# Euro-Mediterranean relations: meeting of Foreign Ministers, 22-23 April 2002, Valencia

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PURPOSE : to present a communication on the preparation of the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign ministers meeting in Valencia, 22-23 April 2002. CONTENT : the Ministerial meeting in Valencia takes place at a crucial time in Euro-Mediterranean relations. On the eve of decisions on the next enlargement of the Union, and following the turmoil caused by the events of 11 September 2001, the partners need to give a clear political signal of their mutual commitment to build a zone of stability and prosperity by deepening and strengthening the partnership begun at Barcelona in 1995. The Commission proposes the following recommendations be integrated in an Action Plan to be agreed at the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in Valencia in April 2002, based on the following elements: 1) Political security : - Ministers should reaffirm their strong commitment to deepening their political relationship. The political dialogue should be strengthened possibly through holding meetings at the level of Political Directors between the annual Foreign Ministers' meetings; - Ministers should stress their determination to enhance their work together to improve respect for human rights and democracy, on the basis of internationally agreed commitments and agree on a concrete set of actions to ensure progress in these fields; - Ministers should send a clear signal of their solidarity in the fight against terrorism and agree a series of concrete measures. 2) Freedom, Justice and Governance : - partners should finalise discussions and conclude a framework agreement providing for concrete co-operation measures on freedom, justice and governance focussing on judicial co-operation; the fight against drug trafficking; organised crime and terrorism; and dealing with matters related to migration, notably in the fight against illegal immigration, the equal treatment of legally established migrants and the facilitation of travel for those on normal business. 3) Social, Cultural and Human : - Ministers should agree in Valencia to create a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to promote a dialogue between cultures and civilisations in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Foundation would be funded by contributions from Member States, the Commission and Mediterranean partners. Ministers should also agree to the early adoption of proposals for participation in the Tempus programme. Preparations for participation should be undertaken during 2002 to ensure the success of the first call for proposals to be launched by the end of 2002. 4) Civil Society : - Ministers should agree to propose an analysis of the most cost-effective way of supporting and ensuring the further involvement of civil society at the earliest possible stage in the development of the partnership. 5) Economic and Financial : - Ministers should welcome the major progress made towards the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area and recognise that its creation is now irreversible; - They should express strong political support to the Agadir Declaration as a key initiative towards liberalising South-South trade and achieving closer economic integration; the EU shouldconfirm its willingness to help the partners to conclude an agreement between them, if possible in the first half of 2002; - Ministers should welcome the technical decisions taken in the field of trade (rules of origin) which will strengthen regional integration among the Mediterranean partners and open further prospects for co-operation among enterprises in the partners and those in the EU and the rest of Europe; - Ministers should call for further efforts to achieve reciprocal liberalisation of trade in agricultural products. The Commission will shortly present a Communication on the creation of a new financial facility or European/international bank. Ministers should consider the recommendations contained in that Communication at their meeting in Valencia. - Ministers should support the development of regional strategies to link key infrastructures in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications; - Ministers should stress the importance of national sustainable development strategies and should endorse the need to development environmental integration strategies for the different sectoral priorities of the partnership. 6) Institutional Agreements : - EU Member States should seek to find ways of accelerating ratification procedures for Association Agreements with the aim of completing ratification within a two year period; - The role of the Euro-Mediterranean

Committee as the steering Committee for the partnership develops further in the association process, the Committee should focus its work more closely on acquis related business; - The dialogue on economic policy should be strengthened at both bilateral and regional levels.