

THE GREATER MEDITERRANEAN
Manifest for
Alliances among Civilizations

1. The *FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO* has as its main objective the institution of a *Coalition of Shared Values and Interests* among the countries which, through the centuries, have acted around the Mediterranean – such as the Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic cultures – and which today, in continuing their social and cultural reciprocal influences, represent the area of the “Greater Mediterranean”: a tradition of synergies, sometimes tumultuous and troubled, but from which an indissoluble interdependence arose, stronger than all contrasts, hostilities, and wars.
2. The *FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO*, which during the last ten years has made valuable these synergies, giving them importance, wishes now to go on in the name of peace and cooperation among the populations and in respect of the fundamental rights set forth in the UN charter. It is for this reason that it publicizes the “Manifest for Alliances among Civilizations”, in order to assemble most women and men, of organizations and Institutions of the countries belonging to the *Greater Mediterranean* and to set common targets and effective means to transform the “Dialogue among Cultures” into an “Alliance among Civilizations”.
3. In order to realize these “Alliances among Civilizations” of the *Greater Mediterranean*, a subject both historical and strategic which works in cooperation with the countries of the Middle East, the Gulf and the Black Sea, it is necessary promote international understanding through the promotion of awareness of the social, cultural, and self-identification realities that exist in the *Greater Mediterranean*. It is also necessary to encourage a closer interaction among these realities in respect of fundamental human rights and equality of the sexes and to develop human resources and intellectual cooperation in multidisciplinary fields.
4. The *Greater Mediterranean* has long been fraught with tensions, crisis and conflicts that have torn the fabric of an otherwise peaceful and prosperous cohabitation. Fresh outbreaks of terrorism and the risk of a schism between those who believe in dialogue and those who favour a ‘clash of civilisations’ mandate increased engagement of governments and calls from civil society to promote a *coalition of shared values and interests*.
5. The Coalition should act on the premise of developing models and programmes for cultural and material growth within the region, based on the concepts of equal dignity and mutual respect among different cultural identities – acknowledging that these peoples have their own principles and values, but at the same time must be open to exchange and discussion. All this work is based on the principles of equality, sovereignty, and dignity of peoples, and it works in respect of pluralism and cultural diversity. Furthermore, these actions are committed to the principle that fundamental human rights – including gender equality – constitute a common denominator among all peoples.
6. The reconciliation in the *Greater Mediterranean* needs a search for *Solidarity in Development*. Young people must receive education and professional training in order to reduce obstacles to their personal development. A great effort is necessary to permit the equal inclusion of young graduates into the working world: to this end it is necessary to start

a specific action aiming at identifying individual formative needs in relation to new opportunities in the labour market of the *Greater Mediterranean*.

7. The openness to the global has not to damage local cultures and will have instead to merge tradition, modernity, and innovation. The engagement in a dialogue is envisioned in respect of new politicises where mutual cultural respect supports the defence of individual human rights. This is, in fact, the new frontier of social experimentation, in which intensive migratory processes have brought about a co-habitation of different religious and cultural groups.
8. The diffusion of prosperity requires the promotion of a labour division and the development of comparative advantages. This is the climate to support the investments. The protection of people's rights, of the weaker social classes, and of less-favoured areas, must be undertaken in consideration of market rules, combining efficiency and solidarity
9. The construction of a Mediterranean society, solid in shared principles and values, is incompatible with the so-called "clash of civilizations", the use of force, and the violent subversion of international political and social order. Those who proclaim evil ideology, those who instigate division, those who incite the usurpation of power must be morally isolated, especially if we are to eliminate future conflict.
10. The Mediterranean, Europe and Islam have a crucial interest in following a path different from the imposition of external forms of government and to resort of terrorism and violent subversion. Collaboration, understanding and solidarity are the only ways forward for all the three. We must not forget that European civilization has a great debt to Islam, since Western Europe owes its Renaissance in large part to the writings and technology of Islamic civilization. Now is the moment to pay this debt. But we aren't, unfortunately, following this road. *Modernity* is often offered to Islam in a way that doesn't promote equality but rather through methods that bring about its submission. Therefore modernity undermines itself even in Europe. The destiny of Islam and Europe are more connected than believed.
11. Muslim societies in the Middle and the Far East react to western dynamics of globalization with hostility and sometimes violence. *Islam* is a common denominator by which all the Muslim world is represented, in spite of its diversities: a general concept, in which the historical western imagination – developed through the centuries – makes unconscious implications converge. With this term we represent a *society where the State is despotic and civil life is ruled by the religious laws of Koran*. But also *modernity* is a common denominator, it is the reflection of a society based on human, and not on divine right, on juridical equality and equal accessibility to political representation. As *Islam* is the static representation of a dynamic and diversified reality, so *modernity* is the static abstraction of diversified realities. *Modernity* is therefore not identified with West or with present-day Europe. It is a project of society born in Europe during the Enlightenment and developed during Positivism, its basilar principles are essential for contemporary lifestyle. However, if the Islamic world has to face problems deriving from a lack of modernity, interpreted as the affirmation of democracy and of individual right, the West suffers from its *excess of modernity*: speediness, lack of solidarity, rationality, anomy of collective environment are the new problems of a post-modern society.
12. The problem of *Islam and modernity* is not the opposition of these two forces but a problem of three terms *Islam*, the *West* and *modernity*: two historic realities and a critical common area; a puzzle in which each sees in the eyes of the other the expression of what he himself

is missing; a shared universe in which the logic of the current world powers render Europe and the Mediterranean ever more to the periphery of the common area of governance. If the question, presented in two terms, creates a political opposition, with three terms it does not put *Islam* and the *West* in contrast but mandates a political solidarity to move together in parallel evolution and accordance toward the same end, even if their starting points are diverse, the distances of their ends and objectives. A necessary collaboration is not only in the interest of Islam but also in that of the West since the West in this process does not advance linearly but it has its pauses and setbacks.

13. This collaboration is the founding element to construct “Alliances among Civilizations”. Further, it recognises that civil society within the countries of the *Greater Mediterranean* – including local communities, universities, private organisations, professional orders, unions, NGOs, network associations, the media, etc. – is the key factor to progress regarding human rights, political security, culture, economy, science, sustainable development, and dissemination of information.
14. The *Greater Mediterranean* is an ancient geographic and political space, within which are found the needs for inter-cultural dialogue, peace, integration between innovation and tradition, and individual rights and social solidarity. Until now, numerous initiatives undertaken for the pacification and the development of the area have produced only partial and inadequate progress. The feeling of hope that the region experienced with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (activated by the European Union in 1995 as part of the Barcelona Process) and with other initiatives today are in a stalemate. The *Greater Mediterranean* must cease to be the *object* of political programs and strategies designed abroad and instead formulate its own strategies as direct expressions of the needs of its peoples: therefore, it is necessary to remain aware of the risks of altering structure and of marginalising the Mediterranean region, and to undertake to the creation of “Alliances among Civilizations” of the *Greater Mediterranean*, even to not create artificial barriers in the Arabic world, separating the Mediterranean countries from those of the Gulf.
15. The *Greater Mediterranean* does not aim to stretch the concept of “Mediterraneanness” to a larger area, but it is the contestation of the rhetoric of a mental space in which the differences and common visions become annulled by a superficial and artificial representation. Our *Greater Mediterranean* is made up of different people who may be in conflict but who nonetheless want social justice and democracy. This is what the *Greater Mediterranean* is about; it is not about an abstract entity stuck in antiquity, but about people of the 21st Century who want to govern global processes in order to not be devoured and subordinated.
16. Recognizing that the West and Islam are born from the same cradle is not an act of subordination but the recognition of the truth on which the Alliance among Civilizations is built, in which the Mediterranean, Europe, and Islam constitute fundamental pillars on which to construct their future, only if they can transform the “Identity of Being” into an “Identity of Doing”, and only if, all together, we are in the position to transform “Love of Power” – an omnipresent idea – into “Power of Love”: an indispensable element to secure shared development and peace not only in the *Greater Mediterranean* but on a global scale.
17. The *FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO* – since 1994 – has been among the main supporters of Dialogue among Cultures, even through its presence in numerous international organizations: it is Head of the Italian Network of the *Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures*, funding member of the non-governmental

Euromed Platform, member of the *Euromed Youth Platform* and observer of *Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly*. It supports the UN “*Alliance of Civilizations*” programme through its member. It is an organization that is free from bureaucracy and in which every resource is invested directly in the field: the great number of partnership accords signed, and of partnerships with civil society and with institutions active in different projects are indications of the high impact reached and of the concrete results achieved.

18. The FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO, with its network of organizations and institutions of the *Greater Mediterranean* countries, believes it is urgent – especially in this difficult moment characterized by new misunderstandings and divisions between the Islamic world and the West – to bring all the forces and the resources together, in order to make concrete actions able to construct a network of “*Alliances among Civilizations*” in the *Greater Mediterranean*, which can be the base for the construction of the UN project of “*Alliance of Civilizations*”.

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