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**Conference Paper**

## Development and Security in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean Area

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**DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY  
IN SOUTHERN EUROPE  
AND THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA**

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Over the course of the years, the Mediterranean region has been analysed from many different perspectives and defined on the basis of the specific approach followed at the time (i.e. historic-cultural political, economical, functional etc.). On this occasion I would like to avoid ulterior interpretations and focus attention above all on the need for a course of development to guarantee security in Southern Europe.

Considering that the geographic centrality and the complexity of the Mediterranean area - ethnic and religious differences, differences in development, differences in lifestyles and forms of government etc., proper to these countries - are, at one and the same time, points of strength and elements of weakness, it is easy to understand, on the one hand, the considerable interest from an international point of view for this issue and, on the other, the difficulties met with when wanting to organise some kind of integrated policy and the management on a rational scale of the resources in an imperative perspective of “sustainability”.

If we take a look at the European continent, marked differences can be detected between the various boundary areas that pass from the Northern to the Western zones - free from potential destabilising and risk factors - to those of the East and of the South, where the European Union has to deal with two specific “crisis areas”. Despite the post-war commitment and efforts made (starting from the end of the Cold War and continuing up to the present day) to avoid the construction of a new wall of division in the Mediterranean Region but rather, to emphasise the concept that the Mediterranean region should itself represent a source of dynamism and an area of free exchange (objective fixed for the year 2010), at the present time, the Mediterranean is still considered one of the neuralgic points of international crises and, consequently, peace in the world is closely connected with the Region’s stability. On the other hand, the process begun in Barcellona in 1995, despite attempts in terms of conferring new dynamism, does not include any substantial success and the progress in macro-economic terms, achieved up to now is still insufficient and far from being consolidated.

Furthermore, the numerous plans and programmes proposed and supported by governing Commissions and by International Institutions have achieved very limited results, because the Mediterranean continues to be considered a *state of affairs* and not a *project*. Central-Northern Europe, besides, appears much more interested in opening up towards the East rather than towards the South, unveiling the risk of a decline in marginal development. The very regions that should cement, in terms of a “linking area” the Mediterranean and the Rhine seem more inclined to have the South become one of their influence areas which is tantamount to keeping the area in a condition of dependency.

We cannot get away from the fact! With no specific political initiatives – and the European Union is still in search of autonomous capacity to produce political initiatives - no partnership initiative scheme can take off, not even in economic-commercial terms. It will not be possible to achieve the heralded globalisation of European policy for the Mediterranean, simply by dealing on the whole with bilateral relations (from which relations a group of vertical compartments of the entire region derive). The existence of a “dialogue” at the end of which each party remains firmly wedged within his own ways of existence and anchored to his convictions is no longer sufficient.

Finally, the time has passed for “reforms”, which pre-suppose the existence of institutions to safeguard. We must now pass on to the phase of “transformation”. The least we can ask of the European Union if it really intends to give an effective signal towards the Mediterranean, is to start implementing policies of concerted development and of North-South co-operation in order that with its contribution, the difficulties that many countries of the South are facing – on a social and

economic plane – can be overcome and the conditions that impede the flow of foreign investments removed. Only by means of a strong and lasting political initiative whose outcome can be none other than the constitution of a Euro-Mediterranean area with common operative Institutions provided with a long-term strategic vision, can the Mediterranean abandon its position of weakness and of dependency.

I don't want to suggest that Europe should take on the role of a top power, but rather, that Europe can aspire to *leadership*, in a certain sense, considering that capitalist globalisation has in the meantime become consolidated and that space for independent strategies that are not those of the management of well constituted interests, has been removed.

It has been opportune and right to concentrate on the East of Europe over the last ten years, but on the twenty first century's agenda of security and development we should not underestimate the relevance of the Mediterranean. During the Cold War the Mediterranean represented the vital line of communication through which raw materials and energy passed towards the West and is today is the crucial Southern flank of the NATO, as well as the border region of the European Union.

As far as Italy is concerned, a strategy of leadership would not be implemented for ideological or ecumenical reasons, but rather, by natural vocation. Consequently, interest for the Mediterranean area could become pre-eminent again not so much as regards the areas in the centre of the European Union but rather in those that today constitute the borders.

Regional governments, in order to escape their subordinate status compared to national governments, could start to look for roles and geopolitical strategies that emphasise and highlight the Southern Italy-Mediterranean relationship, benefiting from advantages of geographical vicinity and productive affinity in the same way that the Northern regions of Italy have benefited from Western and Central Europe.

This does not mean a new way of division from Europe, but on the contrary, returning to the fold with political proposals and a different and more functional economic vision in the face of the needs of millions of people who have decided to live and work in the Mediterranean area. Except for some scenarios, as for example, in Campania, where in recent years worthy initiatives have been achieved in this direction, it would seem that the governing classes – perhaps for fear of “falling into the Mediterranean” - prefer to maintain Southern Italy in a sort of economic and cultural limbo deprived of ties with the North and unable to create an independent strategy of development in the direction of the South, where on the contrary, their Italian and European vocation should push. Imagine for example, the advantages which would derive from the growth of markets; migratory pressure would be reduced on the European Union, environmental risks would be reduced, risks of political destabilisation and military aggression would be reduced and last but not least, a balanced process of growth in Southern Europe would be re-charged.

Europe now finds itself at a crossroads: whether to consider with renewed vigour initiatives for the stability of the Mediterranean region or resign herself to undergoing the consequences of ever stronger destabilizing factors. If the first option is chosen, Italy too must continue to be committed to the purpose, last year during the semester of the Italian Presidency of the European Union (the last Mediterranean Presidency until the deadline of 2010) the President outlined progress made in this direction. For the next opportunity it will be necessary to wait at least until 2015 and it is not easy to imagine what scenario will present itself then. So, we should act now, in order to play an active role as stakeholders in the development and security of Southern Europe and in the whole of the Mediterranean area.

We should promote political actions for the key actors of European and International Institutions and attempt a process of restructuring the negative perception of the area, by means of the construction of an integrated and aggregated structural and dynamic information system.

Had the Mediterranean dialogue not been invented, we would have had to create it. Today, on the contrary, we have the opportunity to reap the rewards of existing co-operation and to carry on adapting this co-operation to meet the new challenges on the horizon. Multilateralism represents the most remunerative political investment on the international scene, in the light of the resolution of regional crises and the construction of world governance, structured on the role of the United Nations, which must absolutely be re-confirmed. Multilateral relations are probably the most laborious, but they ensure without doubt the greatest efficacy for foreign policy and develop a sense of responsibility on the part of the interlocutors towards one another. A different logic would be totally inadequate for managing the complexity of the modern world. Transatlantic solidarity constitutes a fundamental piece of this mosaic. As Europeans, we are aware of having benefited from and enjoyed fifty years of peace – despite the tensions of the Cold War era – thanks to and because of, the Atlantic Alliance. In fact, political and military alliances often offer a valid contribution to lasting peace.

This is why NATO's role must not be relegated to the history of the twentieth century, but rather to the issues of the twenty first century, in all their urgency. It is possible to speculate that more intense co-operation between NATO countries and Mediterranean countries would favour the reinstating of the peace process and above all, the re-establishing of fundamental reciprocal trust.

In particular, it is necessary to launch a strong and clear signal to the countries of the Mediterranean area at a time in which the Atlantic Alliance is pursuing its enlargement policy towards East, in order to bring to mind that, in the project fostered by the NATO and the European Union to create a Great Region of Europe, the Mediterranean has always been an integral part and will not be relegated to the traditional framework of the dual relationship North-South, i.e. developed countries and those in process of development. There should be awareness of the Mediterranean in its global capacity the components of which share a common destiny including that of security.

Globalisation, which is not just limited to the economic sphere, but invests social, cultural issues etc. is a policy that can in theory, be judged as right or mistaken. It is a process destined to gain ground, offering opportunities of exchange, of inter-relations, of technological acquisition and of growth, quite unimaginable for those peoples and nations at the margins of development, and who must be governed by recognised supra-national Institutions and regulated by means of established and accepted rules.

The passage from a bi-polar system to that of a post-bi-polar system produced hopes and illusions which rapidly vanished however, when it was realised that the risks and challenges far from disappearing, increased dramatically, not least as the result of the processes of political fragmenting. It is clear that it was the latter that produced and generated greater systemic instability on a regional level, but it is also those integrative systems and above all those that are concentrated into the concept of globalisation that highlighted the fact that problems of security are not completely manageable on a national scale. The concept of security, traditionally seen from a purely military perspective, has gradually grown to embrace economic aspects, political-cultural aspects as well as others of a different nature. To guarantee security, then, means not so much or at least, not only, to increase the weight of traditional power factors but rather to reduce to a minimum the conditions of specific vulnerability.

Functional to this aim would be an accurate analysis prior to implementing actions that could avoid an extremely critical and dangerous union of forces. A return to the study then of the problems that encourage the phenomena, their dimension and collocation in space, the inter-dependence between possible solutions and the choice of development made by European countries appears to be the longest and most laborious way but also the only one possible. An analysis of the present day economic and political questions in the Mediterranean region must not neglect, furthermore, the considerable imbalances existing in the region concerning population and uses of the resources.

In this operative framework, the role of territorial planning is strategic. In establishing economic and social objectives for late developing countries, territorial planning ensures a rational use of resources and productive structures, so as to promote growth according to the canons of sustainability. Even so, prediction, planning and programming are processes that seem to have been totally underestimated by the various supra-national key actors who for different reasons, are called upon to take care of the development and security in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean area. In fact, an attentive observer might ask how individual Institutions could possibly offer a valid contribution towards attaining the so called unified objectives in the absence of a strategic framework, that establishes the guide lines for the development of that area and which is imperative for guaranteeing the complementary function of the actions of the various Institutions.

Only after indicating the principal lines of development can one follow up with the formulation of projects that are well inserted into a strategic framework, so as to seal the gap existing between plans, programmes, actions, laws and recommendations. Besides, if the risks are connected with an ever more unbalanced world situation, we will be obliged to visualise a global strategy of development.

Economic processes alone do not seem able to produce lasting balance, above all in the epoch of global competition, which very often, is nourished on instability itself and on the continuing producing of differences. However, if the objective is that of development, perhaps more gradual but more widespread development, we would need to formulate a *corpus* of rules, and consolidate an order founded on values which are not just of an economic nature. The task of elaborating new instruments that guarantee a strategy of “correct development” cannot but be entrusted to the political sphere.

The difficulties encountered in the attempt to correctly re-compose the “Mediterranean mosaic” are many, but not much greater than those that other regions have had to face at the beginning of the reconstruction of their economic, political and cultural identity. Most of the countries in the Mediterranean Basin, even those on the Northern shore, are today areas of territorial depression and of political destabilisation even because Europe, in order to enter into competition in a “tri-global” sense has indicated certain geographical areas, emarginating others and subordinating the satisfaction of needs to those of richer countries and markets. But now at last it is clear to them that the four fundamental challenges of present day development (technology, ecology, demography and institutions) cannot be dealt with without the rediscovery and the enhancement of the Mediterranean regional dimension.

For the countries of the Mediterranean, therefore, there is no other alternative, and for the European countries the alternative remains that of the “wall”; a project not only immoral but also unfeasible because as history has demonstrated, *divisions never support the drive of men*.

From these considerations which emerged during the course of my studies and research, the idea of elaborating a “MASTER PLAN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA”, gradually took shape, integrating the idea of a “*Marshall Plan for the Mediterranean*” launched by the Berlusconi Government, in

which the roles of the individual territories, the duties of the institutional subjects and the actions to undertake in a co-ordinated way, in the light of (a) a new international order and (b) the disparity and the different directions of the forces in the field. I am well aware that this process is not simple nor is it short term, because it requires, besides an adequate support of knowledge, analysis and proposals on the part of intellectuals, lucid awareness and a patient line of action on the part of governments, their powers of planning, control and intervention. However, in my view, it is possible to create the preliminary conditions for favouring and facilitating the process, by instituting a Task Force of international experts who, on the one hand, are able to provide accurate knowledge both of the key actors and of the global and regional dynamics, and on the other, have the right command of theoretical and methodological instruments for the analysis of trends and solutions for current problems, in order to set up a strategic project for development and security in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean area.

I am certain that this Workshop will provide useful and preliminary reflections for succeeding in this objective.