

For'UM Union pour la Méditerranée / **Marseille, jeudi 27 mai 2010**

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DISCOURS /SPEECH

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It gives me great pleasure to take part in this important Forum on Mediterranean attractiveness and economic convergence within the Union for the Mediterranean, especially that it coincides with the launching of the Secretariat. I am confident that the deliberations of this Forum will examine the cohesion of financing the future projects of UFM and will allow the private sector and the financial institutions to learn more about the opportunities available to them, thus encourage the business community to lend its support to the implementation of these concrete projects.

For decades we have been ceaselessly talking about all that unites the peoples around the Mediterranean basin. We have been vaunting the merits of dialogue among cultures, among civilisations and among religions. Now in the framework of the UfM, we have the opportunity to work hand in hand as well as to put all our energies into fostering the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, since this region is absolutely crucial for world balance.

I strongly believe that the future of the Mediterranean region relies on boosting cooperation between the countries of the two banks since they are bound by joint interests and challenges. By turning their back on the Mediterranean, countries of the two banks would lose, not only their intellectual, moral and spiritual sources, but also their future. Since it is in the Mediterranean that these countries will secure their prosperity, ensure their security, and will again be able to make their message heard by the international

community. They will bring their influence to bear on the future of the world and on the process of globalization.

The Union for the Mediterranean represents a challenge for all of us. Let us forge between us ever-closer concrete solidarities on pragmatic projects which involve all our peoples' vital interests and with the participation of all concerned and interested actors (ARLEM, Civil society...). This original and unique experiment should create the conditions for its success in order to make the Union for the Mediterranean project irreversible. The Mediterranean countries are not part of two blocs facing one another across the sea, but rather that they are, all together, part of fate-bound community, in which each has a place and where all Mediterranean peoples share equal dignity, rights and obligations.

The Union for the Mediterranean must be pragmatic: it will be a Union embracing variable geometry, depending on the projects involved. Just as Europe began with coal and steel and atomic energy, the Union for the Mediterranean will start with the six priority areas that were identified and adopted at the Paris Summit in 2008, covering important sectors that will boost a stronger cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

As you know, the Union for the Mediterranean will be a project-based Union. But with a single goal: to make the Mediterranean the world's largest testing ground for co-development where development is decided on together and managed together. In this regard, the success of this project depends on our close cooperation and determination to give birth and implement the directives shaped by our leaders. (summit)

As far as Europe is concerned, States are aware of the benefits that Mediterranean economic integration can bring. They are however not fully aware of the importance of the Mediterranean integration in maintaining European industries' competitiveness, in the face of a rising Asia. Euro-Mediterranean Governments must act as facilitators to bring together both shores. Northern States should support strong economic integration with Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, namely to give rise to ambitious projects (water, energy, agriculture, infrastructure...) benefiting all UfM member States. The European countries have to believe that their future lies in the Mediterranean region. This is crucial to maintain the momentum created by the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, whose economies closely depend on Northern shore countries, have to sustain their efforts in promoting regional economic integration, fostering economic development and thus containing the adverse effects of the global economic and financial crisis. By 2020 and 2030, Southern and Eastern

Mediterranean countries could become the new world emerging market. In this case, they would actually drive economic growth in Europe.

On July 13, 2008, the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean gave a new impetus to euro-med cooperation. To nurture this momentum and expand it, the private sector and business community should be deeply involved, since they are key players in the drive to bring together the two Mediterranean shores, allowing the region to achieve the objectives defined to attain economic prosperity and social development.

In this framework, allow me to underline the fact that the Secretariat is established in order to contribute to the efforts deployed by all UfM member States and the institutions involved in the Partnership. Its mandate as defined in the Paris Summit, Marseille Declaration and in its Statute will give the opportunity to be not only a key player in the framework of the UfM institutional architecture, but a tool working closely with the member States and cooperating with different institutions and actors in order to bring its added value to such an ambitious project. In this regard, the Secretariat will deliver in the next coming weeks a working Program and the guidelines for the projects selection which will be a starting point and a basis of our work in the future.

At the end, I would like to recall and reiterate the fact that the business community will have a crucial role in contributing to turn this initiative to a success story especially in terms of supporting the government's efforts especially by providing additional financial resources to fund the different ambitious projects promoted by the member States, which will bring concrete and tangible benefits to the Mediterranean populations and thus, proving the credibility and reinforcing the visibility of the UfM.

Thank you.