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## **Manifesto for a new Mediterranean of knowledge**

*Social Science, Humanities and Arts to foster the sustainable development of the Mediterranean basin*

We hereby call for giving Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts a crucial role in the Euro-Mediterranean Education and Research cooperation programmes as a tool to foster a more sustainable development of the Mediterranean basin and its populations' resilience.

The recent Euro-Mediterranean strategies for Education and Research, mainly built upon Applied Sciences restricted to a limited range of disciplines (e.g. water, food, energy, environment), are surely not enough to answer the challenges that our societies are facing.

By introducing Social Science, Humanities and Arts as a strategic axis in international Education and Research cooperation programmes, we believe we can achieve three main results:

- Unlocking the unique Mediterranean knowledge and human capital by overcoming the growing mistrust and misunderstanding between bordering populations;
- Developing analysis tools allowing to forecast the evolution of societal challenges and identifying possible mitigation strategies;
- Improving our youth's transversal skills, necessary to face the unprecedented challenges ahead.

Our claim is based on a shared vision of the role of Higher Education Institutions and on a common analysis of the future of the Mediterranean youth.

### **Education is about shaping future citizens and workers**

We strongly believe that Higher Education Institutions' main mission and responsibility is to develop youth's skills, knowledge and personality, because today's students will be tomorrow's citizens and workers. Therefore, when training youth for the labour market, we should not limit our role by teaching them almost exclusively hard sciences and technologies. On the contrary, we should strengthen the presence of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts in all the curricula, in order to develop transversal skills - like critical thinking and creativity – and to provide youth with the opportunity to ground their personal development on solid bases as an effective mean to overcome all forms of radicalization and of exclusion.

## **Mutual understanding can mitigate risks and prevent conflicts**

Fostering mutual understanding is crucial to unlock the huge knowledge and human capital of the Mediterranean basin. This issue is even more urgent for our youth because their future will be characterised by greater mobility. Mutual understanding is much more than teaching foreign languages, it is about making students discover somebody else's cultural and religious traditions, political and social systems as well as artistic and intellectual productions.

The Social Science and Humanities community can play a great role in building this dialogue. On both sides of the Mediterranean, many of the Social Science and Humanities researchers and academics are working in departments or centres devoted to the study of other languages and cultures. Many thousands of academics are currently involved daily in cultural dialogues, but most of the time on a limited scale.

The lack of sufficient translations between the various languages of the Euro-Mediterranean area is another topic that has already been highlighted but still needs to be solved.

There is a great urgency to investigate on a larger scale these essential issues for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, building upon the richness and diversity of Social Science and Humanities paradigms. Disciplines like War and Peace Studies, Spatial Studies, Youth Studies, Development Studies, Urban Studies, Gender Studies, Religious Studies, Heritage Studies, Cultural Studies, are totally under-researched in the Euro-Mediterranean Area.

These studies will help to create new spaces for dialogue and new ways to share knowledge and build common values.

### **What we ask for**

- **Strengthening dialogue with the Southern Mediterranean countries as a priority in all EU strategies;**
- **Setting a new Agenda for Research and Education in the Euro-Mediterranean area, in which Social Sciences and Humanities play a major role;**
- **Designing and implementing new tools allowing the creation, on a larger scale, of academic networks for Cultural, Scientific and Educational Mediation in the Euro-Mediterranean Area;**
- **Including Social Sciences and Humanities specifically in the EU Research and Innovation and Education strategies addressed to the Mediterranean region.**