

## Brussels Declaration on industrial cooperation adopted at the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference (20–21 May 1996)

**Caption:** On 21 May 1996, the Brussels Declaration sets out the decisions taken at the ministerial Euro-Mediterranean Conference on industrial cooperation, held in Barcelona.

**Source:** Archives historiques de l'Union européenne, Florence, Villa Il Poggiolo. Dépôts, DEP. Pier Virgilio Dastoli, PVD. Sommets européens. 1985-1997, PVD 121.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/brussels\\_declaration\\_on\\_industrial\\_cooperation\\_adopted\\_at\\_the\\_barcelona\\_euro\\_mediterranean\\_conference\\_20\\_21\\_may\\_1996-en-a9bdbb2e-7482-4972-a036-5bdb653073d6.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/brussels_declaration_on_industrial_cooperation_adopted_at_the_barcelona_euro_mediterranean_conference_20_21_may_1996-en-a9bdbb2e-7482-4972-a036-5bdb653073d6.html)

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## Brussels declaration on industrial cooperation adopted by the participants at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference (20 and 21 May 1996)

The participants in the Conference:

- mindful of the Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995 and the relevant Work Programme;
- in consideration of the general principles it defines for developing economic and financial partnership and in particular the importance of sustained, balanced growth aimed at creating a zone of shared prosperity;
- recognizing the strategic role of industrial cooperation in developing a sound competitive economic fabric and in creating jobs;
- stressing the need - as a contribution to industrial competitiveness - for suitable infrastructures in the field of transport, energy, telecommunications and water resources, and for adequate growth in the financial system;
- mindful that in the sphere of industrial cooperation, it is the task of the public authorities to encourage and develop an environment that will draw investments and initiatives to the Mediterranean's southern and eastern regions and that it is the task of economic and commercial operators to derive the maximum advantage from the opportunities on offer;
- mindful of the role in endogenous development that may be played by the Mediterranean partnership and by forms of active cooperation between southern Mediterranean countries to be implemented in a climate of political and economic stability;
- stressing the importance of the entrepreneurial system for Euro-Mediterranean socio-economic development and the desirability of giving this system a role in making proposals;
- in the conviction that the goals of economic and financial partnership, as outlined in Barcelona and elaborated in this Declaration, can only be pursued in a structured, integrated and coordinated way;
- aware that other European, international and regional fora sharing the same expertise and responsibility as the participants of this Conference must also be involved in the pursuit of these goals;
- in the hope that its action can be effectively coordinated with other Conferences organized within the framework of the Barcelona process with the aim of ensuring that infrastructures and financial systems can be strengthened, since these latter are a prerequisite of industrial development;
- in the light of the outcome of the Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Forum held in Malta on 13 and 14 May 1996,

1. Agree that, in the interests of sustainable and balanced economic development, industrial modernization and the encouragement of private investment, including cross-investment, should be based on the following priorities:

- the creation of an appropriate legal and administrative framework that is stable, reliable and consistent with Euro-Mediterranean partnership goals;
- improving business culture, revitalizing and adjusting business associations and modernizing training;
- creating and modernizing industrial zones and developing specialized services centres;
- promoting and launching new small and medium-scale enterprises and restructuring and re vamping existing businesses;
- developing and strengthening the Euro Mediterranean partnership, information and communication networks to foster cooperation among companies;

2. Adopt the Work Programme detailed at point 6 below and take note of the ideas outlined in the Annex regarding financial services and infrastructures, and of the final Declaration of the Euro Mediterranean Industrial Forum held in Malta on 13 and 14 May 1996;

3. Have decided to:

- organize further meetings of the Ministers for industry, as and when needed, with a view to:
  - verifying the application of this Declaration;
  - taking the necessary action;
  - up-dating the Work Programme as required;
- convene one or more Working Parties to:
  - study the issues addressed in this Declaration;
  - pinpoint priorities;
  - assist the European Commission in identifying joint projects, including technical support projects, in order to facilitate their inclusion in the MEDA programme, in compliance with the objectives and procedures of that Programme and to contribute to the consistency of action taken in the industrial sector;
  - develop ongoing monitoring of the action taken;

4. Agree that each Working Party, consisting of highly-qualified experts from each of the Euro-Mediterranean countries concerned and the Commission, will independently decide on its operating rules and internal organization and will report to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Industry Ministers; the Working Parties will also collaborate on a continuing basis with the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process;

5. Deem it advisable, as of now, to focus in particular on studying the following topics as part of the Work

Programme mentioned in point 6:

- an appropriate legal and administrative framework;
- business culture, the formation of associations, and training;
- industrial zones and specialized services centres;
- the promotion and modernization of business, with special reference to SMEs, thereby encouraging the flow of investment;
- the development of Euro-Mediterranean partnership information and communication networks.

## 6. Work Programme

Industrial cooperation will be focused on measures concerning the factors in economic development considered in the Brussels Declaration: these are regarded as the key elements of economic and financial partnership; within this framework a number of horizontal initiatives contributing to implementation of a consistent Euro-Mediterranean industrial cooperation strategy will also be defined.

Those initiatives, to be implemented on the basis of transparent, clear procedures, will include support for common projects, with the aim of guiding industrial intervention while providing the synergy required for economic development and job creation in the Mediterranean basin.

### 6.1. An appropriate legal and administrative framework

The search for an appropriate legislative framework conducive to economic and industrial cooperation should be mindful of the legal traditions of each member country of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It must also consider the needs born of today's economic globalization processes and if necessary adapt existing legislative systems to international trade regulations.

Efforts will be aimed at:

- introducing measures on companies' right of establishment and on the liberalization of the supply of services;
- promoting the appropriate conditions for the free movement of capital;
- fostering compliance with competition rule and their application, drawing no distinction between the public and private sectors, and ensuring compliance with dispute-settlement rules and mechanisms;
- facilitating the progressive narrowing of disparities hindering cooperation, the exercise of the right to private and public ownership, industrial and intellectual property rights, capital liability and corporate bankruptcy procedures, legal persons, companies and their fiscal treatment, securities and banking and financial systems;
- adjusting production processes to international and Community rules and standards in order to strengthen

conformance testing, certification, recognition and quality schemes and processes;

- abolish progressively all obstacles to trade and investment, including those arising from rules of origin.

## 6.2. Business culture, the formation of associations and training

Cooperation will aim to:

- strengthen entrepreneurial association-forming and the forms of collaboration between European associations and those in Mediterranean countries;
- inform European business of opportunities for cooperating with operators in Mediterranean countries in order to reinforce industrial interaction;
- devise programmes to generate a new entrepreneurship by stimulating the capacities of corporate management and staff;
- update management and staff training methods with specific reference to international markets, technological development and the supply of specialized services;
- start training courses for the managers of associations designed to upgrade the services offered to business;
- disseminate managerial training experiences, by means which include intensifying the links between business, universities and European and international training centres.

## 6.3. Industrial zones and specialized services centres

Cooperation will aim to:

- upgrade existing productive sites and create new industrial zones;
- create industrial zones which will also provide highly specialized services (including multimedia communications and data management facilitating international links, access to research systems, training structures and production services);
- reinforce and create specialized services centres supplying corporate services in the fields of innovation, organization, quality and marketing;
- promote the establishment of technical centres for training, sponsored by business associations.

## 6.4. Promotion and modernization of business, with special reference to SMEs

Cooperation will aim to:

- implement action to pinpoint new business potential and to generate new businesses, taking account of the decisive role played by women and young entrepreneurs;
- promote and empower bodies with the task of stimulating the generation of new SMEs and of monitoring their development; these bodies will also be expected to assist business in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, in locating their businesses, with their start-up financing, their contacts with potential clients and suppliers, and in identifying partners;
- promote and create structures ("nurseries") to serve as temporary bases for new entrepreneurial projects, giving them the support they need to succeed. These structures, with functions similar to those of the above bodies, will also be expected to provide shared low-cost services and to promote the insertion of the new initiatives into the industrial fabric;
- define action plans for business restructuring and modernization by:
  - developing the supply of highly specialized consulting services on strategy, quality, management, production organization, finance, R&D, innovation and marketing;
  - promoting and supporting subcontracting between large-scale business and SMEs;
  - developing testing grounds and training programmes for quality certification;
  - reinforcing cooperation relations between promotional and regional industrial development agencies.

#### 6.5 Development of Euro-Mediterranean partnership, information and communication networks

Cooperation will aim to:

- activate a policy of complementarities, partnership and networking in order to promote contacts and collaboration between bodies and institutions in different countries and regions, including the dissemination of new technologies contributing to improved integration into the information society;
- follow up partnership initiatives between Euro Mediterranean SMEs (e.g. Euro-Partenariat, Med Partenariat, Med-Interprise, Business Cooperation Centres BCC, Business Cooperation Networks – BC-NETT , European Community Investment Partners ECIP, and Euro Info Correspondence Centres EICC).

7. The next meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Industry Ministers will be held in Marrakesh (Morocco). The Conference will be convened according to the follow-up procedures agreed within the framework of the Barcelona process.