THE MEDITERRANEAN CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Assemblée des Citoyens et Citoyennes de la Méditerranée

Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly

تجمع مواطني ومواطنات المتوسط

MEDITERRANEAN CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

SURVEY REPORT

October, 2014

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FOREWORD

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nevila Xhindi
MCA's Balkan Pole Coordinator
Deputy Mayor of Tirana

Welcome to the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA) Survey Report 2014!

Since 2008, a group of Mediterranean citizens have committed to work towards the emergence of a Mediterranean community of people. In order to do so, they launched in 2009 the establishment of a Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly. In lieu of the complexity of the Mediterranean reality, the lack of the Mediterranean unity as a region and relatively limited synergies on the political level, the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly is not only complementary to other undertakings, but unique at the same time in its collective approach to the needs of the Mediterranean Citizens.

The MCA Survey Report 20014 marks the finalisation of a research project on the current and future perspectives of the Mediterranean region as observed by the citizens. The research applied a quantitative methodology approach, i.e. citizens' survey through online questionnaire with both structured and open questions. The survey was designed and conducted by a group of researchers, part of the Tirana MCA Circle in Albania, and distributed to MCA circles' members via email in English and in French. The survey focused on the perceptions of citizens in regards to the economic, political and social situation of the Mediterranean region. In this regard, the survey is not an opinion poll and it does not attempt to capture the public opinions of the general public in the Mediterranean region. It concentrates instead on the perceptions of individuals, man and women, who are members of the MCA circles. The first part of the report introduces the sample used in the survey and its characteristics and the second part concentrates on the analysis of the MCA's status and future development, including concerns about current limitations and future potentials of the MCA.

This MCA Survey Report 2014 provides the MCA with a much needed tool for a better understanding of the Mediterranean citizens' views, expectations, concerns and values of Euro-Mediterranean societies; redefine new programing and instruments with respect to education, interaction, mobility, the use of new technologies, and further commitment towards young people. Furthermore, it will help MCA to assess the impact of the increased dialogue efforts, to bridge gaps, narrow intersections and overlaps, and reinforce opportunities for synergies.

Last but not least, in my view the results of the MCA Survey 2014 presented in this Report are encouraging and clearly show that we have to gear up our efforts to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions in the Mediterranean region and, in the process, help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. The Survey Report confirms that the Mediterranean people wish for building on a shared and meaningful space to live together in mutual respect and peace.

I am positive that the Report, and its recommendations, will help MCA, policy-makers, opinion-leaders and civil society, to address some of the challenges ahead and reinforce the MCA's work in connections to other societies.

I invite you to read this report and I encourage you to share it with colleagues. I believe this is a valuable resource that should be of interest to readers throughout the Mediterranean region.

AVANT-PROPOS

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nevila Xhindi
MCA's Balkan Pole Coordinateur
Adjout ou Maire de Tirana

Bienvenue au Rapport d'Enquête de l'Assemblée des Citoyens de la Méditerranée (ACM), 2014!

Depuis 2008, un groupe de citoyens et de citoyennes de la Méditerranée se sont engagés à participer activement à l'émergence d'une communauté méditerranéenne des peuples. Pour ce faire, ils ont inauguré le processus de construction d'une Assemblée des Citoyens et Citoyennes de la Méditerranée (ACM). Ce processus est fondé sur des valeurs démocratiques de liberté, de paix, de respect de la diversité culturelle et de responsabilité environnementale. Il ambitionne de favoriser l'émergence d'une parole et d'une action citoyenne commune, par la mise en œuvre de rencontres permanentes disposant de méthodes et d'outils novateurs. L'ACM, qui se veut complémentaire d'autres expériences existantes, repose néanmoins tout entière sur un constat : c'est principalement par l'action et l'implication des citoyens et citoyennes qu'une « communauté de destin » solidaire et positive pourra se mettre en place au sein de l'espace méditerranéen. L'Assemblée des Citoyens et Citoyennes de la Méditerranée n'est pas une entreprise réservée à un petit nombre de personnes, à un cercle d'initiés. Au contraire, la démarche d'ensemble nécessite de rassembler au mieux, de recueillir l'adhésion d'un grand nombre et d'une grande variété de personnes.

Le rapport d'enquête ACM 20014 marque la finalisation d'un projet de recherche sur les perspectives actuelles et futures de la région méditerranéenne telle que observées par les citoyens. La recherche est fondée sur une approche méthodologique quantitative, utilisant des questionnaires en ligne avec des questions structurées et ouvertes pour les citoyens. L'enquête a été conçue et réalisée par un groupe de chercheurs, une partie de la ACM Cercle Tirana en Albanie, et distribuée aux membres des cercles ACM par email en anglais et en français. L'enquête portait sur les perceptions des citoyens en ce qui concerne la situation économique, politique et sociale de la région méditerranéenne. À cet égard, l'enquête n'est pas un sondage d'opinion et elle ne cherche pas à capturer les opinions publiques du grand public dans la région méditerranéenne.

Elle se concentre plutôt sur les perceptions des individus, hommes et femmes, qui sont membres des cercles ACM. La première partie du rapport présente l'échantillon utilisé pour l'enquête et ses caractéristiques et la deuxième partie se concentre sur l'analyse de situation et l'avenir développement de la ACM, y compris des questions au sujet des limitations actuelles et les potentialités futures de la ACM.

Ce rapport d'enquête ACM 2014, fournit ACM avec un outil indispensable pour une meilleure compréhension des points de vue, des attentes, des préoccupations et des valeurs des citoyens méditerranéens des sociétés euro-méditerranéennes; redéfini la nouvelle programmation et les instruments en matière d'éducation, de l'interaction, de la mobilité, de l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies, et plus de l'engagement envers les jeunes. En outre, il aidera ACM à évaluer l'impact des efforts augmentés du dialogue, à combler les lacunes, les intersections étroites et les chevauchements, et à renforcer les possibilités de synergies.

Last but not least, à mon avis, les résultats de l'Enquête ACM 2014 présentées dans ce rapport encouragent et montrent clairement que nous devons faire des efforts à fin d'améliorer la compréhension et les relations de coopération entre les nations et les peuples à travers les cultures et les religions dans la région méditerranéenne et, dans le processus, contrer les forces qui alimentent la polarisation et l'extrémisme. Le rapport d'enquête confirme que les peuples de la Méditerranée souhaitent la construction d'un espace commun et un sens de vivre ensemble dans le respect mutuel et la paix.

Je suis convaincue que le rapport et ses recommandations, aideront ACM, les décideurs politiques, les leaders d'opinion et de la société civile, à répondre à certains des défis à venir et à renforcer le travail de la MCA en connexions d'autres sociétés.

Je vous invite à lire ce rapport et je vous encourage à le partager entre vos collègues. Je crois que cela est une ressource précieuse qui doit être d'intérêt pour les lecteurs dans toute la région méditerranéenne.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aim of the report

This report presents the findings of the research project on the public perceptions on the current and future perspectives regarding the Mediterranean region. The research draws from the developments in the Euro-Mediterranean process since the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 as well as from the objectives of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA). The particular focus of the research is the efforts of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly to contribute towards the Mediterranean progress as well as the role of the citizens in enhancing democratic processes and socio-economic development. The research explores the perceptions of the citizens of the Mediterranean region in regards to three principle strategic areas for the region: economic situation; political context and democracy; social, human and cultural affairs.

Methodology and sample

The research project applies a quantitative methodology of citizens' survey based on online questionnaires with structured and open questions. The final sample of the survey is 73 respondents, all are MCA members. 66% of the respondents belong to the Charter Signatories of the MCA. The vast majority of the respondents have been members of the MCA for more than one year and therefore they have a good knowledge of the MCA challenges and have been able to consolidate their thoughts regarding the future development of the MCA. This is combined with the new MCA members that provide a fresh perspective regarding the current situation and future perspective of MCA. Respondents come from a total of 18 countries and Cataluña in the Mediterranean and represent all MCA circles.

Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly: Current limitations

Following the sample characteristics, the MCA Survey Report 2014 provides a thorough analysis regarding the Mediterranean citizens' perceptions on the current affairs and future development of the MCA itself. 62% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens think that the MCA is only partially meeting its set objectives, which are: (a) contribute to build a sustainable Mediterranean area of peace, development, solidarity and shared prosperity between its people; (b) take part in the emergence of a new governance, truly based on dialogue and sharing, in the Mediterranean area; (c) act in favour of economic and political integration at the regional level; (d) work towards overcoming mutual fears to give a sense of human, political, cultural, environmental and economic unity to a community of Mediterranean peoples; (e) help communities communicate with each other. In the same line, 64% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens declare that their personal expectations as an MCA member are partially met.

The reasons behind these perceptions relate to the limitations faced by the MCA itself as well as by the perceived constraints of individuals in the capacity of members of the MCA circles. In this sense, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens highlight the following limitations currently faced by the MCA and by its members: (i) internal capacities of the MCA; (ii) concrete integrated actions; (iii) frequency of meetings/interaction and communication; (iv) engagement with the wider public; (v) political lobbying and advocacy; (vi) Intercultural dialogue and language barriers; (vii) identity construction; (viii) national and international political context.

Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly: Future development

Considerations about the limitations of the current situation of the MCA lead to the identification of the future key priority areas and themes for action for MCA. The concrete suggestions for the future of the MCA as per the main limitations highlighted above are:

- **The development of internal capacities and human resources are:**
    - Development of fundraising strategies and plans to generate financial resources;
    - Allowing flexibility of circles to raise funds and generate financial resources for action at the local level;
    - MCA should become a legal entity and establish an institutional status;
    - Development of IT competences and infrastructure at each circle;
    - MCA should be formally established in all countries of the Mediterranean;
    - Professional resources and opening up to other professional background;
    - Open up to work with other actors at the national and international level.

- Development of concrete actions should include:
  - Youth employment programme;
  - Social transformation and activism;
  - Joint projects on Mediterranean issues;
  - Concrete cultural events to promote the identity of the Mediterranean;
  - Directly involve in sensitive and hotspots discussion such as ISIS, Syria, etc.
- Improvement of the circles' interaction and communication:
  - Establishment of new circles;
  - Holding more frequent meetings amongst circles and members;
  - Promote and strengthen collaboration among different circles and members of countries and regions;
  - Focus on networking and organisation of activities in advance;
  - Joint seminars, conferences, roundtables with other institutions, not only with MCA's circles;
  - Organisation of bilateral activities;
  - Organisation of activities at the local level;
  - Joint seminars, conferences, and roundtables with other institutions, not only with MCA's circles.
- Improvement of the engagement with the wider public:
  - Involvement of youth and other social community groups;
  - Development of initiatives and projects to engage with the wider public;
  - Involvement of key sources in the community to engage the public and raise awareness about the MCA;
  - Adoption of PR techniques;
  - Invite the wider public to MCA events;
  - Getting closer to citizens through online and new media;
  - Obtain visibility in national and international media.

- Political lobbying and advocacy:
  - Cooperation with local and central government;
  - More lobbying at local and international level;
  - Being more present in mainstream media.

The interesting point is the suggestion of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens for MCA to engage in higher education, research and student mobility area including adult lifelong learning. The issue of democracy remains a priority and it includes human rights at its core. More concretely, the themes for future actions for the MCA suggested by the surveyed Mediterranean citizens are:

- Democracy and political developments
  - Human rights;
  - Women rights;
  - LGBT rights;
  - Social movements and activism;
  - Religious conflict;
  - Corruption;
  - Fundamentalism and multiple crises.
- Social issues and social progress
  - Social securities;
  - Social inequalities;
  - Migration, refugees and immigration;
  - Fight against social poverty and inequalities.
- Economic development
  - Economic crises;
  - Agriculture and rural-urban dynamics;
  - Environmental protection: maritime.
- Education and research
  - Erasmus Mediterranean;
  - Adult lifelong learning;
  - Education, health and development;
  - Public higher education;
  - Facilitation for students' exchange and mobility.

Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly: Future status

The surveyed citizens propose that in order to overcome its limitations and further contribute to the region MCA should become a Mediterranean movement and focus on advocacy as well as visibility of actions and cooperation with other actors in the region such as public institutions, civil society, higher education, local government and community groups. 54% of the respondents highly recommend MCA to become and international non-Governmental organization. However, 27 % indicate that the status of MCA should not change. The surveyed citizens think that the relationship between MCA and other organisations in the region should be based on concrete participatory actions such as implementation of mutual initiatives and project, participation in joint meeting, forums, conferences and publications.

Despite the type of relationship established, MCA should primarily maintain its independence on decision-making process. This approach does not underestimate the importance of dialogue with other Mediterranean organizations, however it emphasize that MCA has a lot to do in terms of strengthening its identity and internal structures before thinking of engaging itself into bilateral relations. Respondents believe that integrated actions and collaboration between MCA and the public sector will enable the exchange of information and knowledge as well as the necessary reforms to take place in respective countries. Another highlighted type of relationship proposed by surveyed members is the advisory relationship between MCA and public institutions in the Mediterranean by means of consultations, exchange of information and lobbying.

Perceptions on economic situation

The surveyed Mediterranean citizens are pessimist of their current economic, political and social situation with the majority of the respondents pointing out that the current situation is bad or is deteriorating. In terms of the economic situation, some of the main issues highlighted by the surveyed MCA members are: unemployment, public debt, lack of social policies, low economic growth, and lack of investments. The main causes behind the current economic situation are considered to be: the government and its economic/financial policies (54%); the economic and financial system (46%); governmental weakness (45%); global financial crises (31%). In this framework, the ways to improve the situation

suggested by the surveyed members are: changing of the national economic-financial policies (65%), with an emphasis to the policies for economic and social development; war against corruption and informality (50%); the empowerment of the integration and regional Mediterranean cooperation (26%).

Perceptions on the political situation

As far as the political situation is concerned, the pessimistic view persists and it relates to issues such as: the corruption in governmental settings, accompanied by the lack of transparency and accountability in public administration (69%); the weak or non-existing channels between citizens' need and government policies (54%); human rights (28%) and dialogue amongst political parties (23%). As indicated corruption in governmental settings is the main most important issue on the political situation in the Mediterranean, while government in national level is the principal actor for this situation. 61% of the respondents believe that the government at national level is predominantly responsible for the political situation in Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, 41% of the respondents point to the lack of well-functioning structure of civil society as well as the weakness of political parties' leadership capacities.

Considering that civil society plays an important role in checking government excesses and helps uphold human rights and democracy, 61% of all respondents think that Civil Society infrastructure and regional cooperation would be the solution for political issues faced in the countries. The civil society has been developed significantly in the Mediterranean and has been active in topics such as human rights, gender equality, youth participation and citizen engagement. Most notably social movements and civil society are considered as key actors of the Arab Spring and the current political transformations in the region.

Perceptions on the social situation

The development of the social dimension in the region is not only interlinked with the political and economic dimensions, but it is also a guiding principle in the sense that it provides for an appropriate balance between the free market and trade area in the region and the development of a common social area ensuring cohesion and integration within this economic area. The social, cultural and human context in the Mediterranean region is very complex and even

though the values of individuals and community groups demonstrate positive signs of evolution towards dialogue, understanding and coexistence, others indicate the risks for fragmentation and exclusion. The pessimistic view noted in regards to the social situation reflects the citizens' concerns on issues such as: employment opportunities and labour relations (57%); education and research (54%); youth and human capital development and mobility (39%); good governance (20%) and development of civil society (18%).

The surveyed Mediterranean citizens (74%) note that the national governments are proving less capable of delivering on their pledges to the citizens. This is then followed by the lack of appropriate public, social and economic policies to address current and emerging social issues (33%). The regional partnerships, being the EMP, EU, or the Union for the Mediterranean or the Arab League State, are also considered as actors responsible to the current social situation (14%). Some of the concerns here refer to the limited policy convergence and regional synergies due to the multi-centred EU policymaking, the challenges of the multilateralism and differentiation approaches of the EMP and UfM and the complex historical context of the region as a whole.

The surveyed Mediterranean citizens recognise that past legacies and citizenship apathy as well as limited activism and citizenship engagement are factors that affect not only the current social situation, but also the political and economic ones. The challenges faced in the region in terms human affairs, cultural differences and identity constructions, are issues related with the overall profound transformations of the contemporary society related to the advancements in technology, information and communication, which are challenges faced by other societies as well, and not particularly to the Mediterranean.

The suggestion is that the first thing to do to improve the social situation is to increase accountability and transparency of the governmental organisations (49%), which is followed by the need to strengthen the cooperation and interrelations between the government, business, academic and civil society (44%). Improvement and promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity is seen by 22% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens as instruments to improve the social situation. However, the cultural aspect of the social dimension of the EMP is the most challenging one. On one

hand, Mediterranean citizens demonstrate a genuine interest towards more cultural exchanges as tools of better understanding and coexistence. One the other hand, conceiving cultural diversity as a possible threat to the social stability of the society hinders the will and actions towards more intercultural exchanges.

Future of the region: Euro-Mediterranean and Mediterranean

One of the main achievements of the EMP and the Barcelona Declaration has been the consolidation of the terms 'Mediterranean' and 'Euro-Mediterranean' into political and analytical categories. This survey also investigates how citizens identify themselves with these political and analytical categories. As such almost half of all members (43%) identify themselves as citizens of Mediterranean, rather than citizen of Euro-Mediterranean or European Union. However, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens align the integration process of the region as both a Euro-Mediterranean and as a Mediterranean integration with only 1% difference in favour of the Euro-Mediterranean integration. In this light, when it comes to the future development path of the region, the surveyed members prioritize Euro-Mediterranean integration over Mediterranean integration with a slight difference of 3%.

Finally, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 constituted an ambitious and multilateral initiative to work towards the construction of a Euro-Mediterranean region. This survey on the perceptions of the Mediterranean citizens shows that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation (process and dialogue) is conceived as mainly formal and procedural rather than about substance and concrete action. This implies low policy convergence and limited regional synergies.

The debate regarding the most appropriate model for the partnership building and integration in the Mediterranean region is ongoing. In practice there are three main initiatives that are based on three different models: the EMP based on multilateralism; the ENP based on EU-centeredness and the UfM based on flexibility and differentiation. It is thus difficult to assert whether multilateralism partnership works better than differentiation approach or the EU-centeredness one and it is necessary to examine this question with empirical research in regards to specific policy areas in the region.

SOMMAIRE EXECUTIF

Objectif du rapport

Ce rapport présente les résultats du projet de recherche sur les perceptions du public concernant les perspectives actuelles et futures de la région méditerranéenne. Cette recherche part des développements du processus Euro-méditerranéen depuis la déclaration de Barcelone en 1995 aussi bien que des objectifs de l'Assemblée des Citoyens Méditerranéens (ACM). La recherche est particulièrement focalisée sur les efforts de l'Assemblée des citoyens méditerranéens pour contribuer au progrès méditerranéen aussi bien que sur le rôle des citoyens dans le renforcement des processus démocratiques et le développement socio-économique. La recherche explore les perceptions des citoyens de la région méditerranéenne sur les trois secteurs stratégiques principaux pour la région : situation économique; contexte politique et démocratie ; affaires sociales, humaines et culturelles.

Méthodologie et échantillon

Le projet de recherche applique une méthodologie quantitative de l'enquête des citoyens basée sur les questionnaires en ligne avec des questions structurées et des questions ouvertes. L'échantillon final de l'enquête est composé de 73 répondants, tous sont des membres de l'ACM. 66% des répondants appartiennent aux signataires de la Charte de l'ACM. La grande majorité des répondants ont été des membres de l'ACM pour plus d'un an et donc ils ont une bonne connaissance des défis de l'ACM et ont pu consolider leurs pensées concernant le futur développement de l'ACM. Ceci est combiné avec les nouveaux membres de l'ACM qui apportent une perspective nouvelle concernant la situation actuelle et l'avenir de l'ACM. Les répondants viennent de 18 pays de la Méditerranée en total, et la Catalogne, et représentent tous les cercles de l'ACM.

L'Assemblée des citoyens de la Méditerranée: Limitations actuelles

Les raisons derrière ces perceptions sont liées aux limitations dont l'ACM elle-même fait face aussi bien qu'aux contraintes perçues par les personnes en qualité de membres des cercles de l'ACM. Dans ce sens, les citoyens méditerranéens interrogées soulignent les limitations suivantes rencontrées par l'ACM et ses membres: (i) capacités internes de l'ACM; (ii) actions intégrées concrètes; (iii) fréquence des réunions/interaction et communication; (iv) engagement d'un public plus large; (v) lobbying politique et défense des

intérêts; (vi) dialogue entre les cultures et barrières linguistiques; (vii) construction d'identité; (viii) contexte politique national et international.

L'Assemblée des citoyens de la Méditerranée: développement futur

Les considérations au sujet des limitations de la situation actuelle de l'ACM mènent à l'identification des futurs secteurs prioritaires et domaines d'action pour l'ACM. Les suggestions concrètes pour l'avenir de l'ACM selon les limitations principales soulignées ci-dessus sont:

- Le développement des capacités internes et des ressources humaines sont:
  - Développement des stratégies et des plans de collecte de fonds pour produire des ressources financières.
  - Autoriser la flexibilité des cercles pour collecter des fonds et produire des ressources financières pour l'action au niveau local.
  - L'ACM devrait devenir une personne morale et établir un statut institutionnel.
  - Développement des compétences informatiques et de l'infrastructure à chaque cercle.
  - L'ACM devrait être formellement établi dans tous les pays de la Méditerranée.
  - Ressources professionnelles et ouverture à d'autres parcours professionnels.
  - Disponibilité à coopérer avec d'autres acteurs au niveau local et international.

- Le développement des actions concrètes devrait inclure:
  - Le programme pour l'emploi des jeunes.
  - La transformation sociale et l'activisme.
  - Projets communs sur les questions de la Méditerranée.
  - Activités concrètes culturelles afin de promouvoir l'identité méditerranéenne.
  - Participation directe dans les discussions concernant des questions d'actualité telles que l'ISIS, la Syrie, etc.

- **Amélioration de l'interaction et de la communication entre les cercles.**
  - L'établissement de nouveaux cercles.
  - Rencontres plus fréquentes entre les cercles et les membres.
  - Promouvoir et renforcer la coopération entre les différents cercles et membres des pays de la région.
  - Mettre l'accent sur l'établissement des réseaux et l'organisation des activités en amont;
  - Séminaires, conférences, tables rondes organises conjointement avec d'autres institutions que les cercles de l'ACM.
  - Organisation des activités bilatérales.
  - Organisation des activités au niveau local.

- **Amélioration de l'engagement d'un public plus large:**
  - Implication de la jeunesse et d'autres groupes sociaux.
  - Développement des initiatives et projets en vue d'impliquer le plus grand public possible.
  - Mobilisation des ressources principales de la communauté en vue de l'implication du plus grand public possible et de le sensibiliser à propos de l'ACM.
  - Adoption des techniques des RP.
  - Inviter le plus grand public possible dans les activités de l'ACM.
  - Etre plus près des citoyens à travers les medias en lignes et les nouvelles medias.
  - Visibilité dans les medias locales et internationales.

- **Lobbying politique et défense des intérêts:**
  - Coopération avec le gouvernement local et central.
  - Plus de lobbying au niveau local et international.
  - Etre plus présent dans les medias.

Un point intéressant c'est la suggestion des citoyens méditerranéens interrogés pour que l'ACM s'engage dans l'enseignement supérieur, la recherche et le secteur de mobilité des étudiants comprenant l'éducation à long terme des adultes. La question de la démocratie demeure une priorité et elle inclut des droits de l'homme à son noyau. Plus concrètement, les thèmes pour les futures actions de l'ACM, suggérées par les citoyens méditerranéens interrogés:

- **Démocratie et développement politique**
  - Droits de l'homme;
  - Droits des femmes;
  - Droits de LGBT;
  - Mouvements sociaux et activisme;
  - Conflits religieux;
  - Corruption;
  - Fondamentalisme et d'autres crises.

- **Question sociale et progrès social**
  - Sécurité sociale;
  - Inégalités sociales;
  - Migration, réfugiés, et immigration;
  - Lutte contre la pauvreté sociale et les inégalités.

- **Développement économique**
  - Crises économiques;
  - Agriculture et dynamiques rurales-urbaines;
  - Protection de l'environnement: maritime.

- **Education et recherche**
  - Erasmus Méditerranéen;
  - Formation à long terme pour les adultes;
  - Education, santé et développement;
  - Enseignement public supérieur;
  - Facilitées pour l'échange et la mobilité des jeunes.

L'Assemblée des Citoyens de la Méditerranée: Quel statut pour le futur

Les citoyens interrogés proposent qu'afin de surmonter ses limitations et contribuer plus pour la région, l'ACM devrait devenir un mouvement méditerranéen et se focaliser sur le lobbying et sur la visibilité des actions et coopérations avec d'autres acteurs dans la région telle que les établissements publics, la société ci-

vile, l'enseignement supérieur, le gouvernement local et la communauté. 4 % des répondants recommande fortement pour l'ACM de devenir une organisation internationale non - gouvernementale. Cependant, 27% indiquent que le statut de l'ACM ne devrait pas changer. Les citoyens interrogés pensent que la relation entre l'ACM et d'autres organisations de la région doit être fondée sur des actions participatives concrètes telles que la mise en œuvre d'initiatives et projets communs, la participation à des réunions, forums, conférences et des publications communes.

Malgré le type de relation établi, l'ACM doit principalement maintenir son indépendance dans le processus de la prise de décision. Cette approche ne sous-estime pas l'importance du dialogue avec d'autres organisations de la Méditerranée, mais elle souligne que l'ACM a beaucoup à faire en termes de renforcement de son identité et des structures internes avant de penser à s'engager dans les relations bilatérales. Les répondants croient que les actions intégrées et la collaboration entre l'ACM et le secteur public permettront l'échange d'informations et de connaissances ainsi que les réformes nécessaires dans les pays respectifs. Un autre type de relation proposé par les membres interrogés est la relation de consultant entre l'ACM et les institutions publiques dans la Méditerranée par le biais de consultations, l'échange d'informations et le lobbying.

Perceptions de la situation économique

Les citoyens de la Méditerranée interrogés sont pessimistes pour leur situation économique, politique et sociale actuelle, la majorité des répondants soulignant le fait que la situation actuelle est mauvaise ou se détériore. Par rapport à la situation économique, quelques-unes des principales questions soulevées par les membres de l'ACM interrogés sont: le chômage, la dette publique, l'absence de politiques sociales, la faible croissance économique, et le manque d'investissements. Les principales causes de la situation économique actuelle seraient: le gouvernement et ses politiques économiques/financières (54%); le système économique et financier (46 %); faiblesse gouvernementale (45%); crises financières mondiales (31%). Dans ce cadre, les moyens d'améliorer la situation proposée par les membres interrogés sont: changement des politiques nationales économiques et financières (65%), avec l'accent sur les politiques de développement économique et social; lutte contre la corruption et l'informalité (50%); le renforcement de l'intégration et de la coopération régionale méditerranéenne (26%).

Perceptions de la situation politique

En ce qui concerne la situation politique, le point de vue pessimiste persiste et il se rapporte à des questions telles que : la corruption dans les milieux gouvernementaux, accompagné par le manque de transparence et de responsabilité dans l'administration publique (69%); les liens faibles ou non existants entre les besoins des citoyens et les politiques gouvernementales (54%); droits de l'homme (28%) et le dialogue entre les partis politiques (23%). Comme indiqué, la corruption dans les milieux gouvernementaux est la question la plus importante de la situation politique dans la Méditerranée, tandis que le gouvernement au niveau national est le principal acteur de cette situation. 61% des répondants croient que le gouvernement au niveau national est principalement responsable de la situation politique dans les pays méditerranéens. En outre, 41 % des répondants soulignent le manque de fonctionnement adéquat de la société civile ainsi que la faiblesse des capacités de leadership des partis politiques.

Considérant que la société civile joue un rôle important dans le contrôle des excès du gouvernement et aide à respecter les droits de l'homme et la démocratie, 61% des répondants pensent que l'infrastructure de la société civile et la coopération régionale serait la solution pour les problèmes politiques rencontrés dans les pays. La société civile a été développée de manière significative dans la Méditerranée et a été active sur des sujets tels que les droits de l'homme, l'égalité des sexes, la participation des jeunes et l'engagement des citoyens. En particulier, les mouvements sociaux et la société civile sont considérés comme les principaux acteurs du Printemps arabe et les transformations politiques en cours dans la région.

Perceptions de la situation sociale

Le développement de la dimension sociale dans la région est non seulement lié avec les dimensions politiques et économiques, mais il est aussi un principe directeur dans le sens où il établit un équilibre entre le marché libre et la zone d'échanges commerciaux dans la région et le développement d'un espace social commun qui garantirait la cohésion et l'intégration au sein de cette zone économique. Le contexte social, culturel et humain dans la région méditerranéenne est très complexe et même si les valeurs des indi-

vidus et des groupes communautaires démontrent des signes posi- tifs d'évolution vers le dialogue, la compréhension et la coexistence, d'autres indiquent les risques de fragmentation et d'exclusion. Le point de vue pessimiste en ce qui concerne la situation sociale reflète les préoccupations des citoyens sur des questions telles que: les possibilités d'emploi et des relations du travail (57%); l'éducation et la recherche (54%); les jeunes et le développement du capital humain et mobilité (39%); la bonne gouvernance (20 %) et le développement de la société civile (18%).

Les citoyens méditerranéens interrogés (74%) notent que les gou- vernements nationaux se révèlent moins capables d'accomplir leurs engagements envers les citoyens. Il est suivi par le manque de transports appropriés, les politiques sociales et économiques pour résoudre les problèmes sociaux actuels et émergents (33%). Les partenariats régionaux, tels que le PEM, l'Union européenne ou l'Union pour la Méditerranée ou la Ligue arabe, sont également considérées comme des acteurs responsables de la situation sociale actuelle (14%). Certaines des préoccupations se réfèrent ici à la convergence insuffisante des politiques et des synergies régionales limitées en raison de l'élaboration des politiques multi- centrées de l'UE, les défis du multilatéralisme et de différenciation des ap- proches du PEM et de l'UpM et le contexte historique complexe de la région dans son ensemble.

Les citoyens méditerranéens interrogés reconnaissent que l'héritage du passé et l'apathie de la citoyenneté ainsi que l'activisme limité et l'engagement citoyen sont des facteurs qui affectent non seule- ment la situation sociale actuelle, mais aussi celles politiques et économiques. Les défis à relever dans la région en termes des affaires humaines , les différences culturelles et les constructions identitaires , sont des questions liées aux transformations profond- es de la société contemporaine en rapport avec les progrès de la technologie , de l'information et de la communication , qui sont des défis auxquels sont confrontés les autres aussi bien les sociétés , et pas particulièrement dans la région de la Méditerranée .

On suggère que la première chose à faire pour améliorer la situation sociale est d'accroître la responsabilisation et la transparence des organisations non gouvernementales (49%), suivie par la nécessité de renforcer la coopération et les relations entre le gouvernement, les entreprises, les universités et société civile (44 %). L'amélioration

et la promotion du dialogue interculturel et de la diversité culturelle sont considérées par 22 % des citoyens interrogés méditerranéens comme des instruments pour améliorer la situation sociale.

L'Avenir de la région: Euro-méditerranéen et Méditerranéen

L'une des principales réalisations du PEM et de la Déclaration de Barcelone a été la consolidation des termes 'Méditerranée' et 'Euro – Méditerranée' dans des catégories politiques et analytiques. Cette enquête étudie également comment les citoyens se recon- naissent dans ces catégories politiques et analytiques. Par rapport à cela, près de la moitié de tous les membres (43 %) s'identifient en tant que citoyens de la Méditerranée, plutôt que citoyens de l'Euro - Méditerranée ou de l'Union européenne. Cependant, les citoyens méditerranéens interrogés tentent à aligner le processus d'intégration de la région à la fois comme une intégration euro- méditerranéenne et méditerranéenne avec une différence de seule- ment 1% en faveur de l'intégration euro-méditerranéenne. De ce point de vue, lorsqu'il s'agit de la future voie du développement de la région, les membres interrogés privilégient l'intégration euro -méditerranéenne à l'intégration méditerranéenne avec une légère différence de 3%.

Enfin, le Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen (PEM) et la Déclaration de Barcelone en 1995 constituaient une initiative ambitieuse et multilatérale pour travailler à la construction d'une région euro- méditerranéenne. Cette enquête sur les perceptions des citoyens de la Méditerranée montre que la coopération euro- méditerranéen (processus et dialogue) est perçue comme essentiellement formelle et procédurale plutôt que d'action substantielle et concrète. Cela est du à une convergence insuffisante des politiques et aux syner- gies régionales limitées.

Le débat sur le modèle le plus approprié pour la création de parte- nariats et l'intégration dans la région méditerranéenne est en cours. En pratique, il existe trois principales initiatives qui sont basées sur trois modèles différents: le PEM basées sur le multilatéralisme; la PEV sur la base de l'UE -centrisme et l'UpM basées sur la flexibilité et la différenciation. Il est donc difficile d'affirmer si le partenariat de multilatéralisme fonctionne mieux que l'approche de différen- ciation ou d'une UE -centrisme et il est nécessaire d'examiner cette question par le biais de la recherche empirique en ce qui concerne les domaines spécifiques des politiques dans la région.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONIMES

ACM   L'Assemblée des Citoyens Méditerranéens

EBRD   European Bank for Reconstruction and development

ECB   European Central Bank

EMP   Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

ENP   European Neighbourhood Policy

EU   European Union

IMF   International Monetary Fund

LGBT   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MCA   Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly

MPC   Mediterranean Partner Countries

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NGOs   Nongovernmental organisations

OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PEM   Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen

UE   L'Union européenne

UfM   Union for the Mediterranean

UpM   L'Union pour la Méditerranée

USA   United States of America

WB   World Bank

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Setting the context to the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly

The Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA) came as an initiative of group Mediterranean citizens who since 2008 have committed to work towards the emergence of a Mediterranean community of peoples. With the launch of the development of the MCA a Founding Charter was constituted setting the principles of the MCA which are deeply founded on the democratic values of freedom, peace, respect for cultural diversity and environmental responsibility. The core of this initiative is that 'it is mainly through the action and involvement of citizens, both men and women that a united and positive "community of destiny" will be set up in the Mediterranean' (MCA Founding Charter, 2009). The MCA, drawing from a collective approach, brings together a large number of people from the region and seeks to expand its reach to the wider public.

The first observation of the MCA Founding Charter is that although the Mediterranean lacks unity as a region and on the political level, it is de facto a region in the historical, human, commercial, cultural, social and environmental sense and this is important when considering the initiatives and actions to create a Mediterranean community of peoples. The Mediterranean region though faces many challenges and particular sub-regions such as the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean or the Balkans have been struggling in various ways. In this light, the main challenges that the MCA attempts to address are the: shared synergies on governance and democracy as well as human rights and social integration, which are highly linked to the economic growth and development of the society; strive to break the isolation of countries that are still too confined within their national boundaries, or excluded for economic and political reasons – particularly in the South and East of the Mediterranean; and contribute to overcoming mutual fears and to bringing back a sense of human, political, cultural, environmental and economic unity to the Mediterranean region.

Drawing from this context and the above mentioned challenges, the objectives of the MCA are to: (a) contribute to build a sustainable Mediterranean area of peace, development, solidarity and shared prosperity between its people; (b) take part in the emergence of a new governance, truly based on dialogue and sharing, in the Mediterranean area; (c) act in favour of economic and political integration at the regional level, thus enabling certain populations to break away from their confinement; (d) work towards overcoming mutual fears to give a sense of human, political, cultural, environmental and economic unity to a community of Mediterranean peoples once again; (e) help communities communicate with each other.

The work of the MCA is composed by the Mediterranean Coordination, the Advisory Council, the Citizens' Circles and the MCA Secretariat. One of the most important bodies of the MCA are the local citizens' circles in the Mediterranean region, which are conceived as open and permanent places for dialogue between citizens, they exchange ideas (through workshops, round table discussions), and collectively elaborate and assess proposals aiming to contribute to the emergence of new economic, social, cultural and environmental policies in the region. There are currently 20 active MCA citizens' circles operating in 15 countries in the Mediterranean and 6 other circles are in the process of being constituted in Egypt, Slovenia, Malta, Libya and Italy.

MCA expresses its deep admiration for Mediterranean peoples that, since January 2011, have opened a new way for the revival of citizenship. The rebirth of the dream, that was confiscated for decades, of a more fair and human society, governed by the rules of law universally established: popular sovereignty in the election of representatives and leaders, separation of powers, equality before the law, equitable redistribution of wealth, eradication of corruption, guarantee of individual and collective freedoms, including freedoms of opinion, organization, movement and religion. People are taking action right now and the citizenship of North, South, East and West Mediterranean is at the heart of the righteous struggle that cross Mediterranean countries on both shore. Struggles that in the near future will change the geopolitical framework of the Mediterranean. MCA proposes to support the emergence of new models of governance enable to promote economic and political integration within the regional framework, allowing people to advance in their development by surpassing mutual fears.

1.2   Research background: Rationale and significance

This research investigates public perceptions on the current economic, political and social situation as well as future perspectives in the Mediterranean region. The research draws from the developments in the Euro-Mediterranean process since the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 as well as from the objectives of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) instituted in 1995 with the Barcelona Declaration was conceived as a novel and ambitious endeavour to create and strengthen a Euro-Mediterranean region. In the lieu of low economic, social and cultural integration, lack of trust and dialogue amongst various countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area, the EPM attracted a lot of attention and raised many hopes and expectations regarding the enhancement of regional cooperation between the European Union and the southern and eastern parts of the Mediterranean.

The objectives of the Barcelona Declaration compromised three main dimensions: (i) political and security partnerships – aiming at the promotion of peace and regional stability; (ii) economic and financial partnership – aiming at the creation of an area of shared prosperity; (iii) partnership in social, cultural and human affairs – aiming at developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures & exchanges between civil societies. As the EMP was conceived as a regional attempt to promote convergence in a wide number of policy domains, it implied a holistic and geographically encompassing approach and it has managed to create meaningful political and analytical categories such the Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean.

However, EMP has been mainly characterized by differentiation dynamics rather than concrete multilateral partnership. In this sense, the European Union initiative for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 embraced the differentiation in the region. In addition, the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean

(UfM) in 2008 emphasized mainly a more selective and flexible cooperation in the region. Therefore, the research takes into account the differentiation dynamics of the Mediterranean in light of the developments in Southern Europe, the Maghreb, Middle East and sub-Saharan African countries. The particular focus of the research is the efforts of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly to contribute towards the Mediterranean progress as well as the role of the citizens in enhancing democratic processes and socio-economic development.

1.3   Research aim and objectives

The aim of the research is to explore the perceptions of the citizens of the Mediterranean region in regards to three principle strategic areas for the region: economic situation (trade, industry, sustainable development, and environment); political context and democracy (political stability, security, good governance, level of democracy, citizens' participation); social dimension (social, human and cultural affairs, social services, human rights, religious and conflict, media and communication).

The research concentrates on the following main dimensions of analysis:

a. by conducting a survey it captures the perceptions of members of the MCA citizens' circles in regards to the economic, political and social dimension as mentioned above;

b. it draws conclusions regarding citizens' perceptions on economic, political and social situation and provide recommendations;

c. it provides recommendations on the future development of MCA based on the results analysis of the data collected by the MCA citizens' circles.

1.4   Research methodology

The survey focuses on the perceptions of citizens in regards to the economic, political and social situation of the Mediterranean region. In this regard, the survey is not an opinion poll and it does not attempt to capture the public opinions of the general public in the Mediterranean region. It concentrates instead on the perceptions of individuals, man and women, who are members of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly circles. The research project applies a quantitative methodology of online survey based on a questionnaire with structured and open questions.

The questionnaire[1] is designed based on the research topic and research project objectives. The questionnaire is composed of five main parts: Part A of the questionnaire intends to gather general information about the selected sample. The variables for Part A are: group-age; sex; professional background; country; time-period as a member of Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly circles. Part B of the questionnaire focuses particularly on the perceptions of the respondents on the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly. The main variables are: identification and citizenship; expectations for the future development of MCA; MCA status etc. The questions are designed so as to explore citizens' perspectives and opinion on the progress so far of the MCA as well as gather insights regards its future development and priorities.

Part C, D, and E of the questionnaire focuses on the economic, political and social dimension of the Mediterranean region. The questions in Part B, C and D are designed so as to find out the citizens' perceptions on the overall economic, political and social situation in their respective country. More concretely questions in Part B, C and D aim at gathering citizens' perceptions on: main economic-financial, political and social issues; the principle actor/factors responsible for the situation; the ways to improve the situation. What is more the last two questions of Part B, C and D intend to explore the perceptions of citizens regarding the Euro-Mediterranean process and its possible impact on the economic, political and social situation in the region. The questionnaire was distributed via email to members of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly circles.

2. PERCEPTIONS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

This chapter focuses on the perceptions of the citizens regarding the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA) per se and its future development. The first part of the chapter introduces the sample used in the survey and its characteristics and the second part concentrates on the analysis of the MCA's status and future development, including concerns about current limitations and future potentials of the MCA.

2.1   The sample of the survey

The survey was conducted through online questionnaire which where distributed to circles' members of MCA via email in English and in French. The online questionnaire was sent to approximately 380 individuals, i.e. via their email addresses as per the MCA database. However, the response rate was very low and thus the survey platform was maintained open for four months (June – September 2014) and several reminders via email were sent to the circles' members. As a result the total sample of the survey is 73 respondents. When analysing the data the incomplete answers were not calculated. The statistical analysis used is descriptive, i.e. it allows providing a snapshot of the perceptions of the citizens regarding the current and future perspectives of the MCA.

The sample is composed of almost all group ages. 27% of the respondents are between the age of 50 and 59 years old and only 13% of the respondents are between the age of 19 and 29 years old. It is interesting to note that 18% of the respondents is above 60 years old. As shown by the graphs in Fig. 1 the majority of the respondents is over 49 years old, which reflects the need to involve more young people in the MCA's circles.

Whereas within the group ages one can notice a slight gap in respondents' age, in terms of gender the participation is almost within the same level. 48% of the respondents are female and 52% of the respondents are male as illustrated in Fig. 2.

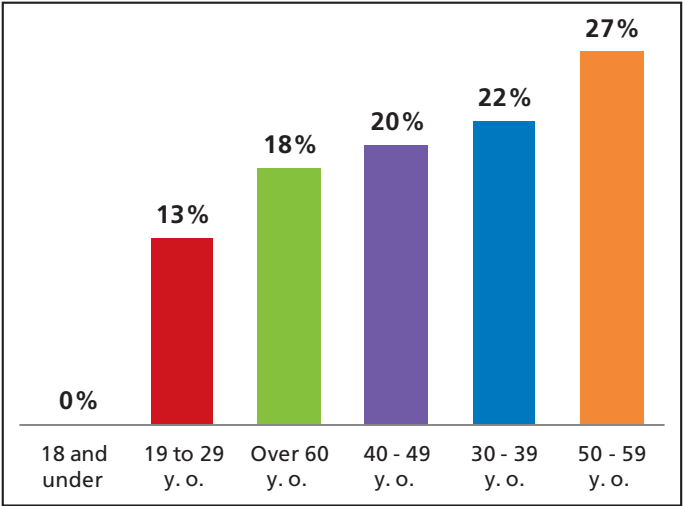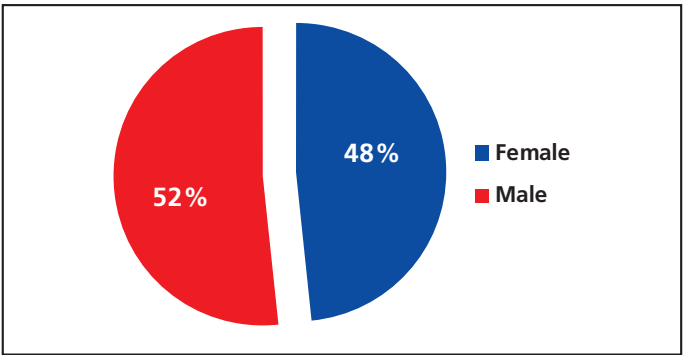**Fig. 1   The group-age of the respondents**
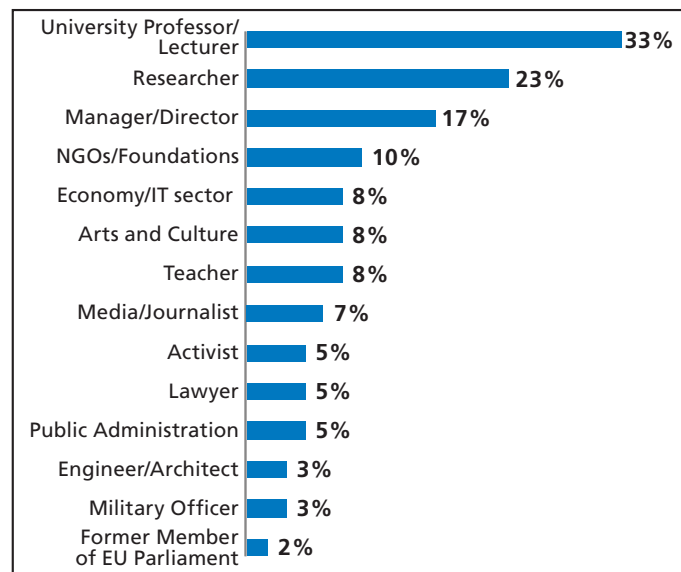

Fig. 2   Respondents' gender

Through an open question the respondents were asked to specify their professional background. The majority of the respondents (56%) come from a professional background in academia either as university professors and lecturer or researcher respectively 33% and 23%. This is followed by the management positions with 17% and then by employees in the civil society sector, such as non-governmental organisations and foundations, with 10% of the respondents. Fewer respondents belong to other sectors such as media, legal system, public administration and activism as shown in Fig.3. This reflects the membership of the MCA's circles and it implies the need to engage with other professional background and wider the MCA to other professionals from the business sector, public administration, local government etc.

As far as the country of origin is concerned, respondents come from a total of 17 countries from the Mediterranean plus Belgium and Cataluña, which is specified as a 'country' by the respondents themselves. 15% of the respondents are from Albania, which is in line with the fact that the Circle of Tirana conducted the survey. The other respondents are from France (13%) and Spain (12%).

In line with the country of origin, respondents also identify their membership to MCA's circles as shown in Fig 5. There are currently 20 active MCA citizens' circles operating in 15 countries in the Mediterranean and 6 other circles are in the process of being constituted in Egypt, Slovenia, Malta, Libya and Italy. The respondents of this survey belong to 17 out of the current 20 MCA circles. As mentioned above they come from a total of 17 countries from the Mediterranean plus Belgium and Cataluña. The three circles missing in the survey responses are the Circle of Izmir in Turkey, the Circle of Nador in Morocco and the Circle of Roma in Italy. Nonetheless, 4% of the respondents belong to the Circle of Istanbul in Turkey and Morocco is represented from its other two circles: Casablanca and Rabat. 7% of the respondents are from Italy and come from the Circle of Naples. 26% of the respondents do not declare to belong to any of the MCA circles and when asked about the membership to MCA they note that they belong to MCA Secretariat, Advisory Council or are simply not part of any circles as yet. It is interesting to see that 2% of the respondents come from Libya where the circle is in process of being constituted.

Fig. 3   Respondents' professional background

Professional background	%
University Professor/Lecturer	33%
Researcher	23%
Manager/Director	17%
NGOs/Foundations	10%
Economy/IT sector	8%
Arts and Culture	8%
Teacher	8%
Media/Journalist	7%
Activist	5%
Lawyer	5%
Public Administration	5%
Engineer/Architect	3%
Military Officer	3%
Former Member of EU Parliament	2%

Fig. 4   Respondents' country of origin
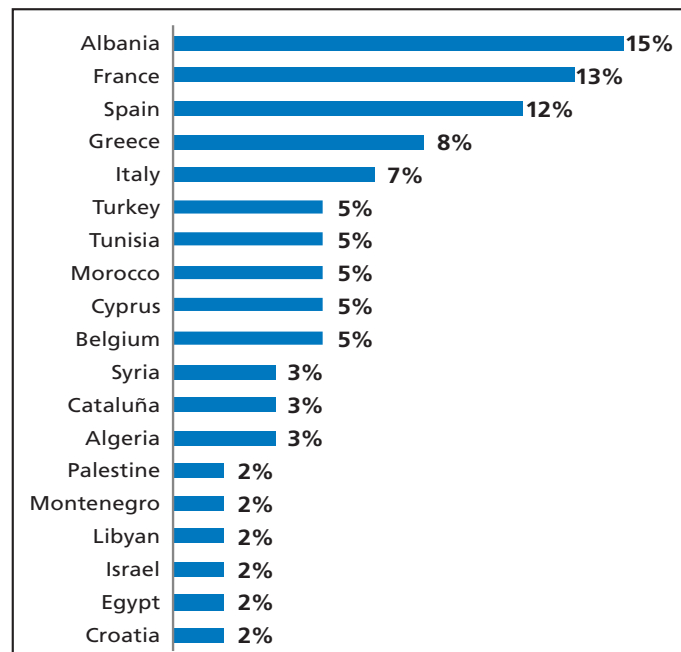
Country	%
Albania	15%
France	13%
Spain	12%
Greece	8%
Italy	7%
Turkey	5%
Tunisia	5%
Morocco	5%
Cyprus	5%
Belgium	5%
Syria	3%
Cataluña	3%
Algeria	3%
Palestine	2%
Montenegro	2%
Libyan	2%
Israel	2%
Egypt	2%
Croatia	2%

The vast majority of the respondents have been members of the MCA for more than one year and therefore they have a good knowledge of the MCA challenges and have been able to consolidate their thoughts regarding the future development of the MCA. On the other hand, 8% of the respondents are relatively new with the MCA, i.e. they have been its members for less than 1 year. In this sense, they provide a fresh perspective regarding the current situation and future perspective of MCA.

When asked about the type of membership, 66% of the respondents belong to the Charter Signatories and 22% belong to the Advisory Board.

Fig. 6   Timeframe as a member of MCA circle

- Less than 1 year: 8%
- More than 1 year: 92%

Fig. 5   Respondents' membership to MCA circles

Circle	%
Other	26%
Circle of Valence (Spain)	12%
Cercle ofTirana (Albania)	11%
Circle of Thessaly (Greece)	10%
Circle of Marseille (France)	7%
Circle of Naples (Italy)	5%
Circle of Tunis (Tunisia)	4%
Circle of Istanbul (Turkey)	4%
Circle of Damas (Syria)	3%
Circle of Alexandria (Egypt)	3%
Circle of Zagreb (Croatie)	3%
Circle of Oran (Algeria)	3%
Circle of Aleppo (Syria)	3%
Circle of Rabat (Morocco)	1%
Circle of Beirut (Lebanon)	1%
Circle of Podgorica (Montenegro)	1%
Cercle de Cyprus	1%
Circle of Casablanca (Morocco)	1%
Cercle of Rome (Italy)	0%
Circle of Izmir (Turkey)	0%
Circle of Nador (Morocco)	0%

Fig. 7   Type of membership: Advisory Board/Charter Signatories

- Advisory Board: 22%
- Charter Signatories: 66%
- None: 12%
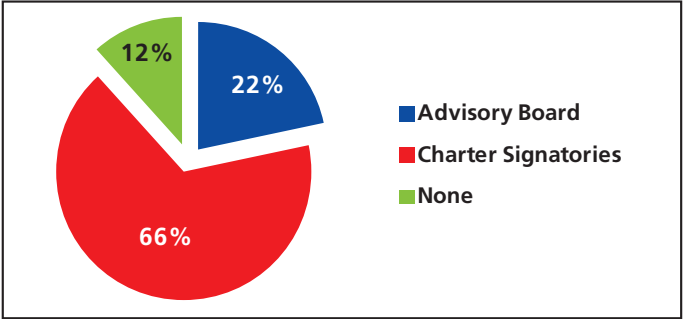
2.2 The Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly objectives and future perspectives

2.2.1 Fulfilment of the set objectives

The Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly works towards the following objectives as postulated in the Founding Charter in 2009: (a) contribute to build a sustainable Mediterranean area of peace, development, solidarity and shared prosperity between its people; (b) take part in the emergence of a new governance, truly based on dialogue and sharing, in the Mediterranean area; (c) act in favour of economic and political integration at the regional level, thus enabling certain populations to break away from their confinement; (d) work towards overcoming mutual fears to give a sense of human, political, cultural, environmental and economic unity to a community of Mediterranean peoples once again; (e) help communities communicate with each other.

The perceptions of the respondents regarding the fulfilment of the MCA's set objectives reflects the major challenge faced by the MCA, i.e. it is partially meeting its set objectives (62% of the respondents). Only 17% of the respondents declare that they believe that MCA is fully meeting its set objectives. It is interesting to notice that 11% of the respondents feel that MCA is not meeting its set objectives as shown in Fig. 8. In order to identify the reasons behind the perceptions that MCA is not fully meeting its objectives, respondents were asked to identify the main limitations faced by MCA and then suggest priority areas and themes for future action for MCA to fully achieve its objectives.

2.2.2 Identification of main limitations currently faced by MCA

Respondents were asked to identify the main limitations currently faced by the MCA. This was an open question, which allowed the respondents to freely express their perspectives. Despite the variety of the responses, the analysis and interpretation of these qualitative data shows that across all respondents eight areas are identified as the main limitations of the MCA as shown in Fig. 9[2].

Fig. 8 Perceptions on the fulfilment of MCA's set objectives

Partially meeting its set objectives	62%
Fully meeting its set objectives	17%
Other	11%
Not meeting its set objectives	11%

Fig. 9 Main limitations currently faced by MCA

Frequency of meetings/ interaction and communication	52%
Concrete integrated actions	42%
Internal capacities of the MCA	40%
Engagement with the wider public	32%
Political lobbying and advocacy	28%
National and international political context	22%
Intercultural dialogue and language barriers	12%
Identity construction	10%

The majority of the respondents (52%) identify as the main limitation of the MCA the lack of interaction and communication and frequency of physical meetings. Respondents, i.e. members of MCA's circles, argue that the current frequency of annual meetings is not sufficient to build up and strengthen the MCA community. What is more, the respondents observe limited interaction between circles and members and also a lack of regular and meaningful communication oriented towards actions and results. In this light, the second main limitation of the MCA is noted to be the lack of concrete integrated actions with 42% of the respondents. This is seen in terms of: limited coordinated actions towards set objectives, which are not concrete and specific in focus. In addition there are limited joint projects and initiative and limited joint activities in the Mediterranean. Respondents argue that the constrain lies with the fact the MCA is more about the production of declarations rather than actions. In this framework, the overcoming of mutual fears and prejudices is difficult to be achieved if there is a lack of concrete integrated and joint actions amongst different circles at local level.

In addition, 40% of the respondents emphasise that the most relevant limitation currently faced by MCA relates to its own internal capacities in terms of legal status, number of circles as well as financial and human resources. For instance, respondents argue that the current status and restricted number of circles form obstacles for MCA to fully meet its set objectives. The limited financial resources and the lack of flexibility of circles to raise funds and find alternative financial resources for integrated concrete actions constitute other limitations. What is more, human resources are also important, but MCA faces constraints regarding human resources directly involved in the work of MCA as the majority professional background of MCA members, as also shown above, is that of academia. Members suggest that MCA should open up to new professional background.

The opening up is closely related with the fourth main limitation of the MCA, i.e. lack of appropriate engagement with the wider public (32% of the respondents). The engagement with the wider public is perceived as two-folded: on one side, respondents argue that there is limited visibility of the MCA work and actions, i.e. lack of engagement with local, national and international media and other forms of online media; lack of public relations technique etc.;

on the other side, the respondent argue that the principle limitation in this regards is the lack of participation of the public within the MCA work and actions, for instance young people or the local communities are not engaged. In this light, it is difficult for the MCA to help communities communicate with each other if there are limitations within the MCA regarding communication and participation of the wider public.

Following the argument about the engagement with the wider public, it is interesting to note that 28% of the respondents think that another limitation is that of limited or not at all political lobbying and advocacy, which then influences directly into the MCA core objectives. Some of the issues highlighted in this sense are the lack of representation in the local government and the lack of support of key political figures for the causes represented by the MCA. Also, it is noted that awareness raising activities and advertising are tools to be further developed towards advocacy for social and economic issues that rest at the heart of the MCA work.

As anticipated, the limitations of the MCA do not rest only with the internal factors mentioned above, but they also relate with the national and international context as noted by the 22% of the respondents. Multiple crises in various countries and entire regions have not facilitated the work of MCA, on the contrary these challenging environment, being political, social and economic, amplifies the MCA challenges per se. In addition, 12% of the respondents argue that intercultural differences and language barriers are also limitations to the MCA work. Fewer respondents (10%) highlight the identity construction issues are limitation of the MCA in the sense that people do not easily identify themselves with the Mediterranean, as we will see below regarding citizens self-perception about the Mediterranean identity and Euro-Mediterranean one.

2.2.3 Identification of key priority areas and themes for the MCA in the near future

Following in the line of the identification of the main limitations, respondents were asked to express their suggestions regarding the key priority areas for the MCA in the near future. This was also done through open-ended questions to allow respondents to elab-

orate their thoughts on the MCA future developments. As shown in Fig. 10[3], the respondents declare that the three main priority areas for the MCA in the near future should be: first, development of the internal capacities and human resources (47%); development of concrete and integrated actions (45%); improvement of circles' interaction and communication (43%). The other priority areas are: improvement of the engagement with the wider public; improved political lobbying and advocacy; promotion of the Mediterranean identity and promotion of the intercultural dialogue.

The concrete suggestions for the future of the MCA regarding the development of internal capacities and human resources are:

- Development of fundraising strategies and plans to generate financial resources;
- Allowing flexibility of circles to raise funds and generate financial resources for action at the local level;
- MCA should become a legal entity and establish an institutional status;
- Development of IT competences and infrastructure at each circle;
- MCA should be formally established in all countries of the Mediterranean;
- Professional resources and opening up to other professional background;
- Open up to work with other actors at the national and international level.

Development of concrete actions should include:

- Youth employment programme;
- Social transformation and activism;
- Joint projects on Mediterranean issues;
- Concrete cultural events to promote the identity of the Mediterranean;
- Directly involve in sensitive and hotspots discussion such as ISIS, Syria, etc.

As far as improvement of the circles' interaction and communication is concerned, these concrete actions should be taken:

- Establishment of new circles;
- Holding more frequent meetings amongst circles and members;
- Promote and strengthen collaboration among different circles and members of countries and regions;
- Focus on networking and organisation of activities in advance;
- Joint seminars, conferences, roundtables with other institutions, not only with MCA's circles;
- Organisation of bilateral activities;
- Organisation of activities at the local level;
- Joint seminars, conferences, and roundtables with other institutions, not only with MCA's circles.

Another priority area is that of improvement of the engagement with the wider public and it refers to the following:

- Involvement of youth and other social community groups;
- Development of initiatives and projects to engage with the wider public;
- Involvement of key sources in the community to engage the public and raise awareness about the MCA;
- Adoption of PR techniques;
- Invite the wider public to MCA events;
- Getting closer to citizens through online and new media;
- Obtain visibility in national and international media.

Another important priority is the political lobbying and advocacy, which refers to cooperation with local and central government; more lobbying at local and international level and being more present in mainstream media.

In line with the priority areas for action, the respondents also identify themes for the future development of the MCA with the highest score for democracy at 12% followed by media and culture, economy and social issues as shown in Fig. 11.

The surveyed Mediterranean citizens identify as possible MCA themes for action social issues such as security, human rights with particular focus on women rights and LGBT (8%), which are also highlighted as areas of major concern for the respondents. It is interesting to notice that immediately after this, other themes are identified such as corruption, migration and fundamental crisis (7%). In this respect, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens expect the MCA to be active with concrete integrated projects and joint initiatives amongst circles tackling these themes. Also, possible themes include those related to education, research, student mobility and lifelong learning. In addition, other surveyed Mediterranean citizens suggest the need for MCA to get involved in particular crisis such as in Middle East and especially Syria.

In conclusion, the themes for future actions for the MCA suggested by the surveyed Mediterranean citizens can be grouped as follows:

- Democracy and political developments
  - Human rights;
  - Women rights;
  - LGBT rights;
  - Social movements and activism;
  - Religious conflict;
  - Corruption;
  - Fundamentalism and multiple crises.

- Social issues and social progress
  - Social securities;
  - Social inequalities;
  - Migration, refugees and immigration;
  - Fight against social poverty and inequalities.

- Economic development
  - Economic crises;

Fig. 10 Perceptions of respondents on the main priority areas of MCA in the near future
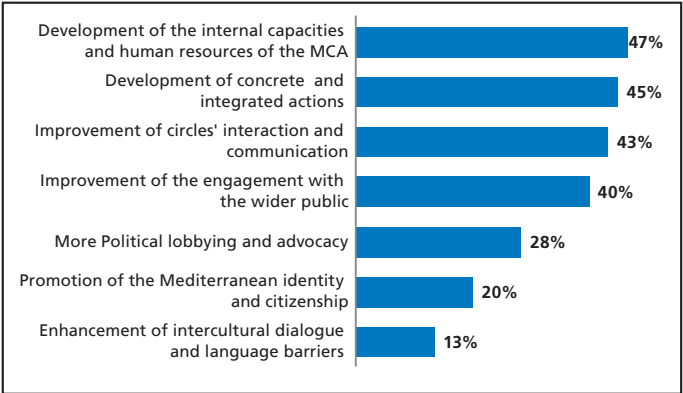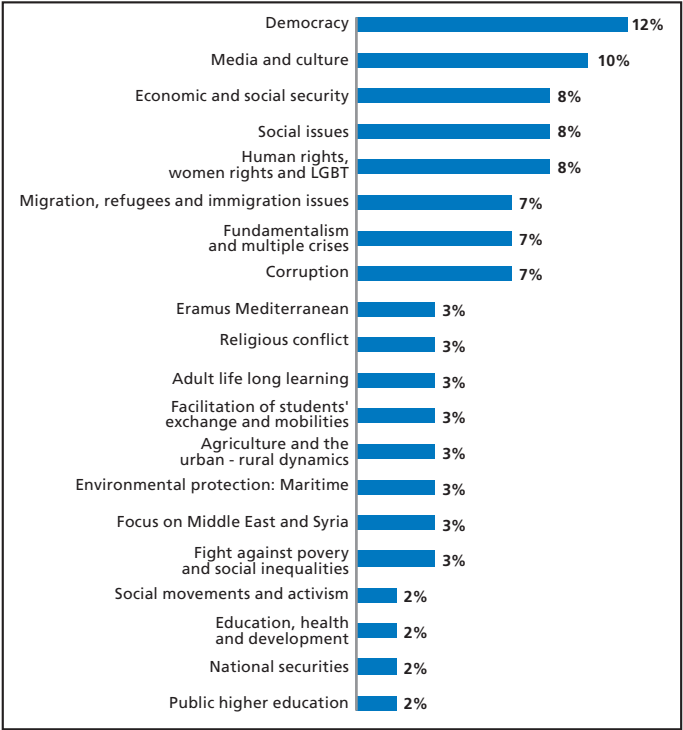

Development of the internal capacities and human resources of the MCA	47%
Development of concrete and integrated actions	45%
Improvement of circles' interaction and communication	43%
Improvement of the engagement with the wider public	40%
More Political lobbying and advocacy	28%
Promotion of the Mediterranean identity and citizenship	20%
Enhancement of intercultural dialogue and language barriers	13%

Fig. 11 Perceptions on main priority themes for future action of MCA

Democracy	12%
Media and culture	10%
Economic and social security	8%
Social issues	8%
Human rights, women rights and LGBT	8%
Migration, refugees and immigration issues	7%
Fundamentalism and multiple crises	7%
Corruption	7%
Eramus Mediterranean	3%
Religious conflict	3%
Adult life long learning	3%
Facilitation of students' exchange and mobilities	3%
Agriculture and the urban - rural dynamics	3%
Environmental protection: Maritime	3%
Focus on Middle East and Syria	3%
Fight against povery and social inequalities	3%
Social movements and activism	2%
Education, health and development	2%
National securities	2%
Public higher education	2%

- ○ Agriculture and rural-urban dynamics;
- ○ Environmental protection: maritime.

- • **Education and research**
  - ○ Erasmus Mediterranean;
  - ○ Adult lifelong learning;
  - ○ Education, health and development;
  - ○ Public higher education;
  - ○ Facilitation for students' exchange and mobility.

The interesting point in here is the suggestion of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens for MCA to engage in higher education, research and student mobility area including adult lifelong learning. The issue of democracy remains a priority and it includes human rights at its core.

2.2.4 Members' personal expectations on MCA

Similar to the perceptions about the achievement of the MCA set objectives, the majority of the respondents (64%) declare that their personal expectation as an MCA member are partially met. Whereas the same numbers of the respondents declare that their personal expectations are not met or that are fully met (15%) as shown in Fig. 12.

In their capacity of MCA Members, respondents were asked to identify the main constraints that they personally have faced in the experience with the MCA. Trying to get a wide range of perceptions, researchers opt for an open question, which allowed respondents to provide a large spectrum of responses and opinions in the same way as when exploring the limitations of MCA per se.

Drawing from the analysis of responses it is evident that the main constraint faced (45%) by MCA members in their experience with the MCA, is linked to MCA internal capacities. In e broader sense, this is connected to the limitation on well functioning, transparency and networking of MCA steering bodies, circles and individual members. As far as the steering and decision making process within MCA is concerned, members think that it is a weak process which does not respond to the real challenges faced by circles. Moreover, respondents think that the process is slow and as such

Fig. 12 Respondents' expectations regarding MCA
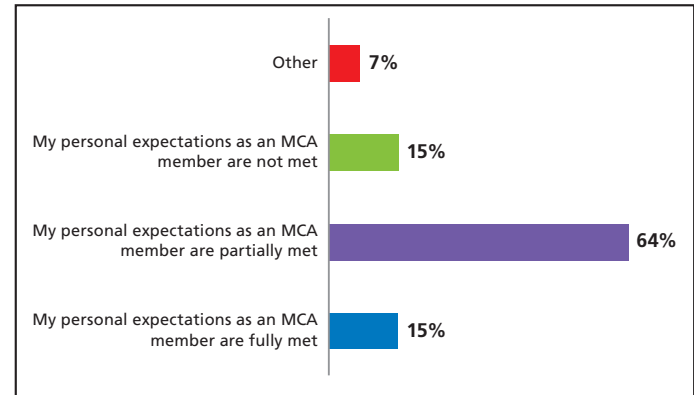
it becomes not convenient, from the time efficiency perspective, to include members and circles within the process. An identified obstacle within the structures of the steering bodies (Advisory Board) is the lack of transparency toward MCA circles, which influences the internal relationship and hinders sustainable collaboration.

Another constraint faced by MCA members themselves in the internal organizational structure of MCA is the limited and sometime inappropriate funding conducted within the organization. Almost 10% of members surveyed think that there is an emerging need for MCA to rise the funding for research activities, which target Mediterranean issues. In this line, MCA need to establish and undertake a fundraising campaign, which ensures these constraints to be addressed.

Surveyed members emphasize that there is a restricted number of circle in the Mediterranean countries. What is more, circles are geographically far from each other and this make it difficult for members to meet and connect. Thus, MCA membership is relatively low and many times members do not feel motivated to organize and conduct MCA activities. According to respondents' perception, countries like Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, have a relatively low representation compared to other Mediterranean countries where MCA circles are established.

The Fig. 13 illustrates the personal constraints faced as members of MCA. In addition, 32% of surveyed members think that another constraint which influences the performance of MCA is the low frequency of meetings held in local and regional level as well as the limited interaction and communication established among steering bodies, circles and members. This is mainly as a result of (i) decreased number of regional meetings - the annual meetings organized are not sufficient to maintain a vivid and effective communication; (ii) when organized, annual meetings do not provide for an agenda and related materials in advance, thus members are not prepared for the thematic of discussion. Moreover, after the conference there is no follow up of the joint meetings and activities; (iii) the lack of an established online and/or offline communication channel or the production of a Newspaper dedicated to the work of MCA and the activities of specific circles.

In order to address such identified constraints, MCA members suggest some concrete and immediate actions to be undertaken. Respondents (20%) suggest that actions related to networking, collaborations and visibility would help MCA address the identified constraints. Moreover, result oriented actions, clear and focused strategy and up-to-dated agenda for discussions need to be the guiding principles for MCA activities.

On the other hand, 5% of members surveyed emphasize the importance of MCA advocacy and lobbying activities. Accordingly, members indicate that MCA need to get engaged in consultation process with other similar organization and the government, and it need to lobby its important issues of concern in national and international level. In a macro picture, 7% of surveyed members believe that MCA engagement with the wider public, within the Mediterranean countries and beyond, remain a constraint, which needs to be addressed. Following this argument, respondents indicate that MCA need be more visible and more present especially to third interested parties, by promoting its objectives, sharing its vision and conducting its activities.

The analysis of responses shows that constraints identified by members are two-folded, in terms of the source from where they derive and the context in which they exist. Thus, despite internal

Fig. 13 Constraints faced in the capacity of MCA member
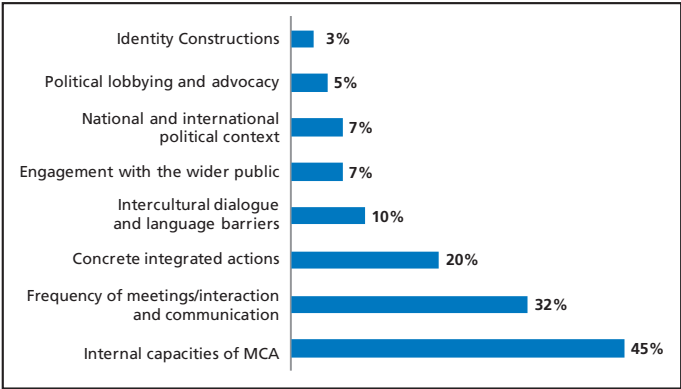
constraints identified so far, there are also some external indirect constraints, which hinder the work of MCA. In this line, 10% of members think that the intercultural dialogue and language barriers are serious constraints for the work of MCA. This is particularly linked with the usage of a single language for communication (usually French), which deprives English-speaking members from understanding the context and participating in the given action/discussion. Moreover, as far as the intercultural dialogue is concerned, surveyed members think that due to cultural disparities in Mediterranean countries, sometimes it becomes difficult to set a common ground and produce basic common conclusion for all members participating in a joint event.

What is more, MCA members perceive the national and international political context of individual countries as another external factor affecting the performance of MCA activities. As already known, there still exist restrictions to free communication and movement for specific countries, due to the political and integration process of such countries. Specifically, the political context in Egypt and the intervention of government is noted as a serious constraint for the work and activities of MCA in the country.

As illustrated in the Fig. 13, other issues related to the identity construction of MCA have a low influence upon the performance of the work of MCA[4].

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4. For full data on constraints faced as MCA Members see Annex I.

2.2.5 Perceptions on the future development of MCA

When asked about expectations for the future development of MCA, a majority of members surveyed reported that in order to be developed, MCA should become a Mediterranean movement in the future. Other members, almost 21% of all surveyed, suggest that expectations for MCA are related to its advocacy role for issues of Mediterranean concern. Parallel to this stands another expectation related to the visibility of MCA action. Around 19% of respondents think that MCA visibility is a priority issue for its development. Other issues such as membership and participation as well as communication channels between circles have a lower priority and are considered as less important for the future development of MCA.

Responses to question about the future of MCA reveal that members highly recommend MCA to become and international non-Governmental organization. 54% of the respondents express their opinion in favour of an International non-Governmental status for MCA. However, 27 % indicate that the status of MCA should not change; suggesting that in the future MCA should maintain its status quo. Overall, the overwhelming majority of MCA members who were surveyed suggest that MCA should either become an international NGO or maintain its own status quo in the future. As illustrated in the Fig. 14, when the future status of MCA is discussed in terms of the reconfiguration of its local circles, members are not enthusiastic that this would better fit its future status.

This survey tries to capture the perception of MCA members on the role MCA should play when establishing bilateral relations with other Mediterranean organizations. Drawing from the analysis of data collected, the vast majority of respondents think that the relationship should be based on concrete participatory actions between MCA and the Mediterranean organizations. Such actions include implementation of joint meeting (7%), participation in joint projects (5%), participation in joint forums, conferences and publications (5%) and other unspecified events that promote cooperation, partnership and networking (42% of all respondents) as shown in Fig. 16.

Surveyed members go on to specify concrete actions upon which the participatory approach of the bilateral relationship should be based. Accordingly, collaboration on joint projects for social trans-
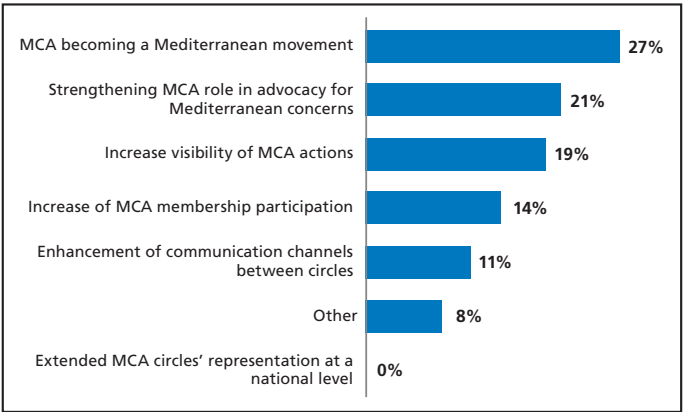
Fig. 14 The future development of MCA

MCA becoming a Mediterranean movement	27%
Strengthening MCA role in advocacy for Mediterranean concerns	21%
Increase visibility of MCA actions	19%
Increase of MCA membership participation	14%
Enhancement of communication channels between circles	11%
Other	8%
Extended MCA circles' representation at a national level	0%

Fig. 15 Perceptions on the future status of MCA

International Non-Governmental Organisations	54%
Movement –maintaining status quo	27%
All circles forming an association	10%
Other	7%
Each circle becoming an association on its own	2%
National Non-Governmental Organisations	0%
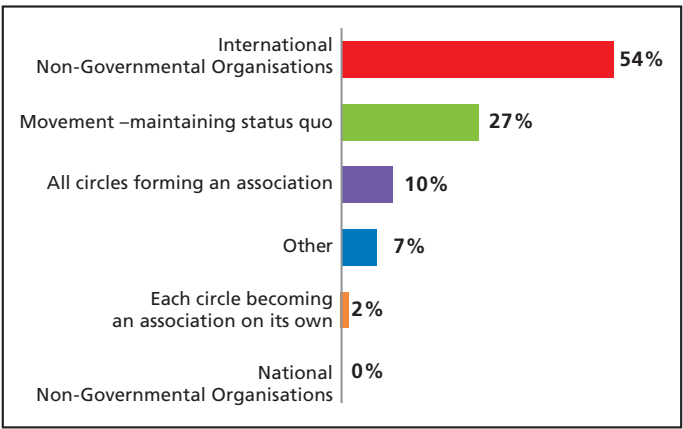
Fig. 16 MCA relationship with other networks

MCA independence in focus	Advisory relationship	Other	Participatory actions
3%	3%	24%	70%
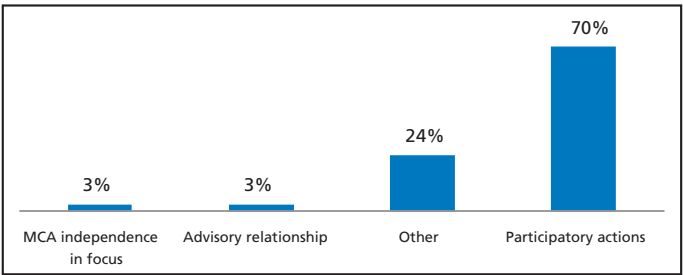
formation in the Mediterranean should be enhanced to the point that MCA and other partner organizations have a coordinated and aligned agenda. In this regard members believe that MCA should enhance the cooperation with other Mediterranean organizations as a good way to empower itself and get promoted into the region.

A group of 3% of all members surveyed proposes an advisory relationship between MCA and other Mediterranean organizations. This role would be based on consultative actions on regular bases. In principle, this proposed relationship needs to be combined in such a way that enhances and emphasizes the quality and strength of each organization, which do not necessarily cooperate on concrete actions and project with each other.

In parallel, another group of 3% of all members surveyed argues that despite the type of relationship established, MCA should primarily maintain its independence on decision-making process. This approach does not underestimate the importance of dialogue with other Mediterranean organizations, however it emphasize that MCA has a lot to do in terms of strengthening its identity and internal structures before thinking of engaging itself into bilateral relations.

Finally, it is very interesting the appearance of another group of opinions, which focus more on the intensity of relations, established among MCA and other Mediterranean organizations rather than the form of collaboration. When asked about the kind of relationship MCA need to have with other networks or platforms in the Mediterranean, almost 5% of MCA members surveyed claim that despite the level and the form of collaboration, it is important for MCA to establish strong and normal cooperation with such organizations[5].

Responses provided in the previous questions, reveal that members are highly interested in including MCA into participatory actions with other Mediterranean organizations. Following this trend, members consider participatory actions very important for MCA even when relations are to be established with public institutions in the Mediterranean. Almost 45% of all members surveyed sug-

Fig. 17 The suggested relation of MCA with public institutions
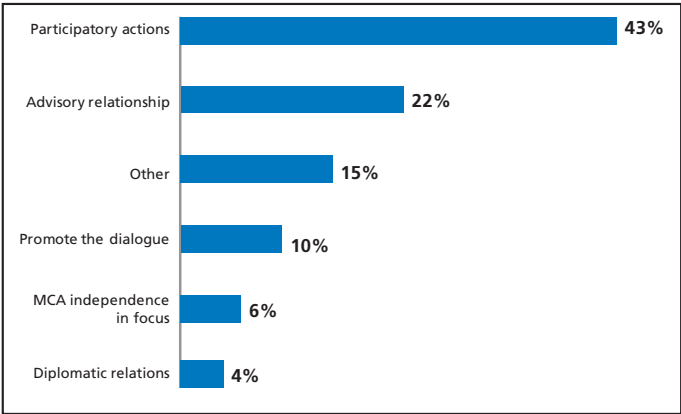
gest MCA to get engaged in participatory actions, which focus on cooperation and networking with other public institutions in the Mediterranean as shown in Fig. 17. Respondents go on to claim that participation in such actions should inspire new policies focused on good governance and inclusion of Mediterranean citizens within the decision-making process.

Respondents believe that integrated actions and collaboration between MCA and the public sector will enable the exchange of information and knowledge as well as the necessary reforms to take place in respective countries. Among all members surveyed, 10% of respondents think that the promotion of dialogue must stand on the basis of all relations MCA establishes with the public sector. The promotion of dialogue targets the defence of social rights for people in the Mediterranean countries as well as the promotion of strategic partnership and sustainability for institutions involved.

Another important and highlighted type of relationship proposed by surveyed members is the advisory relationship between MCA and public institutions in the Mediterranean. By means of consultations, exchange of information and lobbying, 22% respondents

indicate the advisory relationship as the preferred type of relation-ship established between MCA and other public bodies in the region. Although this type of relationship is recommended by 22% of respondents, it tends to establish weaker cooperative relations compared to the direct participatory actions suggested by 43% of respondents.

As illustrated in the figure, members in favour of a diplomatic relations established between MCA and other public institution in the Mediterranean are fewer when those in favour of cooperation and advisory relation. Only 4% of all members surveyed think that MCA should establish professional but diplomatic relations with public institutions in the Mediterranean, based on economic rather than political relations. This is also interlinked with the suggestion that MCA should maintain its independence when establishing the relationship with public institutions in the Mediterranean. Thus, 6% of all respondents stimulate the institutional cooperation as a mean of mutual benefit, but they suggest MCA to build its relations upon mutual respect, total independence of its governing bodies and development of citizens centring actions[6].

2.2.6 Perceptions on identity, integration and development

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 constituted an ambitious and multilateral initiative to work towards the construction of a Euro-Mediterranean region. The expectations regarding the success of the EMP were high considering that the regional and holistic approach affected an area which has been characterized by low economic integration, lack of trust between countries and relatively limited interaction between societies. The EMP managed to promote the Euro-Mediterranean region through purposeful actions regarding the economic, political, social and cultural interaction. Moreover, scholars (Bicci, 2011; Barbé & Surrallés, 2010) have argued that one of the main achievements of the EMP and the Barcelona Declaration has been the consolidation of the terms 'Mediterranean' and 'Euro-Mediterranean' into political and analytical categories. This survey on the percep-

Fig. 18 Respondents' identification
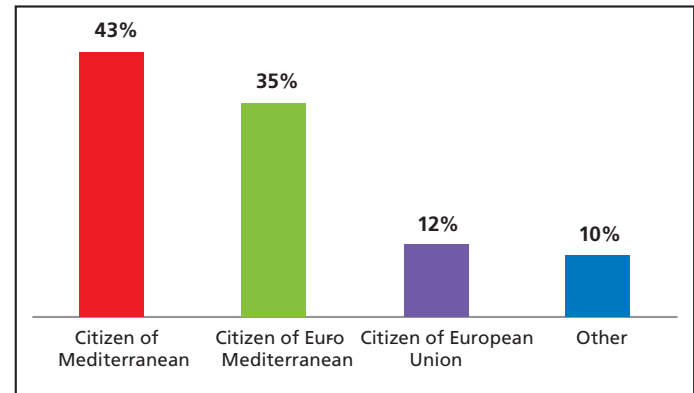
tions of the Mediterranean citizens also investigates how citizens identify themselves with these political and analytical categories.

Respondents, member of MCA, are asked to identify themselves in term of their identity and belonging. As noted, almost half of all members (43%) identify themselves as citizens of Mediterranean, rather than citizen of Euro-Mediterranean or European Union. However, the Euro-Mediterranean identity appears also very strong. Thus, 35% of all members have identified themselves as citizens of Euro-Mediterranean. The European citizenship is left behind in members' self- identification. There are only 12% of all members participating in the survey who feel as citizens of European Union, while in parallel 10% of members have chosen other (unspecified) identification for their belonging.

However, the daily relations between the EU and the MPC have not been significantly fixed into comprehensive and meaningful multi-lateral partnerships with concrete results (Barbé & Surrallés, 2010: 131). In this regard, the survey also explores the perceptions of the citizens regarding the Euro-Mediterranean integration process and their expectations for future developments in the relations between Mediterranean countries.
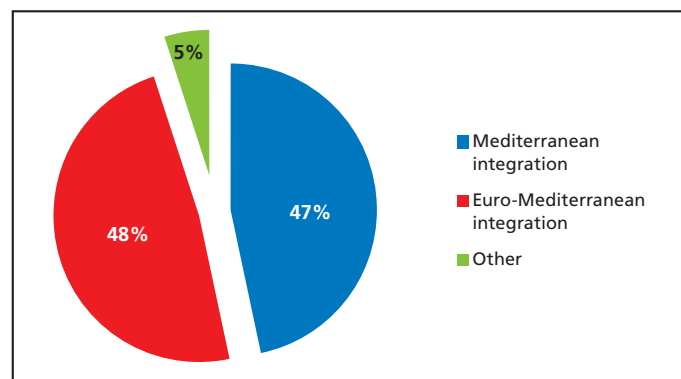
6. For more details see Annex I.

MCA members who participated in the survey are asked about the association they make when thinking of the integration process. There are two options provided for surveyed members to choose: one aligns integration process to the Mediterranean integration and the other with the Euro-Mediterranean integration. There is a slight difference of 1% among responses for both options, meaning that none of the two types of integration is highly aligned with member's perception on integration process compared to the other.

As noted, there is a consistency among the association members make for the integration process and their opinion on the future development of the region. Asked about the future path of the development for the Region, surveyed members, with a slight difference of 3%, prioritize Euro-Mediterranean integration over Mediterranean integration. Nevertheless, it must be said that ACM members participating in the survey consider both Euro-Mediterranean and Mediterranean integration as important paths for the development of the region.
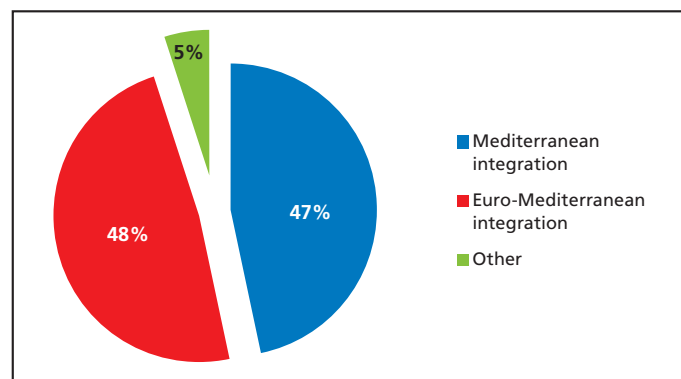
The debate regarding the most appropriate model for the partnership building and integration in the Mediterranean region is ongoing. In practice there are three main initiatives that are based on three different models: the EMP based on multilateralism; the ENP based on EU-centeredness and the UfM based on flexibility and differentiation. It is thus difficult to assert whether multilateralism partnership works better than differentiation approach or the EU-centeredness one and it is necessary to examine this question with empirical research in regards to specific policy areas in the region.

The encompassing multilateralism approach to region building and cooperation cannot work for certain cases and issues that are structurally flawed by conflicts, different perspectives and high costs (consider issues of migration, energy, and employment). As a result, differentiation may be the most adequate approach as the only way to make some progress in the enhancement of cooperation even though the result will be limited policy convergence. This is particularly the case with the EU because of its lack of policy coherence due to multiple policy-making centers. However, the differentiation approach is a double-edged one: through this approach partners' perspectives and interests are better included, but differentiation may lead to fragmentation and it limits the vision for long lasting and sustainable cooperation. So far, the Euro-Mediterranean co-

Fig. 19 Perceptions on the integration process

- Mediterranean integration — 47%
- Euro-Mediterranean integration — 48%
- Other — 5%

Fig. 20 Future development of the region

- Mediterranean integration — 47%
- Euro-Mediterranean integration — 48%
- Other — 5%

operation has been EU-centered and some Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries have worked towards specific cooperation arrangements with the EU and/or one another. This is understandable considering the different actors and interests involved, but it does not lead to policy convergence and regional synergies.

As observed by other studies (Bicchi, 2011; Barbé & Surrallés, 2010) the region-wide multilateralism and comprehensiveness anticipated by the EMP have been difficult to achieve and various sub-regional or bilateral dynamics have taken over in the Mediterranean. In addition, differentiation approach, selective and flexible cooperation have been the guiding principles of other initiatives for the region such as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2004, and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2008. The central question in this regard is whether attempts shall be made towards multilateralism, comprehensiveness and holistic regional approach or towards differentiation and flexible bilateral and sub-regional cooperation.

While it is difficult to meaningfully sustain the first approach and achieve concrete results, with the differentiation approach there is the risk of fragmentation rather than region building in economic, political and social terms hoped for by the Barcelona Declaration. This research will also explore the perceptions of the Mediterranean citizens regarding the impact of the Euro-Mediterranean process and dialogue on the economic, political and social situation in their own countries. In addition, the research takes into account the differentiation dynamics of the Mediterranean in light of the developments in Southern Europe, the Maghreb, Middle East and sub-Saharan African countries. The particular focus of the research is the efforts of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly to contribute towards the Mediterranean progress as well as the role of the citizens in enhancing democratic processes and socio-economic development.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

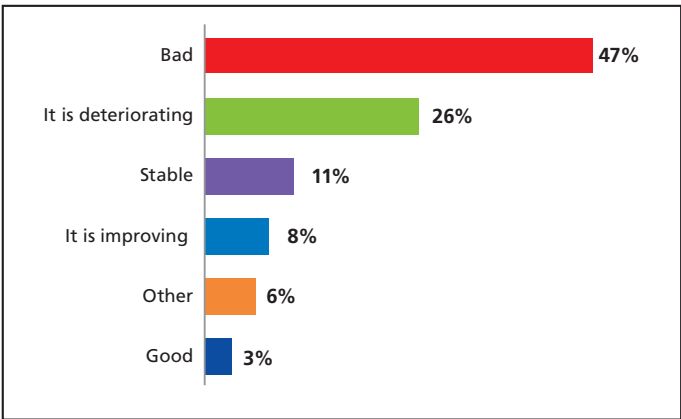## 3.1   Setting the context to the economic situation

The economic landscape in the Mediterranean region is very complex and highly affected by the economic and financial crises of the recent years at a global level. Based on some specific indicators on economic and social issues the symptoms of the current situation are relatively the same despite the differences between north and south, east and west. These symptoms are: high budgetary deficit; public debts; increased levels of unemployment particularly amongst youth; limited social policies for social integration; etc. The current complex economic situation accompanied by pessimistic perspectives from the citizens regarding future developments, has fuelled social actions, pressure by community groups to the government, activism on the side of the civil society and more demands for accountability and transparency. The issue at stake is to find the right balance between austerity measures and social development.

Fig. 21 Overall impressions on economic situation

3.2   Perceptions on the current and future economic situation

3.2.1 Perceptions on the general economic situation

The surveyed Mediterranean citizens are pessimist of their current economic situation, and demonstrate low levels of optimism for their future. 47% of the respondents evaluate their situation as bad, whereas 26% of them think that the situation is further deteriorating. Only 11% of the citizens think that the economic situation is stable, whereas 8% express a more optimistic view emphasizing that the situation is improving and 3% of the citizens think that this economic situation is good as shown in Fig. 21. Understanding beyond the general impression given by the surveyed Mediterranean citizens and analysing thoroughly the reactions of special countries or regions, we find out that the degree of pessimism and lack of confidence for a fast improvement of the economic situation is not only applicable to southern countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt or eastern countries like Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, but also for EU countries like France, Italy, Spain and Greece. The general average figures reflected in the graphs are similar to the

individual ones for each specific country, proving that the pessimist feeling for the economic situation is spread almost equally in all the Mediterranean area.

Confronting these indicators with the social and economic evolution that the Mediterranean region has gone through in the last 2-3 decades, we notice that this is one of the most pessimistic situations perceived by the people. Looking at the overall results of the questionnaire, it results that three are the macro reasons leading to this situation: (i) the effects of the global economic-financial crisis which appeared in 2008, involving both developed and rich countries as well poor countries of the Mediterranean; (ii) hesitant hope and confidence in the efficiency and results of the Euro-Mediterranean initiatives of all levels, evaluating that they have not produced and are not yet producing results and objectives foreseen in the political, strategic and developing documents advertised with so much echo and confidence; (iii) the on-going tensions in the middle-east (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestinian territories) as well as the economic and political tensions (Egypt, Libya, Turkey) are making the Mediterranean an area less stable and quite.

3.2.2 Main financial economic issues and factors responsible

Through elaborating more in-depth the causes and details of the pessimism on the economic situation expressed by the surveyed Mediterranean citizens, it is clearly noticed an hierarchical degree, which is also reflected with no significant changes or deviations from one country to another, regarding the indicators which led to this economic and social pessimism. The main negative opinion and pessimism is caused by six main elements. On top of the list with 72% of the evaluation is unemployment, clearly concerning the Mediterranean citizens of the "northern" countries like France, Italy, and Spain as well as citizens of "southern" countries like Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt. From this list are not excluded countries like Albania, Turkey, Greece, Montenegro or Croatia. The Public Debt is noticed by 52% of the interviewees as the main issue of the bad economic situation. The high level in almost most of the Mediterranean countries (Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Albania, Egypt, etc.), as well as lack of efficiency to manage it accompanied by a negative opinion on the caused effects in all the Mediterranean society, the issue of public debt and decreasing policies, make the Mediterranean citizens perceive the debt as one of the main sources of the problems related to their region's economic-social situation.

The two above-mentioned causes, according to the opinions expressed by the Mediterranean citizens, are inter-twined with some other negative factors preventing the social-economic development such as effective lack of social policies (44% of the interviewees), weak economic growth (41%), lack of investments (34%), low wages (33%), fear and pessimism of the businesses for the future (22%) as shown in Fig. 22. Almost all the surveyed Mediterranean citizens are concerned about the trend of deepening of social and economic differentiation in their countries, emphasising that the difference between rich and poor is increasing, the social policies are insufficient to influence a greater social equality, and the crises and globalisation are not managed properly, thus causing significant economic and social problems in the Mediterranean region.

The third group of the evidenced negative factors, but generally perceived as having a lower implication on the economic situation are: high prices, from which it seems that countries mainly suffering

Fig. 22 Perceptions on the main financial and economic issues
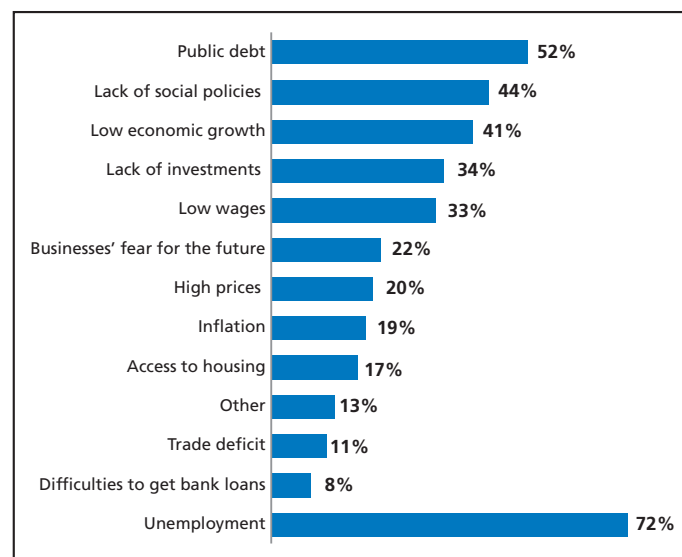
from are Albania, Greece, Montenegro, Spain, Algeria, Egypt, etc., 'inflation", as a disease more of southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, because the EU and euro zone countries like Spain, Italy and France are suffering more the fear from low inflation and deflation; trade deficit, difficulties to get bank loans on relieving conditions and access to housing are also evidenced as negative factors from the southern and eastern countries.
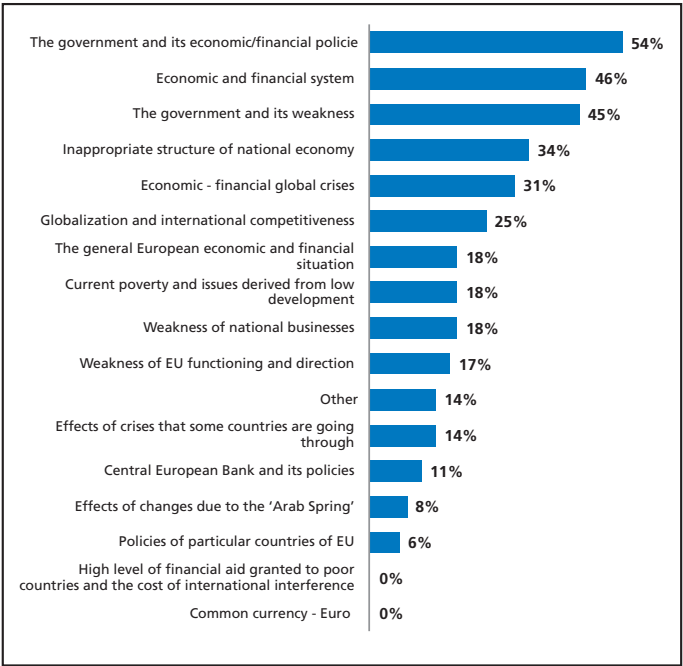
Concentrating the focus directly to the actors and factors with an institutional and governance nature, 54% of the Mediterranean citizens evaluate that the main cause of the current economic situation and lack of confidence for its fast improvement in the future are the economic and financial policies of the governments respectively for all the Mediterranean region as shown in Fig. 23. On the top of the negative evaluations regarding quality, standards and the practical application of these policies, are the citizens of Greece, Spain, Italy, Albania, Algeria, Egypt, etc. Particular emphasis is put to three negative evaluations on the pursued economic and financial policies: (i) forcing of these policies by the international

institutions like IMF, WB on behalf of a global financial sustain-ability; (ii) granting priority, financial rigorousness, and budgeting on behalf of financial stability and not based on the priorities of policies which encourage employment and social development; (iii) the weaknesses of the governments in compiling and implementing proper policies.

It is very interesting the evaluation of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens, who state that in their opinion some causes influencing the current economic and social situation are related to the inappropriate national economic structure to get out of the crisis (34%), mainly in Greece, Albania, Egypt, Algeria, Spain, etc. Another factor identified is that of globalisation and international competitiveness (25%), typical hesitating factor in France, Italy, Turkey, Montenegro, etc. Both these problems accompanied by a high level of sensitiveness for indicators such as poverty and weak economic development (18%) show that the Mediterranean citizens expect their governments to have a more rapid and firm reaction towards reforms and important structured policies in favour of getting more foreign investments, reducing inequality and social differentiation, improving of the competitiveness level in terms of global market, improving the economic structure in order to decrease its dependency (especially in the southern and eastern countries) from the effect of remittances and foreign help, radical improvement of employment policies to reduce to minimum the immigration plague, etc.

On the other hand, even the rich countries of the "north" are concerned that the general economic and social situation in Europe is not good, and in some countries is also aggravating, that vast number of companies, businesses and European corporations are becoming weak, faced with the international competitiveness, that EU functioning and leading is not on the hoped standard and quality, that the EU and euro zone countries report pessimist figures and estimations regarding the economic growth, that low inflation and deflation, unemployment, especially of the youth, export growth, controlling and managing of the public debt and budgetary deficit, that the European Central Bank is not undertaking the right policies for the sustainability of the common European currency euro and encouraging of the loans in the European economy, etc.

Fig. 23 Perceptions on the factors responsible for the economic situation

| Factor	%
The government and its economic/financial policie	54%
Economic and financial system	46%
The government and its weakness	45%
Inappropriate structure of national economy	34%
Economic - financial global crises	31%
Globalization and international competitiveness	25%
The general European economic and financial situation	18%
Current poverty and issues derived from low development	18%
Weakness of national businesses	18%
Weakness of EU functioning and direction	17%
Other	14%
Effects of crises that some countries are going through	14%
Central European Bank and its policies	11%
Effects of changes due to the 'Arab Spring'	8%
Policies of particular countries of EU	6%
High level of financial aid granted to poor countries and the cost of international interference	0%
Common currency - Euro	0%

3.2.3 Improvement of the economic situation

Faced with this pessimistic economic-financial and social situation, the Mediterranean citizens are of the opinion and propose that the most important factors that might and should change the current situation and its less than optimistic perspective are: first, changing of the national economic-financial policies (65%), with an emphasis to the policies for economic and social development and not only to the financial and budgetary rigorousness, giving priority to the policies that encourage economic growth and not only to those policies that aim at decreasing the debt or budgetary deficit (32%) as shown in Fig. 24; encouraging policies that create employment, especially for the youth and marginalised social groups, industrial and modern policies for services in their broad context, innovative policies and increasing of competitiveness confront the effects of global liberalisation market, etc.

Secondly, war against corruption and informality (50%), judged as one of the severe and uncured diseases for the economies and societies of many countries like Greece, Albania, Italy, Montenegro, Egypt, Algeria, Croatia, Turkey, etc.; the citizens also think that "meritocracy" and "transparent rules for the employment and nomination" should be reinforced regarding the nominations and functioning of the institutions of their respective public administrations.

Third, the empowering of the integration and regional Mediterranean cooperation (26%) is also noticed as an important element which might change the current situation in the Mediterranean region. The citizens think that the current integration and cooperation is not satisfactory and has not produced the positive expected effects, which everybody hoped for. In many of its aspects, we mention the north-south integration and cooperation, the southern countries between each other, the cooperation and integration of the eastern Mediterranean, and/or cooperation in the Middle East. Economic, financial, commercial, political and cultural integration leaves room for improvement, not justifying considerable commitments and activities undertaken from the highest political and institutional levels so far.

Fourth, 18% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens emphasise the necessity for a greater independence of the economic and social development policies from the market. They judge that the policies

Fig. 24 Perceptions on how to improve economic situation
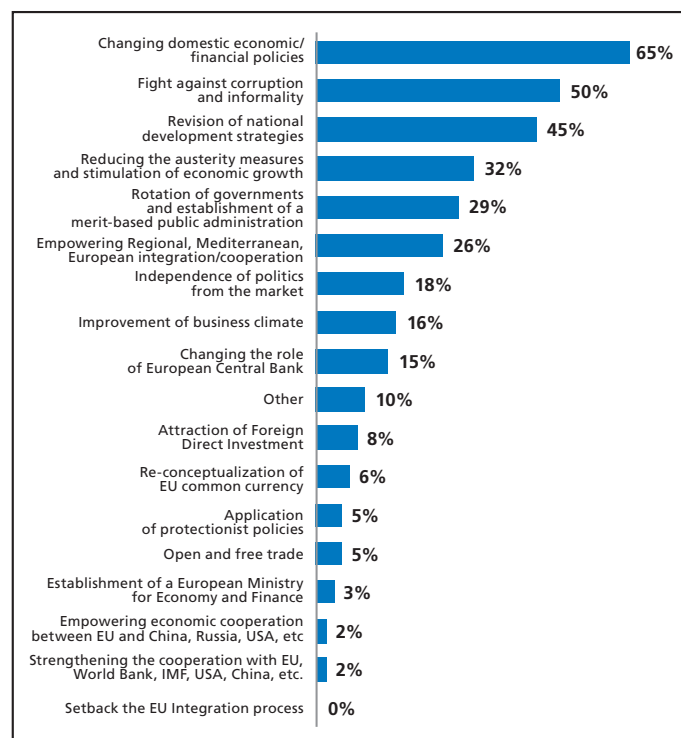
undertaken from their governments are influenced more by the requests and signals of the market rather than by the economic and social needs of their people. In many south and east countries, but also in some development countries in the north, there is a clear concern regarding the fact that the market and liberalisation logic of the market continues to dominate the policy decision-making, damaging in this way the proper solution for the concrete economic and social problems of many social groups and strata of the Mediterranean, and the "income and financial stability are dominating against the increasing of the general welfare, employment, social policies and human capital development."

Finally, it is very interesting the appearance of another group of opinions related to the transformation of the role of the ECB, attributing it a more active role (besides the inflation control and price stability) regarding economic growth and employment, in undertaking of non-conventional monetary policies and encouraging of loans, etc. In this group of proposals are noticed also interesting ideas that have to do with the re-conceptualisation of the common European currency, making it a more active development factor, application of some protection measures, which protect the in-country production and guarantee a certain level of employment in some of the Mediterranean countries, establishing of a European Ministry of Economy and Finances, or proposals that have to do with enhancing of the cooperation with international institutions such as IMF, WB, OCDE, EBRD, etc., as well as increasing the collaboration with countries like USA or other countries with emergency economies like China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa, etc.

3.2.4 Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and impact

Evaluating specifically the effects or the impact of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens are pessimist and doubtful regarding the expected effects. 35% of them believe that it has been a formal process based on clear political interests, from the respective governments, whereas 22% of them state that they are aware of the existence of the euro-Mediterranean process of cooperation or collaboration, but doubt the visible positive effects of this process. 18% of the citizens reply shortly this process has no impact, or they do not understand the goal and effect of this process and they do not have information about its existence and content. Only 12% of the Mediterranean citizens expect and hope that the euro-Mediterranean cooperation will have concrete positive effects and will respond to the hopes and wishes of the Mediterranean people in this aspect as shown in Fig. 25.

The prevalence of scepticism in the Euro-Mediterranean collaboration process is an alarm signal not only for the governments and official institutions that are engaged to bring this process forward, so crucial for the Mediterranean countries, but also for the civic society in general, different organisations and non-governmental in-

Fig. 25 Perceptions on the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation
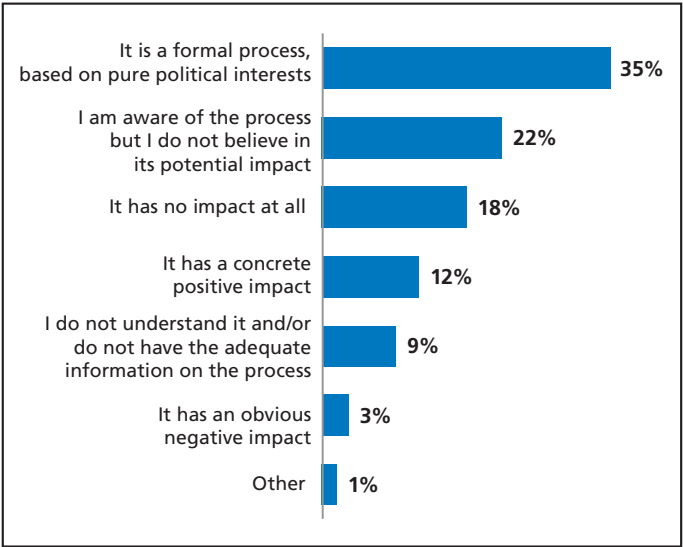
stitutions engaged in this process, or donors and supporters of this process, who should review, complete, and make more efficient the methods and models of the Euro-Mediterranean collaboration, giving thus a more realistic content in the function of needs and requests of the Mediterranean people and not treating these as facades or political instruments for their instant interests or for corruptive affairs. The evaluations and opinions of the Mediterranean citizens regarding this aspect are "an alarm bell" in respect of the importance and seriousness, required by all political, governmental, civic society, NGO-s, foundations, universities, academic and scientific centres, interest groups, corporations and businesses, all actors in this process.

When it comes down to the impact that the Mediterranean citizens expect from the Euro-Mediterranean collaboration process, it seems that they all agree together despite if this is about the rich European countries, countries of Maghreb, east Mediterranean or Middle East as shown in Fig. 26. The subject of all is the necessity to

increase the investments and implementation of joint development projects. Especially, southern countries and eastern ones notice that it should be done more to increase the north-south investments, as a concrete expression of the euro-Mediterranean collaboration, since it has been done very little on this aspect, less than promised and hoped for.

The enlargement of this channel of collaboration awakes the hope that the positive effects will be reflected in increasing of employment, reducing of poverty and increasing of the welfare, stability of public finances, and especially the improvement of the governance and of the quality of the economic and public policies in the poor countries and those in development in the Mediterranean region. The know-how and best practices on policy development of the northern countries to the southern ones is deemed as way to improve the economic situation in the Mediterranean. We should mention here that (27% of the respondents) among the factors that increase the collaboration impact is emphasised the element relating to the quality of human capital, professional education, university, innovation and scientific research.

It is very interesting that the citizens are of the opinion that the cooperation and Euro-Mediterranean collaboration should not be referred to and materialised obligatory from the state and governmental actors, but it should expand and extend in every cell of the Mediterranean society; that this collaboration should be conceived and elaborated more as a decentralised cooperation between all social, economic actors, academics, civic society, interest groups, different categories of social groups, etc. This way only it can take a real meaning and influence concretely in order that the euro-Mediterranean collaboration produces the required and expected effects.

Fig. 26 Perceptions on the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact on economic situation
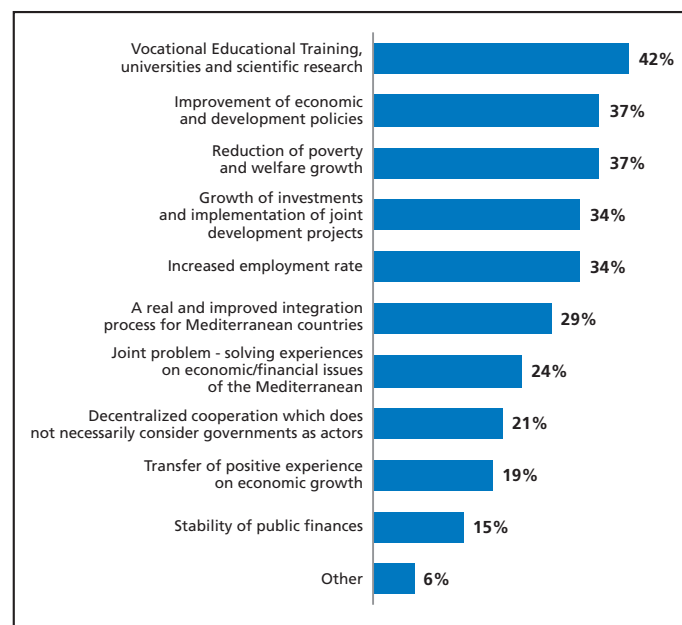
4. ANALYSIS OF CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS ON POLITICAL SITUATION AND DEMOCRACY

4.1   Context to the political situation and democracy

The concept of geopolitics is a driving phenomenon for the strategic actions of the Mediterranean region. Considering its positioning, Mediterranean is the meeting point of three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. Thus, it interlinks a variety of policy, economy and culture approaches. Such diversity has in many times been the reason for provocative political instability and fragile security among the countries while in many other times the situation has been dominated by economic integration, stabilized politics and cultural exchange.

While the northern countries have embraced liberal pluralist democracies, the governance in countries in the southern part of the Mediterranean is still being dominated by fragile politics. In a situation where demands and needs are being more and more articulated and result-oriented, citizens are trying to find and establish means and channels of communication with the government. However, due to the political turmoil which has called democracy into question and has hindered reforms to get implemented, the dissatisfaction of Mediterranean citizens, especially youth, has led to protests and social movement or the brain drain process. In this situation, countries in the southern shore are not only facing a democratic deficit in term of policy making and accountability but also a deficit of human rights which tend to frustrate the Mediterranean citizens even more.

The level of diversity among European countries in the northern part of the Mediterranean compared to the Asian and African countries in the southern part of the basin, is a factor of importance not only for the equilibrium imposed among Mediterranean courtiers, in term of implementation of political, social and economic policies, but also for the bias politics that the European Union and other international organizations apply toward the Mediterranean region. Stagnated policies, which have demonstrated limitation in institutional building process, infrastructure settings and economic cooperation, have been manifested through the whole Mediterranean region. However the northern Mediterranean countries have better tackled the challenges due to the closer ties with the westerns countries and the stronger cooperation with the European Union.

Naturally, the Brussels' policy is closer linked with countries which are members of the European Union compared to other candidate countries or neighbour countries. However, the European Union has a thorough foreign policy platform, the European Neighbourhood Policy, dedicated to the bilateral cooperation of the EU with other non-member neighbouring counties. Thus, for the Mediterranean countries not part of the EU it is important to focus on the best experiences on partnership and cooperation, which have always tried to transform disparities into complementary indicators upon which countries could build their bilateral and multilateral relationships. Having said this, the policy of the EU toward the Mediterranean also tries to establish a long-term partnership which is promoted and sustained through the complementary of their economies and a vision on developing common policies and successful joint activities. In this line, from the November 1995 on, the Barcelona Process still remains the most prominent instrument for Euro-Mediterranean relations, the launch of which signified the establishment of a zone of stability and peace based on the principles of democracy and good governance.

In this line, research shows that Mediterranean countries should firstly undertake wider and deeper efforts to avoid fragmentation and build a common identity and afterwards work to better perform in joint actions with the EU and beyond. Researchers also agree that there is no other option for the future of the Mediterranean region rather than cooperation, coordination and synergy with the EU and beyond, in such a way that helps countries overcome the barriers faced across the Mediterranean while ensure a vital strategic cooperation of the Mediterranean - in political, economic and cultural terms, - with the wider world.

4.2   Perceptions on the current and future perspectives of the political situation

4.2.1   *Overall perceptions*

When asked about their perception on the current political situation on the Mediterranean countries, almost two third of all respondents perceived it in negative terms. 36% of the respondents

think that the current political situation in Mediterranean countries is bad, while the second biggest cluster of responses (24%) indicates that the situation is deteriorating. Although the figures show diverse tendencies, one can see that only 22% of the respondents think positively on the state of political situation in Mediterranean countries, i.e. 12% think it is improving and 10% think it is a good situation as shown in Fig. 27.

4.2.2 Main political issues currently faced as perceived by citizens

Drawing from the responses provided in the previous question, it is important to scrutinize the actors and factors responsible for the negative perception MCA members have on the political situation in Mediterranean countries. In order to address this challenge, participants in the Survey were asked about the main political issues that Mediterranean countries are facing nowadays. Results indicate that over three quarter of respondents think that the main obstacle to a positive political situation is the corruption in governmental settings, accompanied by the lack of transparency and accountability in public administration.

The second most influencing issue on the political situation in the Mediterranean is the weak or non-existing channels between citizens' need and government policies. More than half of all respondents have indicated this to be a deterrent factor for the political progress. Almost one third of all respondents consider other issues as responsible in affecting political situation in Mediterranean countries. Such issues include the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in terms of the tolerance between different groups in society, the political culture of leadership, and the lack of political dialogue among political parties as well as the politicization of public administration. When thinking about issues of security and state control, few respondents consider the impact of such issues on the politics of Mediterranean countries. Less than ten respondents out of fifty-six believe that issues of national or civil security, organized crime and state control to economy are immediate issues in the given countries.

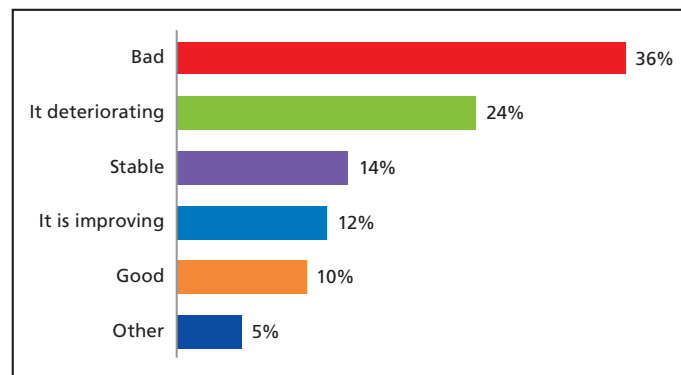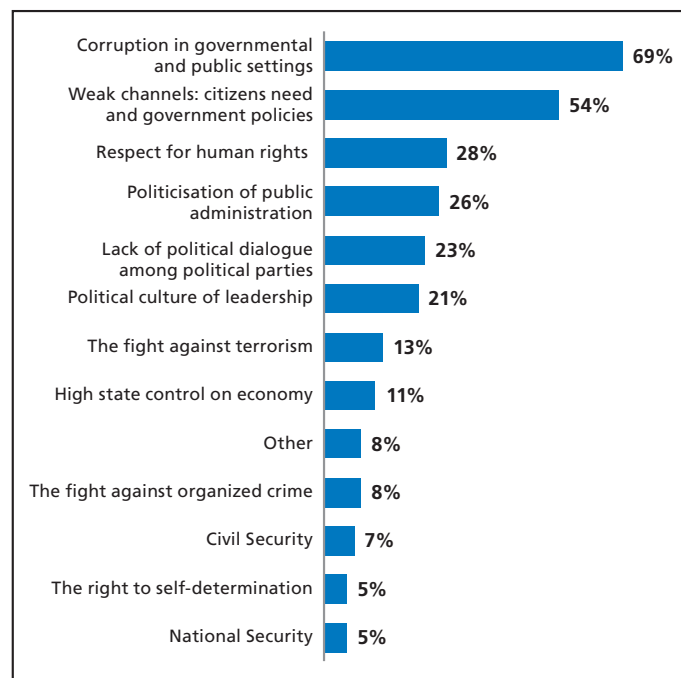**Fig. 27 Perceptions on the overall political situation**

Fig. 28 The main political issues

### 4.2.3 Main factors influencing the current political situation

After having identified the principal issues of concern that have influenced and negatively impacted the political situation in the Mediterranean countries, it is importance to distinguish the key responsible actors in this regard. As noticed, options provided to this question are in line with the previous answers, considering a logical correlation between questions. As indicated corruption in governmental settings is the main most important issue on the political situation in the Mediterranean, while government in national level is the principal actor for this situation

There are 61% respondents who believe that the Government and governmental leverage in national level is predominantly responsible for the political situation in Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, 41% of the respondents state that the responsibility for the political situation lies behind the lack of well-functioning structure of Civil Society as well as the weakness of political parties' leadership capacities. As illustrated in the Fig. 29, factors as the lack of well-established middle class, global economic crises and international actors are listed, in a descending order, as lower impact factors. Again, the issue of security does neither stand as a predominant obstacle of the political situation, as illustrated in the Fig. above, nor as a responsible factor for the given situation.

4.2.4 Appropriate measures to improve the current political situation

When asked to identify the most appropriate ways to improve the political situation in their countries, respondents do not see government as the most appropriate leverage to change the political situation. Instead, they think of high importance the strengthening of the Civil Society in national level and the enhancement of the regional cooperation in the third sector among countries of Mediterranean and beyond. Considering that Civil Society plays an important role in checking government excesses and help uphold human rights and democracy, 61% of all respondents think that Civil Society infrastructure and regional cooperation would be the solution for political issues faced in the countries as shown in Fig. 30.

Fig. 29 Perceptions on the factors responsible for the political situation
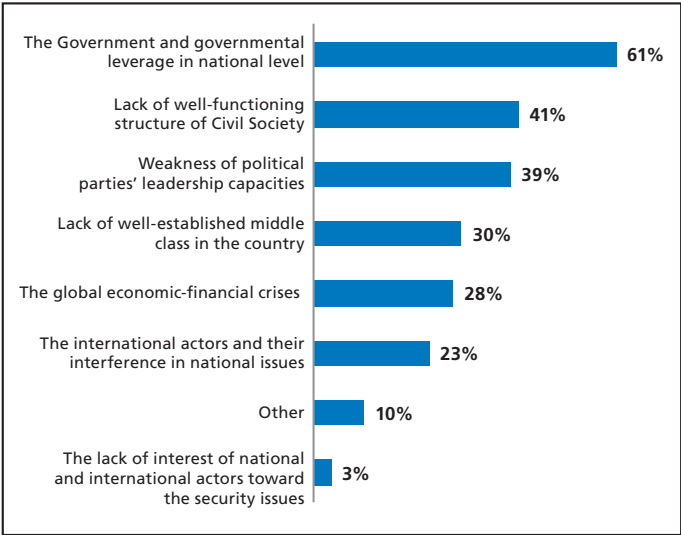
Nevertheless government and public administration are still an important consideration when thought of ways to improve the political situation. Referring to data derived from the analysis, twenty four respondents think that establishing a merit-based public administration through a rigid process of frequent exams on officials' performance and professional capacity can be a solution to the political issues faced in the Mediterranean countries. Yet, the same number of respondents has chosen internal democracy of political parties and institutionalization of political party system as an effective tools and solutions used for political issues.

Other internal factors in the portfolio of ways to improve the political stability in the Mediterranean countries are related to state building, fight of corruption and illicit financial flows. Around one third of all respondents think that it is important to revise national strategies and policies related to state building and democracy settings in the governmental structures in order to ameliorate the political situation. Empowering the auditing structure specialized to fight corruption and informality in public structures seems to be

as important as the revision of national policies when the political issues are into consideration. A comparable high level of respondents have chosen the politics of 'inclusion within diversity' implemented by the EU toward the Mediterranean, as a tool which may ameliorate the political situation, due to the respect it guarantees toward the multiple identity of each Mediterranean country.

Questions of culture and identity are not highly considered as alternative solutions for the political situation. When asked about the integration process of countries in international level organizations (NATO; EU; etc.) as a tool to strengthen cooperation and bridge cultural gaps or the empowering the 'WE'-ness of Mediterranean identity in comparison to the Arab-Islamic and European-Christian identity, less than 10% of respondents think that such ways will enhance democracy deficit of Euro-Mediterranean politics and help political situation to be improved.

4.2.5 The impact of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on the political progress and democracy

As the Fig. 28 illustrates, responses on the impact of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on the political progress and democracy in Mediterranean countries, are diverse and show wide range of opinions. A basic understanding stands between all respondents when thinking of the EU as an accelerator of reforms aiming at streamlining the policy process. Thus, it worth to mention that almost no respondent, except one, think that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process would have a negative impact on the political progress and democracy in the Mediterranean countries.

Another important consideration is the fact that a high number of respondents (32%) think that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process has no impact at all on the political progress and democracy of Mediterranean countries. 25% think that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is a formal process based on pure political interest, thus the need and demands of citizens, as the main indicator of democracy, are not considered. This means that the EU response to the changes taking place in the region is not primarily addressed toward the real needs of the people, thus it lacks real country based need-assessment process. In addition 12% of the respondents think that although they have knowledge about the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process they are sceptic about the

Fig. 30 Measures to improve the current political situation
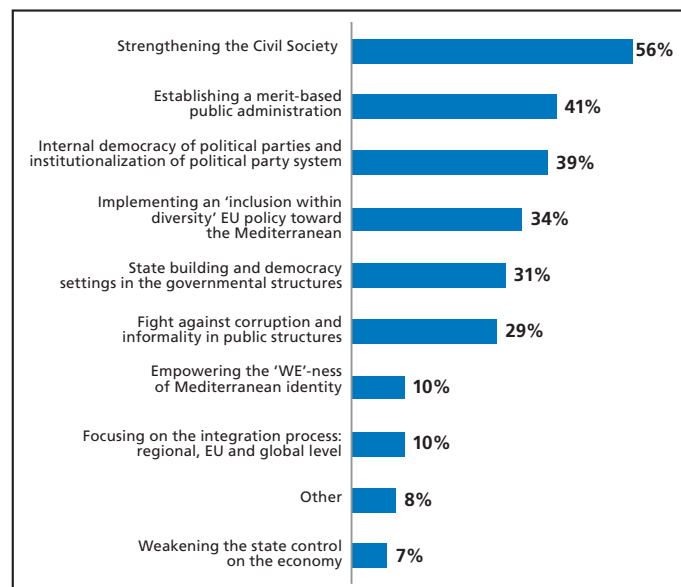
**Fig. 31 The impact of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on political progress**
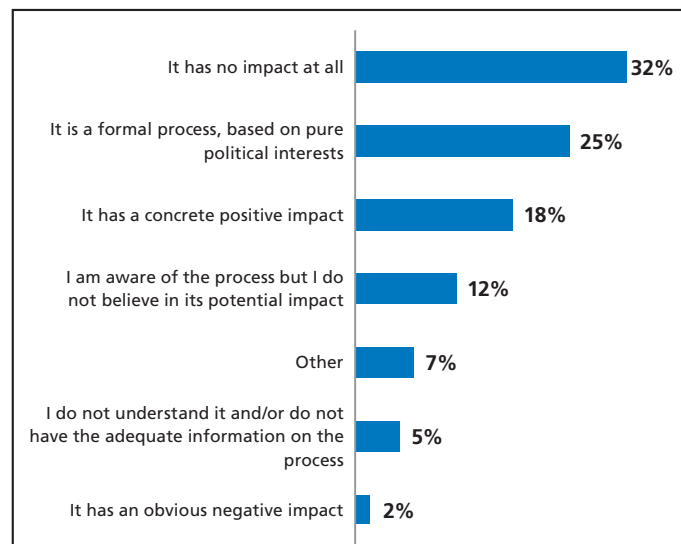
potential and concrete impact it may bring to the countries. Yet it is worth to mention that 18% of the respondents who believe that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process has had a concrete positive impact.

4.2.6 Perceptions on the impact of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on political situation

EU ensures that national transformation processes are aligned with a detailed EU agenda on the assistance offered to local, regional and national capacities and state stetting. In national and regional level, in the capacity of citizens of respective countries as well as in the capacity of Mediterranean citizens, respondents are asked about the main aspects that Euro-Mediterranean dialogue should impact the political situation in related countries. In line with responses provided in previous questions, 68% of all respondents require from Euro-Mediterranean dialogue to stimulate democracy building and good governance in public and non-public settings as shown in Fig. 32. Moreover, responses show that another important aspect to be considered by the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue is the establishment of an appropriate legal framework which can help to establish democratic government setting in the countries. Thus, both main aspects identified by respondents are connected to the central role of the state, democracy and legal framework.

As stated in other analyses of data collected, civil society is also considered as an important factor for the political stability. Increased financial/technical support toward non-governmental sector is another recommended aspect for the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue to consider, as suggested by 13% of respondents. There are some other more technical aspects, like the organized crime, financial support to government and private sector and identity question, which have been listed among aspects of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, although they may be considered as secondary aspects due to the relatively low attention paid by respondents.

Fig. 32 Perceptions on the impact of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on political situation
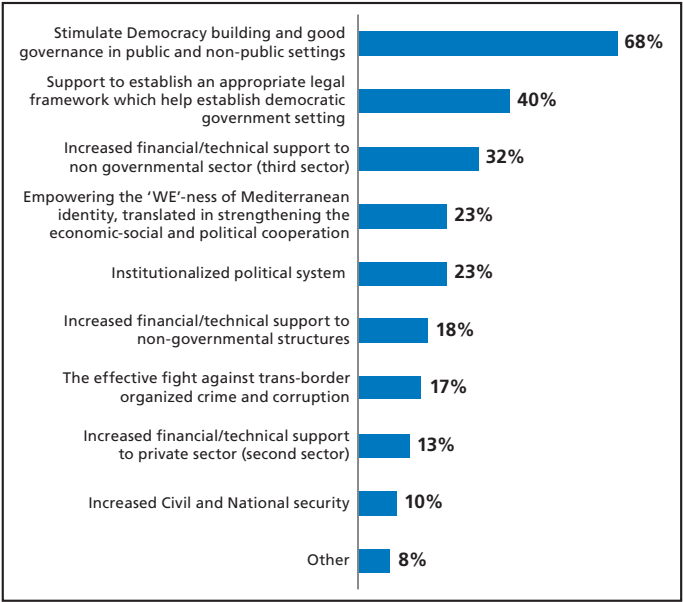
5. ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS ON THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

5.1   Contextualising the social dimension

The development of the social dimension in the region is not only interlinked with the political and economic dimensions, but it is also a guiding principle in the sense that it provides for an appropriate balance between the free market and trade area in the region (Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area or a European Single Market) and the development of a common social area ensuring cohesion and integration within this economic area. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, i.e. Barcelona Process, was conceived as a pursuit to enhance regional cooperation between the EU and the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. As analyzed above, the first chapter concerned political and security partnerships and aimed at promoting peace and stability in the region. The second chapter addressed the economic aspect of the partnership and sought to establish a free-trade area in the Mediterranean. While the objectives of the first two chapters on economic and political dimensions were clearly defined since the beginning of the process, the objective of the third chapter on social, cultural and human affairs was not specified in the first period of the process.

One way of looking into the social dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean region is as follows:

> *'the social dimension includes a range of areas such as the fight against poverty, employment, labour relations, education, health and social cohesion. It is also inextricably linked to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, security, migration, demographic trends, equality between men and women, good governance, trade and economic relations, sustainable relations, equal opportunities for all (including those with physical disabilities), the promotion of culture, the fight against corruption and crime'[7].*

In general the intention was to develop human resources, promote cultural exchange and understanding between societies. This shows that the partnership in terms of the social dimension includes a variety of areas from the fight against poverty to health and education. What is more, some (Schäfer, 2007) have argued that the third

chapter on the social dimension includes all areas which are not covered by the first two chapters as well as all the sensitive topics such as cultural diversity and human rights. The cultural aspect of the social dimension of the EMP includes regional programmes that aim to foster cultural dialogue and understanding through common projects and initiatives such as Euromed Heritage, Euromed Audiovisual, and Euromed Dialogue, as well as the cultural activities of the Delegations of the European Commission in the countries participating in the partnership. Others initiative include the establishment of foundations such as The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.

When assessing the progress of the social dimension of the EMP both positive developments and difficulties can be observed. The Anna Lindh Report 2014 points out that one of the most important developments in terms of the social dimension has been the awakening of the civil society and the renewed capacity to become a social actor for change in the region. In addition the increasing demands for freedom, social cohesion, justice and equal opportunities are signs of the positive social developments in the region. However as highlighted in the other chapters regarding the economic and political dimension of the EMP and the region as a whole, there are many constraints in terms of achieving the objectives of the social dimension of the partnership on issues such as human rights and cultural exchange. The analysis that follows explores the perceptions of the MCA's members precisely on the social dimension of the Mediterranean current developments and future perspectives.

5.2   Perceptions on the current and future perspectives of the social situation

5.2.1   Perceptions on the overall social situation

The social, cultural and human context in the Mediterranean region is very complex and even though the values of individuals and community groups demonstrate positive signs of evolution towards dialogue, understanding and coexistence, others indicate the risks for

fragmentation and exclusion. The pessimistic view noted in regards to the economic and political situation is also noted amongst the surveyed Mediterranean citizens when it comes to the social issues. This is expected to be so given that the economic, political and social aspects are interrelated with one another and there is no clear and definitive cut. What is more, the economic situation impacts directly the mood and the situation on the social side.

In considerable part (39%) the MCA circles' members surveyed declare that they perceive the social situation in their country as bad as shown in Fig. 33. The most concerning finding in this regard is that 28% of the respondents think that the social situation is deteriorating and only 9% think the opposite, i.e. that the social situation is improving. Overall, the majority of the respondents have a pessimistic and negative view on the social issues in their countries. To some extent this is expected given the multifaceted crises in various countries of the Mediterranean such as political, social and economic crises as well as religious conflicts, social unrests and international turmoil. As highlighted above, this national and international context of crises is deemed as the first main external factor for the MCA limitations and the achievement of its set objectives.

5.2.2   Identification of main social concerns

Following on the negative perceptions about the social situation, respondents were asked to rank the three most crucial social issues and the results are shown in Fig. 34. As analysed in Chapter 3 on the economic situation, the issue of unemployment is identified as the most concerning economic issue in the Mediterranean. From a social point of view, we observe the same concern, i.e. the main social issues are: first, employment opportunities and labour relations (57%); education and research (54%); and youth and human capital development and mobility (39%). These issues are in fact interrelated with one another and it comes to no surprise that they are listed as the most pertinent social issues considering that the region has been suffering from slow growth, austerity measures and high levels of unemployment reaching up to 50% of youth unemployment in Spain (ILO, 2013). In addition, the level and quality of education as well as youth mobility and human capital development are interlinked to the employment opportunities and labour relations.
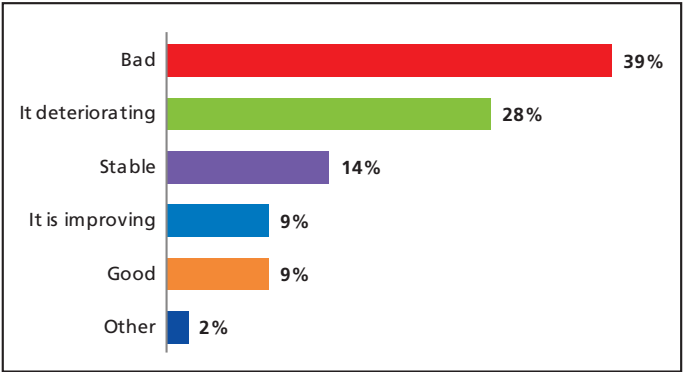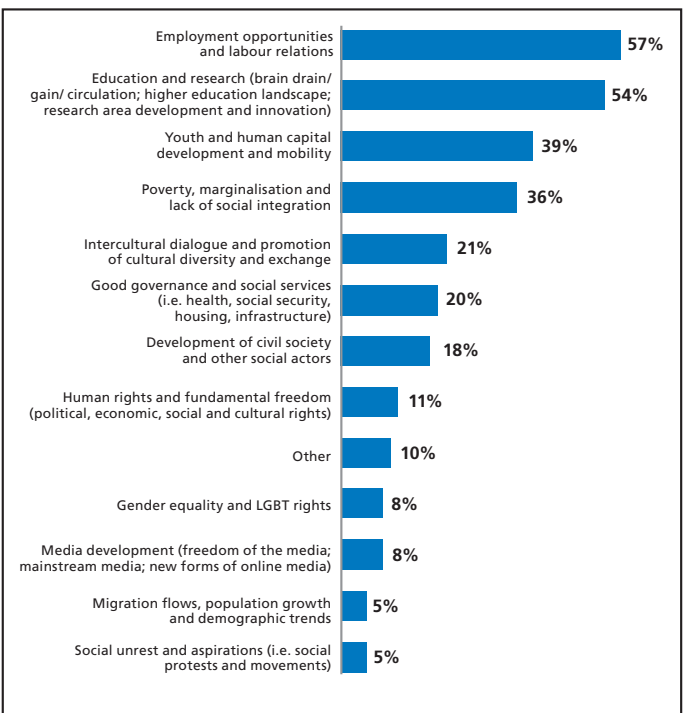
Fig. 33 Perceptions on overall social situation

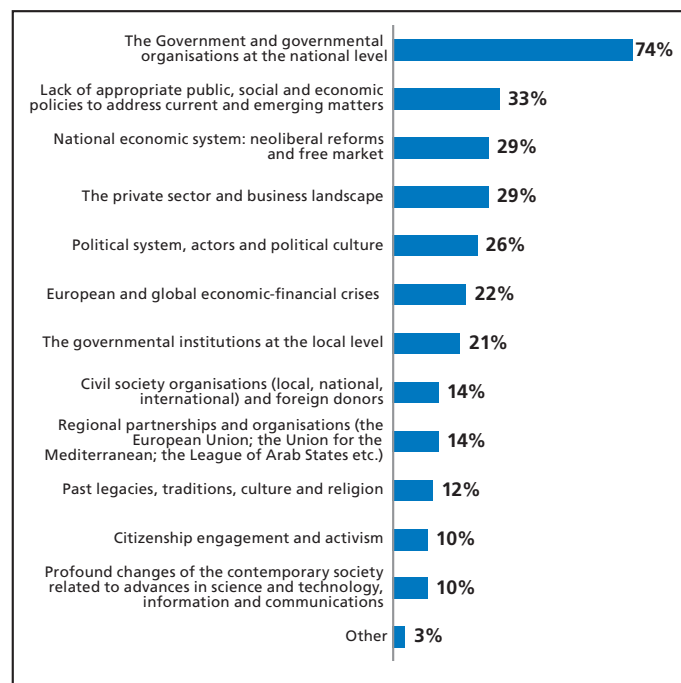## Fig. 34 Perceptions on main social issues

These are particularly sensitive concerns for women, youth and marginalised communities, who face most difficulties in terms of unemployment, segregation, differences in wages and social exclusion. In this vein, other persistent issues include poverty and marginalisation as well as lack of social integration (36%), followed by intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity exchanges (21%). These issues related directly with the diversity of origins of individual and groups that compose the society. Therefore, whereas some value cultural diversity, others conceive it as a threat to social stability and integration. In this sense, the main difficulties refer to the coexistence and social integration of diverse groups within the countries in the Mediterranean.

In addition, good governance (20%) and development of civil society (18%) are also concerning areas, which interrelate with the political situation analysed above. The concerns about good governance and the development of the civil society must be considered in the framework of the Arab Spring fuelled by the lack of individual freedoms and social justice particularly in the southern countries of the Mediterranean and by the high rates of marginalisation, poverty and violation of human rights. In the light of this complex social, cultural, political and economic landscape, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens highlight the role that good governance and development of civil society shall play.

5.2.3 The main factors influencing the current social situation

The vast majority of the respondents (74%) point at the government and governmental organisations at the national level as the first and foremost responsible actors for the current social situation which corresponds to a large extent with the same view regarding the facts responsible for the economic and political situation. The surveyed Mediterranean citizens note that the national governments are proving less capable of delivering on their pledges to the citizens and moreover they demonstrate less capacity to support their societies vis-à-vis external factors such as global market tendencies, environmental catastrophes, conflicts, crime etc. This is then followed by the lack of appropriate public, social and economic policies to address current and emerging social issues (33%) as shown in Fig. 35. The development of policies relies also with the government and therefore respondents expect the government

Fig. 35 The main factors affecting the social situation

The Government and governmental organisations at the national level	74%
Lack of appropriate public, social and economic policies to address current and emerging matters	33%
National economic system: neoliberal reforms and free market	29%
The private sector and business landscape	29%
Political system, actors and political culture	26%
European and global economic-financial crises	22%
The governmental institutions at the local level	21%
Civil society organisations (local, national, international) and foreign donors	14%
Regional partnerships and organisations (the European Union; the Union for the Mediterranean; the League of Arab States etc.)	14%
Past legacies, traditions, culture and religion	12%
Citizenship engagement and activism	10%
Profound changes of the contemporary society related to advances in science and technology, information and communications	10%
Other	3%

and its institution to work towards the improvement of the social situation. The perception of diversity within the societies in the Mediterranean as a possible threat to social stability also impacts the citizens' perspectives on social issues and the factors responsible for the current situation. 29% of the respondents perceive the neoliberal economic reforms in the framework of the three market transformations in the region as one of the main factors for the current bad or deteriorating social situation. This is also related to the discussions regarding the effects of free market and neoliberal reforms, such as austerity measures, on the European financial crises, which is then reflected immediately on issues of employment and social policies.

In addition, the private sector and the business landscape are also deemed responsible for the social situation (29%) given that there

is lack of business social responsibility; there is focus on profit maximisation and less employment opportunities. Other factors include the political system (26%) and policies at the local level (21%). In addition, the European and global economic and financial crises are also identified as possible factors for the social situation. What is more, civil society organisations and foreign donors are also deemed as actors that can contribute towards the social issues in the Mediterranean (14%). This is particularly relevant considering the work of NGOs at local level and the funds provided by foreign donors for particular marginalised groups and various social issues.

The regional partnerships, being the EMP, EU, or the Union for the Mediterranean or the Arab League State, are also considered as actors responsible to the current social situation (14%). Some of the concerns here refer to the limited policy convergence and regional synergies due to the multi-centred EU policymaking, the challenges of the multilateralism and differentiation approaches of the EMP and UfM and the complex historical context of the region as a whole. In addition, the surveyed Mediterranean citizens recognise that past legacies and citizenship apathy as well as limited activism and citizenship engagement are factors that affect the current social situation. Finally, the challenges faced in terms of the social situation such as human affairs, cultural differences and identity constructions, are issues related with the overall profound transformations of the contemporary society related to the advancements in technology, information and communication, which are challenges faced by other societies as well, and not particularly to the Mediterranean.

5.2.4 Appropriate measure to improve the current social situation

The respondents were also asked to suggest some appropriate measure to improve the current social situation. Following the argument that the government is the main actor/factor responsible for the social situation, the respondents note that the first thing to do to improve the social situation is to increase accountability and transparency of the governmental organisations (49%) as shown in Fig. 36. This is followed by the need to strengthen the cooperation and interrelations between the government, business, academic and civil society (44%). This is also related to the suggestion for a

multi-stakeholder participatory approach to government, which allows for a public policy development process that is inclusive of all actors and interests groups (25%). Improvement of the higher education landscape and research is also deemed crucial given that it directly influences the professional development and employment opportunities of young generations. 29% of the surveyed citizens argue that the way forward is to improve the national strategies and public policies including employment and labour relations, pension schemes and social welfare, health and education, environment and urban planning. In the context of diverse societies and increased flows of migration, public policy on social inclusion, integration and human rights become even more sensitive and crucial.

In this vein, the empowerment of social actors, civil society organisations and community groups is deemed as an appropriate tool to improve the current social situation by 24% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens. The civil society has been developed significantly in the Mediterranean and has been active in topics such as human rights, gender equality, youth participation and citizen engagement. Most notably social movements and civil society are considered as key actors of the Arab Spring and the current political transformations in the region. When thinking of civil society as a channel for improvement of the social situation it is necessary to note the difference between: the conventional dimension of the civil society, i.e. non-governmental organisations, faith organisations, associations, etc.; and secondly the alternative forms of civil society such as social movements, social media activism, individual actions and alternative community initiatives. The latter being considered as even more effective that the conventional dimension of the civil society. In this line, 15% of the respondents indicate that the media can play a crucial role in democratic and social processes. The democratic role of the media refers to the normative function of providing quality information and content to citizens; holding the government and private actors accountable, i.e. the watchdog function of the media; and creating participatory spaces for social groups, i.e. online social media, alternative media etc.

Improvement and promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity is seen by 22% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens as instruments to improve the social situation considering the historical context, pas legacies and increasing tends of migration in the
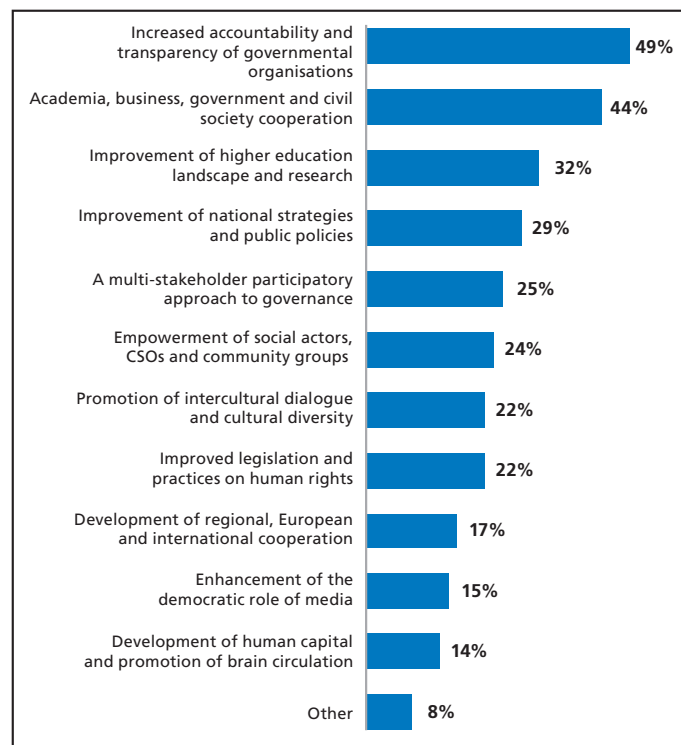
region. The cultural aspect of the social dimension of the EMP is the most challenging one. On one hand, Mediterranean citizens demonstrate a genuine interest towards more cultural exchanges as tools of better understanding and coexistence. One the other hand, conceiving cultural diversity as a possible threat to the social stability of the society hinders the will and actions towards more intercultural exchanges. Equality important is considered the improvement of legislation on human rights (22%), which constitutes one of the most sensitive and highly challenging themes of the third chapter of the EMP. In this vein, the development of human capital and brain circulation are also pointed out as tools to improve the social situation particularly so when considering the brain drain of some of the Mediterranean countries whereby the lack of employment opportunities and career perspectives, to mention but a few, have led youth to leave their countries of origin.

17% of the surveyed Mediterranean citizens argue that the social situation can be improved by the increased regional, European and international cooperation. The impact of such cooperation on the social dimension will be analysed in the following section.

5.2.5 The Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and its impact on social progress

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 constituted an ambitious and multilateral initiative to work towards the construction of a Euro-Mediterranean region. As highlighted in the previous sections, this survey on the perceptions of the Mediterranean citizens shows that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation (process and dialogue) is conceived as mainly formal and procedural rather than about substance and concrete action. This implies low policy convergence and limited regional synergies. In this light, 30% of the respondents believe that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process has no impact on the social progress as shown in Fig. 37. Whereas 23% of the respondents believe that it has a concrete positive impact. Very closely with 20% of the respondents who believe that it is a formal process. It is based on political interests and does not have a concrete social impact. It is important to notice that 12% of the MCA's members surveyed note that they do not understand the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and do not have enough information.

Fig. 36 The appropriate ways to improve the social dimension

Increased accountability and transparency of governmental organisations	49%
Academia, business, government and civil society cooperation	44%
Improvement of higher education landscape and research	32%
Improvement of national strategies and public policies	29%
A multi-stakeholder participatory approach to governance	25%
Empowerment of social actors, CSOs and community groups	24%
Promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity	22%
Improved legislation and practices on human rights	22%
Development of regional, European and international cooperation	17%
Enhancement of the democratic role of media	15%
Development of human capital and promotion of brain circulation	14%
Other	8%

5.2.6 *The Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact on social progress*

When asked about the possible impacts of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on the social progress the majority of the respondents (53%) note that it should positively affect the intercultural dialogue and social exchange and contribute to promote cultural diversity and cooperation as seen in Fig. 38. Secondly, 47% of the respondents suggest that the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue should increase the North-South and South-South social, cultural and economic cooperation and provide financial and technical support and capacity building for civil society organisations, social actors and community development (45%). In line with this argument is the suggestion that the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue should contribute to the empowerment of the citizens and community groups to engage in public affairs and participate in the policy development process (40%). This is also interlinked with the suggestion of a multi-stakeholder participatory approach to government and policy development as well as increased accountability and transparency of governmental organisations, which were identified above. Other suggestion refers to the management of migration flows and enhancement of social integration and cohesion (34%), followed by the improvement of social, economic, political and cultural situation of women, which is one of the priority themes suggested for MCA future action plan.

Fig. 37 The Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and the social progress
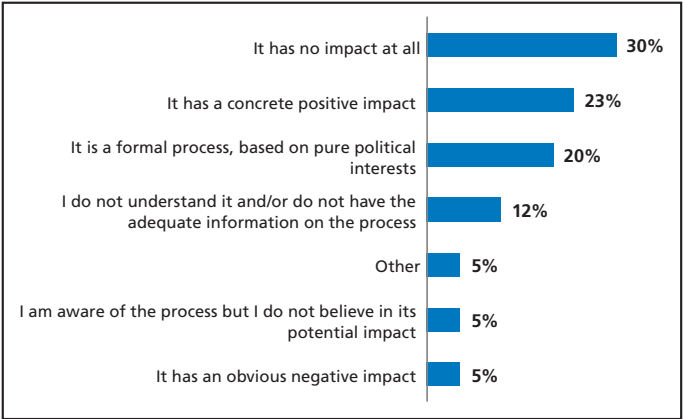
Fig. 38 The Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact on the social dimension
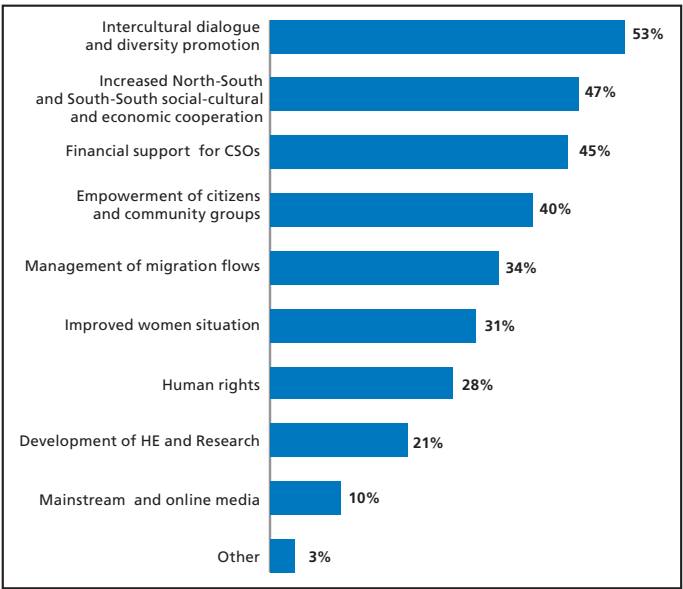
ANNEX I – TABLES

Table 1.   Perceptions on main limitations of MCA in the capacity of a member

Perceptions on main limitations of MCA in the capacity of a member	
External factors	
National and international political context	Economic and political crises in member countries
	International context and restrictions on free movement
	Political situation is the main constraint: we talk more about war than peace
	National and international security
	The situation in the Arab countries
	The situation in Mediterranean countries
	Multiple crisis in the countries
	Religious conflicts
Intercultural dialogue and language barriers	Language differences
	Cultural differences
Internal factors	
Internal capacities of the MCA	Week steering and management
	Restricted number of circles
	Lack of financial resources for common projects/Limited financial resources to support circles and concrete actions
	Limited human resources /There is limited professional staff
	There is no clear annual action plan for all circles
	Status of MCA/Legal entity
	Few circles/Limited number of circles/More circles per each country
	Lack of sustainable projects
	The activities of MCA are too academic
	Budget and technology do not work the same way in all circles
	Circles' flexibility to raise funds and find other financial resources
	Limited work regarding the strategic themes such as social issues, economic hardship and lack of free movement
	The publication of reports is not followed by concrete actions

Engagement with the wider public	Involvement of people
	Lack of information disseminated to the wider public
	Very limited visibility to the public at large
	Limited public and external relations
	Participation of the public within MCA limited
Political lobbying and advocacy	Lack of representation in local and central authorities
	There is limited lobbying in Brussels
	Taking clear political actions
	There is no support of major political figures, elected by citizens such as Presidents, Prime Ministers
	Limited activities to raise awareness about MCA and its activities
	There is no advertising for ordinary citizens to learn about MCA and its work
Concrete integrated actions	There are limited joint activities in the Mediterranean
	There is limited coordinated actions towards set objectives
	The set objectives are not concrete and specific in focus
	Production of declarations rather than actions
	Integration of circles and common actions
	Confusion with objectives and milestones
	Lack of strong meaningful actions
	Joint projects are rare
	Annual meetings should be result-oriented and focus specific
Frequency of meetings/interaction and communication	Annual meeting is not sufficient
	Communication and integration is limited
	Differences in types of activities organized by different circles
	There is limited interaction between members outside of the annual meeting/No connection between the members during all the year
	Limited interaction at a personnel level between members
	There is limited knowledge sharing and exchange of experience
	Limited number of meetings
	Interconnection between circles is not at the appropriate level
Identity construction	Citizens are not aware of their Mediterranean dimension of identity
	Lack of understanding between European Union and Mediterranean region
	There is few representation of youth in the circles or other social groups
	The identity of MCA is not clear
	Equality between men and women
	Gender issues

Table 2.   MCA's priorities for the near future

Main priority areas of MCA in the near future	
Enhancement of intercultural dialogue and language barriers	More cultural exchanges
	Culture against war
Development of the internal capacities and human resources of the MCA	Fundraising and plan to generate financial resources
	More research and capacity building initiatives
	MCA should become a legal entity
	IT competences and infrastructure
	MCA should be formally established in all countries of the Mediterranean
	Establishing an institutional status
	Professional resources
	Open up to work with other actors at national and international level
Improvement of the engagement with the wider public	Involvement of youth
	To develop initiatives to engage with the wider public
	Involvement of key sources in the community to engage the public and raise awareness about the MCA
	Adoption of PR and Strategic Marketing techniques
	Invite the wider public to MCA meetings
	Involvement of other social-professional groups not only academics/researchers/CSOs
	Getting closer to citizens through media, visibility and networking.
	Use of international and national mainstream media as well as new and alternative media
More Political lobbying and advocacy	Publication of circles' contributions (journals, annual review, books etc.)
	Creating visibility and public awareness on MCA, its mission and work
	Cooperation with local and central government
	More lobbying at the local level
	Being more present in mainstream media and political landscape
	Organize of activities with local government

Development of concrete and integrated actions	Youth employment programme
	Focusing on peace actions
	Focusing on social problems
	Focusing on democracy
	Focusing on women's rights
	Focusing on fight against corruption
	Joint projects on Mediterranean issues
	Focus on Middle East and Syria
	North-South collaborations
	Concrete cultural events to promote the identity of the Mediterranean
	Social transformation and activism
	Involve in the discussion/actions about the ISIS and particularly focus on women
Improvement of circles' interaction and communication	Establishing new circles in all Mediterranean countries
	Establishing more frequent meetings amongst circles and members
	Promote and strengthen collaboration among different circles and members of countries and regions
	Focus on networking and organization of activities in advance
	Determine specific campaigns, actions and projects
	Improvement of communication
	Joint seminars, conferences, roundtables with other institutions, not only with MCA's circles
	Bilateral activities of circles
	Organize thematic conference online - video conferences
	Activities at the local level
	Organizing more open public discussions on current themes
Promotion of the Mediterranean identity and citizenship	Defending social rights and identity of Mediterranean's citizens.
	Use of culture for the construction of Mediterranean citizenship

Table 3. Perceptions on the main priority themes for future actions of MCA

Main priority themes for future actions of MCA
Fight against poverty and social inequalities
Human rights, women rights and LGBT
Fundamentalism and multiple crises
Corruption
Democracy
Social issues
Economic and social security
Focus on Middle East and Syria
Environmental protection: Maritime
Public higher education
National securities
Media and culture
Agriculture and the urban-rural dynamics
Migration, refugees and immigration issues
Facilitation of students' exchange and motilities
Adult lifelong learning
Religious conflict
Erasmus Mediterranean
Education, health and development
Social movements and activism

Table 4: Constraints faced as MCA members

Main constraints faced in the capacity of an MCA member	
External Factors	
National and international political context	Restriction of free movement
	Lack of information on the EU policy in the Mediterranean
Intercultural dialogue and language barriers	Language differences
	Difficulties to set a common ground and produce basic common conclusion due to cultural disparities
Internal Factors	
Internal capacities of MCA	Weak Steering process / Slow decision making process with regard to the collaboration between steering bodies (Advisory board) and circles
	Limited and inappropriate financial sources to support common activities (events and research)
	Low membership in the level of circles / Difficulties in organizing and motivating the circles
	Restricted number of circles / Circles are geographically far and not easily accessed
	Low transparency in the level of the steering bodies of the MCA
	Limited time for members to participate in MCA activities
	The planning and programming of future activities is not discussed among members
	Circle's flexibility to raise funds on behalf of MCA
Engagement with the wider public	Low promotion of MCA mission and activities to the wider community
	Limited visibility of circles to the wider public
Political lobbying and advocacy	Lack of representation at national level
	Limited consultation process with other organizations
	Lack of presence in the national and international media for lobbying and advocacy purposes

Concrete integrated actions	Low level of publications on Mediterranean issues / Citizens need to become ambassadors of MCA in terms of disseminating the Charter's principles
	Need to engage in networking process and cooperation
	Lack of concrete problem-solving actions
	Actions sometimes become more theoretical than needed
	Production of declarations rather than actions
	Debates and topics must refer to the ongoing conflicts and issues of Mediterranean countries
	Orient the vision of MCA members toward clear and focused objectives and strategy
	Enhance and diversify the number of joint activities
	MCA should receive and institutional status
Frequency of meetings/interaction and communication	Limited interaction at a personal level between members
	Meeting materials, detailed agenda, purpose of the meeting need to be distributed in advance
	Lack of a Newspaper for MCA
	Communication and information is limited among members during the year / Lack of established online and/or offline communication links
	Lack of knowledge on the activities of other circles
	There is no follow up of the joint meetings and activities
	Annual meetings are not sufficient / Decreased number of regional meetings
Identity Constructions	MCA should review its juridical status

Table 5. Suggested relationship of MCA with other networks or platforms in the Mediterranean

Participatory actions	Cooperation / partnership / networking
	Joint projects and meetings
	Forums, conferences and publications
	Collaborate on joint projects for social transformation in the Mediterranean
	Semi-annual meetings and common platform on targeted issues
	Co-ordinate to establish, as much as possible, a common agenda
	Cooperation means more power
Advisory relationship	Complementary relationship
	Close and regular consultative relations
MCA independence in focus	The relationship of autonomy but consultation and on-going dialogue
	MCA must first work on its own identity before thinking of engaging itself into bilateral relations

Table 6. Suggested MCA relationship with public institutions

Promote the dialogue	Dialogue between countries to defend human rights
	Maintain relations of dialogue, understanding and cooperation with public institutions in the Mediterranean
	Exchange information
	Promote a dialogue that is missing in the Mediterranean / Promote the strategic partnership with these institutions
Diplomatic Relations	Very professional but diplomatic relationships
	Diplomatic relations with public institutions concentrated on funding common activities
Participatory actions	Participatory and advisory relationship
	Cooperation and network
	Participation in conferences and events / publications
	Cooperate to encourage reforms / proposing new policies for good governance and inclusion
	Exchange of information
Advisory relationship	Consultation
	Advice each other on activities and policies
	Participate as observer
	Lobbying initiatives
MCA independence in focus	Invitation to participate in events / MCA remains independent / MCA is composed of citizens and not institutions
	Generate common ideas and visions but the independence of decision-making bodies remain untouched
	The relationship should be of mutual respect, but not closer than necessary

ANNEX II – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A – General Information

A1.　What is your age?

1. 18 and under　❑
2. 19 to 29　❑
3. 30 to 39　❑
4. 40 to 49　❑
5. 50 to 59　❑
6. 60 and Over　❑

A2.　What is your sex?

1. Female　❑
2. Male　❑

A3.　Please state your professional background:

_____

A4.　Please state your country:

_____

A5.　Which MCA citizens' circles do you belong to?

1. Circle of Aleppo (Syria)　❑
2. Circle of Casablanca (Morocco)　❑
3. Circle of Damas (Syria)　❑
4. Circle of Istanbul (Turkey)　❑
5. Circle of Marseille (France)　❑
6. Circle of Naples (Italy)　❑
7. Circle of Oran (Algeria)　❑
8. Circle of Podgorica (Montenegro)　❑
9. Circle of Rome (Italy)　❑
10. Circle of Thessaly (Greece)　❑
11. Circle of Tirana (Albania)　❑

12.	Circle of Tunis (Tunisia)	❑
13.	Circle of Valence (Spain)	❑
14.	Circle of Zagreb	❑
15.	Other (please specify)	

_____

A6. How long have you been a member of your MCA citizens' circle?

1.	Less than 1 year	❑
2.	More than 1 year	❑

A7. Please tick if you belong to any of the following:

1.	Advisory Board	❑
2.	Charter Signatories	❑

PART B – Perception on the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly

B1. In your opinion, is the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA) progress so far meeting its set objectives?

1.	Fully meeting its set objectives	❑
2.	Partially meeting its set objectives	❑
3.	Not meeting its set objectives	❑
4.	Other (please specify)	

_____

B2. In the capacity of an MCA member, which are the main limitations, if any, that MCA faces in achieving its set objectives?

   (Please list three most important)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B3. *In your opinion, which areas of activity should MCA prioritise in the near future?*

　　(Please list three most important)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B4. *Considering your experience with MCA, would you state that:*

1. My personal expectations as an MCA member are fully met　　　❑
2. My personal expectations as an MCA member are partially met　❑
3. My personal expectations as an MCA member are not met　　　❑
4. Other (please specify)

_____

(If your response is the option 1, please go to question B5; otherwise continue to B4)

B5. *Which are the main constraints that you have faced in the capacity of an MCA member?*

　　(Please list three most important)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B6. *In your capacity as an MCA member, which are your expectations for the future development of MCA:*

1. MCA becoming a Mediterranean movement　　　　　　　　　❑
2. Increase of MCA membership participation　　　　　　　　　❑
3. Strengthening MCA role in advocacy for Mediterranean concerns　❑
4. Increase visibility of MCA actions　　　　　　　　　　　　❑
5. Extended MCA circles' representation at a national level　　　❑
6. Enhancement of communication channels between circles　　　❑
7. Other (please specify)

_____

B7. *In your opinion, what should be the future status of MCA?*

1. Movement – maintaining status quo
2. International Non-Governmental Organisations

    3.   National Non-Governmental Organisations
    4.   Each circle becoming an association on its own
    5.   All circles forming an association
    6.   Other (please specify)

_____

B8.   *How would you identify yourself as:*
    1.   Citizen of Mediterranean
    2.   Citizen of Euro-Mediterranean
    3.   Citizen of European Union
    4.   Other (please specify)

_____

B9.   *When you think about integration processes, which of the following do you refer to:*
    1.   Mediterranean integration
    2.   Euro-Mediterranean integration
    3.   Other (please specify)

_____

B10.   *In your opinion, the future development of the region should go towards:*
    1.   Mediterranean integration
    2.   Euro-Mediterranean integration
    3.   Other (please specify)

_____

B11.   *In your opinion, what kind of relationship should MCA have with other networks or platforms in the Mediterranean (FAL; Platform Euromed, other thematic networks)?*
    1.   _____
    2.   _____
    3.   _____

B12. *In your opinion, what kind of relationship should MCA have with public institutions in the Mediterranean (UPM; AR-LEM; CESE; African Union; Arab League; Islamic Conference; etc.)?*
    1.   _____
    2.   _____
    3.   _____

PART C- Perceptions on Economic Situation

(Please tick the answers you consider most appropriate – more than one option is possible)

C1. **How do you feel about the <u>current economic situation </u>in your country?**

1. Good ❏
2. Bad ❏
3. Stable ❏
4. It is improving ❏
5. It is deteriorating ❏
6. Other (please specify)

_____

C2. **In your opinion, which are the main <u>financial-economic issues</u> that your country is facing?**

(Please select up to three most important)

1. Unemployment ❏
2. Inflation ❏
3. Public debt ❏
4. High prices ❏
5. Lack of investments ❏
6. Lack of social policies ❏
7. Low wages ❏
8. Trade deficit ❏
9. Low economic growth ❏
10. Difficulties to get bank loans ❏
11. Businesses' fear for the future ❏
12. Access to housing ❏
13. Other (please specify) ❏

_____

C3. **In your opinion, who are the <u>principle actors/factors responsible for the economic situation</u> in your country?**

(Please select up to three most important)

- ❏ The government and its weakness ❏
- ❏ The government and its economic/financial policies ❏
- ❏ Economic-financial global crises ❏
- ❏ Inappropriate structure of national economy ❏
- ❏ Weakness of national businesses ❏

☐ Effects of crises that some countries are going through ☐
☐ Effects of changes due to the 'Arab Spring' ☐
☐ Current poverty and issues derived from low development ☐
☐ Economic and financial system ☐
☐ Weakness of EU functioning and direction ☐
☐ Common currency - Euro ☐
☐ Central European Bank and its policies ☐
☐ The general European economic and financial situation ☐
☐ Policies of particular countries of EU ☐
☐ Globalization and international competitiveness ☐
☐ High level of financial aid granted to poor countries and the cost of international interference ☐
☐ Other (Specify)

_____

C4. **In your opinion, what are the most <u>appropriate ways to change/improve the economic situation</u> in your country?**

(Please select up to three most important)

1. Changing domestic economic/financial policies ☐
2. Rotation of governments and establishment of a merit-based public administration ☐
3. Revision of national development strategies ☐
4. Improvement of business climate ☐
5. Fight against corruption and informality ☐
6. Empowering Regional, Mediterranean, European integration/cooperation ☐
7. Open and free trade ☐
8. Application of protectionist policies ☐
9. Attraction of Foreign Direct Investment ☐
10. Strengthening the cooperation with EU, World Bank, IMF, USA, China, etc. ☐
11. Independence of politics from the market ☐
12. Setback the EU Integration process ☐
13. Empowering economic cooperation between EU and China, Russia, USA, etc ☐
14. Re-conceptualization of EU common currency ☐
15. Establishment of a European Ministry for Economy and Finance ☐
16. Changing the role of European Central Bank ☐
17. Reducing the austerity measures and stimulation of economic growth ☐
18. Other (Specify)

_____

C5. *In your opinion, what is the impact of <u>Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process</u> toward the economic progress in your country?*

1. It has a concrete positive impact ❑
2. It has an obvious negative impact ❑
3. It has no impact at all ❑
4. It is a formal process, based on pure political interests ❑
5. I do not understand it and/or do not have the adequate information on the process ❑
6. I am aware of the process but I do not believe in its potential impact ❑
7. Other (Please Specify)

_____

C6. *In your opinion as a citizen of your country as well as in the capacity of a Mediterranean citizen, in which of the following aspects, should the <u>Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact the economic situation</u> in your country?*

(Please select up to three most important)

1. Increased employment rate ❑
2. Reduction of poverty and welfare growth ❑
3. Improvement of economic and development policies ❑
4. Stability of public finances ❑
5. Growth of investments and implementation of joint development projects ❑
6. Transfer of positive experience on economic growth ❑
7. Vocational Educational Training, universities and scientific research ❑
8. Joint problem-solving experiences on economic/financial issues of the Mediterranean ❑
9. Decentralized cooperation which does not necessarily consider governments as actors ❑
10. A real and improved integration process for Mediterranean countries ❑
11. Other (Specify)

_____

PART D – PERCEPTIONS ON POLITICAL SITUATION AND DEMOCRACY

D1. *How do you feel about the <u>political situation</u> in your country?*

1. Good ❑
2. Bad ❑
3. Stable ❑
4. It is improving ❑
5. It is deteriorating ❑
6. Other (please specify)

_____

D2.   ***In your opinion, which are the main <u>political issues</u> that your country is facing?***

     (Please select up to three most important)

1. Corruption in governmental and public settings   ❑
2. Politicisation of *public administration*   ❑
3. Lack of political dialogue among political parties   ❑
4. *Political culture of leadership*   ❑
5. Weak/non existing channel between citizens need and government policies   ❑
6. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms/ tolerance between different groups in society   ❑
7. High state control on economy   ❑
8. *Civil Security*   ❑
9. *National Security*   ❑
10. The right to self-determination   ❑
11. The fight against terrorism   ❑
12. The fight against organized crime   ❑
13. Other (Please Specify)

_____

D3.   ***In your opinion, who are the <u>principle actors/factors responsible for the political situation</u> in your country?***

     (Please select up to three most important)

1. The Government and governmental leverage in national level   ❑
2. The global economic-financial crises   ❑
3. The lack of well-functioning structure of Civil Society   ❑
4. Lack of well-established middle class in the country   ❑
5. The lack of interest of national and international actors toward the security issues   ❑
6. Weakness of political parties' leadership capacities   ❑
7. The international actors and their interference in national issues   ❑
8. Other (Please Specify)

_____

D4. In your opinion, what are the most <u>appropriate ways to change/improve the political situation</u> in your country?

     (Please select up to three most important)

1. Establishing a merit-based public administration through a rigid process of frequent exams on officials' performance and professional capacity   ❑
2. Implementing an 'inclusion within diversity' EU policy toward the Mediterranean, respecting the multiple identity belonging of each Mediterranean country   ❑

3. Strengthening the Civil Society in national level and enhancing the regional cooperation
    of the third sector among countries of Mediterranean and beyond   ❑
4. Internal democracy of political parties and institutionalization of political party system   ❑
5. Revision of national strategies and policies related to state building and democracy
    settings in the governmental structures   ❑
6. Empowering the auditing structure specialized to fight corruption and informality in public structures ❑
7. Focusing on the integration process of countries in regional, EU and global level organizations and
    (NATO; EU; etc.) as a tool to strengthen cooperation and bridge cultural gaps   ❑
8. Weakening the state control on the economy   ❑
9. Empowering the 'WE'-ness of Mediterranean identity in comparison to the Arab-Islamic and
    European-Christian identity (as a tool to enhance democracy deficit of Euro-Mediterranean politics) ❑
10. Other (Please Specify)

_____

D5.   In your opinion, what is the impact of _Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process toward the political progress and democracy_ in your country?

1. It has a concrete positive impact   ❑
2. It has an obvious negative impact   ❑
3. It has no impact at all   ❑
4. It is a formal process, based on pure political interests   ❑
5. I do not understand it and/or do not have the adequate information on the process   ❑
6. I am aware of the process but I do not believe in its potential impact   ❑
7. Other (Please Specify)

_____

D6.   In your opinion as a citizen of your country as well as in the capacity of a Mediterranean citizen, in which of the following aspects, should the _Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact the political situation_ in your country?

(Please select up to three most important)

1. Increased financial/technical support to governmental structures   ❑
2. Increased financial/technical support to private sector (second sector)   ❑
3. Increased financial/technical support to non-governmental sector (third sector)   ❑
4. Institutionalized political system   ❑
5. Stimulate Democracy building and good governance in public and non-public settings   ❑
6. Support to establish an appropriate legal framework which help establish democratic
    government setting   ❑
7. The effective fight against trans-border organized crime and corruption   ❑
8. Increased Civil and National security   ❑

9. Empowering the 'WE'-ness of Mediterranean identity, translated in strengthening
   the economic-social and political cooperation ❑
10. Other (Please Specify)

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PART E– Perceptions on social dimension (social, cultural and human affairs)

E1. How do you feel about the overall <u>social dimension</u> *(social, cultural and human affairs) in your country?*

1. Good ❑
2. Bad ❑
3. Stable ❑
4. It is improving ❑
5. It is deteriorating ❑
6. Other (please specify)

_____

E2. In your opinion, which are the <u>main issues</u> *that your country is facing in terms of* <u>the social dimension</u>?

(Please select up to three most important)

1. Youth and human capital development and mobility ❑
2. Education and research (brain drain/ gain/ circulation; higher education landscape; research area
   development and innovation) ❑
3. Employment opportunities *and labour relations* ❑
4. Social unrest and aspirations (i.e. social protests and movements) ❑
5. Poverty, marginalisation and lack of social integration ❑
6. Migration flows, population growth and demographic trends ❑
7. Human rights and fundamental freedoms (political, economic, social and cultural rights) ❑
8. Intercultural dialogue and promotion of cultural diversity and exchange ❑
9. Media development (freedom of the media; mainstream media; new forms of online media) ❑
10. Gender equality and LGBT rights ❑
11. Development of civil society and other social actors ❑
12. Good governance and social services (i.e. health, social security, housing, infrastructure) ❑
13. Other (Please Specify)

_____

E3. *In your opinion, who are the <u>principle actors/factors responsible for the social dimension</u> in your country?*
(Please select up to three most important)

1. The Government and governmental organisations at the national level ❑
2. The governmental institutions at the local level ❑
3. Regional partnerships and organisations (the European Union; the Union for the Mediterranean; the League of Arab States etc.) ❑
4. The private sector and business landscape ❑
5. Civil society organisations (local, national, international) and foreign donors ❑
6. European and global economic -financial crises ❑
7. National economic system: neoliberal reforms and free market ❑
8. Profound changes of the contemporary society related to advances in science and technology, information and communications ❑
9. Political system, actors and political culture ❑
10. Past legacies, traditions, culture and religion ❑
11. Lack of appropriate public, social and economic policies to address current and emerging matters ❑
12. Citizenship engagement and activism ❑
13. Other (Please Specify)

_____

E4. *In your opinion, what are the most appropriate ways to <u>change/improve the social dimension</u> in your country?*
(Please select up to three most important)

1. Establishment of a multi-stakeholder participatory approach to governance ❑
2. Strengthening the partnership between academia, business, government and civil society ❑
3. Increased accountability and transparency of governmental organisations ❑
4. Revision and improvement of national development strategies and public policies ❑
5. Improved legislation and practices to guarantee and protect human rights, fundamental freedoms, promote gender equality and LGBT rights ❑
6. Empowerment of social actors, civil society organisations and community groups ❑
7. Enhancement of the democratic role of media (mainstream and new forms of online media) in the provision of quality information and spaces for discussions and audience participation ❑
8. Improvement of higher education landscape and encouragement of innovative research: funding, exchange and mobility ❑
9. Development of human capital and promotion of brain circulation ❑
10. Promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity ❑
11. Development of regional, European and international cooperation ❑
12. Other (Please Specify)

_____

E5.   In your opinion, what is the impact of <u>Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process toward the social progress</u> in your country?

1.   It has a concrete positive impact   ❑
2.   It has an obvious negative impact   ❑
3.   It has no impact at all   ❑
4.   It is a formal process, based on pure political interests   ❑
5.   I do not understand it and/or do not have the adequate information on the process   ❑
6.   I am aware of the process but I do not believe in its potential impact   ❑
7.   Other (Please Specify)

_____

E6. In your opinion as a citizen of your country as well as in the capacity of a Mediterranean citizen, in which of the following aspects, <u>should the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue impact the social dimension</u> in your country?

(Please select up to three most important)

1.   Positively affect the intercultural dialogue and social exchange; promote cultural diversity and cooperation   ❑
2.   Better management of migration flows to enhance social integration and cohesion   ❑
3.   Empowerment of citizens and community groups to engage in public affairs and participate
     in policy development processes   ❑
4.   Financial/technical support and capacity-building for civil society organisations, social actors
     and community development   ❑
5.   Improved social, economic, political and cultural situation of women   ❑
6.   Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including working towards gender equality
     and LGBT rights   ❑
7.   Increased North-South and South-South social, cultural and economic cooperation   ❑
8.   Financial/technical support for the higher education sector and research: human capital development
     and circulation; student and staff exchange and mobility   ❑
9.   Promote the development of mainstream media and new forms of online media to better perform
     their democratic functions   ❑
10. Other (Please Specify)

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ANNEX III – Bibliography

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ANNEX IV – Biographies

Prof. Dr. Adrian Civici is the President of the European University of Tirana, leading university in Albania. He is a distinguished scholar, lecturer and expert in Albania in the field of EU economic integration, sustainable regional development and transitory economies in South East Europe, agriculture policies and rural development. He has been working in various leading positions in the public sector, government and civil society as well as higher education. Prof. Dr. Civici holds a Ph.D., in Economics from ENSA, Montpellier (France) and a doctor's degree in Business Administration from the Agricultural University of Tirana. Prof. Dr. Civici was a Member of the Supervisory Council of the Bank of Albania from April 2005 to September 2014. Prof. Dr. Civici is the author of several books on market economy in Albania and in the region and has published in leading scientific journals.

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nevila Xhindi is the Deputy Mayor of the Tirana Municipality. She holds PhD Degree in Regional Development and Planning at the University of Potsdam, Germany and 'Doctor of Science' in Human Geography from the University of Tirana. She was awarded a Fulbright/Humphrey scholarship to pursue her postgraduate studies at the Pennsylvania State University in the US on Education Policy and Comparative Studies. With extensive experience in higher education, she has also been working for three years as the Country Donor Coordinator at the Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination, Council of Ministers Albania. Prof. Assoc. Dr. Xhindi has been awarded by the European Commission the Jean Monnet Chair at the European University of Tirana for the first time in Albania. She is a member of the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) and the European Experts for the Bologna Process (HERE).

Blerjana Bino, PhD (c) is the Executive Director of the UET Centre, a CSO working on research and capacity building projects on social inclusion, human rights and good governance in Albania. Ms Bino is experienced in project management, research, lecturing and youth mentoring. Her areas of interest include: social inclusion of marginalized groups; alternative media and empowerment; political representation and participation, public sphere and democracy. Ms Bino holds a Master of Science Degree in Politics and Communication from the London School of Economics and Political Science in UK. Ms Bino is currently at the final stage of her doctoral studies,

working on research project that focuses on the role of alternative media and communication technologies in the political empowerment of marginalised communities. She is a lecturer of Research Methods and New Media at the European University of Tirana.

Ketrina Çabiri, PhD (c) is the Project Manager, Office for Project Development and Partnerships, at the European University of Tirana. She has received a Master's Degree in European Politics from the University of Sussex, UK and is pursuing her PhD on democracy and transition studies. She is a political scientist specialized in the politics of democratization, with emphasis on the democratization of Albania. Her fields of expertize include also spheres such as European Integration, Constitutionalism and Public Policy Analysis. She has been working as a lecturer on Theories of Democracy at the University of Tirana and the Chair of Albanian Research Team of the Group for Legal and Political Studies. Ms. Çabiri has been working as an external consultant for national and regional research organizations as well as an expert of European Research Programs in the Council of Ministers in the Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation. She is currently a lecturer at the Department of Applied Social Sciences at the European University of Tirana.

Dr. Teuta Xhindi is a lecturer of Statistics at the Department of Informatics, Mathematics and Statistics at the European University of Tirana. She holds a 'Doctor of Science' degree in statistics from the Polytechnic University of Tirana and has been working as in the education sector, both secondary and higher education, for more than fifteen years. From 2007-2009 Dr. Xhindi has been the Head of Department for Registration and Business Services at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tirana. Dr. Xhindi has been serving at the Parliament of Albania in the capacity of the Director of Human Resources and Deputies' Training Department. Dr. Xhindi is the author of e series of papers published in national and international journals.

Assemblée des Citoyens et Citoyennes de la Méditerranée

Méditerranean Citizens' Assembly

تجمع مواطني ومواطنات المتوسط

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