



## CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 3 AND 5 FEBRUARY 2010 Segovia (Spain)

The Preparatory Meeting was held on 3 and 5 February in Segovia for the Final Conference of the TRESMED 3 Project, which is to take place on 19, 20 and 21 May 2010, bringing the third edition of the Project to a close.

All the Mediterranean partners to the Project (with the exception of Syria) were present at this working meeting which was held on two days.

On the first day (3 February), the ESCs of Israel and Palestine, the European ESCs of the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain as well as the *Real Instituto el Cano*, the *Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales* and qualified academic experts participated. Also present as observers were a representative of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and a member of Spain's representation at the European Commission.

On the second day (5 February), those present included the ESC of Palestine and the delegates of Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria, the economic and social agents of Egypt and Morocco (since neither of these two countries yet has an ESC or similar institution), as well as the European ESCs of the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain and the other specialist institutions and experts.

Their objective was to analyse and discuss the most relevant subjects raised during the Project, and to draw up proposals for measures aiming to ensure that the links created amongst all the partners through TRESMED3 continue and grow in the future.

### PRODUCTION MODEL. EDUCATION. CODEVELOPMENT

Civil society has been seen to be ahead of political decisions. This confers a great influence on the ESCs and Similar Institutions as a standing consultative body and, in many cases, a great capacity for anticipating events, precisely because organised civil society is represented in the ESCs.

Stress was placed on the need for providing a more favourable environment so that initiatives can arise that will help transform the production model. For this purpose, it is important to share the different models that can be found in the EuroMediterranean Area, leading to a sharing of experiences.

The objectives of the new production model should focus not only on economic aspects but also on social and environmental aspects because these condition the future and the cohesion of our economies.

Priorities for the future should create lasting added value aiming to achieve growth in knowledge, a stronger role for citizens in inclusive societies and the creation of a competitive economy that is not dissociated from the environment.

It is therefore essential to define professional profiles in line with the skills needed in the new production models, without neglecting the essential function to be played in this by social agents.

Coordinated incentive measures against the crisis have avoided a catastrophe on a global level so, in order to optimise results, it is important to stress efficiency in the implementation of coordinated measures.

There was agreement on the key role that the Economic and Social Councils can play in adopting structural reforms.

Cooperatives also have an important role to play in the development of the countries in the South which are mainly agricultural, and links between cooperatives on the two shores should be strengthened.

More support is called on from the European Union for this purpose.

Greater efforts should be devoted to the integration of civil societies in Israel and Palestine by providing support to joint business projects, development of SMEs and educational and university exchanges.

An in-depth analysis should also be made of regionalisation in a globalised world. If working methods are to be effective, it is important to consider what their scope should be, how actions can be sure to have an impact and, especially, how we can be sure that actions are backed by consensus and that the transferability of their results will be appreciated.

The idea of the Euro-Mediterranean region makes possible an intermediate space between States and the global economy. In this field, the TRESMED3 project can be an important tool for sharing good practices and as a permanent scenario for dialogue between civil societies on the two sides of the Mediterranean.

Cross-cutting concepts such as inter-culturality, pragmatism and equal opportunities were covered. These should be incorporated in policies in the fields of the economy, employment, social affairs, education, demography, civil participation, the viability of the pillars of social security and health and the environment, amongst others.

The importance of "freedom of knowledge" was stressed. More university exchanges and/or twinning between universities were proposed to allow the two shores of the Mediterranean to carry out joint reflection.

## **PROPOSALS:**

Promotion of dialogue as an instrument for peace.

Support for the creation of ESCs and similar institutions

Formal recognition of the Palestinian ESC and strengthening the relationship with Palestine and various European CES. Once Palestinians have the skills, knowledge and techniques they will be able to compete and cooperate with any society and economy worldwide. Palestinians can't restrain its economic, social growth and development to that of Israel.

Projects to assist SMEs

Promoting human capital: new professional profiles and training

Strengthening the capabilities of organised civil society

Search for new formulae to ensure that regional initiatives have an impact and the good results are shared

Creation of observation markers to ascertain the real impact of policies and for North and South to work together. Such markers must be adapted to the realities of each country, so that their results indicate where progress is, or is not, being made as planned.

Evaluate the initiatives of international organisations such as the ILO's "Global Jobs Pact", which aim to achieve stability and political and social balance

Evaluate existing institutions, such as the APEM, which has a permanent line for dialogue even at times of serious conflict amongst its members

## **MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE**

Mobility in a globalised world is no longer an occasional phenomenon but an unstoppable reality.

Mobility is a fundamental right but it is currently limited by the economic situation in Europe. European societies do not have the absorption capacity that is needed for decent migration.

Mobility must be a positive tool. In the case of voluntary mobility it leads to better employability, competitiveness and cheaper labour.

The problem that may arise is that disorganised migratory movements may wrongly receive support, with the result that migrants are unable to find a decent life in the adopted country and face obstacles for returning to their countries of origin.

It is important to provide channels for legal, organised migration, controlling flows from the countries of origin. The need was stressed, in various sessions on different

subjects, for simplification of the formalities for obtaining a Schengen visa because the current process is very long and complicated.

The economic crisis has also changed the situation of countries and their labour needs. In both the North and the South it is necessary to review and re-evaluate the European Commission Communications (2007), intergovernmental agreements and, in some cases, national regulations.

Most of those present consider that young people have an active role to play in this context. However, the main problem for young people in the Euro-Mediterranean area is to find decent employment and receive training.

It should be remembered that, in a not very distant future, Europe is likely to have a shortage of labour and that this could be supplied by countries in the South Mediterranean. It is therefore necessary to provide the necessary training linking the two shores in order to meet this need, without damaging the basic notion of fair treatment, freedom of movement and decent employment.

Based on legal migration, the following measures were proposed:

- Transferability of Social Security contributions.
- Reduction of double taxation and the inclusion of methods for tax deduction.
- Co-development accounts and reduction in the cost of sending remittances.
- Entry for people within to apply for jobs under the same conditions as national applicants, or who wish to expand, adapt or update their occupational skills.
- Measures to assist those who wish to return to their countries of origin.

There are projects under way, such as that for circular migration, which involve scientific field work and a methodology for finding out and measuring the factors that affect the arrival, stay and return of migrants. These include short-stay, medium-stay, permanent and even intermittent migration.

## **PROPOSALS**

At the Final Conference for the Project it should be the young people themselves, fairly represented from the regional and gender viewpoints, who talk in a panel discussion about the economic and social problems affecting them.

The promotion of training structures in countries of origin with hiring in destinations.

The possibility of using mobility to update or renew knowledge, with the possibility of returning without any bureaucratic obstacles.

Analysis of the viability of creating an observatory on the quality of migration with updated economic, social and human information..

Circular migration as a tool for mutual benefit.

Transferability of contributions.

[Review of policies to integrate migrants to prevent problems from arising amongst second or third generations.](#)

## **THE ROLE OF ESCs IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC STABILITY AND OF CRISIS**

One of the functions of ESCs is to issue reports on all bills of law or draft regulations on matters that fall within their scope. The law makes it obligatory for such drafts to be sent to the ESCs and this is the usual way in which such Councils can influence decision-making.

Moreover, the ESCs are able, at their own initiative, to draw up reports in order to update, anticipate or submit opinion on matters which may have not yet been through parliamentary proceedings but have been tabled as emerging topics on which prospecting needs to be carried out.

Institutionalised social dialogue is characterised by its permanence, as opposed to external social dialogue which may go through stages of high levels of consensus or of temporary breakdown. Perhaps what is most important is that the lack of institutionalised social dialogue is conflict, because in times of breakdown such a dialogue can help get things moving within organisations in order to facilitate the resumption of the external social dialogue.

It is important to distinguish between the consultative work of social dialogue in the framework of the Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions from the political work of reaching agreement at the negotiation table, in order to avoid any reluctance when promoting this type of Institution.

The ESCs act freely and, in principle, without any governmental influence.

It is also important to note that the ESCs can carry out monitoring of the impact of policies approved by the legislative power.

Interest on the part of the Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions in participating in the Union for the Mediterranean in order to promote institutionalised social dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area is undoubtedly already an instrument for stability in the region.

It is considered of importance to strengthen international labour regulations and social dialogue because in times of crisis it is vital that social dialogue, including collective bargaining, should be encouraged and respected. Social dialogue is a mechanism for drawing up policies in line with national priorities.

Social dialogue is a tool in times of crisis for proposing reforms and drawing up alternatives and changes in the production model because, in the absence of dialogue, fluid negotiations and a will to reach agreements, what prevails is the rule of the strongest.

Thanks to the sharing of experiences amongst the different representatives of the ESCs and Similar Institutions during this session, the need was expressed for the drafting of a report assessing the impact of the opinions requested from the ESCs in their consultative work for governments.

## PROPOSALS

Drafting of a report assessing the impact of ESC opinions in their consultative role for governments.

Support and technical assistance for newly-created ESCs and for those still becoming established.

Consider ESCs and Similar Institutions as consultative bodies that enrich the UPM process, because they provide the opinion of the civil societies they represent.

To use institutionalised social dialogue as an element that may help when external social dialogue has broken down. Institutionalised social dialogue has to help achieve fair distribution of efforts in times of crisis.

Training for young people within ESCs and Similar Institutions so that in a near future they can take over from their predecessors.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY.

In comparison with the mechanisms for technical assistance used until 2007 – based on project-based cooperation, since then the system used has been the “financial tool of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, or ENP.

The European Union has made a strategic change, the results of which have not yet been noticed. Large sums of money have been allocated to technical assistance although the economic and social reality has not yet been transformed.

At present there are cross-border cooperation programmes using structural fund mechanisms and programmes for the Mediterranean Basin which can in turn be subdivided into strategic projects (2-5m Euros) and standard projects (up to 2m Euros).

Technical assistance has also been extended to programmes which to date were only for countries applying for membership:

- TAIEX: technical assistance programme to help the public administrations of countries in the South find out about the *acquis communautaire*.
- SIGMA: technical assistance programme aiming to assess reforms and help design new legislation.
- INSTITUTIONAL TWINNING also between public administrations.

The ESCs and Similar Institutions might act by creating visibility for social dialogue and through collaboration in such a way as to promote development of the South to achieve a united common area.

## **PROPOSALS**

Drafting of a report on the real impact of technical assistance on countries receiving it

Drawing up a strategy to make institutionalised social dialogue visible so that people know about its potential

Comparative institutional analysis in the EuroMediterranean Region