

Mr. José Manuel Barroso
President
European Commission
200 rue de la Loi
Brussels
Belgium.

Copied to:
The Rt. Hon Jack Straw, MP Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth
Affairs.
Monsieur Jean Asselborn, Vice-Premier Ministre, Ministre des Affaires étrangères et
de l'Immigration.
Dr Bernard Rudolf Bot, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.
Dr. Benita Ferrero Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations.
Mr. Stravos Dimas, European Commissioner for the Environment.
Ms. Margot Wallstrom Vice President of the European Commission and
Commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication.
Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, President of the European Parliament.

May 4, 2005

Dear European Commission President,

With reference to the recent Communications of the Commission about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

On behalf of Mediterranean environmental NGOs, I am writing to you about two recent communications of the Commission:

- i) the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the 10th Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
- ii) Draft Euro-Mediterranean Roadmap for Agriculture

On behalf of an important part of civil society in the European and Mediterranean region, namely the environmental organizations grouped under all major Networks¹ represented by the "Comité de Suivi" (CdS) of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), echoing the voice of millions of citizens, I wish to express to you our great concern about these two documents and draw your attention to the following points which call for your immediate reaction.

Although the 5th and 6th Conferences of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs (2002, 2003) acknowledged **sustainable development** as a guiding principle of the EMP and the 2nd Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of the Environment (2002) urged that it should be the central guiding principle and adopted

¹ Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), Environment and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Friends of the Earth (FoE/MedNet Programme), Mediterranean NGO Network for Ecology and Sustainable Development (MEDForum), Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), World Wild Fund Mediterranean Programme (WWF/MEDPO)

a strategic framework for the environmental integration process of the EMP within the perspective of sustainable development, tragically little has been achieved until now. Furthermore, despite your personal commitment to sustainability, as evidenced once again by your speech on 15 April, the messages about sustainable development in the Mediterranean given by the Commission are neither clear, coherent or convincing.

Thus for example the EC representative at the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD), speaking for the European Community, together with seven Member States who belong to MCSD support the relaunching of the Partnership focused around sustainable development (in the draft text of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development), but there is no reflection of this position in the 10th Anniversary Communication.

Under the World Summit for Sustainable Development's Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the World Food Summit Programme of Action, and the decisions of the most recent meeting of the FAO Committee on Agriculture, the European Community and member states pledge their strong support to promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) as a holistic overall policy framework, but there is no reference to this concept in the agricultural roadmap.

These contradictory positions of the European Commission on the central issue of sustainable development in the Mediterranean seriously undermine its credibility.

Therefore, since you have the power of initiative and in view of the forthcoming 7th conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of foreign affairs (Luxembourg May 30-31 2005) and the subsequent Barcelona summit (heads of government), November 2005), **we strongly urge you to take the steps needed in order to create the necessary provisions within the European Commission's position for a genuine, explicit, much stronger sustainability component for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, to be reflected in a revised version of the above documents for circulation to governments prior to EuroMed foreign Ministers' conference.:**

i) The 10th Anniversary Communication

Although we welcome elements of the Communication (from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament), the revised text we are requesting should also take into account the attached detailed comments of the *Comité de Suivi*. (See Annex 1)

- the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) at present being drafted by the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) will be adopted by environment Ministers within the framework of the 14th conference of the contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention (8-11 November, 2005). In addition to seven member states, the European Community is also a Contracting Party, as are all south Mediterranean partner states. The MSSD should be formally endorsed by the anniversary summit thereafter as the vehicle for mainstreaming sustainability throughout the partnership – in accordance with the conclusions of the 2nd Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of the Environment (2002), which were endorsed by the conclusions of the 6th conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign affairs in 2003. **The anniversary**

summit presents a unique opportunity to re-launch the EMP around the central guiding principle of sustainable development.

- The proposal in the Commission's communication relating to adoption of measures leading to a thorough de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, should be explicitly anchored in the on-going actions under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols as well as the measures incorporated into the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development as adopted. The Commission should commit to establishing an equal partnership with the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan, which services the Barcelona Convention, and is ably supported by its Regional Activity Centres around the Mediterranean.

- Within the EMP, the pursuit of modernisation, economic reform and liberalisation must take place **within the framework of sustainable development and a formal commitment should be made to fulfil all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, reflecting partners' commitments at the United Nations General Assembly of 2000 as well as under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Such a joint commitment from the Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg will certainly be seen as evidence of a regional will to achieve these goals and duly be welcomed by the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2005 convened to review progress on the MDGs.

- The recommendations of the on-going Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area should be fully incorporated into all trade liberalisation proposals and negotiations, to ensure that negative economic social and environmental impacts are either fully avoided, or fully remedied.

ii) the agriculture roadmap

This document posits a high degree of trade liberalisation as being 'necessary' and beneficial – without supporting this assertion, while thus implicitly pre-empting the outcome of the on-going Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area – to which it does not even refer!

Despite the EC's commitment to Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in other fora, as above, as well as the support for this approach by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Agriculture at the first conference in Venice, November 2003, there is no mention of this concept in the document, rural development being presented as some kind of accompanying measure to extensive and rapid trade liberalisation.

Numerous studies, most recently by FEMISE and the Blue Plan have warned of the major risks of trade liberalisation for a number of sectors. The rural areas of South Mediterranean member states are home to over 100 million people, also concentrating a high proportion of each nation's poorest of the poor, and due to male out-migration, the number of women living in these areas far outnumber the men.

A SARD approach to Mediterranean agriculture would build policies and programmes around the economic, social and environmental functions of agriculture, encompassing principles of sustainable livelihood development and the need to prepare and adapt the sector to the harsh impacts of climate change,

whilst promoting increased regional food and nutritional security. It is within such a context that the possible contribution of agricultural trade liberalisation in this sector should be viewed.

Our proposals for a redrafted roadmap are set out in Annex 2.

Mr. President,

People across Euro-Mediterranean region want strong environmental policies. A change of emphasis is needed that puts sustainable development thinking at the heart of future policy to ensure that citizens expectations are met. We believe that at this time, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership offers a unique opportunity for the promotion of the EC's image and the exercise of sustainable development diplomacy and should provide a convincing, concrete example of solidarity and true partnership, going far beyond the mere achievement of a regional, free trade area, for the benefit of all the peoples and the security and prosperity of this important region.

For our part, as Mediterranean environment NGOs in partnership with other sectors of regional civil society, we confirm our determined commitment to the effective implementation of sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

We look forward to your reply to this letter at your earliest convenience,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Scoullos', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

On behalf of the CdS
Prof. M. J. Scoullos
Chairman of MIO-ECSDE
CdS Coordinator