

**A Mediterranean-EU Community for a New Mankind Era
*Appeal.***

And suddenly everything is different ! With the Arab Spring as a Season of Freedom and Rights we are entering into a new era while the European Union itself is facing huge challenges. This is the time to innovate ! Diplomacy, economy and society have to be rethought to respond to the aspirations towards a new development model, the strengthening of the rule of law, a regional economic integration in a new framework .

*In addition to the differentiated approach the European Commission is proposing with the 'Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity' open to all Mediterranean Countries, a '**Mediterranean-EU Community (MED-EU)**', limited to Countries having embraced real democracy and a peace agenda, should be launched.*

*Indeed, the visionary response to the Arab Spring should be the building up of '**Institutions**' to take initiatives, leading to peace and prosperity at the regional level, secure the enforcement of the rule of law and protect citizens. We call for a Mediterranean-EU Community which would have a **High Authority** (three men and three women), a **Senate directly elected by the citizens** and a **Council of Ministers** while the European Union would keep its Commission, its European Parliament and its European Council. A specific **Tribunal** of MED-EU would be established in Strasbourg next to and working with the European Court of Human Rights. MED-EU would have **Mediators** in the field of armed conflict, water management, human rights and associations' rights. Non Mediterranean Countries would be welcomed as Observers.*

***MED-EU would be a 'Community of Countries of the Mediterranean Region with the European Union itself'** acting on behalf of its members. Members of MED-EU would be committed to peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development.*

*MED-EU would have **four 'baskets'** to address : (i) **Peace and Human Rights**, access to information, right of expression, participation and justice (ii) **Green Economy**¹, water, energy, food, green and connected cities (iii) **Integrated Economic Region**² (iv) **Youth**.*

¹ Rio +20 Agenda. See UNEP report the Green Economy.

² As proposed by the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) and by professor Mario Monti

MED-EU would have its headquarters in Istanbul (the High Authority), Tunis (the Senate), Strasbourg (the Tribunal), Cairo (the Youth Agency) while the EU would keep its headquarters in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

MED-EU isn't an alternative to the EU accession process addressed to the Balkans countries and Turkey.

*Observing that all the previous efforts to design initiatives at Mediterranean level failed for the same reason, the MED-EU founding declaration would state that "Israel and Palestine have vocation to join the Mediterranean-EU Community (and **Jerusalem** should become the Capital of the MED-EU Community) but only once both Israel and Palestine will have reached a peaceful agreement, secured democracy and security".*

*A **Diplomatic Conference** of the Countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea , the EU, the Arab League, the African Union with participation as observers of Russia, the United States, China, Japan and India and with delegations of the UfM Parliamentary Assembly and of the Council of Europe should design the MED-EU Community new institutions.*

This Conference should be prepared by:

- ***A Civil Society Congress** to shape a roadmap for each basket*
- ***A Financial Conference**³ to get the public and private financial institutions, including Sovereign Funds, to agree on the financial support to a Marshall Plan⁴ in support to the baskets implementation.*

The peoples of the Southern Mediterranean countries as the Europeans and Mankind as a whole are in front of a 'great transition' and a 'transformation agenda' for several reasons and from a political, economical and ecological point of view. With a MED-EU Community, peoples of Mediterranean countries and Europeans have again the chance to lead the 'global great transition' by example, building a new 'community of values and rights', beyond cultural diversity, to secure prosperity for all and move gradually and peacefully to a new mankind era.

³ Prime Minister Papandreou and the EIB hosted by 2011 a similar conference on climate change and the Mediterranean region.

⁴ As suggested by Prime Minister Zapatero and President Obama.

MED-EU

No one had expected the Arab Spring as a Season of Freedom and Rights!

The Arab Spring promises to usher in a new era of democratic states with the rule of law and sustainable economies as their mainstays. It promises a strong and viable cross-Mediterranean partnership. Diplomacy, economics and the underlying social fabric must be redefined to meet the galvanized aspirations of awakened young Arabs to a new model of development, a powerful and independent legal system and a revitalized sense of strong regional cohesion.

At the same time, Europeans find themselves having to deal with many internal and external challenges. An extremely difficult decade has just begun, where critical issues including peace, democracy, citizenship, economic prosperity and social development are all put to the test.

These are enormous challenges for both Europe and the fledgling democracies of the Middle East but they also present a golden opportunity for both sides to revisit the framework of their relationship and adapt it to the changing times. The nature of the challenges facing each side of the Mediterranean divide means that, if the opportunity is seized, both sides can stand to benefit from a renaissance in cross-Mediterranean dynamics.

We are proposing the establishment of a "Mediterranean-EU Community (MED-EU)" in addition to existing partnerships as in charge of the Union for the Mediterranean or proposed by the European Union to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

While this proposed Community is not intended to replace the EU enlargement process towards the Balkans and Turkey, it seeks to add a new dimension next to the concept of 'EU enlargement'. This Community will be initially limited to countries currently undergoing constitutional reform and with new strong institutional, legal and democratic regional frameworks. The dialogue will then be expanded to include North Africa as a whole as well as Sub-Saharan Africa. It will be a metaphoric Olympic ring involving the European Union as such and its neighbours, showing an innovative approach inspired by the early beginnings of Steel and Coal Community (ECSC) in the 1950s and the Human Rights - Helsinki process of the mid 1970s.

We must keep in mind that the European Communities were instruments of peace and prosperity because they were equipped with institutions and common law (which is not insured or provided by partnerships). For this underlying historical reason, we believe a "community" inspired by the expectations of civil society of South and North of the Mediterranean countries and drawing on the historic ECSC and Helsinki experience could represent a turning point in the Euro-Mediterranean relations.

In proposing the establishment of this community, we seek to eliminate State-sponsored violence, class violence and corruption.

Prosperity and security are issues which will continue to grow in importance over the coming years, particularly as key commodities are at risk of severe shortage including the energy, environment, food, water and raw materials sectors. The alarming prospect that states may no longer be able to provide these necessities to their citizens is one of the primary catalysts behind the renewed focus on prosperity and security.

The proposed solution and the ability to recover from the crisis must be guided by a long-term vision that addresses nationalist fervour and the "every man for himself" attitude which is on the rise in the European Union. A "Med-EU Community" could revitalize the process of European integration because it would be a new way to deal with vital issues that impact on peace, prosperity, democracy and citizenship. These are the challenges of the economy, environment, migration and enlargement of the EU's borders.

In order to realize this new vision, several factors need to be appropriately positioned:

The MED-EU Community should become a *shield* against dictatorships, corruption, injustice, apartheid and war as well as a *propeller* for economic and social development. The Mediterranean area has fantastic potential, as is highlighted by studies such as those of the United Nations and OECD on the green economy in the context of eradicating poverty. To turn this potential into reality, fast and coordinated action should be taken in several areas of competence – called baskets – which would define the scope of action of a MED-EU Community .

The MED-EU Community would have four 'baskets' to address : (i) Peace and Human Rights, access to information, freedom of expression, participation and justice (ii) Green Economy⁵, water,

⁵ Rio +20 Agenda. See UNEP report the Green Economy.

energy, food, green and connected cities (iii) Integrated Economic Region⁶ (iv) Youth. The Helsinki process (which contributed to the end of the Soviet empire) had three baskets as well: security in Europe, cooperation in economy, in science, in technology, in environment and in the humanitarian field which was a prelude to the broader field of protection of human rights.

We should invite as Observers our traditional partners as the Council of Europe, the United States, China, Japan, Russia, India along with the African Union and Arab League and explore with them how to involve them in the broader scope of the new proposed community.

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1. First basket: Peace and Human Rights, Access to Information, Right of Expression, Participation and Justice.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are part of the fundamental expectations of the Arab revolutions.

The proposal is inspired by the Human Rights - Helsinki process, the mechanisms of the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and the Aarhus Convention on Access to information, participation and justice. *“There is growing evidence that engaging citizens in democratic processes leads to both a more vibrant society and happier citizens. Promoting open and effective governance nationally and internationally, including the peaceful resolution of conflicts and elimination of systematic corruption, is important for all of us achieving greater well-being in the long term”⁷.*

Peace and democracy both assume the existence of rule of law and justice to which citizens have access. A MED-EU Tribunal should be in place to secure the respect of fundamental rights in relation with issues as judiciary systems, prisons, corruption, freedoms, socio-economic rights, apartheid, environmental justice, protection of the common goods, migrations.

We suggest that a trilateral work on the EU, the African Union and the Arab League Charters will be made to find common values and principles mainly taking into account the role of the women, the rights of association and the freedom of conscience.

Peace at external borders and internal civil peace are two valuable public goods that must be safeguarded. Nowadays new crises (financial, resources, climate) are the modern day threats that

⁶ As proposed by the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) and by professor Mario Monti

⁷ New Economics Foundation (NEF): *Global Manifesto for a Happier Planet*.

must be faced. These crises could very well lead humanity to war for energy or water, to resume the conquest of space, especially agricultural. MED-EU would have **Mediators** in the field of armed conflict, water management, human rights and associations' rights.

2. Second basket : Green Economy in the context of Poverty Eradication.

The seeds for today's and tomorrow's armed conflicts lie in the field of natural resources, primarily energy, water and food. In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, where the issue of water control also features prominently, as well as in the case of Iran in the energy field, the very proposal of setting up the Community might open up new vistas. We should draw inspiration from the founding fathers of the ECSC and take up a similar approach in other words tackling energy and water issues as potential sources of conflict, food as basic needs, green and connected cities as major drive of improvement of waste and mobility management ⁸.

With the MED-EU Community, we have a potentially extraordinary opportunity to put the UN "green economy" program into full and active effect. The application of the green economy program in the context of sustainable development and the fight against poverty would then become the second basket behind our proposed Community. It could establish the Med Region as a 'Pilot Region of the World' in view of Rio+20. This second basket would concern energy, water, food (including the common agricultural policy), zero waste, commodities, green and connected cities, sustainable mobility.

We believe it is time to conceive a new dream and give new impetus to progress. It is in our strategic interest to realize this dream with other Mediterranean basin countries.

3. Third Basket : Integrated Economic Region

A distinction should be clearly established in people's minds and in actual fact between the "great single market" and the "European Union", which must not necessarily cover the same area. From this point of view, the stand taken by the European Round-table of Industrialists (ERT) marks an interesting development (2). The objective would be to move *"towards an "Integrated Economic Region" (IER) with a step-by-step approach to implementation, allowing individual countries to move at their own speed (...) encouraging the neighbouring countries to gradually integrate into the Single Market, offering them the opportunity to eventually join it as participants if and when they are fit to do*

⁸ See OECD report on Green growth and UNEP report on Green economy 2011.

so. (...) A stepping stone towards the creation of the IER would hence be the establishment of a free trade area with all IER Countries”.

Today, while Asia goes back to being the planet's most powerful economic area and China emerges again in a leadership role, the same role it had occupied in the year One thousand (with 70% of world GDP) until the Industrial Revolution (14% of GDP in 1880 and 5% in 1950). Arab countries are now presented with a much more open choice with China, ever more present in the Mediterranean and Africa. This third Basket is in line with the objectives of the Euro - Mediterranean Partnership as defined in 1995 and could help the development of an economic regional integration between the South Mediterranean Countries assuring the freedom of movement of people and goods.

4- Fourth Basket : Youth.

"You can kill us, we are already dead in any case". By facing the Tunisian police with this slogan, there was no need to say anything else. As Moncef Marzouki (Tunisia) underlines⁹, when considering the continuous flows of migrants that have followed the fall of dictatorships, it is quite obvious that young people cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel; at a time when migration prospects are reduced, the young experience a permanent feeling of confinement, genuine economic and social desperation, fed by the failure of development models at economic, moral and ideological levels. Young people in the Mediterranean Basin should be able to see the future in a different light, recover their dignity and find the way to prosperity. The MED-EU Community wants to bring a new lease of life to them, a new “development dream”.

You can find in Annex 1 a detailed proposal for this Youth Basket. Initial chapters give a short overview of the fears that youth is currently facing, issues such as corruption, inadequate education, unemployment, youth hopelessness, etc. and the problems of the present Mediterranean societies and . As the aim of the document was to outline current trends and the vision for the future, the list of the issues is not exhaustive. The ensuing section enumerates some of the dreams and needs of the Mediterranean youth, with the aim of laying the transformational agenda for the region. In order for this transformation to happen, along the existing EU tools that are presented in a separate chapter, a new set of instruments has to be conceived and implemented. Some of these instruments are presented and could include awareness rising about contributive democracy and sustainable lifestyles, a new set of instruments targeting education and

⁹ *Dictateurs en sursis. La revanche des peuples arabes.* Moncef Marzouki. Editions de l'Atelier, 2011.

green skills development, promotion of youth entrepreneurship and in particular women entrepreneurship, etc. Finally, the paper explores the establishment of the governance of such MED –EU Youth Basket.

The first Arab International Forum for Young Entrepreneurs and Businesspersons Yeb2011 which focused on the support and promotion of young entrepreneurs in the building of post Arab Revolutions economies hosted in Beirut in partnership with UNIDO and the Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce (1/10/2011) with CNN support and the participation of 500 young entrepreneurs is a major signal. On this basis, it could be possible to organize such events with the support of social media, news agencies and European and Arab TV Channels.

The Youth Basket of the MED-EU Community should be in charge of an Agency located in Cairo.

Med-EU Preparatory Process.

A Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of the MED-EU Community involving inter alia, in addition to the European Union and the Arab countries on the way of democracy, the representatives of the African Union and Arab League, should be preceded by a Congress of Civil Society MED-EU - as happened in 1948 at The Hague on the eve of the European integration process, or as happened in the early '90s for the Helsinki Citizens Assembly.

This congress should bring together leaders of the social networks-revolution, professors of law, history, economy, sociology, architecture and new technologies, coming from both sides of the Mediterranean, doing projects for the green economy, young people and migrants organizations, voluntary organizations and development assistance. We suggest that a participation of representatives coming from the main political families in the MED-EU region will be also invited.

We propose to organize that conference in Tunis in 2012.

Similarly, the Diplomatic Conference should be preceded by a financial summit on the mobilization of capital public (EIB, EBRD, World Bank) and private (banks, pension funds, foundations, European and Arab capital) supporting a financial instrument as a “Plan Marshall of the Mediterranean” (in its historic meaning that was responsibility), proposed by Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero and revived by President Obama, who discoursed, on the same occasion, about *institutional building*.

An important signal in the right direction has been given by the EBRD, set up after the end of the Soviet system, giving 2.5 billion Euros to the countries involved in the "Arab Spring", which credits add up those of the World Bank and the Council Co-operation.

The peoples of the Southern Mediterranean countries and the Europeans must reflect on all these issues by becoming aware of the fact that, like it or not, we are on the eve of a great change of the planet and humanity.

The peoples of the Southern Mediterranean countries and the Europeans have the opportunity to be an example and see how the cradle Mediterranean of our civilization can contribute to a big transition, building a new community of values and rights, beyond the cultural differences, to ensure the prosperity and humanity to take a new step toward peace and democracy.

(Annex 1)

MED–EU YOUTH BASKET

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SUMMARY

Why and how to launch a MED–EU Youth Basket, one of the four baskets of the proposed MED–EU Community¹⁰? Initial chapters give a short overview of the fears that youth is currently facing, issues such as corruption, inadequate education, unemployment, youth hopelessness, etc.; and the problems of the present Mediterranean societies. As the aim of the document was to outline current trends and the vision for the future, the list of the issues is not exhaustive.

The ensuing section enumerates some of the dreams and needs of the Mediterranean youth, with the aim of laying down the transformational agenda for the region. In order for this transformation to happen, along the existing EU tools that are presented in a separate chapter, a new set of instruments has to be conceived and implemented. Some of these instruments are presented and could include awareness-rising about contributive democracy and sustainable lifestyles, a new set of instruments targeting education and green skills development, promotion of youth entrepreneurship, etc. Finally, the paper explores the establishment of the governance of such MED–EU Youth Basket.

¹⁰ A proposal from Virgilio Dastoli, President of the European Movement Italy and Raymond Van Ermen, Executive Director of European Partners for the Environment. See articles on www.raymondvanermen.org

Preamble

**by Pier Virgilio Dastoli, European Movement-Italy (CIME)
and Raymond Van Ermen, European Partners for the Environment (EPE)**

"You can kill us, we are already dead in any case". By facing the Tunisian police with this slogan, there was no need to say anything else. As Moncef Marzouki (Tunisia) underlines¹¹, when considering the continuous flows of migrants that have followed the fall of dictatorships, it is quite obvious that young people cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel; at a time when migration prospects are reduced, the young experience a permanent feeling of confinement, genuine economic and social desperation, fed by the failure of development models at economic, moral and ideological levels.

While 100 million Arabs live with less than two dollars a day and 62% of the Arab population is regarded as poor according to international criteria¹², we observe a generalized impoverishment which also affects the countries lying to the north of the Mediterranean Basin. The major signs of this impoverishment are the rising unemployment rate among young people, particularly university graduates, and the growing level of household debt. Likewise, while nearly all Arab countries have huge debt levels¹³, the northern area of the Mediterranean Basin is also confronted with manifold financial difficulties.

We asked Tomislav Bagatin, a former student of the College of Europe, to report on the problems and aspirations which young people share on both sides of the Basin.

Young people in the Mediterranean Basin should be able to see the future in a different light, recover their dignity and find the way to prosperity. The MED-EU Community wants to bring a new lease of life to them, a new "development dream". The MED-EU Community should become a shield against dictatorships, corruption, injustice, apartheid and war as well as a propeller for economic and social development. This development will be based on the wide-scale transformation and large opportunities for a good life for all society which are provided by current challenges in the fields of energy, water, food, raw materials and a low-carbon, zero-waste society.

¹¹ Dictateurs en sursis. La revanche des peuples arabes. Moncef Marzouki. Editions de l'Atelier, 2011.

¹² Ibidem, p 66.

¹³ Ibidem, p 81.

The Mediterranean area has fantastic potential, as is highlighted by studies such as those of the United Nations and OECD on the green economy in the context of eradicating poverty. To turn this potential into reality, fast and coordinated action should be taken in several areas of competence – called baskets – which would define the scope of action of a MED-EU Community that has been broadly outlined in other articles¹⁴.

From the outset, democracy, peace and human rights in the countries that will be part of the Community (first basket) should be ensured so as to guarantee law compliance and competence while securing barriers against corruption.

An industrial and financial plan should be set up to create jobs in the light of the issues at stake in the 21st century ('green economy' and 'large market' baskets).

A real action plan for young people is also needed. It is the purpose of the 'youth basket' that determines one of the four action fields of the MED-EU Community – a basket whose tools and governance are explored by Tomislav Bagatin so that young people can make them their own.

The following analysis and the proposals put forward by this young native of the Mediterranean area is subjected to debate.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

My task is to give an overview of dreams of the young Mediterranean generation as well as problems and fears that stand as an obstacle for their realizations, and to propose the tools that can be available in the framework of a MED-EU Youth Basket. But, as a 'citizen of the world' I cannot neglect the fact that some of the fears I see in the eyes of my fellow European, Arab and Israel friends are the same as the ones we can see in the youth almost anywhere we go around the world. The same goes for the dreams. It is true that some fears and problems are specific only for some societies and countries, but some of them are omnipresent, especially those that pertain to now obvious climate change and environment in ever growing jeopardy. Therefore, as most of these problems do not know physical boundaries, the solutions must be found and implemented on

¹⁴ See articles by Dastoli and Van Ermen.

a global level, in a joint collaboration between different parties, different stakeholders, different nations. And here I come to the issue whose importance I want to raise.

YOUTH, A CONSTITUENCY

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The issue that can be best summarized under the title “The influence of youth on decisions about their future” is lately gaining increasing attention. This is so much the case that youth have been recognized as a constituency, albeit with probationary status, at the annual sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).¹⁵ I believe that this is the right path to follow, as many of decisions that are brought today by older generations will have a deeper impact on the lives of their children. It should also be the case as far as MED – EU is concerned.

On the other hand, since this development is taking place rather slowly, we are witnessing a situation in which fertile ground for a clash between generations is being laid down in many countries around the world. The reason is that the predominant result of current decision-making will “place higher costs on the young and give benefits to older citizens.”¹⁶ Consequently, in line with the rise of this new dividing line between generations, the youth has been raising its voice in almost all the Mediterranean countries in the last several months (and not only there). In Spain they were called Indignados, in Greece Aganaktismenoi or Frustrated, and in the UK Uncut, while in the North Africa they started a movement known under the name of the “Arab Spring”.

Are the reasons for the protests across Mediterranean similar? The answer is not an easy one. Namely, in the North Africa the origin of “Arab spring” is not only connected with lack of job opportunities for youth and many other reasons similar to those that have pushed the youth in the northern part of the region to the streets. It was also the voice of the people that asked for political changes not seen in decades in these autocratic political systems.

Although in the Southern Europe the reasons for the rise of the youth are mainly related to the current state of their respective economies, the problems are more deeply entrenched in the societies concerned, since they are going to the heart of the prevailing political and economic system of these European countries, to the heart of the western capitalistic system, and to the

¹⁵ Youth World Report: Youth & Climate Change, UN 2010, Introduction, page XVII.

¹⁶ Europe in the World: Elements of a New Economic Narrative, Nick Mabey.

origins of EU monetary union. In the following section I will therefore enumerate some of the common ills that are not only visible in South European countries, but in the North Africa as well as in the other West European states.

COMMON ILLS

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To go to the heart of the problem one has to start with corruption, perennial ill present in any society and nation since the outset of human history. Being always there, this is a societal disease that is practically impossible to eradicate completely. The problem, nevertheless, occurs when it pervades the social structure in a way that hinders any further progress. This is the case in many countries of the Mediterranean basin, including those that belong to the European Union. Corruption is to be found in the job markets, in the allocation of businesses in public sphere, in educational system; shortly in every corner of the society. Since in many instances corruption has completely drew to a halt the functioning of societies and as it often went unpunished, it was one of the most present words that one could find in reports about the gatherings of angry Spanish, Tunisian, Egyptian, Greek and other people of all ages, persuasions and colours¹⁷ that sent a warning signal to their political elites recently on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Corruption as the biggest ill of the society is connected with another deep-seated problem that the youth of both North African and South European countries today is facing, and that is growing unemployment. In many of these countries it has come close to 40% of the youth population¹⁸, while in Spain that number is even higher¹⁹. The reasons for this high unemployment are not only to be found in the repercussions of the economic and financial crisis that originated in 2008; in some of these countries they go to the heart of their political and economic system. Many of those who recently protested in the streets of Southern and Northern Mediterranean cities are highly educated (education levels have risen sharply in the recent decades even in the North Africa²⁰) and increasingly finding their diplomas basically worthless. It was the case in Greece²¹, it was the

¹⁷ How corruption, cuts and despair drove Spain's protesters on to the streets, The Guardian, 21 May 2011.

¹⁸ In the middle of 2011.

¹⁹ The unhappy campers, The Economist, May 28th 2011, page 31.

²⁰ Degrees of democracy, The Economist, June 23rd

²¹ Young, educated Greeks angry at being locked out of their lives, The Guardian, 3 August 2011.

case in Egypt already three years ago²², as it was the most famous case of the young Tunisian who ignited his countrymen by immolating himself.²³

Educational systems are often providing diplomas and curricula that are of absolutely no worth in modern global economy that sees changes occur on a daily basis. In some countries this trend goes so far that we see diplomas with a strangest titles possible such as those on the well-being of dogs and cats and on packaging, for example.²⁴ Naturally, it is crystal clear that these academic programmes are often created only to make room for teaching positions of people with connections, while on the other hand it shows a big existing gap between the reality of labour market conditions and lack of reforms that educational authorities should be undertaking. Hence, many member states of the region will need to elaborate integrated employment and social policies, including matching of training initiatives and labour market needs.²⁵

Another important reason for growing unemployment in some of the Mediterranean states is the rigidity of labour markets that urgently need reforms, which are often blocked by unions.²⁶ The result is that the majority of young people who don't have connections can only get short-term contracts or several traineeships. What is more, even when young people do get a work, they often don't get paid, or the salaries offered by employers are very small²⁷, resulting in a situation in which young people cannot get a real estate loan, have a feeling of social exclusion and are basically trying very hard to make ends meet. The situation is worsened by the global trends in the last decade of the rise of housing prices, prices of food as well as decreasing public spending for social benefits. These trends are so powerful that they are producing negative consequences even for the richer countries of the Mediterranean region, such as Israel.²⁸

²² Looking beyond the boom, Marcus Noland and Howard Pack, 1 August 2008, Voxeu.

²³ Ali Baba gone, but what about the 40 thieves?, The Economist, January 22nd, page 30.

²⁴ Special report on Italy, The Economist, June 11th, page 14.

²⁵ A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean; Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, March 8th 2011, Brussels, page 8.

²⁶ Spain's cry of pain, The Economist, May 28th 2011, page 13

²⁷ <http://www.euromedp.org/testimonies/egypt/>

²⁸ a) Street power, The Economist, August 6th;

b) Tende e "cucine collettive": Indignati in lotta a Tel Aviv, Corriere della sera, 8 agosto 2011.

One depressing outcome of these developments for young people is that they are often living with their parents, even in their 40s²⁹, so the dreams of leaving parental home and setting up the family on its own is often just remaining a dream. If one adds here a trend of outsourcing and re-localization of production to Asian countries together with increasing use of robot machines in manufacturing³⁰, it becomes perfectly clear why youth is dissatisfied with the system, the system that increasingly cannot provide its youth a decent present. Nor it can promise them a better future.

Another common trait amongst the youth in Mediterranean basin is growing dissatisfaction with the entire political class, its leadership and gerontocracy in general. It is not only that politicians across these countries are lacking vision and that it has become by now patently clear that they cannot adequately tackle pressing problems, but elderly and out-of-touch elite exhibit a tendency to retain a status quo. It is the case in North African countries where autocratic leaders are holding their grips on power for several decades, and it is also the case in South European states where there is usually an exchange on power positions between two dominating political parties, neither one of those able to undertake necessary changes and reforms. The result of this situation was visible through 2011 when a large number of young people took to the streets with a sense of being cheated out of the future, and not wanting anymore that decisions about their destiny is taken without them.

Feeling of hopelessness among the youth is aggravated by the realization that climate change is really taking place, and that the huge number of studies that proliferated in the last decade in the subject undoubtedly tells us that consequences for the region will be significant. Climate change will deeply affect people in the region, and especially when it comes to water and food, since desertification as a result of higher temperatures will increase. Having in mind that youth will reap only the costs of this trend, as to the opposite of the generation in their 50s and 60s, and knowing that we are rapidly losing time to undertake necessary changes, it is clear how generational gap is widening by the day.

Every single person from my international circle of friends have some young friend in a different Mediterranean country that is currently feeling on their own skin what it means not to have job, not to have housing, not to have money, not to have hopes that something will change soon... Consequently, the increasing number of them has no dreams about their future. Since the reality

²⁹ a) Forchette Rotte, l'eminenza grigia ha 25 anni: "Non siamo arroganti", Corriere del mezzogiorno
b) Tent revolt in Tel Aviv, Foreign Affairs, 8 August.

³⁰ Foxconn to boost use of robot machines in manufacturing, BBC News, 2 August.

they see around them is pretty grey, how could they still be positive, how could they still be dreaming about better life in the future?

DREAMS

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In spite of all the aforementioned problems, there are huge possibilities in front of young Mediterranean generation, huge possibilities for whole of the region. I believe that we can even claim that there is a potential Golden age for all the Mediterranean countries if we use everything that nature is offering to us. Namely, the state of art green technology is making possible production of renewable energy on the spot³¹ and its transportation to far away places across Mediterranean; smart grids, ICT and other tools could be used for greening and connecting the cities on both sides of the Mediterranean basin, etc. Nevertheless, what is essential to underline is that there are two tangible benefits of this opportunity. While on the one hand it could substantially contribute to fight against the climate change and favour resource efficiency, on the other it is offering large room for the creation of green jobs and skills.³²

If this dream would be brought to reality, it would immensely boost confidence of the youth. In this case, newly build skills and resources would enable many young people to become entrepreneurs and to establish different businesses and organizations. Some of them could even become social entrepreneurs wanting to maximize some form of social impact (which is usually done by addressing an urgent need that is being mishandled, overlooked or ignored by other institutions)³³.

Blossoming of new business opportunities for youth would have to be enabled by newly established micro-finance and business assistance schemes, which would at the same time contribute to rising levels of political engagement and would hopefully address the widespread demands for more “social justice” that was heard this year in all the corners of the Mediterranean. And this would be exactly in line with the younger generation’s primacy given to the egalitarianism, interdependence, fairness and community over individualism.³⁴

³¹ According to the EU documents, “there is clear potential for building an EU-Mediterranean partnership in the production and management of renewables”. Even the possibility of establishing the EU-Southern Mediterranean Energy Community in the mid to long term is mentioned. (A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean; Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, March 8th 2011, Brussels, page 9-10)

³² Towards a Green economy: pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication, UNEP report 2011, page 15.

³³ Social entrepreneurship: what everyone needs to know, David Bornstein and Susan Davies, Oxford University Press 2010., page 30.

³⁴ MAP3, Political anticipation magazine - LEAP, April-July, page 6.

Majority of young people from both sides of the Mediterranean sea are hoping to receive the necessary space and opportunities to express themselves, to express their needs and desires in their own countries so that they are not forced to emigrate in search for a better life prospects, and one day make part of the “brain drain” process. They want the chance to exert positive influence in their societies and to make a real impact there. They are hoping that the older generations will undertake a collective re-examination of the pension system and start to think more about the need for better educational systems that could, in the end, provide skills for the youth and prepare a fertile ground for the economic growth based on the green and blue economy.

Young people expecting to work in a green and blue economy are hoping that they would be able to satisfy their aspirations of developing their own countries through meaningful work, and would more easily achieve work – life balance. At the same time, as the greening of the region would require a significant amount of joint work of experts in new technologies, this would definitively increase the need and benefit of visa free travel to other countries of the region. In that case, youth could definitively hope that more travel would enable cross Mediterranean cultural fertilizations and would not only increase tolerance amongst the youth, but between whole societies and religions as well.

TOOLS

a) Existing EU tools in support to MED youth

In the field of education and training, international cooperation of the EU with the non EU Mediterranean countries is successfully taking place in the shape of several EU programs. These programs have multiple goals among which are such as support of the modernization efforts, promotion of common values and closer understanding between different peoples and cultures:

- Erasmus Mundus program is opened to educational institutions and individuals engaged in education from all over the world, including Mediterranean countries. Its aim is to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote inter-cultural

understanding through cooperation with third countries and to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.³⁵

- Similar to Erasmus Mundus (with which is implemented in close coordination) is Tempus program that was conceived with the idea of supporting the modernization of higher education in the EU's surrounding area. It promotes institutional cooperation that involves the European Union and Partner Countries and focuses on the reform and modernization of higher education systems in the Partner Countries, including those from the Mediterranean region.³⁶
- Euro Med Youth Program promotes the mobility of young people and the understanding between peoples. It is realizing it on the basis of three types of actions: Euro-Med Youth Exchanges, Euro-Med Youth Voluntary Service and Euro-Med Youth Training and Networking (Contact Making Seminars, Study Visits, Training Courses and Seminars)³⁷.

b) Enlarging the existing EU tools focused only on the EU

Aside from the above-mentioned EU tools aiming at international cooperation, there are other EU programs, but which target so far only the youth of the European Union. Since some of these instruments have proven themselves as very successful ones, they should be modified in order to include the youth from all parts of the Mediterranean region. For this to happen, the European Parliament should profit from the occasion of shaping the financial framework for 2014-2020 and should use its powers to propose the needed adjustments of the existing programs such as:

- Your First EURES Job – the program could be enlarged to give opportunity to all the Mediterranean youth that have never worked abroad before to work in other countries of

³⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm

³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc70_en.htm

³⁷ <http://www.euromedyouth.net/About-EuroMed-Youth-Program,51>

the region³⁸

- Erasmus Mundus - in line with the proposition of MEPs³⁹, a new youth program should be devised that would lean on Erasmus Mundus, in which currently only 200 Mediterranean students participate each year. Under the name of “Averroes”, it could become a foundation on which to build a free circulation of students in the Mediterranean region, as well as the increased mobility of young people willing to acquire a professional formation in a foreign country.

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c) Proposed new tools for MED - EU Youth Basket

Rapid development of green economy in the context of poverty eradication in the Mediterranean is possible only if the political leadership of the Mediterranean countries attacks the problem from three directions. First track includes creation and promotion of a major program for the green economy with the aim of creating necessary infrastructure. The second one needs to address the question of how to create necessary green skills and shape educational programs that would boost interest among the youth for social entrepreneurship and green economy, and at the same time create business environment where business initiative would thrive and be looked positively upon. The third one includes awareness-rising initiatives and campaigns through which youth could learn what is sustainable lifestyle and how to embrace it in everyday life.

1) AWARENESS - RISING AMONG THE YOUTH OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES, AS A SOURCE OF INNOVATION

One of the most efficient ways for addressing the nexus energy-food-water-raw materials and low carbon economy, and for changing the ways we lead our lives comes from development of a sense of ownership and accountability. In order to develop that sense, people need to acknowledge that it is behaviour and lifestyles of individuals and the societies in which they live that is, in the end,

³⁸ In its document “EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” the Commission enumerated similar steps at EU level within EU Flagship initiative “Youth on the move”. These initiatives could cover other Mediterranean countries. (COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Brussels 3.3.2010., page 13.)

³⁹ MEPs launched a petition on 7th April 2011.

responsible for substantial impact on overall environmental sustainability.⁴⁰ Therefore, as youth firstly needs to fully understand what are and will be the real consequences of their lifestyles on the world we live in, education has to play a key role here and help them to grasp the connection. In order to do this and at the same time increase cultural fertilization across Mediterranean, sustainability issues classes are not the only tools that should be introduced in all the schools and universities across the region. There are other new tools in this domain that could be devised as well. These could encompass:

- Mediterranean awards for the best-written literal work on the sustainable lifestyles experience⁴¹ for elementary school pupils and for high school students
- Mediterranean green awards for the best-arranged elementary school and high school environment
- Mediterranean competition for the best-informed elementary school and high school pupils and students about climate change science and mitigation options
- Mediterranean youth award for the best documentary film about greening the economy and surrounding environment
- Mediterranean youth award celebrating young people that initiated social/climate change problem solving
- Green Mediterranean Summer School for youth where courses on environmental issues and sustainable practices would be thought and sustainable lifestyles promoted
- Green Mediterranean Football Championship for youth – once a year football championship could be organized that will celebrate sustainable lifestyle of the youth and their participation in the green economy
- Green Mediterranean Sports Games – the same as above, but for other various sports.

Apart from increasing the awareness among the youth about sustainability issues, education should also emphasize the role that young people can play in contributive democracy. Namely, youth has to learn that they exercise their democratic rights each time they chose to purchase some item. In this way, they can reward environmentally friendly production from various producers

⁴⁰ World Youth Report: Youth & climate change, UN 2010, page 30.

⁴¹ "Sustainable lifestyles can be defined as practices and choices at the individual and collective levels that enable individuals to meet their needs and aspirations with a sense of responsibility for the well-being of present and future populations, taking into account the environmental and social consequences of their actions." (Youth report, page 34.)

and consequently force other producers to improve their products from environmental point of view.

Moreover, youth can promote and implement changes in their lifestyles in their own homes within family surroundings, but due to the increasing utilization of Internet, they can also successfully do it in social networks and in communities they are part of, to some extent thanks to growing importance of peer pressure. When number of young people acting in this way reaches a certain proportion, they can wield significant purchasing power and consequently shape the environmental agenda even of the biggest companies on the market.

Taking this into account, it is important to emphasize the potential behavioural influence of role models in the lives of the youth. Namely, a great deal of youth is imitating lifestyles of their so-called role models. In order to capitalize from this fact, public authorities of the Mediterranean countries should:

- cooperate with “celebrities” and role models of the youth to influence their behavioural and consumption lifestyles and consequently give momentum for them to become more sustainable
- cooperate with TV channels that have a wide outreach (Al-Jazeera, EuroNews, etc.) to promote sustainable lifestyles of the youth.

2) PROMOTION OF EDUCATION & GREEN SKILLS TRAINING

In order for MED-EU Green economy program to gain momentum, educational institutions should be used to teach the youth necessary skills and knowledge. Namely, education in the field of low carbon and resource efficiency can open the views of the youth to the new employment opportunities that will derive from the shift to green economy and can prepare young people to profit from these opportunities.⁴² In this way, besides adopting green behaviours in their private life,

⁴² World Youth Report: Youth & climate change, UN 2010, page 35.

they could also work in line with their convictions, performing green jobs⁴³. For this to happen, it is proposed that:

- In secondary schools across the Mediterranean educational curricula is adjusted in order to encourage youth to take up subjects related to technology and sustainable development
- Vocational training dealing with new green technologies is introduced
- All Mediterranean universities dealing in one-way or another with green economy (faculties of architecture, faculties of design, faculties of engineering, faculties of agriculture, faculties of energy, faculties of law, etc.) set up internationally certified university courses and degrees aiming at teaching the necessary green skills and knowledge
- Above-mentioned universities from various Mediterranean countries jointly develop and introduce sustainable development postgraduate masters program, and in this way induce close cooperation and exchange of student and professor body.

Aside from these educational measures to be introduced, additional measures aiming to promote green skills and green jobs can be elaborated. These can include, for example:

- Establishment of Mediterranean database of green intern-ships that will contain every traineeship offer that emerges in green industries across the Mediterranean countries
- Green visa free system that will allow young workers with highly sought green skills coming from North African countries to travel and work in other Mediterranean countries for a certain number of years, under the condition that they return back home afterwards to implement acquired knowledge and skills in their home country.

3) PROVIDING THE CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In many Mediterranean countries young people often prefer to be employed in public than in private sector. Since the outset of global economic crisis, this is even more the case, as the public

⁴³ According to UNEP, Green jobs can be defined as work in agriculture, industry, research and development, services, and administration that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment.

sector seems to offer protection and security. For this reason governments should undertake necessary initiatives in order to boost entrepreneurial spirit among the youth:

- All the Mediterranean countries should encourage entrepreneurial spirit from the youth by making it less burdensome from the legislative point of view to open and close social-purpose organizations and associations
- Entrepreneurship training for youth that includes support in the development of business plans and access to technology and know how
- Green young - innovators award for the best technical innovation in the field of green economy and sustainable development
- Green Mediterranean Silicon Valley should be established where green companies could operate in the same way as ICT companies do in Silicon Valley in California.

4) FINANCE

But, having entrepreneurial spirit is not enough, as one of the biggest obstacles for the green economy to take roots is a lack of available capital.⁴⁴ This is especially the case for potential young entrepreneurs, and even more for those coming from the North African countries. Therefore, to give incentive to the youth to enter the waters of private business:

- New funds should be devised and especially oriented towards the youth willing to engage in social entrepreneurship and green economy⁴⁵
- Mediterranean green youth fund should be established to give free grants to the young people whose ideas are recognized and awarded in the objective international competition, under the condition that they will be useful for the society. In this case, in order to ensure

⁴⁴ In a Joint communication of the EU institutions from March 8th 2011 titled: A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, for the promotion of inclusive economic development in the Southern Mediterranean countries, a stronger contribution of International Financing Institutions is suggested (page 8).

⁴⁵ For example, Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) is successfully operating in the region since 2002. However, for the youth social and green entrepreneurship to take momentum, new type of products should be devised, aside from the existing ones. These should especially target young entrepreneurs from the region.

objectivity and root out the possibility for corruption, jury should consist of mixed international experts in the field

- Financial conference/roundtable for youth should be organized – a roundtable between financial institutions (Islamic banks, sovereign funds, public and private European banks, Arab and European foundations, etc.) and youth associations.

To establish different types of microfinance funds, lessons can be drawn from similar existing and successful schemes that have already been proved in practice around the world. For example, there is a lot that can be learned from the experience of Grameen Bank and its founder Muhammad Yunus that are operating in Bangladesh for decades⁴⁶ so successfully, that they have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2006.

GOVERNANCE OF MED-EU YOUTH BASKET

Young people were always having problems in wielding their influence on decision makers and power structures. That was usually the reason that sometimes they even chose public protests as a way for their voices to be heard. Nevertheless, a more peaceful and democratic way should be found for them to secure their place at the decision making table, especially since the decisions that we make now about our economy and environment will be felt more strongly by the young people and generations to come.

For greater influence of the Mediterranean youth on decision making to happen, cooperation with the youth in the areas of mutual interest should be institutionalized. This will be achieved only in the case if the youth participation in decision-making becomes embedded within a system as the MED – EU basket and is viewed as the norm.⁴⁷ Therefore, the establishment of the two following institutions is suggested:

- Council of MED –EU Youth to review progress in implementing MED – EU Youth Basket Program

⁴⁶ Social entrepreneurship: what everyone needs to know, David Bornstein and Susan Davies, Oxford University Press 2010, page 15.

⁴⁷ World Youth Report: Youth & climate change, UN 2010, page 69.

Council of MED-EU Youth should be devised as a place where chosen representatives of youth organizations across Mediterranean would meet and discuss all the issues relevant for young generations. It should also be the place where youth representatives would regularly meet with the chosen Mediterranean Minister for the Youth to jointly coordinate the positions of the youth that would be afterwards presented in further decision-making processes in higher instances of MED-EU Union.

- MED-EU College

MED-EU College can draw experience from the College of Europe that was conceived with the aim of offering the highest quality postgraduate education in European affairs. The same as the College of Europe, the MED-EU College should therefore aim at academic excellence for its attendants, and could offer in international environment a cultural and linguistic diversity of the Mediterranean. It should prepare its students for the top business and public positions in the Mediterranean countries.