



Final declarations of the Advisory Council of the Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly (MCA)

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Table of contents

Declaration on Syria.....	1
Declaration on Israel and Palestine.....	2
Declaration on Cyprus.....	2
Declaration on Tunisia.....	3
Declaration on Morocco	3
Declaration on Greece	4
Declaration on the situation of democratic transitions in the Mediterranean.....	5
Declaration on freedom of movement in the Mediterranean.....	7
Declaration on freedom, individual and collective security and peace in the Mediterranean	7
Declaration on the economic crisis and Citizenship in the Mediterranean	8

Declaration on Syria

It is almost three years that the Syrian bloodshed is enduring. There are now more than hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties, in addition to more than 6 million internally displaced people and external refugees. A peaceful revolt, demanding freedom and dignity has been repressed by tanks, warplanes, ballistic missiles, chemical weapons and starvation. An incredible violence has opened the country to all sorts of regional and international influences which has given place to an unusual radicalization in the Syrian society and in its culture. There is a generalized international indifference in response to a humanitarian disaster that is hitting this devastated people. The incapability of the international bodies to start an effective initiative to end this tragedy becomes a dark stain in the history of humanity.

In this mess, the Mediterranean, its sea and coasts, becomes a profound cemetery for the dozens of Syrian refugees trying to escape the conflict. The attitude of the countries of the northern coasts is regrettable. The reception offered to the refugees in the poor countries surrounding Syria is much more worthy than the one provided by the rich countries of the north. The humiliations of this people by the authorities of some countries as well as racist and xenophobic abuses represent a real danger for the common future of the Mediterranean people.

Even if it is too late, the citizens of Syria need to feel the Mediterranean solidarity through words and actions. This ancient country that has given so much to humanity in general and to this region in particular, suffers from the regime, from the radicals plundering the revolution and from silence. It is time to put pressure on governments and the civil societies to make them assume their responsibilities and help Syria and the Syrians in getting out from the spiral of violence and rebuild a democratic country for its citizens.



Declaration on Israel and Palestine

Now that the American Secretary of State is trying to make us believe that the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are going to start again, the reality on the ground shows the real intentions of the far-right government in power in Tel Aviv: the pursuit and the acceleration of the colonization of the West Bank, in other words, the progressive expansion of the Jewish State borders.

While the Palestinian leadership seems to be playing all its cards on the possibility that Washington might pressure Israel to stop their colonization policy, the population of the occupied territories has chosen resistance on the ground. Doing so, they try to defend every inch of soil through unarmed civil resistance, and to rebuild the infrastructure of a society that was destroyed during the Barak and Sharon reconquest between 2002 and 2006 and in the Gaza massacre of 2009. This heroic resistance is showing that if the State of Israel is still able to make its colonial project work, that it has failed in its “sociocide” plan, in other words the destruction of the Palestinian social tissue. The reconstruction of the unity between Gaza and the West Bank, as well as that of Hamas and Fatah remains the main objective of the great majority of the occupied Palestinians.

In 2011, the Israeli society has experienced the biggest mobilization of its history, through a protest movement against the neoliberal choices and the privatization of the public services. The current challenge for the Israeli social movement is to tie its social demands to the rejection of the colonial policy and of the high cost of this policy for the Israeli citizens.

Declaration on Cyprus

The risk of not reaching a concrete agreement in the current negotiations on the Cyprus issue would have a catastrophic outcome for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Moreover none of the international and regional stakeholders would benefit from it. It is of paramount importance for political forces in Cyprus to maintain friendly and peaceful relations and a positive attitude at the political level, in order to establish a road map for a negotiated settlement on the basis of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation according to the agreed UN principles.

The lack of a culture of equality and non-discrimination, including gender elements, should be compensated in the peace efforts through acceptance and valorization of the relevant resolutions and consultations with activist groups and NGOs and through an appropriate expertise in order to ensure the inclusion of mechanisms and trends of contemporary social dynamics.

A negotiated Cyprus settlement would trigger financial and political dynamics which would multiply the political effects both locally and in the international surrounding sphere. Right now, the international community is committed to a settlement of the Cyprus problem, as a chance to strike a deal for the sake of more stability in the region. Economic benefits from the reunification will provide a win-win solution for both communities in Cyprus and the international community which will increase the stability in the region.



A negotiated agreement with Turkey could ensure a real resolution of all issues and not just a normalization of the relationship with Turkey. Numerous advantages could result from this possibility, especially as to the economy: opportunities with regards to the natural gas exploitation; the opening of the closed city of Famagusta; synergies in using the closed air spaces and ports, tourism and transit trade; the unhindered transfer of water and electricity.

The solution of the Cyprus problem would not imply the end of the peace process but it would rather be the mere beginning. Challenges and risks can be expected in order to fulfill this, but it is the only way forward. In this respect, Cypriots from all communities on the island should work hard in close collaboration, along with regional partners and stakeholders from the international community.

Declaration on Tunisia

The MCA follows the constitutional and political process in Tunisia with great interest. We highlight that since the creation of a constituent National Assembly, Tunisia is waiting for its new constitution, a democratic constitution guaranteeing the balance of powers, the rule of law, rights and freedoms for all citizens, without any discrimination based on sex, race or religion.

The MCA was pleased to remark that all the political currents represented in the constituent Assembly express their willingness to adopt a constitution for a civil state that respects the people's sovereignty and of the universal criteria of a democratic constitution.

Nonetheless, the MCA notes the slowness and difficulties to accomplish this process. It understands as well that this process is connected to a political environment suffering of a lack of consensus and of weakness in dialogue culture and hopes that the different protagonists will rapidly reach a compromise that will put an end to a political crisis that has last too long, paralyzing the constitutional process and menacing the country's stability.

The MCA still believes that Tunisia has all the means to achieve a transformation and implement transition to democracy. The activism of the Tunisian elite, the engagement of its political class and the vivacity of its civil society will be able to find the path to follow with the aim of offering to the Tunisian people a democratic, stable and serene future.

Declaration on Morocco

Morocco is experiencing a great revival in terms of changes since the implementation of the new constitution through advocacy of human rights and feminist movements. This allowed political stability compared to what happens in the southern region of the Mediterranean. A collection of laws is put in place for the new government as to implement the various articles of the constitution; but are there enough efforts undertaken?

Most certainly the new constitution established values which were absent in the public sphere previously, such as citizenship and respect for universal fundamental and indivisible rights. Although, in reality we encounter delays in the introduction of organic laws, and we are far from the aspirations expressed by political parties, trade unions and civil society in the reform of the constitution.



We notice a lack of political willingness to accelerate projects in the field of gender equality. Additionally a legal approach for the protection of human rights and individual freedoms is missing. The democratic precondition would be a condition for settling the Sahara conflict, accepted by all sides.

Movements that are struggling for the projection of liberties in all fields, call for the institutionalization of good governance in public policy and in management of local affairs.

Declaration on Greece

Since 4 years Greece has been hit by an economic and social crisis, definitely unprecedented and not comparable with any other European country. Since the end of 2009 Greece becomes the target of the so-called markets, which rapidly attack the country through their new destructive instruments and put it on the brink of bankruptcy.

At this point in time, faced with this presumed impasse the three institutions (European Commission - ECB and IMF) sign an agreement with Greece, imposing an inhuman, outrageous and despicable memorandum. The conditions of aid are granted in the form of a loan but are called a bailout. Repayment will be requested at all cost.

The implementation of this plan according to the rules of extreme austerity imposed on the country by its funders began to aggravate and worsen the situation. This resulted in an almost total loss of sovereignty, a progressive impoverishment of the population (income fell by almost half), an unemployment beating all records (30%, and 60% for youth), weakening public services, an unimaginable suicide rate, an augmentation of the homeless people.... a new wave of emigration especially of the most educated population and a total collapse of the private sector with almost complete disappearance of SMEs and independent professional activities etc..

And above all, the emergence of new conflicts and the formation of a neo-Nazi political group (also part of the Occupy movement, which is instrumentalised it and manipulated partially). This group makes it to the parliament, in addition to seeing its forces increase in a very dangerous way which should be eliminated completely.

The various elected and technocratic governments that are succeeding have practically one mission: to take unsustainable measures for the population and oppress any form of citizen resistance (demonstrations, forced closure of the public service such as national television etc..) The consensus process disappears, very often it is even going against the constitution. This must be fought.

The state is entangled in these centralizing principles and perpetuates a vicious circle trying to find a false alibi, considering all opposition as despicable extreme. In this deadlock, only a true movement of citizens can struggle. There must be cooperation among all stakeholders, highlighting the values of solidarity and humanism. What is needed is a cooperation to create a rapid development to apply pressure in order to reach a change of course. Such cooperation can and will give an answer to break the deadlock.

The Mediterranean heritage of solidarity can and should enrich these movements for a civil society at the service of the humanist and civilizational mission of our Mediterranean.



Declaration on the situation of democratic transitions in the Mediterranean

The "Arab Spring", to quote its most usual qualification, has strongly put the notion of citizenship on the agenda. For a long time the Arab world has known years of stagnation in civic matters. Many politically associative initiatives, even the least important ones, regularly underwent the humiliation of paranoid political authorities. These initiatives are automatically suspected of being controlled from abroad and of aspiring to overthrow the prevailing political order. Now, suddenly, citizen power has been able to assert its potential and its aspiration for difference: "the Arabs" (or at least some of them), with their uprisings, have left their mark behind on the evolution of an entire region.

Through a domino effect several European countries of the northern shore as well as Israel and Turkey have in fact experienced mass protests against the perverse effects of the economic and political crisis, the loss of legitimacy of institutions, austerity and the decrease of democratic spaces. This has given a truly regional dimension to this citizen uprising and has raised the question of an avant-garde political role for the organized civil society in the Mediterranean. Transitions in the Mediterranean, however, have variable speed and geometry. We should recognize this fact in order to do better in the future. Every society has its politico-cultural characteristics that affect, generally, its rhythm and its means of action.

The notion of bottom up change certainly leads to polarization situations (politically, socially and ideologically), but any situation of change entails risks, disagreements or turbulence. While it may be too early to speak of "the" Arab revolution, there is no doubt that a the willingness of a citizen revolution has been imposed in the Mediterranean with a lot of energy. To strengthen citizens fighting in the Mediterranean and in order to develop common strategic dynamics, the question that arises is whether an independent citizen infrastructure to train local groups in the Mediterranean in civil action should be established. This would enable them to exchange practices of civil action. It could be an infrastructure which provides services and expertise to and between these groups and which strengthens citizens' initiatives on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Political consolidation projects, institutional reform and transitional justice remain fundamental in several national contexts, but they should not make us forget the magnitude of the required socio-economic changes. The Mediterranean area has in this sense become a laboratory of the civic spirit, of its ambitions and various projects as well as of the rewriting of the relationship between the citizen's community, representative institutions and economic forces. The way people and governments around the world have followed - and continue to follow- the transitions in the Arab world and the resistance of numerous social sectors to restructure the social contract in countries such as Greece, Slovenia, Italy and Spain, shows that the "Mediterranean citizenship" could have value as a conceptual model for the prevailing trends in many areas across the globe.

This requires the need to strength the implemented dynamics and to continue presenting reports of political institutions, of economic and financial crises and of development models. It is evident that at the basis of all these dynamics lies the question of democracy, that is to say the ability of citizens to determine the fundamental choices that affect the future of their communities, cities and countries.



Similarly, the issue of the training citizens in political life and civil activity should be a priority. The MCA has made significant efforts to establish an independent citizen infrastructure dedicated to sharing expertise, setting up joint initiatives, developing citizen actors and the exchange of civil action practices. This includes an infrastructure for local groups on both shores of the Mediterranean that fosters the assertion of a culture of networking, and supports ways and practices of civic engagement for the benefit of democracy and social justice. This goal is by no means out of range, the Mediterranean area is already in a constant dynamic of evolution. The regional dimension of the crisis, which is a structural crisis linked to the democracy, the economy, the emergence of new forms of social reorganization and citizen reaction, can help to put into perspective the cultural differences and intercultural mistrust and reinstall cohesion within the same society. This historic moment therefore justifies a commitment to build a transnational infrastructure of citizen action on a Mediterranean scale.

Of course we are aware of the risk that third parties (geopolitics, influence strategies) might hijack the ongoing transitions. These citizen initiatives aimed at creating a common space for social, political and cultural action in the Mediterranean should therefore make efforts towards more political integration for the Mediterranean in the decades to come. This integration would be built on civic engagement, based on the principles of social justice, freedom and labor. Moreover it would compel governments to take into account the actors of the civil society and not vice versa. This is a challenge that anticipates and foreshadows the new times. It is similar to the immediate post-war period when the founding fathers of Europe, dared to announce a united Europe, despite the distrust or contempt of that time. The disappointing experience of the project of the “Union for the Mediterranean” tells us that the construction of political integration cannot be done by bypassing the people and imposing a top down roadmap. The Mediterranean carries the foundations of a community with a common destiny, which expresses a natural resistance to normalization, individualism, consumerism and segregation – the codes of contemporary capitalism– for the lifestyle and values of its people. Some elements are essential to the culture of the Mediterranean: the pleasure of living together, the taste for beautiful things even if they sometimes seem mundane, cultural and social diversity, how to eat and work, the sense of the sacred and the family and the culture of dialogue and sharing.

To move towards Mediterranean integration, we need pilot projects. The difficulties and obstacles for the free movement of people in the region are a source of political conflict and generate mafia groups, corruption and humanitarian disasters. So we propose to launch an initiative that structures a joint civic involvement in favor of democracy and integration in the region, based on the right to a transnational citizenship and anchored in a new charter for the Mediterranean citizenship. The initiative may seem symbolic but it makes sense. The values promoted on behalf of the Mediterranean citizenship rely on the following principles: the process of drafting a participatory charter open to all elements of civil society that share this path; the provision of online communication tools as well as more traditional forms of open debates; and maintenance of a Mediterranean transnational referendum for the adoption of a draft charter as the first example of voluntary regional participatory democracy.



Declaration on freedom of movement in the Mediterranean

Similarly to the previous tragedies since twenty years, the drama of Lampedusa of 2013 awakened for a few days the bad conscience of the Europeans. This will continue to happen until the moment when the indictment of smugglers and traffickers (they don't dare to criminalize the victims at least) will prevail on condemning the policy of closing the human borders of Europe. This policy, implemented since 1976 in the Mediterranean where there was a relative freedom of movement, cannot be exempted from its responsibility in generating thousands of victims.

This policy of Europe, embodied by Frontex is not only lethal; it also kills the spirit of the European project. By giving up humanist and Universalist jurisdictions since its beginning, the European idea – or what remains of it – yields to the logic of identity and fear of the other, and encourages an opinion which is affected by the crisis, but which is mostly disoriented by political leaders who are paralyzed by the populist discourses.

Yet we can't deal with populism denying, in name of the electoral realism in the short term, this basic human right of freedom of movement. When it comes to thinking about the future of Europe in the Mediterranean in the global space, which is built on long-term realism, it urges for a complete change of the worldview, considering human mobility on a global scale rather than a more or less imaginary threat (never actually measured), but as a rule of the game that is valid for everybody. In an article entitled "The future lies with the immigrants", Bertrand Badie pointed out just recently how this mobility, which we use daily in our favor, is part of the horizon and strengths of globalization. We cannot wish it for ourselves and deny it to others.

As Europeans, and as members of an association dedicated to build a Mediterranean citizenship, it is primarily in the Mediterranean that this challenge is imposed on us. So this is where we must act against the populist excesses and the walls that are built. The time has passed to respond with soothing propositions to the expectations of the migrants who take the risk of dying to reach Europe. If we refuse to make a common human space to the Mediterranean, that is to say to make a space for mobility and solidarity, we will certainly build a horizon of hostility and conflict with the Arab-Muslim world and Africa.

Declaration on freedom, individual and collective security and peace in the Mediterranean

For decades, the collective security has been limited to that of the state, in the best case, and most of the time to that of the regimes. Freedom was thus sacrificed in the name of "collective" stability. The working method has often been equated to subcontracting, with on one side Fortress Europe, and supported authoritarian regimes on the other side. The terms of this equation are they totally undermined by the Arab revolts?

Although there is not enough distance as of today to give an objective answer, it is however possible to observe four constants:

- In terms of threat perceptions: Europe continues to see the south as an exporter of insecurity and instability on the one hand, and a preliminary security wall on the other. However, the actors of the south from their side, continue to strike the chord of fear, to use and abuse the fear of the other to increase their room for manoeuvre;



- In terms of conflict management strategies: the management by confrontation, and more precisely by military means, remains omnipresent, maintaining the idea that it is less the collective security that is retained than the collective security approach. The military interventions in Libya and Mali are perfect illustrations in this regard;
- In terms of actors: despite the multiplicity of frameworks for cooperation between the Maghreb countries, none has been actuated to analyze, coordinate and manage collectively the upheavals that continue to shake the region. And if the European Union has, more or less coordinated the position of its members, the south has again shown deep divisions;
- In terms of goals: The human security is a fragile priority, uneven with variable geometry. It is present in all discourses from the north as those from the south, but creates more suspicion than enthusiasm. From political freedom to judgment of the polls, through international law, economic development and human mobility, all main principles are canceled as soon as they challenge the higher interests of the ruling elites.

What lines can be developed in order to consider freedom, individual and collective security and peace in the Mediterranean at the same time?

First of all, we could think about security as rational as about economy, namely make sure that the losses are less than the profits and make long-term goals a priority compared to the short term. In order to bypass the obstacles that cannot be eliminated, it is necessary to leave the inter-statism and bilateralism, two ideal frameworks for the status quo. We could consider establishing foundations of regional governance in which local authorities, public and private actors act in an interdependent network.

Second, we could connect the idea of sustainable development to that of “sustainable security”. This concept was used by the UN and NATO to highlight the fact that relations between the EU and the Maghreb should always be solid, balanced and sustainable. Thereby sustainable security involves quantitatively and qualitatively intense areas of cooperation, led by partners who know exactly what their needs and capabilities are and what they can get from the other party. Moreover, it requires balance, not in terms of balance of power, but of balance of interests. This means a win-win system in which free movement of capital and goods would go hand in hand with work force. As for sustainability, it reflects the idea that sustainable security, as equal development, is only feasible if it is part of a long-term vision.

Declaration on the economic crisis and Citizenship in the Mediterranean

We, citizens of the Mediterranean,

Indicate in the unprecedented economic crisis, which concerns the people, the major cause of:

- The destabilization of the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries
- The political and social crisis in the countries of the northern shore
- The increase of migration flows to the EU and within the countries of the EU



Denounce:

- The bulimia of the financial capital with respect to the real economy
- The failure of the civilization of work and the lack of future for young generations
- The consistent mortification of the dignity of citizens
- The corruption in the management of economic affairs and politics
- The disproportionate distribution of wealth
- The violation of human rights in managing the migration flows
- The environmental disaster of our land and our common sea

We are committed :

- To spread civic awareness through the coordinated action of our circles
- To support any action of solidarity and the experimentation of alternative economic forms (solidarity economy)
- To redesign the dominant economical philosophy by substituting the economy of resource use with an economy of education, training and expertise and to disseminate the culture of work
- To promote peaceful methods of struggle for dignity and youth employment in particular
- To defend the individual and collective rights for the basic needs of all citizens
- To work together to for the protection of the natural, cultural and environmental heritage

We wish:

- That the democratization process, undertaken by the peoples of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, can include alternative economic policies to the absolute power of the global financial capital
- That in accordance with the ideals of its origins, the EU can become a transnational civil community and recognizes its common destiny with the Mediterranean countries, to submit its policy to the needs of citizens and the conservation of cultural and environmental heritage, of which the Mediterranean is the major owner.