

# **Tempus III: 3rd phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education, Mediterranean countries (2000-2006)**

2002/0037(CNS) - 12/02/2002 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE:** to include MEDA countries in the TEMPUS III programme. **CONTENT:** the 1995 Barcelona Declaration recognises the strategic relationship the EU needs to foster with non-EU Mediterranean countries. Bearing this in mind the European Union agreed in 1996 to the setting up of the MEDA programme the aim of which is to offer financial assistance and aid to non-EU Mediterranean countries - covering every spectrum of civil society. THE EU's educational policy towards MEDA was, until 1997, largely channelled through the 1992 MED-Campus programme the objective of which was to set up co-operation projects managed by networks of universities in both northern and southern Mediterranean countries. However, due to managerial difficulties, the programme was wound up. As a result a substantial hole has emerged in the EU's educational policy towards the MEDA countries. Yet, one essential element of the Barcelona Declaration is to: "Develop human resources, promote understanding between cultures and rapprochement of the peoples in the Euro-Mediterranean region as well as to develop free and flourishing civil societies (social, cultural, and human partnership)". The objective of this proposal, therefore, is to amend the TEMPUS III programme and to extend its provisions to the following Mediterranean partners: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Lebanon. TEMPUS, an EU programme catering mostly for Central and Eastern European Countries, is designed to facilitate the development of higher education; to promote understanding between and rapprochement of cultures; and to develop free and flourishing civil societies. The main implementing bodies of TEMPUS are the Joint European Projects (JEP). They act as the principle inter-university co-operation instruments. In addition to JEPs the TEMPUS programme provides individual grants to teachers, researchers, trainers, university administrators, senior ministerial officials, education planners and other experts in training from eligible countries or from the Community, visits to promote the quality of higher education and training in eligible countries. These grants may be used for a variety of activities ranging from the development of courses and teaching material to teaching, research and training assignments including staff development. The actual revision of the TEMPUS III Decision would be minor. Nevertheless, in addition to amendments of a purely technical nature, the Commission is proposing two amendments of substance namely: - the addition of a new objective which aims to promote understanding between and rapprochement of cultures to develop free and flourishing civil societies. This would incorporate part of the Barcelona Declaration into the framework of the TEMPUS III Decision; - "Research" and "researchers" would be added to the Annex heading "Individual Grants"; - to extend the programme by 6 months to the 31 December 2006. Such a step would not require any financial provisions since the TEMPUS-MEDA programme would be funded from existing allocations of the MEDA programme. It is hoped that the merging of the TEMPUS-MEDA educational programme will lead, not only to strengthened educational tools, but also to a greater understanding of and tolerance towards diverging cultures and faiths.