

Intercultural Dialogue and Human Rights: Prospects for a Euromediterranean Citizenship

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THE PAPER PROPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT of a new conception of citizenship (more inclusive, active and plural) for all the peoples living in the territory of the partner States of the Union for the Mediterranean, to be based on the sharing of common ontological values and the respect for cultural diversity. Because of its foundations, the prospective success of this proposal depends on the development of intercultural dialogue and on an equal protection of human rights in the region, while an evolution of the current institutional structure of the Union for the Mediterranean would be needed to enforce this and other contextual proposals which might be made in its framework.

INTRODUCTION

The mingling of cultures, traditions, languages and religions which has been characterising the Euromediterranean region for centuries – despite present conflicts and cultural stereotypes, political difficulties and socio-economical contradictions – allows foreseeing the potential existence, among Euromediterranean populations, of a sense of belonging to a common civilization. This possibility sounds like a strong antidote to the threat posed by the *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington 1993) and to many of the obstacles preventing today any substantial step towards the realisation of an area of peace, human security and welfare around the Mediterranean and not only there: because of the specificity and the complexity of this region – as Xuereb pointed out – ‘if we find answers in the Mediterranean, we find them also for Europe and also for the whole world’ (Xuereb 2007, 232).

How is it possible to reinforce this sense of belonging and make it overcome stereotypes and differences in the region? How may cultural

diversity be conciliated and interrelated with universal values towards the recognition of this common feeling? How may equal rights be granted to all citizens in the region? And yet, which would be the best institutional framework to undertake this process?

[164] This paper tries to give an answer to these questions, proposing as their solution the identification and codification of a group of specific citizenship rights for all the peoples living in the region to be included in a more general Euromediterranean Charter of Human Rights, adopted in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (ufm).

The first part of the paper analyses the relationship between intercultural dialogue and human rights and their position among the priorities of the Union for the Mediterranean. This chapter also introduces the concept of Euromediterranean Citizenship and its basic features, including its relation with the development of economic integration in the region.

The second part is dedicated to the definition of a Euromediterranean Charter for Human Rights, intended as a necessary tool to improve intercultural dialogue and human rights in the region while respecting the cultural diversity of its populations. Prospective advantages and the main obstacles brought by the proposed charter – which would act as home for specific Euromediterranean citizenship rights – are discussed within the second part, while in the third part and in the conclusions references are made to the principles which would characterise its contents and the institutional changes needed to enforce it.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND HUMAN RIGHTS:
A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN?

Since the end of the 20th century, and especially following the 2001 terror attacks in New York, intercultural dialogue (or, according to the UN preferred lexicon, dialogue among civilizations) has been intended and promoted worldwide as the major tool to contrast the process of culturalization of conflicts and to promote a ‘new humanism,’ that is, a new universal vision open to the entire human community (Bokova 2010). Working in this direction, civil society organisations,



NGOs, local and regional authorities, national governments, regional and international organisations have contributed to transforming their efforts for the promotion of intercultural dialogue in a shared, global and universally promoted strategy.

It has been underlined that the final aim of intercultural dialogue is to work together in order to share the common goods (Bekemans 2007; Mascia 2007; Papisca 2007a; Xuereb 2007). The challenge is, therefore, to provide true opportunities to all those living in a given society, not only in order to know and tolerate each other, but, above all, to do things together in the same socio-political community. The reciprocal knowledge obtained through dialogue is essential to identify what to do together, how to do it and to share responsibility about it, in other words, to identify the foundations of a feeling of common belonging among people living in the same community. For these reasons, the concept of intercultural dialogue is intimately related to those of democracy and citizenship. The process of inclusion promoted by dialogue is ‘based on the active involvement of multiple social actors and usually emphasizes the participation of previously excluded citizens’ (Karasinska-Fendler 2007, 90–91).

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In the context of inclusive participation in the political, economical and social life of a community, it is clear that the present concept of national citizenship is not fit to respond to the challenges of multiculturalism to which intercultural dialogue is addressed. The process of conceptually and concretely redefining citizenship then becomes urgent: ‘[...] the legal status of the human being does not stem from the anagraphical power of the state, it is a citizenship not octroyée but simply ‘recognised,’ for the holder is an ‘original’ holder, not the ‘national’ or the ‘subject’ of whatever state. All human beings, being formally recognised as born with dignity and rights, are by nature citizens of the planet earth.’ (Papisca 2007a, 465.)

Thus, the development of intercultural dialogue is anchored to the principle of the equal dignity of every member of the human family, recognised and promoted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the other legal instruments – at universal and regional levels – constitut-

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ing the International Human Rights Law. As a consequence, being its universal paradigm of reference, human rights play an essential role in the context of intercultural dialogue in what can be seen as a bidirectional process, since an effective dialogue needs to be rooted in the International Human Rights Law, contributing, at the same time, to its effectiveness. This relation works as a solid basis for the proposed conception of citizenship: ‘assuming therefore that equal dignity of all the members of the human family is the founding principle of whatever legal system, the intercultural dialogue marked by human rights and by the tension of the telos, of ‘what-to do-together-where,’ the question that needs to be reopened as regards the traditional concept of citizenship in the sense of making it plural and extending the space it is exercised in’ (Papisca 2007b, 35).

Rooted in the theoretical reflection on the relationship between intercultural dialogue, human rights and citizenship issues, briefly outlined in the previous paragraphs, the proposal for the development of a plural, active and inclusive Euromediterranean citizenship in the framework of the UfM finds its institutional anchorage in the official documentation at the basis of the new regional initiative. In the Paris Declaration (2008), Heads of State and Government of the 43 participating Countries have actually underlined ‘their commitment to strengthen democracy and political pluralism by the expansion of participation in political life and the embracing of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,’ a commitment which was reiterated six months later in the Marseille Final Statement (2008). Moreover, they have declared ‘their ambition to build a common future based on the full respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in International Human Rights Law, such as [...] the advancement of cultural dialogue and mutual understanding’ (Paris Declaration). This may be hopefully realised through cooperation with other regional bodies and institutions dealing with those issues in the same geopolitical framework.

In the Mediterranean – besides previous efforts made according to the third basket of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, in the context of the former Euromediterranean Partnership (EMP) – the main contribution to what was previously defined as a global strategy to pro-



mote intercultural dialogue has been given by the High Level Advisory Group (Group de Sages). This group, created in 2003 by the President of the European Commission, had as its main outcome the setting up, in 2005, of the Anna Lindh Euromediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Among Cultures, the 'key-institution' for taking new, practical action to foster intercultural dialogue in the region (Prodi 2004). A prior important step in this framework had been represented by the launch of the Euromediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) in 2004, with an internal parliamentary commission on cultural issues. The complementary role of both to the UfM has been recognised either in the Paris Declaration or in the Marseille Final Statement, while the ALF innovative approach to intercultural issues was praised during the latest UN Alliance of Civilizations Forum held in Rio de Janeiro on 28 and 29 May 2010. Thus, with human rights and intercultural dialogue being clearly among the priorities of the Union for the Mediterranean, the position and actual cooperation of ALF and EMPA with the new Euromediterranean bodies in the path of the development of a new Euromediterranean citizenship should be taken into the highest consideration and improved.

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Some Reflections about Euromediterranean Citizenship

A starting point of the reflection on intercultural dialogue, human rights and citizenship in the Euromediterranean region is that citizenship rights should be recognised to all people residing in the territory of one of the 43 partner States of the UfM. Being in possession of a national citizenship would not be considered a prerequisite, as it is, for example, in the European Union, where only citizens of member States can benefit from specific European citizenship rights. Conceptually speaking, therefore, the Euromediterranean citizenship is to be intended as something new and not only an extension of some rights, already recognised nationally, to a larger geographical area. It should be built in order to respond genuinely to citizens' needs and to participation requirements other than to the multicultural situations today characterising our societies.

The proposed conception moves in the direction of the notion of 'universal citizenship' (Konopacki 2007; Papisca 2007a) without, how-

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ever, the ambition of fulfilling it. The challenge of Euromediterranean citizenship is rather to foster the development of a universally inclusive citizenship by building a valuable institutional precedent towards the redefinition of the concept of citizenship itself, working on deeply different perceptions, political systems and conceptions of society, on the basis of universally shared values, respect for cultural diversity and the principle of equality of every culture/civilization. For these purposes, the adoption of a Euromediterranean Charter of Human Rights (EMCHR) is proposed as an operative tool to codify and foster this approach to citizenship.

In order to reach so ambitious a goal, the will and the support of all peoples living in the area is needed. Indeed, this may be not enough: even the values on which the Euromediterranean Charter would be built should be shared and strongly felt as common by peoples, and their recognition and protection should be required by peoples in a single voice. Promoting this common feeling of belonging in an active way – work together to do together – is, as underlined, the final aim of the intercultural dialogue strategy. Its promotion can be highly encouraged and fulfilled through the efforts of civil society organisations – real ‘civil forces to promote intercultural dialogue’ (ERICarts 2008) –, and the contribution of local and regional authorities, especially in the cities – ‘the natural environment of intercultural dialogue’ (Beke-mans 2007). The aim is thus to make the common feeling of these values manifest, beyond existing cultural stereotypes, and its benefits and consequences in daily life perceptible. A Euromediterranean human rights charter is only thinkable as the final result of the harmonious interaction of all these conditions which have to be realised and promoted together, even if, at present, admitting that the path to be walked is still very long sounds almost superfluous.

*Euromediterranean Citizenship and Economic Integration:
The Case of Tourism*

An important factor to be taken into consideration in developing a Euromediterranean citizenship regards the relations between social improvements, strongly promoted by intercultural dialogue, and regional economic integration. Taking as reference the European Union, a brief



reflection on the reasons at the basis of European citizenship – the free movement of economically active persons and the members of their families – demonstrates that, at the beginning, the principal objective was economic and the rights which EU citizens enjoyed were firmly linked to the Community's economic issues (Konopacki 2007, 70). For these reasons, considering the relationship between the two sectors is essential, as was clearly stated in the Barcelona Declaration (1995) – ‘social development must go hand in hand with any economic development.’

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Among the several aspects that are included in the second basket of the Barcelona Process – i. e. the economic partnership –, tourism is probably the one receiving today more increasing attention by partner States and Mediterranean institutions, therefore it has been chosen as an example to demonstrate the benefits of this relationship. The growing importance of this sector is demonstrated by the decision to convey a Euromediterranean tourism conference – the first on this issue since 1995 – in April 2008, while touristic issues were previously included in trade ministerial meetings. In the conclusions of the 2008 conference, besides underlining the central role of tourism in the economic development of the area, Ministers have considered that tourism is an excellent tool for cultural understanding, mutual respect and tolerance, and the stressed the importance of cultural tourism, as well as cultural routes, to best promote our Euromediterranean cultural heritage. Therefore, the strong link between intercultural dialogue, tourism and the aims of Euromediterranean citizenship is evident, since touristic development in the region supports ‘the objective of achieving a common area of peace, stability and prosperity, in which cultural affairs and mutual respect and understanding between societies throughout the Mediterranean region are promoted’ (Vizjak 2008).

Once adopted this approach, being Euromediterranean citizenship conceived on the reinforcement and institutionalisation of a common sense of belonging to the same civilization (our common heritage) and on respect for cultural diversity, an increase in the volume of tourism in the Mediterranean would, therefore, sensibly help this advancement. Efforts to improve tourism in the region have recently been undertaken by the European Commission, especially under the European

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Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), and by the Union for the Mediterranean itself, which has set among its priorities major projects supporting the implementation of tourism in the region, namely the de-pollution of the Mediterranean and the creation of maritime and land highways. Initial results of this commitment are shown in recent statistics, which describe a substantial growth of annual tourist arrivals at borders in the Mediterranean countries and a general improvement in the percentage of travellers coming from the European Union (Eurostat 2009), while an important growth, compared with 2006 collected data, has been forecast in the number of tourist arrivals in Mediterranean countries, despite major differences among them (FEMIP 2008).

Summing up, the growth in tourism and trade integration plays a reinforcing role in the path of Euromediterranean citizenship. On the other hand, the process is bidirectional: if regional touristic and trade improvements constitute a practical prerequisite for the realization of citizenship rights, then improved intercultural dialogue promotion and human rights protection favour a sense of closeness, thus enhancing economic development. In the specific sector of tourism, this means that a stronger awareness of the cultural and artistic richness of the places of destination would improve the volume and the quality of travels to, from and between Mediterranean countries (increasing cultural tourism) and contribute to a stronger integration of the Euromediterranean economy.

A EUROMEDITERRANEAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS (EMCHR)

The proposed charter is intended as a new (macro) regional human rights instrument aimed at including, promoting and protecting the ontological values of all the populations living in the Euromediterranean region, with full respect for their cultural diversities. It is not to be considered either as a starting or an arrival point, rather as a vector reinforcing previous efforts towards the promotion of intercultural dialogue in the region and – at the same time – giving new sap to this commitment, opening new paths and new perspectives. The charter is thought of as supplementary to existing regional treaties, which act,



however, as its starting points. The choice is justified by the fact that – being adopted in the framework of regional organisations, which base their political and cultural identity on the geographical area they originally represent (e.g. the Council of Europe or the Arab League) – regional charters on human rights reflect these characteristics and show a marked cultural connotation, which contributes towards constituting their specificity. Because of the inclusive nature of EMCHR, this specificity becomes essential to proceeding with the analysis.

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Prior to analysing which may be the contents (principles and rights) of the charter, two preliminary issues regarding the document enforceability will be addressed: the formal ‘aptitude’ of UfM partner States to adopt human rights treaties, and the possibility to realistically adopt a human rights charter in the present institutional framework of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The Formal ‘Aptitude’ of UfM States towards Human Rights

A first evaluation of the possibilities to adopt a Euromediterranean human rights charter is to be traced in the adherence level of UfM member States to international legal instruments regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms; although the stimulus and the will for drafting this document shall hopefully come from peoples, civil society associations, academic and religious representatives and ‘enlightened’ politicians, Governments remain the final point in the ratification and enforcement *iter* of any treaty. Clearly, what is called here ‘aptitude’ is only one (and probably the most formal) of the several indicators which could be used to study the situation of human rights in one or more countries (others being, for example, the existence of National Human Rights Institutions, national laws and policies about minorities and vulnerable groups, collaboration with international organisations on human rights issues, etc.), but it shows the existence of a minimal requirement by States, which is essential for the track followed in this paper. The analysis can be undertaken at two levels, the international and the regional one.

A glance at the two UN covenants of 1966 – the most ‘general’ universal human rights treaties – reveals that all the 43 UfM members (plus Libya, the only observer) have ratified both of them, excluding

[172] the Palestinian Authority. This should not be seen as a major obstacle, for the PA is not yet a member of United Nations, and – in Article 18 of the third project of Constitution of the State of Palestine, drafted according to the obligations included in the 2003 Quartet’s Road Map for Peace – it is clearly anticipated that the new State, besides abiding by the Universal Declaration of 1948, shall seek to join other international covenants and charters that safeguard human rights.

Regarding the regional level, the situation is much less homogeneous. Taking into consideration the four major legally binding instruments on human rights in the area – the European Convention of Human Rights (1950), the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Banjul Charter, 1981), the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (Nice Charter, 2000) and the Arab Charter of Human Rights (in its emended version, 2004) – partner States place themselves in different geometries. Through the review of the status of ratifications of these treaties it is possible to identify at least four categories: (1) States which are party to two treaties. This group includes all EU States, which are simultaneously members the Council of Europe, and a small group of Southern States – Algeria and Libya, at present – which have ratified both the African and the Arab charters; (2) States which are party to one treaty. The second category includes the members of the Council of Europe which are not member of the EU (Turkey, Monaco and part of the Balkans) and southern partners which have ratified one charter, even if some of them – the northern African States – may have ratified two of them. The group includes Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania for the Banjul Charter, and the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia for the Arab Charter; 3) States which are not party to any treaty but, being member of one or more regional organisations, might adhere to one of the quoted charters. This category includes Lebanon and Morocco; 4) States which are not party to any regional organisation and, therefore, to any regional treaty. This group includes only the State of Israel.

This classification, although variegated, demonstrates the existence of a formal, solid, starting base on which to build the Euromediterranean Charter. Clearly it also highlights problems which should be resolved before proceeding, the most manifest being the absence of



Israel from any regional organisation and charter. Neither Israel nor the other Arab or African States participating in the Union for the Mediterranean should be excluded from the process which is being proposed. As underlined before, the EMCHR will be based on respect for cultural diversity and on the sharing of common values among Euro-Mediterranean peoples and, in order to match this prerequisite, it will be rooted in existing regional charters on human rights. It is going to be an inclusive effort to promote peace and stability through intercultural dialogue in the area, and it must include the cultural specificity and the human rights approach of every State and population contributing to it.

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Unfortunately, the discussion about the 'Israel issue' cannot be addressed in the few pages of this paper, but it is possible to list at least three possible exit strategies from this apparent deadlock: referring to international legal instruments ratified by the State of Israel; rethinking its accession possibilities to the Council of Europe or to the European Union, and referring to national legislation, especially to the Basic Laws of Israel on human rights, human dignity and citizenship, and to its Declaration of the Establishment of 1948, thus artificially considering the Country as a single-member regional system. Clearly another essential prerequisite to proceed with the drafting of the charter is the conclusion of the ratification process by the States, which, while having the possibility of doing it, have not done so yet.

Union for the Mediterranean, a Full Regional Organisation?

Before and after the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean, politicians and scholars have given their definition of the new entity, the latter often proposing alternative ideas for its evolution: among others, the UFM has been defined as an international intergovernmental organisation (Aliboni and Ammor 2009), as a deep strategic partnership between 43 countries (European Law Monitor 2010), as a Union of projects based on the principle of cooperation (Sarkozy 2007), while alternative proposals ranged between a Privileged Regional Partnership (Khader 2008) and an Alliance based on co-development (Amato 2008).

Although the architecture, the functions and the relations of the

[174] new (UFM), older (EMP) and complementary bodies (EMPA, ARLEM, ALF) will need time to be totally run in and clarified, what it is evident, is that, at present, the UFM cannot be considered a proper regional organisation on the model of the Council of Europe or the Arab League. If institutionally the Union for the Mediterranean is in possession of 'executive bodies' (the summit of Heads of State and Government, the Joint Secretariat and the Inter-Ministerial Conference), a parliamentary dimension (the EMPA), a local and regional body (the new born ARLEM) plus other pillars – a cultural one, represented by ALF and EMUNI University, and a more general non-governmental pillar made up by the Euromed Civil Forums and their Platform – it lacks a formal statute where standard setting and follow-up functions are recognised and clearly specified. In other words, this reflection leads to the conclusion that it is impossible to think about the adoption of a legally binding treaty on human rights in today's Union for the Mediterranean framework.

At this point two directions may be taken into consideration: the adoption of a political binding document on the model of the (not yet adopted) Euromediterranean Charter on Peace and Stability, or promoting an institutional evolution of the Union for the Mediterranean towards the structure of a full regional organisation. According to the first proposal, the document should be adopted by consensus by the 43 members of the Union for the Mediterranean. If compared to the Charter on Peace and Stability, whose project was essentially based on political and security dialogue among partners, the proposed document would concentrate on less conflictual topics, therefore there may be interstices for an agreement on its contents, despite the fact that the number of participating countries has sensibly increased in the last years. Notwithstanding, in the context of the definition of Euromediterranean citizenship rights the second choice is favourable. In order to improve the possibility of adopting a human rights charter, to safeguard and implement citizenship rights of all peoples in respect of their cultural and religious diversity and to spread further the practice of intercultural dialogue throughout the region, the Union for the Mediterranean should work at all its levels towards both a clear reorganisation of its functions (including the adoption of a formal statute) and an empowerment of the complementary bodies and institutions



in its framework, especially the EMPA and the ARLEM, while the ALF and the other civil society networks should have a more effective consultative role.

THE CHARTER AND EUROMEDITERRANEAN
CITIZENSHIP

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This short paper is not proposing the draft of the EMHRC or a detailed catalogue of human and citizenship rights to be included in the document. It rather delineates some of the peculiarities the Charter should have in order to satisfy the required functions. These characteristics can be divided into a group of principles serving as framework references to express the *ratio* and the interpretation of the charter contents and a list of human rights, which will include specific citizenship rights for all people living in the region.

Framework Principles: A Prospective Preamble of EMCHR

It is in the preambles of the various regional human rights charters that the heart of their specificity come to surface. Thus, Arab Countries recognise the 'Arab nation's belief in human dignity since God honoured it by making the Arab World the cradle of religions and the birthplace of civilizations which confirmed its right to a life of dignity based on freedom, justice and peace' (Arab Charter, 2004), while in the African Union 'the virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization which should inspire and characterize their reflection on the concept of human and peoples' rights' (African Charter, 1981) are underlined; at the same time the EU declares itself 'conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage' (European Union Charter, 2000), while, at its origin, the fathers of the State of Israel, declared that it 'will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel' (Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 1948).

From these short excerpts it is evident that, in every charter, the recognition of human rights is deeply rooted in different cultural and religious approaches: every treaty explains on these bases the reasons justifying the recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms as shared and inviolable values of the people they are called on to protect. This conception should be extended to the Euromediterranean

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Charter in an inclusive way: the EMCHR is not supposed to eliminate these references, but to improve them and to identify common values starting from them: the specificity of the Euromediterranean civilization should be identified in the equal contribution of all cultures of the Mediterranean basin to the promotion of humanity values during their common history.

Other common elements to all the preambles of the cited human rights treaties are the recognition of the inviolable rights of every human person and a clear reference to International Human Rights Law (especially to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Going deeper with the comparative analysis, other principles and common references can be found in the texts, as well as obstacles and oppositions. However, the aim of this paragraph is to show how it could be possible to proceed in order to identify a balance between universal values and cultural specificity. The core of these principles may be summed up in the following list:

- the recognition of the Mediterranean basin as the cradle of a great civilization to whose realisation every people residing in the region have historically contributed – at the same level and according to their own specificity – with their cultures, languages, technological and scientific innovations and traditions;
- the recognition of the importance (without any hierarchical reference) of the region for the three monotheistic religions – having seen in it their birth, development and spreading –, and of the great contribution that these systems of belief have made in spreading the values of humanity, tolerance and equality all over the world;
- respect for the freedom to believe and not to believe;
- the strong recognition of the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the two UN Covenants of 1966.

Considerations about the Catalogue of Human and Citizenship Rights

The list of rights to be included in the charter should be obtained by the comparison of the human rights which are recognised in all the



regional treaties taken into consideration. As previously underlined, every treaty is characterised by a particular approach to human rights and fundamental freedoms, but their human rights catalogue should be interpreted in relation to the principles proposed for the prospective preamble, having its limits of interpretation set by the respect for International Human Rights Law. [177]

Besides that, a group of specific rights, shared by peoples and accepted by governments, should be included in the EMCHR. Generally speaking, a useful way to proceed could be to extend European effective ideas to the Euromediterranean framework (Signore 2002). This suggests that it could be possible to draw inspiration from the list of citizenship rights included in the Nice Charter (v:39–46), and try to adapt them to the larger context of the *Mare Nostrum*. Choosing this way of proceeding highlights the criticalities of the present institutional architecture of the Union for the Mediterranean. The adoption of most of European Union citizenship rights to the ufm framework would require, as a matter of fact, a substantial evolution of its bodies and their functions.

In order to better explain the relation between Euromediterranean citizenship rights and the ufm bodies, an article of the EU charter is taken as an example. Article 39 of the Nice treaty recognises the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament (EP) for every citizen of the Union. The extension of a similar right to vote at elections for a common representative institution to all people living in the 43 partner states of the Union for the Mediterranean would possibly increase and consolidate that feeling of belonging which has been frequently underlined in the paper. Moreover, the ufm has a recognised parliamentary dimension, that is the Euromediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

The EMPA is a second level parliamentary assembly because its representatives are chosen among elected members of national parliaments and of the EP. Direct election of EMPA representatives would push strongly in the proposed direction. Ideas and proposals for the reinforcement of the Assembly have been included in the Manifesto for the Mediterranean (Socialist Group in the European Parliament 2005) and in the 2008 EMPA Recommendation on the role of the Par-

liamentary Assembly in the Framework of the uFM, while a proposal towards the establishment of a more substantial Euromediterranean Parliament has been included in the Report of the Groupe de Sages (High Level Advisory Group 2003).

[178] By proposing a reinforcement of the functions of the EMPA, a better articulation of its work with the other bodies of the uFM and with the Anna Lindh Foundation and an evolution towards a directly elected Parliamentary Assembly, this specific Euromediterranean citizenship right (right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the Euromediterranean Parliament) may act as a model for the identification of other rights.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been underlined that the idea of the EMCHR is considered as the peak of a long path of promotion of intercultural dialogue in the region. It has also been anticipated that a functional way to foster the interaction among the huge diversities of heritage characterising the Euromediterranean region daily life is through the network activities of transnational civil society, being this multiple, rich of its diversity and of its innovating capacity (Akrimi 2007, 280). Civil society organisations are thus an essential tool of participation, mutual knowledge and promotion of intercultural dialogue.

For these reasons, waiting for the hoped institutional evolution suggested for the Union for the Mediterranean, the major role in the process of promoting and fostering the human rights charter and the notion of Euromediterranean citizenship should be played by the Anna Lindh Foundation. The Foundation puts together, coordinates, encourages dialogue, finances, and stimulates the intercultural activities of civil society associations throughout the whole uFM; it promotes own initiatives on six different fields of actions, all aimed at the understanding and the respect for cultural diversity; it includes more than 3200 members (Anna Lindh Foundation 2010), including local authorities, academic and religious organisations; it has a privileged channel to dialog with EMPA, the uFM bodies, the European Commission and the single partner States it receives fundings from.

The Foundation would have the necessary expertise and attributes of power to facilitate and promote the process of reinforcement of the



common sense of belonging among Euromediterranean peoples, while the Union for the Mediterranean would constitute the institutional frame of reference to realise and enforce the initiative.

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