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**The 10th Anniversary of
the Barcelona Process.
Spanish Views on the Challenges
and Opportunities**

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The Sixth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting
Keynote Speech

The 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process.
Spanish Views on the Challenges and Opportunities

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Spanish Foreign Ministry

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Mediterranean Programme

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LECTURE

by

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The 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process. Spanish Views on the Challenges and Opportunities

I. An Evaluation of the Barcelona Process

The Mediterranean is an area of challenges and opportunities, and—despite the close proximity of both shores—one with the greatest differences in terms of income, socio-economic development and social circumstances.

The Barcelona Process was developed against this background since 1995 and has become the reference framework in for the furthering of peace, stability, security and socio-economic progress this region, based on dialogue and mutual trust.

Since its launching, major changes have developed both in the international scenario and inside the European Union itself over the last 10 years. The world today is characterized by ever more porous borders where internal and external security issues can no longer be kept apart.

Besides facing insufficient progress in our economic relations we are confronting new global threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, human and drug trafficking, let alone renewed challenges arising from the Middle East Peace Process.

To cope effectively with these trends, internal reforms under way in these countries should be enhanced and facilitated through reinforcement of EU cooperation instruments. This being kept in mind, the emergence of ideological trends that lead to lack of understanding and to cultural antagonism between the two shores makes it necessary to step up our initiatives in the fields of education, culture and civil society exchanges.

In our mind, the best way to meet these new challenges is to work together on the basis of our well established relations, cooperation structures and networks that have been in place for almost ten years and which can and need to be further improved.

The European Union has undergone profound transformations during these years, with the addition of new members and new policies. New countries have joined, forming a twenty-five member structure nowadays. Our new partners can play a very positive role in the Barcelona process by sharing some of their own experiences in their road to accession to the EU, such as fund management and reform processes with our Mediterranean neighbours. New EU policies have been developed too or are on the drawing board. The New Neighbourhood Policy and the European Security and Defence Policy are among the new EU policies that should play a relevant role in an enhanced Euro-Mediterranean policy.

The EU enlargement policy has already yielded most impressive results leading to the reunification of Europe and to new prospects with our new Eastern neighbours. Europe's attention to its Southern flank has become a crucial priority now as our southern border and its open opportunities and complex challenges need to be fully answered with new responses leading to greater integration in all spheres towards the traditional goal of creating an area of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region.

The conclusion of Association Agreements with our Mediterranean partners or South-South free trade initiatives such as the Agadir Agreement are encouraging factors, no doubt. Still, we have a long way ahead if we meaningfully intend to be ready for the more ambitious prospect of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010. This would set up a sound basis for a true Euro-Mediterranean partnership, as an advanced form of an open regionalism leading to a more advanced regional community of democratic states.

II. A Summit for the New Agenda

In our view, the celebration of 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process needs a Summit.

Sending a positive message to the region at the highest level should be our priority now. Ministerial meetings are already held every year, and are therefore not best suited for covering this special event of the 10th anniversary. The EU is already holding Summit meetings with all its priority regions, including Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Latin America, Russia or the United States, but it has never had any such high-level meeting with its Mediterranean neighbour partners. A Summit, therefore, makes more sense.

Besides, the justification for this Summit is neither a commemorative event nor limited to a political/diplomatic get-together. To be meaningful, it should provide a response to the new realities marking a new phase in the Euro-Mediterranean relations by means of an updated Barcelona Declaration and a new Action Programme anchored in the New EU Neighbourhood policy. Building on the good results already obtained with the 2002 Valencia Plan, this meeting at the highest possible level would be a unique opportunity to adapt this Process to the new realities with the necessary top-level political resolve. Consequently, a good preparation is also of the utmost importance and the next six months should give special prominence to civil society with the holding of meetings between parliamentarians, business people, newspaper editors, civic associations and other important actors of both sides.

The declaration by the EU of 2005 as the Year of the Mediterranean is another opportunity to give a higher public profile to the re-launching of the Barcelona Process.

III. New Contents for the Barcelona Process

Barcelona was based in three pillars which are still fully justified: political, economic and social. The next step should build on this structure by securing new contents.

A. Political and Security Collaboration:

Definition of a Common Area of Peace and Stability

First, there is a need for political and security cooperation for the definition of a common area of peace and stability.

It is a reality that we have not managed to approve the Charter for Peace and Stability yet. Further efforts are necessary to fill the gap in this important area. But the truth is that the entire Mediterranean region is confronted to new risks and challenges that can only be properly answered through concerted action between the EU and our Mediterranean partners, whatever the difficulties in getting to it. Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human and drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime, are the most important threats looming over our common security and stability. Among the different actions to counter them, we consider of a particular interest the following:

1. Political Dialogue: A committed dialogue, that not only focuses on current political issues but also includes an operational approach centred on prevention and resolution of conflicts, is necessary to respond effectively to present shortcomings.

We should also include issues relative to the strengthening of democracy, the expansion of areas of freedom, good governance practices and better protection of human rights, and, in general, to all processes that include citizens' participation. Adopting, an ambitious approach, within the future Neighbourhood Agreements, aimed at reforming and modernizing national government in line with the internal reform processes recently identified and supported by the Arab League is probably the best way forward to explore together from both sides.

2. ESDP: When the Barcelona Process was created, this EU policy did not exist. It is therefore necessary to integrate it into the dialogue in order to keep our Mediterranean partners informed with absolute transparency on the EU aims and activities regarding crisis management and to explore the opened possibilities for cooperation future cooperation in this field.

Among possible objectives to be explored we could envisage the following:

- i. Exchange of military visits.
- ii. Designation of contact points with the EU Military Staff.
- iii. Participation of officers in EU training courses.
- iv. Invitation to observers to exercises.

- v. Participation in EU manoeuvres for crisis management.
- vi. A 'yearly EU/Mediterranean action programme' with specific actions to give a higher profile to this chapter.

3. Reinforcing Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism is a third not less important priority in which progress will be necessary towards an operational stage, with an active and not merely declarative joint action.

Among possible targeted objectives we could again envisage:

- i. A list of contact points
- ii. Reaffirming the code of conduct on the following joint premises:
 - Permanent and general condemnation of any terrorist action that occurs on the territory of any of the signatory countries;
 - Commitment to develop confidence-building measures by mutual agreement;
 - Enhancement of cooperation in the field of harmonization of national legislations in the fight against terrorism;
 - Greater counter-terrorism cooperation;
 - Possibility of creating a consultation cell on how to manage any kind of alarm or crisis;
 - Stepping up information-sharing on methods and modus operandi in the commission of terrorist actions.

4. Developing the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly Potential. This new institution is an appropriate instrument that can contribute to enhance parliamentary debate and to bring citizens' direct representatives closer together. It could help to achieve greater involvement of Southern political parties with the major ideological trends in the world today and thus enabling greater scope for interaction and cooperation.

An institutional report by its President to the Summit Plenary could be a positive step forward towards this ambitious goal.

5. Finally, this pragmatic approach would require **effective means to secure progress** in an area that has traditionally fallen behind the other two pillars. **Several instruments** could be envisaged:

- i. **Informal Ad-Hoc Groups.** The well-established formula of open and informal ad-hoc groups, with the possibility of setting different *geometries variables*, could offer good basis for starting a fruitful dialogue and carrying out joint actions that would gradually build up a critical mass for a broader application in the future.
- ii. **Pilot Projects.** Cooperation could also be effectively promoted by means of pilot projects in targeted countries or among several countries in the different areas. Well-targeted projects will foster overall cooperation in the long-term. The present approach that progress can only be attained when all countries participate simultaneously is going to be replaced within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, since this has been the main reason why the Process has stalled in the past. On the contrary, we are convinced that small cooperation initiatives enhanced with different *variable geometries* may contribute to an

overall cooperation and to the creation of good practices and usages in the Mediterranean area.

Amid possible pilot projects to be envisaged we could contemplate, for example, the coordination of joint maritime surveillance patrols, the participation of Mediterranean partners in military exercises, the creation of an information-sharing system on terrorism or the carrying out of a joint exercise on border management.

- iii. **Twinning projects.** This has proven to be an extremely effective EU instrument too, that could be used to offer technical assistance to our Mediterranean partners in police and security forces training, in modernizing their Justice Administration and in many other fields, such as border management, fight against terrorism or money laundering.
- iv. **Institutionalization of Ministerial Meetings on Justice and Home Affairs.** Ministerial meetings on justice and home affairs, have not been held yet and they would also be very useful to enhance cooperation in some of these fields.

These ministerial meetings could be prepared and supplemented by:

- Scheduled Senior Officials and Experts Meetings that would discuss the contents for the ministerial sessions and be responsible for the follow up of agreed issues.
- A Euro-Mediterranean Senior Committee for Asylum and Migration.
- A Network of Liaison Officers for Migration.

B. Economic and Financial Collaboration: Creating an Area of Shared Prosperity

Accompanying economic and financial collaboration schemes leading to facilitate the consolidation of an area of shared prosperity is an important second pillar of the new phase of the Barcelona Process. We have considered *six basic activities* or programmes which would in our view best help to develop this second major area of activity.

- First, **Stimulating Economic Reforms.** There are many persisting shortfalls in the Southern Mediterranean region that need to be tackled with. Economic structures require substantial modernization if investor confidence and growth is to be successfully promoted. Regional economic growth is not offsetting demographic growth in the Southern part of the region. The high percentages of under-age population, unemployment and illiteracy rates, especially among women, are all pressing challenges that need to be dealt with greater determination.

To do so, it is necessary to promote economic and institutional reforms that can contribute to greater legal certainty and thus provide support to private sector development.

National consensus has to be achieved, though, as a pre-requisite in the different neighbour countries on the direction and depth of the reforms and the steps to be taken. Only a reform programme that enjoys popular support is more likely to be successful.

- Second, **Reinforcing Cooperation in the Economic and Financial Areas and Fostering Macro-economic Dialogue.** Ensuring proper financial balance in an area of such significance for global stability will also be necessary. In order to do so, more funds will have to be made available to guarantee a real impact.

- Third, **Improving Fund Management Methods.** Changes in project programming and in project follow-up and implementation methodology are also necessary and important in order to introduce formulas for co-management and co-responsibility, together with greater de-centralization, and thus, gaining greater efficiency.

In this regard, pilot projects with management methods similar to those of EU Regional Policy (as proposed by a recent joint French-Spanish initiative), could be an interesting way to be explored for improving funds absorption capacity, promoting regionalization through de-centralization and ameliorating territorial policies in general.

- Fourth, **Promoting Investment.** Investment promotion is a priority tool for regional development, both in terms of intra-regional and foreign investment. This needs, though, a suitable legal framework and appropriate instruments, including risk-capital operations.

In particular it will be necessary to promote private investment with capital-risk funds. The FEMIP, launched in Valencia in 2002, has already produced excellent results in this respect. It would, however, be necessary to be more ambitious in order to exploit the enormous unexploited potential in the Southern countries, creating proper conditions to attract our investors, while simultaneously deploying efforts to promote domestic investment.

Moreover, the idea of setting up more EIB offices on the southern Mediterranean shore with the longer term aim of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Bank must remain one of our priority objectives. Another issue, which also needs our greatest attention is the creation of an Agency within the Bank dedicated exclusively to private investment and to providing technical assistance to businesses.

- Fifth, **Developing Infrastructure Interconnection.** This also will play an important role as a development engine. The creation of a Fund for Trans-European Mediterranean Transport Networks with participation of international financial institutions should also be high in our agenda.
- Sixth, **Promoting South-South Integration.** We are equally convinced that the fastest possible implementation of the Agadir Agreement and its extension to other countries is a pre-requisite for advancing in the process of liberalization between the two Mediterranean shores.
- Last but not least, **Aiming at a Free Trade Area by 2010.** This seventh economic objective will require complying with the programme for progressive liberalization and product quality control.

Among possible liberalization objectives to be set, we find it particularly important the following:

- i. Continuing with the liberalization and coordination of agricultural policies.
- ii. Agreeing on a road map for the liberalization of raw materials, transformed products and services
- iii. Setting up a system of quality standards, denominations of origin and control systems.

***C. Co-Operation in the Social, Cultural and Civil Society Spheres:
Development of Human Resources, Fostering Understanding
between Cultures and Exchanges between Civil Societies***

Third and last pillar of renewal of the Barcelona Process, is the key importance of co-operation in social, cultural and civil society spheres.

The Mediterranean not only ought to be one of the most favourable areas for political and economic success but also for dialogue leading towards an authentic Alliance of Civilizations. Firm and committed support should be given from its very start to the Anna Lindh Foundation, which could become an ideal instrument for developing this third basket, as it could use its networking capacity to head major programmes such as education and youth, without purporting to replace already existing programmes.

It is necessary to make a special effort in public diplomacy on both Mediterranean shores so that the public may know about the large amount of activities, projects and investments that have been carried out under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Its best possible presentation to the mass media is essential if we want to develop a 'Euro-Mediterranean identity', and the feeling that belonging to it is a synonym to prosperity. For this reason it is essential to involve our citizens in this project as actively as possible. Raising the public profile of the Barcelona Process would thus be a key objective.

To do so, efforts should focus in actions providing for a greater involvement of our citizens and civil institutions, such as:

- **More Civil Society Participation and People-to-People Contact.** One of the priority fields for action must be fostering the greatest possible amount of contact among citizens contributing to greater cross-cultural understanding. Citizens must feel that they are participating directly in the Process, which they should feel as their own. If this has not happened yet is because its aims have not been understood.

We could, thus, concentrate among possible fields for action on:

- i. Attention to young people. Granting of ERASMUS-type scholarships for higher education students, who could live with families during the school year in both shores. This could be coordinated—although not necessarily—by the Anna Lindh Foundation and carried out through the national public high education centres, which, in each country, would look for sponsors to fund the exchange scholarship programme so that they may be carried out in every country of the Euro-Mediterranean area. This new programme could be named after some significant figure in the Mediterranean civilization, such as Ibn Khaldun.
 - ii. Fostering interaction between universities and academic sectors, research institutes, etc.
- **Education.** Illiteracy rates—especially high among women—are a major obstacle to the development of the region. The improvement of education systems and their extension to all territories is a priority and a necessary condition for economic development.

- **Gender Issues.** It would be highly productive to share our experiences in the fight against gender discrimination and to analyze the best practices for promoting gender equality both from the legislative and practical implementation standpoints. In addition, good practices to be found in the region could be highlighted and taken as leading cases for advancement in non-discrimination.

A Euro-Mediterranean Conference on gender equality and equal opportunities for women could be organized among other priority actions.

- **Greater Participation of Regions and Municipalities in the Barcelona Process.** As yet, their participation in the Process has been clearly insufficient. Only a few sporadic meetings have been held with regions and with city mayors. This should become a central objective in the agenda for the next decade.

We should devote some thinking into how best to integrate these two levels into the Barcelona Process as a major vehicle to involve and approximate our citizens from all the Euro-Mediterranean countries. For this purpose, these meetings could be formalized with the creation of a Committee of Euro-Mediterranean Regions and Cities. This could give more relevance to this new dimension and promote continued interaction.

- **Enhancing Cooperation in Migration Matters.** This seems another extremely important area in which concerted action by all Mediterranean partners, Northern and Southern, is ever more necessary. This would allow a proper framework for stimulating free movement of people—the fourth freedom—together with the other three freedoms, of goods, services and capital in the context of a future enhanced free trade area.

Some of the conclusions reached at the World Congress on Human Movements and Immigration, organized by the IEMed and held in Barcelona on 2-5 September 2004, should also be taken into account:

- i. Migration can involve balancing demographic effects.
- ii. Regions with ageing populations can benefit from regions with younger populations.
- iii. The effective management and regulation of migration requires international cooperation.

Among future possible objectives in this area we could envisage to focus in particular on:

- i. Management of migration flows and asylum.
- ii. Dialogue on legal migration (vocational training at country of origin and temporary migration).
- iii. Dialogue on social integration.
- iv. Improved border management.
- v. Border control support.
- vi. Cooperation among security forces.
- vii. Improved infrastructure, equipment and technical material
- viii. Assistance in the training of staff responsible for border control.

IV. Neighbourhood Policy and Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean Region and the Middle East

As we have seen the Barcelona Process has to become part of the framework of the new European Neighbourhood Policy which will offer our Mediterranean partners new prospects of enhanced participation in the European project. The Commission, within the ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument), is setting up a financial instrument which will provide assistance to Mediterranean partners as of 2007. Its objectives and modalities can become the economic backbone of what could be called 'Barcelona plus'.

The European Neighbourhood Policy pursues, in fact, stronger economic integration with its neighbours to give shape to a nucleus of partners who will be able to enjoy the opportunities offered by the European internal market, well beyond the possibilities of the current Association Agreements. The enhanced cooperation foreseen by the Neighbourhood Policy will make it possible to give greater depth and contents to the Barcelona Process. Thus, the Neighbourhood Policy enhances the Barcelona Process, which is the core relationship between the EU and its Mediterranean partners. This is what former President Prodi labelled 'everything but institutions'.

The European Neighbourhood Policy will allow advancing in political and economic reform processes at the pace of the fastest partners and not at the minimum common denominator set by the slowest, as it has been the case until now. We had a fairly good atmospheric engine for change in Barcelona by the standards of 1995 but it has become outdated by the state-of-the-art today. Now we must put a turbo in it and, while maintaining its own European character, provide it with greater accelerating capacity and higher cruising speed. The new conditions prevailing or emerging in the world and in the European and Mediterranean region today not only favour this shift, but actually demand it.

The Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean region and the Middle East is another initiative with a considerable potential to contribute to economic and political reform beyond the Area covered by the Barcelona Process. Not only seems to us to be fully compatible with the latter but also with a considerable complementary potential and, thus, that Partnership should be adequately coordinated with other initiatives.

In addition, the Barcelona Process should continue to expand in order to complete its geographic scope, so as to include Libya, and countries such as Bulgaria and Romania or Croatia or even Albania, the latter having repeatedly voiced its willingness to actively participate in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, being as it is a full-fledged Mediterranean country.

Given the interest aroused by the 10th Anniversary, it will be particularly necessary to seek all possible synergies with the United States and its own planned initiatives in the region. Therefore, we are convinced that Washington should be invited as an observer to our Commemorative Meeting in Barcelona, together with High Representatives of International Organizations that are also present in the Mediterranean such as NATO and the OSCE.

V. Final Remarks

The Barcelona Process has been consolidated as an advanced form of open regionalism which we would like to see one day not too far converted into an truly Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States.

The Barcelona process covers 35 countries and has played a unique role as a multilateral forum for dialogue and political cooperation among the EU, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, the Arab Mediterranean countries and Israel. It has developed an ambitious integral cooperation programme for democratic, economic, social and cultural development coupled with an important amount of financial funding in the form of loans and donations. It has institutionally evolved with new instruments like the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly or the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialog among Cultures in Alexandria.

Reform processes have contributed through the evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to an accumulative effect and from this point of view it has become a true laboratory of globalization. The new policy will build on that in a very positive way as it will insist on the necessity of continuing the reform processes and set up the relevant benchmarks for an adequate follow up.

The emphasis will no longer be on combined efforts by all participants in the Process but on the individual efforts by each partner country, which will also determine the intensity of its relation with the EU. This is not solely a European or a American initiative, many Arab countries have spelled with sound clarity and determination the need for greater freedom, education and women presence, as it has been clearly stated in the PNUD reports.

The Mediterranean is a strategic region for Europe. Many of the challenges and threats in today's world occur precisely in this region. The same goes for the opportunities. Our challenge now is to confront them not merely acting on its manifestations but also addressing their causes. Taking advantage of the new window of opportunity in the region, the EU and the US have to join efforts against the main threats today (terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, human and drug trafficking, to cite some) dealing jointly the new realities in the region periphery to bring solutions to regional conflicts, including Iraq, which remain the major obstacle to the success of our cooperation policies. New US-inspired initiatives based on soft-power and already incorporated in G-8 and NATO can be decisive given their importance in terms of cumulative effects.

For Spain some of the priority areas for future action with our Mediterranean regional partners should be:

- To create a positive and agreed response capacity against threats, specially terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction.
- A greater joint effort to achieve the necessary political and economic reforms and trade liberalization.
- A greater attention to education, particularly among the youngest and women, developing new instruments for contacts and cooperation.

- The opening of new spaces of freedom within a framework of democratic values, tolerance, and common respect.
- A global joint approach to migration in order to obtain an improved regulation and social integration in our countries.

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