential learning develops.

The complementarity between formal and non-formal education has always been considered as a fundamental step for reaching a holistic approach in the educational scope, especially by the European institutions which promote a recognition of non-formal education by setting up quality standards and means of certification. The stand taken by the European institutions sees on one side the increase of the quality training supports – with the creation of the SALTO centres<sup>7</sup> and the signing of the partnership with the Council of Europe<sup>8</sup> in the training and research field – but also through the recognition of learning in the youth work<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> the European Youth Forum has given a definition of the sectors by summing up the existing classifications: "...while formal education is typically provided by formal education institutions and is sequentially and hierarchically structured leading to certification, non-formal education is an organized educational process which takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to certification. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis and as a result, the individual takes an active role in the learning process. Unlike informal education where learning happens less consciously, the individual is usually aware of the fact that he/she is learning through non-formal education" (policy paper "Youth organizations as non formal educators- recognizing our role" (0618-03) adopted by the Council of Members of the European Youth Forum on 21-23 November 2003, p.3 - see [http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy\\_docs/learner-centred\\_education/0618-03.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0618-03.pdf) )

<sup>5</sup> ibidem.

<sup>6</sup>European Youth Forum "Policy paper on Recognition of non-formal education: confirming the real competences of young people in the knowledge society", 11-12 November 2005 (see [http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy\\_docs/learner-centred\\_education/0716-05.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0716-05.pdf) )

<sup>7</sup> see afterwards

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> joint activities between the European Commission and the Council of Europe are highlighted in the working paper "Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and learning in the youth field" realized in February 2004 (see [http://www.eaea.org/doc/working\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://www.eaea.org/doc/working_paper_en.pdf) )

A significant stress on this topic is given in the **White Paper on Youth**<sup>10</sup>, realized by the Commission in 2001 in order to widen and deepen the political debate on youth policies in the Member States involving directly young people and reaching a community dimension in close cooperation with the local and regional authorities, through the open method of coordination<sup>11</sup> in priority areas. The White Paper finds its origin right in the growing interests of the European Commission and Member States on the topic of youth and the direct influence the subject should have on country policies<sup>12</sup>. It does not simply analyse the actual situation of young people but goes further in studying their desires and expectations together with the demands of the Member States and the European Parliament: it is based in fact on a wide-ranging process of consultations addressed to all the actors involved in the youth field (young people, national officials in the Youth field, researchers and civil society.) The consultation focuses on the themes of participation, employment, education, welfare and European values, related also to mobility and external relations.

In the context of education The White Paper on Youth demands a greater recognition of activities in the youth field, being considered as "part of the overall package of lifelong learning"<sup>13</sup> and often seen by young people "as the most positive, efficient and attractive counterpart to a largely inefficient and unattractive system of formal education" having the advantage "mainly in its voluntary and often self-organised nature, its flexibility, the possibilities of participation, the right to make mistakes, the closer link to young people's

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<sup>10</sup> "A White Paper is not a legislative text, but a document containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. It presents a detailed and well argued policy for discussion and for decision. When a White Paper has been favourably received by the Council of Ministers, it may become the action programme for the Union in the area concerned" (see [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/backinfo/backinfo1\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/backinfo/backinfo1_en.html) )

<sup>11</sup> "The open method of coordination takes place in areas which fall within the competence of the Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, youth and training. (...) Depending on the areas concerned, the OMC involves so-called "soft law" measures which are binding on the Member States in varying degrees but which never take the form of directives, regulations or decisions. Thus, in the context of the Lisbon strategy, the OMC requires the Member States to draw up national reform plans and to forward them to the Commission" (definition taken by the glossary at [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open\\_method\\_coordination\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm) )

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Mairesse, director of youth in the European Commission, in an article ("Impact of the White Paper on European Youth Policies", 14.09.07) where he summarises the history of European cooperation on youth policies over the past 15 years, stresses the role of the Youth programmes in shaping a political frame in the European context: "European youth programmes have not only had an impact on the young people themselves and on their immediate circle or on organizations working in the youth sector, they have also had a political impact. The management required for these programmes, which involves regular contacts between the European Commission, the Member States and their national agencies, has helped promote political cooperation. There would have been no Bologna without Erasmus, and no White Paper without the 'Youth for Europe' programme" ([http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural\\_cooperation/youth/5\\_information\\_services/forum\\_21/N9\\_White\\_Paper\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_cooperation/youth/5_information_services/forum_21/N9_White_Paper_en.pdf), p. 3)

<sup>13</sup> European Commission White Paper "A new impetus for European youth", Commission of the European communities, Brussels 21.11.2001, p. 19

interests and aspirations".<sup>14</sup> It has been acknowledged how the White Paper has had a constructive impact not just on the situation of young people but also on the national policies ("The participation of young people is now at the centre of national youth policies. Ties between the ministries and national youth councils, between the Commission and the European Youth Forum have been significantly strengthened by it".<sup>15</sup>)

The importance of complementarity between the formal and non-formal sectors of education was enhanced in 2005, when the **European Youth Pact** was adopted by the European Council: it was considered as one of the instruments for achieving the revised Lisbon objectives in the frame of "Education and Training 2010"<sup>16</sup>, aiming to set the bridges between school and work, by improving education, training, mobility, employment and social inclusion of young people, whilst helping to achieve a work-life balance. Non-formal and informal learning are considered as an effective contribution to the personal development of young people, promoting their social inclusion and active citizenship and furthermore their employability and thus stressing on the need of the active participation of the beneficiaries (young people and youth organisations) in the framing of youth policies<sup>17</sup>.

Furthermore a series of decisions and actions have been taken by the European institutions, addressed to the development of effective and flexible ways of recognition of skills acquired outside the formal sector of education. Following the indications given in the "Decision on a

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p. 34

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Mairesse "Impact of the White Paper on European Youth Policies", 14.09.07, p. 4

<sup>16</sup> in March 2000 by the European Council held in Lisbon it was stated that "The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council, Lisbon, March 2000 see [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm) ). In order to achieve these goals Ministers of education agreed on three major goals to be achieved by 2010, by improving the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems, ensuring their accessible to all and opening up education and training to the wider world. Lifelong learning was seen as a necessity for reaching such objectives and therefore the involvement of the various types and levels of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) was envisaged. As result further commitments were taken with the Copenhagen process - for the vocational education and training - and the Bologna process for the development of the European higher education Area.

<sup>17</sup> "The European Council underlined that, to be successful, the Pact requires the involvement of all actors, first and foremost, of youth organisations, as well as regional and local authorities and the social partners. Young people and their organisations should be consulted on the development of measures for this initiative within the national Lisbon reform programmes, and on following up implementation. While it is up to each Member State to define how to involve young people, national youth councils should be among those consulted". (Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the commission to the council on European policies concerning youth. Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship", Brussels, 30.05.2005 see [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/post-launch/com\\_206\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/post-launch/com_206_en.pdf) )

single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences "<sup>18</sup> - adopted by the European Parliament and of the Council in December 2004 - in the frame of self evaluation and assessment procedures the **Europass** has been realized for providing individuals with a model of comprehensive presentation of their qualifications and competences<sup>19</sup> in order to facilitate their mobility throughout Europe for lifelong learning purposes and job opportunities.

In the same line a **Youthpass** has been realized in the frame of the YOUTH Programme<sup>20</sup>, in order to improve the recognition of learning at a European level of validation in the different activities of the programme as a start but aiming at getting widened to international and national youth work sector and as such being integrated into the Europass, by making the learning outcomes visible and usable in the educational and work field. In the EUROMED YOUTH Programme<sup>21</sup> context an equivalent tool has been realised – the **Euromed Training Pass** - in order to certify the acquisition of skills provided by any Euromed training structure.

The importance of non-formal education has been newly stressed in the "Resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field"<sup>22</sup>, adopted by the Council in May 2006. Non-formal education and informal learning are considered as a milestone in the educational and personal development of young people, as they "are important elements in the learning process and are effective instruments for making learning attractive, developing lifelong learning and promoting the social integration of young people. They encourage the participation, active citizenship and social inclusion of young people, and are of practical relevance to the labour market by helping to acquire knowledge, qualifications and other key skills."<sup>23</sup> Consequently also a greater attention is given to the role of youth workers and youth organisations, already highlighted in previous agreements and decisions, such as the one of the Council of Europe's European Steering

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<sup>18</sup> Decision no 2241/2004/ec of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)" see [http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1399/type.FileContent.file/EuropassDecision\\_en\\_US.PDF](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1399/type.FileContent.file/EuropassDecision_en_US.PDF)

<sup>19</sup> Europass consists of 5 existing instruments: the Europass curriculum vitae and the Europass language passport (directly filled by the applicant) plus the Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Diploma Supplement and Europass Mobility (filled in and issued by competent organizations). See the web pages dedicated to it at <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>.

<sup>20</sup> see the chapter on European Youth programmes

<sup>21</sup> see the chapter on Euro-Mediterranean youth programmes

<sup>22</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field [Official Journal C 168, 20.7.2006] see <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11096.htm>

<sup>23</sup> ibidem

Committee for Youth (CDEJ) of 2003 which led to the realisation – finalised at the beginning of 2007 - of **The European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders**, which is based on a functional analysis of skills, competences and knowledge of the youth worker both through a self-assessment and colleagues feedbacks.

## The Youth Programmes

### a. The European context

#### **The premises:**

The commitment of the European Commission in the youth sector has spread in all the areas of education, with several programmes addressed to different fields with the aim of creating a comprehensive educational frame in the European policies (in the formal sector we find the SOCRATES Programme while in the field of vocational training the LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme).

Regarding the non-formal education field the first steps were taken in the early 1990s, when the youth sector in the European policies has been tackled as a major topic and the attention to the needs of young people was more concentrated on their mobility and formative experience outside the formal sector considered as focal elements for their social and vocational integration. As such two programmes were developed – YOUTH FOR EUROPE (1992-1999) and EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE (from 1996) – aiming at offering young people (15-25 years old) the chance to take part in non-formal educational activities (i.e. exchanges, the promotion of youth initiatives, voluntary service projects). Both the programmes aimed in promoting the building of a European identity among young people in the Member States, by stimulating the mutual knowledge and understanding and thus enhancing the common feeling of belonging to a rich and varied community. On the political level the YOUTH FOR EUROPE Programme contained additional measures designed to strengthen and develop cooperation among the European State Members in the area of youth, as the “Youth Research” action, which aimed to promote cooperation among the Member States in order to develop a Community policy in the youth field, through comparative analysis and cases studies. The thematic the research was centred on was focusing on the

expectations of young people on Europe and the identity feeling towards it by dealing mainly with those issues which could have represented an insurmountable obstacle to a fruitful integration and mutual learning (such as migration, racism and xenophobia).

### **The enlargement of attention:**

With the end of YOUTH FOR EUROPE the scope of intervention was enlarged with a new programme, the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006), which included the previous activities of youth exchanges and voluntary service but widened the scope of actions<sup>24</sup>, aiming in contributing to the creation of a common European youth policy, based on non-formal education through the processes of lifelong learning and active citizenship of young people into society. "The aim of the YOUTH Programme is to encourage young people to make an active contribution to European integration, to developing intercultural understanding, strengthening fundamental values such as human rights and combating racism and xenophobia, developing a sense of solidarity, encouraging a spirit of enterprise, initiative and creativity, stimulating the recognition of non-formal education, and strengthening cooperation on the part of all people active in the youth field."<sup>25</sup> A key priority was addressed to young people with fewer opportunities (from a less-privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic background, or with disabilities) to access to the activities of the Programme. In order to cover more topics with a suitable attention, every year was focused on a specific priority.

While the target group's age remained included between 15 and 25 years, the scope of eligible users widened up after 2004 to 31 Programme countries (EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries and pre-accession countries).

The YOUTH Programme also supported international co-operation activities with Partner Countries in the Mediterranean: the EUROMED YOUTH Programme, involving 35 Euro-Mediterranean partner countries, was one of the YOUTH Programme's main activities (see afterwards). The YOUTH Programme also supported international co-operation activities with other Partner Countries: South East Europe (SEE), the Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (former CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States ) and Latin America (LA).

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<sup>24</sup> Action 1: Youth for Europe Exchanges; Action 2: European Voluntary Service; Action 3: Youth initiatives; Action 4: Joint Actions; Action 5: support measures

<sup>25</sup> European Commission White Paper "A new impetus for European youth", Commission of the European communities, Brussels 21.11.2001, p. 21

### **The consolidation:**

The direct involvement of young people in shaping debates and dialogue has thus become a pivotal element in the European youth policy, actively implemented through the instrument of structured dialogue<sup>26</sup>, especially enhanced with the new youth programme, the YOUTH IN ACTION Programme (2007-2013). The non-formal and informal opportunities in the European frame and dimension are widened to a larger target of users, as the programme is now addressed to young people aged from 13 to 30 years. The activities and actions are improved from the previous experiences in order to stimulate the active participation of young people in shaping a European identity. The cooperation with partner countries is now structured through a specific action (Action 3) which allows European organisations to implement and host international projects with programme countries (the Euro-Med organisations have to apply to the EUROMED YOUTH Programme III)

### **The actors:**

Young people and youth organization find both a financial and a training support offered through a network of partners with specific roles:

- **The European Commission**, responsible for managing the budget and setting priorities, targets and criteria for the Programme on an ongoing basis.
- **The national authorities** of all the Programme countries, involved in the management of the Programme, in particular through the Programme Committee.
- **The National Agencies** established by the national authorities in each Programme country in order to assist the European Commission with management and implementation of the YOUTH programme
- **SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres** which provide training and information for youth organisations and National Agencies ( the acronym SALTO stands in fact for Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities). SALTO-YOUTH.net is

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<sup>26</sup> "The structured dialogue is an instrument to actively involve young people in policy shaping debates and dialogue in relation to the European agenda. It is a direct follow-up of the White Paper on youth and a logical consequence of the European Youth Pact. It is structured in terms of themes and timing: in 2007 it will focus on social and professional integration of young people, in 2008 on intercultural dialogue and in 2009 on the further perspectives of youth policy at European level. The structured dialogue contributes to the implementation of the Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate and to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The European Youth Week and the youth events organised by each Council Presidency are major occasions for young people to raise their voice and contribute to the shaping of policies at European level which concern them. Action 5.1 of the Youth in Action Programme supports projects in the framework of the structured dialogue" (see [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policies/structured\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policies/structured_en.html) )

a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field.

- **The Partnership** – the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe which fosters the active citizenship of young people by giving impetus to training and research activities in this field
- **National Coordinators** based in the 10 Mediterranean partner countries facilitate the implementation of this Programme (substituted from 2005 by the Euro-Med Youth Units)

#### b. The Euro-Mediterranean context

### **The premises: The BARCELONA DECLARATION - chapter III**

Within the objectives of the Barcelona Declaration<sup>27</sup> the social and cultural sphere among the Euro-Mediterranean countries<sup>28</sup> is brought up to the same level of attention of the political and economic cooperation, by reaffirming "that dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary pre-condition for bringing the peoples closer." In this process young people are put in a central position, concerning "the essential nature of the development of human resources, both as regards the education and training of young people in particular and in the area culture." The intention of the partners focuses then on the promotion of "cultural exchanges and knowledge of other languages, respecting the cultural identity of each partner" and goes further with the agreement of the implementation of " a lasting policy of educational and cultural programmes" for which partners assume the responsibilities of adopting " measures to facilitate human exchanges, in particular by improving administrative procedures." The importance of youth for shaping an identity of mutual understanding and knowledge is reaffirmed through the promotion of exchanges between young people in the partners countries: " Youth exchanges should be the means to prepare future generations for a closer cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners. A Euro-Mediterranean youth exchange programme should therefore be established based on experience acquired in Europe

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<sup>27</sup> all the following quotations are taken from the text of the Barcelona Declaration, see [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/euromed/bd.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm)

<sup>28</sup> 27 countries for the period covering 1995 to 2004 and 35 countries as result of the enlargement of EU in May 2004 (the 25 European Member States and 10 MEDA countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey)

and taking account of the partners' needs; this programme should take account of the importance of vocational training, particularly for those without qualifications, and of the training of organizers and social workers in the youth field."

In the work programme 21 intervention sectors of common interest for the partners are highlighted envisaging a common action, though stressing the importance of recognition of the country individual approach to the topic, in respect of undeniable principles to be respected and followed, such as democratic participation, human rights, recognition of freedom (including freedom of expression, freedom of association for peaceful purposes, freedom of thought and freedom of religion), combating racism and intolerance and also assigning a particular attention to the role of women as key factor for the country development.

The fields addressed as being the most representative for an effective common action concern the following issues: cultural and creative heritage, cultural and artistic events, co-productions (theatre and cinema), translations and other means of cultural dissemination, training. A particular attention is given to a greater understanding among the major religions present in the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to facilitate a greater mutual tolerance and cooperation, "with the aim of breaking down prejudice, ignorance and fanaticism and fostering cooperation at grass-roots level."

Several programmes have spurted from the work programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration. Concerning the sector of cultural cooperation different programmes have been implemented by the DGEuropeAid :Euro-Med Heritage, whose general objective is to support the development and enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage, thus providing for better mutual understanding, and Euro med Audiovisual (started in 2000), whose general objective is the development of the audiovisual sector (radio, television, and cinema) in the Mediterranean Partners and fostering the emergence of a Euro-Mediterranean cultural identity through audiovisual heritage of the region.

### **The EUROMED YOUTH Programme:**

This proposal had laid the bases for the structuring of a programme in the field of youth which could satisfy all these needs of both mutual knowledge through exchanges and the

development of a qualified training process for young people on one side and for organisers on the other side.

As a consequence a series of further meetings took place among the actors responsible of youth work in the partners countries:

- In June 1996 was held in Amman a meeting among representatives and responsible for youth work in governmental structures and in non-government organisations (NGOs) for discussing more in depth on the role of youth exchanges in Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, and setting out their objectives in a common declaration.
- Between December 1996 and April 1997 a research on the effective situation and needs of youth in each partner country, by defining the priorities in the youth area and setting a programme which responded to the young people real interests, possibilities and situation.
- In April 1997 was held in Malta the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference, in which the partners reiterated that a programme of activities for youth should be quickly developed.

As a consequence at the end of 1998, the European Commission and the Euro-Mediterranean (MED)<sup>29</sup> Committee for the Barcelona Process adopted the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme (EUROMED).

EUROMED is the only programme which addresses to the needs of a specific part of the population (i.e. youth) rather than the needs of a sector, as the above mentioned programmes. As such it can easily have synergies with the other MEDA programmes, as youth projects can cover also the field of heritage and media.

The experience of the youth sector in the European context is thus transferred in the MEDA field: the strict connection of the two programmes is reflected also in the budgetary management of EUROMED, as it is a co-funded and co-managed by two Directorates

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<sup>29</sup> The Euro-Med Committee is a central institution of the Barcelona Process gathering senior officials - such as Ambassadors - in charge of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the Foreign Ministries of the 35 Member States. The committee meets every two months in Brussels and analyses the progress made towards the fulfilment of the objectives outlined in the Barcelona Declaration and agreed upon by Ministerial Conferences. The committee also provides incentives for new initiatives.

General - DG Education and Culture (responsible for the youth programmes on an European level) and DG Europe Aid (in charge of MEDA programme).

Since the first agreements 3 different phases and implementations have run in the programme:

- From 1999 to 2001 EUROMED YOUTH Programme I was implemented as a concrete initiative of the implementation of the EMP objectives by extending the YOUTH Programme's activities to the Mediterranean partners countries (3 actions out of 5 were transferred, i.e. the youth exchanges, the voluntary service and the support measures.)

The budget provided 9.7 million euros (6 million from MEDA and 3.7 from YOUTH). As concrete participation and direct management of the programme in the MEDA partners countries the figure of National coordinator was established.

- From 2002 to 2004 the second phase of the programme (EUROMED YOUTH Programme II) was adopted after the positive remarks of the evaluation carried out at the end of the previous phase and following the MED Committee's approval in September 2001, on the 22nd November 2001 (Decision n°2001/2347).

The programme was evaluated as really effective in the scope of youth in the Euro-Mediterranean frame and as such it was enriched in the existing structures (as the national coordinators, whose roles was consolidated through detecting a competent figure with high knowledge of local non-profit associative life as well as the needs and realities of youth work) and by adding new one, especially in the field of training, considered as a pivotal element in order to guarantee the sustainability of the activities, their quality implementation and the involvement of all the partners. In this regard the SALTO YOUTH Euro-Med Resource Centre was created - in order to support the implementation of the programme through training activities – and a Partnership Agreement with the Council of Europe was achieved in the form of cooperation on training.

The new structures were widened also the field of support for youth organisations – being one main goal of the phase the strengthening of their role as civil society actors - with the creation of the Euro-Med Youth Platform in September 2003 in Malta. For facing all these developments and increases the budget increased of 40% compared

to the previous phase (14 million euros for 2002-2004, 10 million from MEDA and 4 million from YOUTH).

The programme was more defined in the thematic, focusing more on the Mediterranean needs, such as the fight racism and xenophobia, active citizenship, the role of women in society, minority rights, environment and cultural heritage protection. The actions of the YOUTH Programme allowed were the same of the previous phase (actions 1, 2 and 3: youth exchanges, voluntary service, support measures.)

- in December 2004 EUROMED YOUTH II ended and initially no new programme was started as the Commission's Cooperation Office Europe Aid (DG AIDCO) launched a feasibility study and the programme was suspended for the projects submitted by youth organisations based in the Mediterranean partner countries. As a result of the study and following the decentralised approach promoted with the reform in the management of external aid and cooperation by adapting to the diversity of national systems and situation in the field of youth, the centralised management through which the programme had been primarily run by the European Commission from the headquarters in Brussels until that moment entered a changing phase through which the MEDA part of the programme was decentralised. New structures – the Euro-Med Youth Units, or EMYUs - were created in every MEDA partner country in order to manage (both for issuing the contracts and managing the financial aspects) the projects submitted by the youth organisations in the country. A support unit (Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit -RCBS) was created in order to support the national units, enhancing sub-regional and regional co-operation and monitoring the activities.

The programme remains under the management of the two directorates, DG AIDCO - responsible for the implementation of the Commission's external aid – and Directorate General Education and Culture (EAC) which continues to manage the part of Euro-Med youth projects taking place in Europe and to manage the programme's support structures (SALTO YOUTH Euro-Med Resource Centre, Euro-Med Youth Platform).

- in October 2005 EUROMED YOUTH III Programme was launched with the agreement with 9 Mediterranean partner countries (except Egypt): the programme

will last until 2008 and it focuses mainly on mobility, non-formal education and intercultural learning. The objectives of the programme remain connected to the overall aims pursued since the starting of the programme – such as the intercultural dialogue and the promotion of active citizenship - but it includes and stresses mainly on the enhancing the contribution of non-governmental youth organisations to civil society and democracy, and contributing to the development of youth policy. The actions permitted are still youth exchanges, voluntary service and support measures, but it sets up a proper distinction from the YOUTH IN ACTION Programme and the previous phase of the EUROMED YOUTH Programme, as it is addressed to the youth organisations set in the Mediterranean partner countries, which will apply directly to the national authorities through the role of Euro-Med Youth Units (EMYUs) substituting from 2005 the former National Coordinators, while the application of European youth organisation for project involving MEDA partners, is then confined to the Action 3 of the YOUTH IN ACTION Programme. Also funds are now provided entirely by the MEDA Programme (thus DG Europe Aid), and no more as a sharing with the Directorates General of DG Education and Culture .

**The actors:**

Within the frame of the EUROMED YOUTH Programme several actors play a major role. We have already seen how the funding management and implementation was carried out – for the EUROMED I and II) by two Directorates General, DG Education and Culture (responsible for the youth programmes on an European level) and DG Europe Aid (in charge of MEDA programme), while for the third phase just by the latter one.

At the national level, the programme is promoted and developed by National Agencies (NAs) in the Member States for the implementation of THE YOUTH IN ACTION Programme and the Euro-Med Youth Units (EMYUs) in the Mediterranean partner countries, which are monitored by the Delegations of the European Commission in the respective country and by the Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit (RCBS) which provides institutional capacity building of the EMYUs and takes in charge of the visibility and dissemination of the information regarding the programme.

Focusing more on the support institutions - especially in the field of training and educational resources as well as the assistance for the youth organisations active in the Euro-

Mediterranean context in the field of intercultural dialogue and human rights – we find a series of bodies, with specific objectives and filed of action, but working in synergy and constant cooperation.

- **SALTO Youth Euro-Med Resource Centre** is one of the SALTO YOUTH centre and it was founded in 2000 by INJEP (National Institute for Youth and Non Formal Education) base of the French National agency, in order to be a resources centre in the youth field, dealing at the same time with non formal education and youth NGOs' activities, developing meetings and seminars on these subjects, confronting experiences, implementing both national and European exchanges and concretely supporting international cooperation. The aim of the centre is mainly focused in enhancing cooperation in youth work between the two sides of the Mediterranean area. The activities run accordingly vary from international and national training courses, production of educational material and dissemination of good practices in youth work, all done in close partnership with several European and Mediterranean institutions.
- **The Council of Europe** and the European Commission have developed a close cooperation – The Youth Partnership - in the youth field since 1998 with a specific focus on *training* of youth workers and of youth leaders especially on the thematic of Human Rights Education and intercultural dialogue. They enlarged the cooperation to the Euro-Mediterranean context in 2003, aiming at providing quality training and learning opportunities for youth workers and youth leaders active in Euro-Mediterranean youth projects. For the period 2005-2006 a single framework agreement was created and further for the period 2007-2009 a new contract has been signed.

The Youth Partnership is jointly managed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe within a Partnership Management Board. In addition to this different Sectorial Groups contribute to specific thematic areas in terms of content definition and operational management with a support, advisory and monitoring

function, through the work of researchers, youth policy experts as well as practitioners and institutions' representatives.<sup>30</sup>

- **The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures** was established as a direct implementation of the mandate decided in the Action Plan adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in Valencia in April 2002. The headquarters were set in Alexandria Library in tandem with the Swedish Institute in Alexandria (Egypt). The Foundation is the first common institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and for the first time in the framework of the Barcelona regional actions, all the Euro-Mediterranean partners have announced commitments (the European Commission is providing funding of €5 million from MEDA) with a total figure superior of over €11million. It works as a Network of 35 national networks established by the Euro- Mediterranean partners giving the civil societies of the region an important role to play in its development. The objective is mainly centred on the promotion of the dialogue between cultures and contribution to the visibility of the Barcelona Process through intellectual, cultural and civil society exchanges. Particular importance is given to the development of human resources, mainly addressed to the youth sector.
- **The European Youth Forum** works on a European level for promoting a active citizenship of young people in the societies in which they live and more broadly in the definition of a European identity. It is independently established by youth organisations, and it is made up of more than 90 National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, which are federations of youth organisations in themselves.

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<sup>30</sup> The Sectorial Group on Euro-Med, Human Rights Education and Intercultural dialogue includes representatives from the European Commission, the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport and the North-South Centre, the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform, the European Youth Forum, the European Network of Researchers, the Salto-Youth Euro-Med Resource Centre as well as an independent expert in the field of Euro-Med youth co-operation. The Anna Lindh Foundation has an observer status within the group.

- **The Euro-Med Youth Platform (EMYP)** was officially launched in September 2003 as a replacement of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum<sup>31</sup>, and it was based in Malta. The aims of the institution centre on the creation and support of networks among the youth organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean context by assisting them in capacity building processes, increasing their participation, sharing of relevant information, and exchanging good practice. bringing young people from the region together in an environment of tolerance and mutual understanding. It is mainly funded by The Commission of the European Union and the Government of Malta and is coordinated and supported by a Steering Committee composed of the Director of the Platform, representatives from the Youth Unit, AIDCO and DG RELEX within the Commission of the European Communities, SALTO Euro-Med, and the European Youth Forum.
- **The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament** was promoted by The German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Goethe-Institut and the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation, in cooperation with the European Commission and the Anna Lindh Foundation for the dialogue between cultures. It was first held in Berlin in June 2007 with about 100 participants from 38 countries and representatives of the youth initiatives European Youth Forum, SALTO and Euro-Med Youth Platform. The goal is to practice parliamentary forms of discussion and to discuss future topics beyond cultural and geographic borders by examining and promoting the Euro-Mediterranean partnership from the perspective of young adults.

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<sup>31</sup> The main differences between the two structures lie on the organisational approach – the new one being based on networks – and the management composition, with a permanent secretariat for the EMYP opposed to a rotating one in the Forum.

## **PART 2**

### **The practical analysis – what is perceived and received by actors and beneficiaries**

The survey has the objective of analysing the concrete impact the EUROMED Youth Programme has with the persons directly involved in it, therefore it has been realised through different questionnaires given or sent through web networks to three "classes" of target groups:

- Person in charge of training opportunities in organisational bodies (such as SALTO Euromed and the Council of Europe)
- Trainers and youth organisations' representatives (for their dual role of organisers and beneficiaries of the Programme)
- Young people who have been participating in training courses or other activities run in the EUROMED Programme

The questionnaires aim at revealing the effective concretisation of the objectives theorised in the agreements, focusing on the positive outcomes as well as on the obstacles which slow down the implementation of the projects and widens the gap between the Programme and its beneficiaries.

Hereafter the survey will be presented in three separated sessions through a summing up of the answers obtained by the individual interviews and the internet survey.

## Questionnaire to organisers:

**1. How effective is the cooperation among institutions inside the frame of the EMP?**

The cooperation among institutions is considered in general as having reached its main objectives and being thus quite effective, especially on the level of the Partnership between the Council of Europe and European Commission, but also on the level of cooperation among the structures which offer support in training and educational material (such as the Council of Europe, SALTO Euromed and the Anna Lindh Foundation).

More difficulties are found with cooperation between the above mentioned structures and governmental bodies at national level, probably due to the different organisational obligations they are subjected to. Anyway an improvement in such a sense has been detected in the last period.

**2. is the support given by the European Commission and by the single countries concrete and profitable or are there too many obstacles in organising the activities?**

No obstacle has been detected once the activities have been agreed on.

**3. do you feel that a strong importance is given to the quality of activities run, or more to their quantity?**

Quality remains the major objective of the structures, but also quantity is considered a pivotal element, especially on the matter on visibility, which could give a strong reinforcement to the impact of the Programme among young people, especially by spreading it in new channels of contacts and widening thus the multiplying effect of competences and knowledge.

**4. do you consider the outcomes of the cultural dialogue promoted by EMP effective ( is it a real dialogue or hundreds of monologues, can all topics be tackled...)?**

The effective intercultural base and dialogue is considered surely a delicate issue not just regarding the Euromed context but in general in every international project (also

on a European level). Conditions for true dialogue are concretely experienced but often prejudice and biases can easily enter and dominate the scene. A due delicacy is required for the tackling of various topics, but no topic has been indicated as being "not allowed".

**5. do you think Mediterranean EU countries could have a major role (and responsibility) in reaching a common and concrete EMP identity?**

All parties are considered to have a major role in the scene, and no particular emphasis or additional responsibility should be put on any individual country.

**6. which are the weak and the strong points in the EMP regarding youth?**

the weak points emphasised are concerning mainly differences in the social structures in the partners countries (money and social inequalities between partners and the difficulty to reach young people from similar social strata in European and Mediterranean countries) and the persistent remaining of prejudice and biases (especially though the remnants of imperial political attitudes, Orientalism and prevailing historical injustices and conflicts.)

Questionnaire to trainers and youth organisations' representatives:

**1. how effective are the improvements in administrative procedures – envisaged in Chapter 3 of the Barcelona Declaration – for the realisation of youth projects (please consider all the possible practical obstacles: visas, advancement of money, NA efficiency...)**

The great opportunities given by the Programme for the realisation of project with MEDA countries has been highlighted but it has also being acknowledged how far we are from an effective concretisation of the agreements spurring from the Barcelona Declaration. The problems in the implementation of the youth project are mainly related to the bureaucratic long procedures requested to youth organisations - amplified when it comes to work in the Euro-Med context - which bring to a weak level of concrete improvement. A particular emphasis has been given to:

- visa procedures (it has been stressed the sense of indeterminateness in the realisation of the projects due to the long procedures and time of wait for obtaining visas. Often the participation of MEDA participant is not sure until the very last moment, putting all the project into a level of uncertainty regarding the possibility of a secure implementation and on the other side diminishing in several cases the quality of participants and thus of the project as a whole, as at the very last moment young people with a Shengen visa are enrolled to substitute the designated one, even if they do not match the profile required). It has been highlighted the lack of real "power" National Agencies can have with their Internal Ministries.
- Dealing with conflict area countries: when it comes to realise projects putting together participants from conflict or contrast area countries (such as Israel and Arab countries - mainly Lebanon and Syria – or Turkish and Greek Cyprus) the obstacle are sometimes insurmountable (both on a political level, depending on the countries positions, but also on a social level, with biases and refusal to cooperate of some participant).
- Different perception of the Programme from the "two sides" of the Mediterranean: while in Europe not that much emphasis is given to it – as it is one of the several opportunities given to young people - in MEDA countries it is considered as the only opportunity for young people's mobility and personal development.
- Decentralisation: the suspension period caused a withdrawal of the knowledge acquired until the moment and the visibility of the Programme, which will lead inevitably to a slow recovery both by the organisations and the participants. Decentralisation will permit surely a better management of the projects and above all of the funding.

**2. did you experience a synergy with formal education and labour market (in reference to the recognition of non-formal education, regarding both job opportunities and the possibility in participating in the projects, as constructive moments from a educational and professional point of view)**

The recognition of non-formal education has been evaluated as almost not present, except in some regional cases (especially in autonomous regions). The

complementarity between the formal and non- formal sector of education is therefore not highlighted, especially in MEDA countries, where non-formal education –with the competencies and skills it develops in participants, project leaders and trainers - is considered more aligned with skills and competencies required for the labour market (in acquiring especially “soft skills” like presentation skills, team work, self confidence, international learning but also some relevant technical skills like project management and expertise in some areas of development that could pave a way to an entry level position in the development and social sector).

**3. are participants in the projects a real representation of their society? how effective is the dissemination of information on the programme and projects (are always the same networks to be used or do you experienced other efficient ways to reach a wider and more diversified number of young people)?**

The target groups are considered unanimously to be an elitist part of the young people in the different countries, with a higher incidence in MEDA countries. The reason should be ascribed to several factors:

- monopolisation of possibilities: many NGOs and organisations already active and experienced in the programme obtain constantly funding for the realisation of project or send their participants to other project, being included in restricted networks: as a result participants represent a very closed and restricted circle of NGO's/Individuals who managed to monopolise youth activities in their respective countries, creating a category of “professional participants”, that travel from one event to another. It has been stated that in some cases we encounter an evident conflict of interest that prevents many NGO's involved from publicizing the program. For this reason NAs and EMYUs should have a stronger control and enlarge the possibilities to target groups outside the usual networks.
- the target in real need of the activities are not reached due to the lack of policy of dissemination of the projects. Info doesn't get to the original addressees of the program: marginalized youth or youth with less opportunities, mainly due to the fact that these target groups are outside the usual channels of contact (as they are usually not organised with organisations, they have no access to the internet channels of

communication and often to them the social workers or volunteers of the organisations are preferred)

- financial problems: referring to the self coverage of the 30% of the travel expenses. Again if a participant is part of a big organisation who can cover the expenses or is well known by the NA which could cover the expenses itself, he/she is surely facilitated in attending, on the contrary of young people who have to pay themselves
- knowledge of foreign languages: being the projects realised mainly in English (with just a few exception in French) the selection of participants is driven originally on the base of the knowledge of the language, which is one of the major problem especially in the EU Mediterranean countries.
- Possibility in taking days off: this is a problem mainly encountered in European countries, where participants have to take vacations from job for participating in the project (in case they are not "privileged" as being students or workers of the organisation they are participating for) and therefore they attend just if "it is really worth I". In MEDA countries on the contrary, having the Programme a stronger relevance as explained before, young people consider it as a unique opportunity for professional development or for entering the world of youth organisations working in the social field.

**4. do you consider the outcomes of the cultural dialogue promoted by EMP effective ( is it a real dialogue or hundreds of monologues, can all topics be tackled...)?**

The answers at this question are really varied and respect the personal perception and experience of the interviewed: it is stressed the need of a tool for evaluating the concrete impact in such a sense of the programme, but it is also highlighted that there are the bases for a real intercultural dialogue, but mainly depending on the personal approach to it (not just the one of the participants but also the one of the organisers and trainers in the projects). The effort in such a way are seen as absolutely positive and constrictive, but it is stressed that we are just at the first steps of a long and not straight staircase.

**5. do you think Mediterranean EU countries could have a major role (and responsibility) in reaching a common and concrete EMP identity?**

also in this case the answer differ largely, especially from the voices of EU Mediterranean country, which consider their region as being the natural crossroad between MEDA and European countries, not simply referring to the geographical position but especially emphasising the cultural aspects, with elements in common both with the other European countries but also – for some other aspects – with the MEDA realities. Also the issue of migration has been seen as a *trait d'union* element which shortens the gap between MEDA and EU Mediterranean countries.

On the other side it is stressed the importance that every country gets its responsibilities in implementing the Programme and also a major role in shaping a EMP identity.

**6. which are your comments and/or suggestions for the improvement of EMP in the youth sector?**

Several suggestions have been expressed and they could be summarised as follows:

- an effective participation of young people in shaping youth policies
- strengthening and capacity building of youth NGO's
- more tools for evaluating the effective impact of the Programme and the quality results
- more coordination among the organising bodies at a political and bureaucratic level
- Better monitoring of NA/EMYUs functions.
- increase of budget, especially in MEDA countries, to support more projects more valorisation to the projects realised, through publicity and press article (also on a local level) in order to spread the knowledge of the Programme
- Create a policy of information and communications, focus on inclusion of marginalized sector of the society.

Questionnaire to participants:

- 1. did you experience a synergy with formal education and labour market (in reference to the recognition of non-formal education, regarding both job opportunities and the possibility in participating in the projects, as constructive moments from a educational and professional point of view)**

The answers are really varied and sometimes opposed, revealing different positions which cannot be ascribed to the belonging to a specific geographical area (EU vs. MEDA), but to diversified levels of experiences in personal life and as youth workers. The positivistic consideration of the role of non-formal education in young people life is mainly related to the personal development ( " the youth that have experience in non formal education is making the difference") and above all in the working sector for the development of those skills and competences not tackled in the formal education.

- 2. how effective is the dissemination of information on the programme and projects?**

The information process has been recognised as good within the common channels of contact (youth organisations with an existing experience in European projects) but it is surely lacking in efficiency for making the Programme visible in other context (such as formal education, civil society structures, press). Also the outcomes and follow-ups of the projects realised is seen as an optional activity, as no special funds are given for such an aim, and therefore the projects are realised as individual events and not as part of a continuous work in progress.

- 3. do you consider the outcomes of the cultural dialogue promoted by EMP effective ( is it a real dialogue or hundreds of monologues, can all topics be tackled...)?**

The answers are again very diversified and still relating to the personal experience within the Programme. The quality of the project has been put to the pivotal position for guaranteeing a concrete cultural dialogue, but often the personal background and personality of people does not allow a constructive exchange of ideas and opinions.

No limitation on the topics list to be tackled has been considered.

**4. do you feel supported by the Programme as National Agencies in your local activities as multiplier?**

Also here the answers vary enormously, but in this case a distinction between European and MEDA countries could be traced, above all in regard to the suspension period with denied the implementation of project for MEDA NGOs.

**5. do you think Mediterranean EU countries could have a major role (and responsibility) in reaching a common and concrete EMP identity?**

The answers are mainly agreeing on assigning a special role to EU Mediterranean countries, considered especially as mediators among the MEDA region and the Northern European area.

**6. which are your comments and/or suggestions for the improvement of EMP in the youth sector?**

The concrete involvement of young people in the decision making process on youth policies is considered unanimously as the only fundamental LACKING element.

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## **Info on the conference**

The conference - "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP): Perspectives from the Mediterranean EU countries" - was held on an international level in the University of Crete in Rethymnon (Greece) on 25-27 October 2007, and was organized by the following institutions: The Institute of International Economic Relations, Athens; The Foundation for Mediterranean Studies, Athens; The Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence, Department of Sociology University of Crete. For more info on the conference see the web site: [www.idec.gr/iier](http://www.idec.gr/iier)