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FORWARDING NOTE

From : Secretariat

To : Delegations

Subject : Option Paper on dialogue and co-operation on ESDP between the EU and
Mediterranean Partners

Delegations will find attached a revised option paper on dialogue and co-operation on ESDP between the EU and Mediterranean Partners for discussion at the PSC meeting on Thursday, 20 February 2003.

OPTION PAPER

Dialogue and Co-operation on the European Security and Defence Policy, ESDP, between the EU and Mediterranean Partners

As discussed by the Political and Security Committee, the Secretariat presents herewith a paper identifying possible options for strengthening the dialogue and co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners in the field of ESDP. To this end, the paper proposes a number of possible activities.

I GENERAL FRAMEWORK

1. The 5th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in Valencia in April 2002 agreed *inter alia* on the reinforcement of the political dialogue, including on defence matters, as part of the political and security chapter of the Barcelona process. Effective dialogue on political and security matters, including on the ESDP, is set out in the Valencia Action Plan as one of the items the political dialogue with Mediterranean Partners must focus upon.

Under the Spanish and Greek Presidencies additional efforts were made to strengthen the Mediterranean dimension of ESDP. The GAERC of 19 November 2002 expressed satisfaction with these on-going efforts and agreed on the need for further regular dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners in order to enhance transparency and further strengthen mutual understanding on ESDP and explore more concrete ideas and proposals for co-operation. The ESDP Progress Report to the December 2002 Copenhagen European Council contained this language as part of the mandate for the incoming Presidency ("...to further strengthen the dialogue with Mediterranean Partners in order to enhance transparency and further strengthen mutual understanding on ESDP and explore more concrete ideas and proposals for co-operation.").

This paper assumes that the dialogue between the European Union and the Mediterranean Partners¹ on political and security issues in the area of ESDP would be conducted and developed in order to reinforce the principles of the Barcelona Declaration. Such activities would be in accordance with the Valencia Action Plan, the objectives of which it would support.

It is understood that the Council may, on a case-by-case basis, decide on the invitation of individual Mediterranean Partner countries to participate in an EU-led crisis management operation, based on its specific requirements.

2. Against that background, the aim of the dialogue could be:
 - to contribute to security and stability through improved mutual understanding;
 - to pave the way for future consultation and co-operation with Mediterranean Partners in conflict prevention and crisis management.
3. Its conduct and further development should be based on certain principles, as follows. The dialogue would:
 - be conducted on a regular basis;
 - be non-discriminatory in terms of participation and substance;
 - allow the definition of the scope and intensity of the participation of each Mediterranean Partner leading over time to a deepening of the dialogue and possible co-operation in the appropriate format, including on a sub-regional or bilateral basis;
 - be fully co-ordinated with the activities of the Euro-Mediterranean process, with a view to reinforcing them and contribute to increasing visibility of overall EU action in this field vis-à-vis those countries;

¹ It is understood that the dialogue would extend to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and The Palestinian Authority taking into account Turkey's present status as a candidate country as well as Cyprus' and Malta's status as acceding countries.

- cover political and security issues and crisis management activities of interest to the EU and the Mediterranean Partners, with a view to preparing the ground for future partnership-building measures:

- ESDP objectives in general
- ESDP structures and procedures
- Information on civilian and military capabilities
- Modalities for involvement of third countries in civilian and military EU-led operations (principles, modalities agreed for EUPM, FYROM etc.)
- Current and future operations:
 - EUPM, including on the activities related to fight against organised crime
 - FYROM, BiH
- ESDP/Fight against terrorism.

II STRENGTHENING THE DIALOGUE AND CO-OPERATION

4. Reinforcing the dialogue and developing mechanisms for possible co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners in this area will be a progressive process, which requires appropriate preparation on part of the EU and the Partners with regard to the scope of the envisaged activities and possible mechanisms and measures to be established. It would over time comprise the whole continuum of possible activities, namely information, confidence building, and practical co-operation . It is worth noting that the success of this endeavour will not only depend on the Union's offer but also the readiness and capacity of the Mediterranean Partners to engage in it.
5. During the initial stage, the scope of activities as part of a reinforced dialogue could comprise the following elements:
 - familiarising Mediterranean Partners with CFSP/ESDP aims and instruments in conflict prevention and civilian and military crisis management;
 - familiarising Partners with EU crisis management procedures, with a view to their possible future participation in civilian and military EU-led operations;

- exchanging views, lessons learned, doctrine, best practices etc. in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management, both civilian and military.

6. To this end, the following mechanisms could be implemented, in full co-ordination with the activities of the Euro-Mediterranean process:

- Meetings between the PSC Troika and the Heads of Mission of the Mediterranean Partners once per Presidency.

- Each Mediterranean Partner may, if it so wishes, establish contacts with the Secretariat General of the Council and the Commission, with a view to exchanging information on respective crisis management procedures as well as other issues related to crisis management.

- One meeting will be held with experts by the Presidency and the Secretariat, including EUMS and Commission experts, every six months on specific subjects of crisis management.

- The EU Institute for Security Studies is invited to examine possible activities in support of the dialogue with Mediterranean partners (seminars and other such activities) for presentation to the PSC.

7. In a mid-term perspective, possible co-operation could include further elements, such as observation of EU crisis management exercises as well as possible participation in EU-led crisis management operations making use of civilian and military instruments on a case-by case basis, without prejudice to paragraph 1.² In the same perspective, the Mediterranean Partners:

- wishing to be informed on EU military activities may be invited to appoint an officer as point of contact accredited to the EU Military Staff;

- may be invited to participate in EU training courses within ESDP.

² It is understood that the conclusions of the Nice European Council, Annex VI, provide the basis for participation by third states in EU-led operations. These countries are referred to in Section VI of Annex VI (Arrangements for the Consultation and Participation of Other Potential Partners).

III WAY AHEAD

8. The strengthening of the dialogue and the preparation of possible future co-operation will be a progressive process. It would require further work within the EU and with Partners. Within the EU, such work should be conducted by the PSC, supported by the relevant regional working groups and with the advice from other relevant bodies (CivCom, EUMC). The process should be kept under regular review by the PSC.

Mediterranean Partners will also be kept informed, on a regular basis, in the framework of the Barcelona process of the initiatives taken in this context.
