



tapri



Baltic-Mediterranean Axis: A New Framework for Cooperation?

Expert seminar

DIPOLI Congress Centre, Espoo, Finland

April 4-5, 2011

An innovative forum for inter-regional cooperation

The seminar will bring together representatives of civil society, ministries and private sector as well as other experts on (inter-)regional cooperation from the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions. The objective is to find new synergies by linking actors across institutional and disciplinary boundaries, and thus to generate fresh ideas and concrete project proposals that can contribute to the development of Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of active civil society cooperation as an innovative force that has the capacity to cross thematic and regional boundaries.

The seminar is organized by the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys, together with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Finnish Anna Lindh National Network / Tampere Peace Research Institute TAPRI. It is part of the ongoing project *Facilitating Political Dialogue in the Baltico-Mediterranean Axis*, which is funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Sustainable solutions to common challenges

The themes of the seminar - environmental problems, climate change, migration and cultural diversity - are linked to some of the most pressing issues in international policy. By bringing different actors together to discuss these subjects in the context of Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation, the seminar contributes to the ongoing political debates in different international arenas. The aim is to find sustainable solutions to common challenges by emphasizing the importance of inter-regional cooperation as well as the interdependence of the economic, ecological, social and cultural spheres.

Recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa and the future framework for cooperation

The seminar stresses the importance of the recent and ongoing developments in the Middle East and North Africa for the future cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The new situation, which is still in formation, poses challenges as well as creates new opportunities for cooperation

also in the Baltic-Mediterranean framework. The events in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries will be discussed in the seminar both in the wider framework of interregional cooperation and political dialogue as well as in the context of the specific themes of the working groups.

The structure of the seminar

The two-day expert seminar will take place at the DIPOLI Congress Centre in Espoo, Finland, on April 4-5, 2011. The seminar focuses on the challenges and possibilities offered by Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation on different levels (EU, governments, civil society, private sector), and it will also function as a forum for presenting examples of ongoing cooperation projects on various fields.

The three thematic working group sessions are an essential part of the seminar, giving the participants opportunity to focus more on the specific issues related to cooperation in different fields. The aim is also to use the small groups for developing new ways to tackle common challenges and for innovating new ideas and methods for cooperation.

The seminar will culminate in the final plenary session, in which the results of the working groups will be presented and placed in the broader contexts relevant for Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation. By combining the broader framework of regional cooperation with concrete thematic and project-based approach, the seminar facilitates the identification of both positive connections as well as shortcomings that can be the basis of policy recommendations.

The seminar languages are English and French.

Target group and participants

The target group of the seminar consists of the different actors involved in Euro-Mediterranean and Baltic Sea cooperation, including representatives of NGOs and various transnational networks, civil servants, MPs and MEPs, embassies, Medias, academics, private sector and the trade unions. Altogether 60-70 experts involved in regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions will be invited to take part in the seminar. Most of the participants will come from Morocco, Israel, Greece, Croatia, Estonia and Finland, which are the partner countries of the project *Facilitating Political Dialogue in the Baltico-Mediterranean Axis* (more information on the project below).

Results and follow-up of the seminar

The results and recommendations of the seminar will be published during spring 2011, and the publication will be disseminated among the different target groups in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions. The seminar aims both to generate concrete project ideas and policy recommendations, as well as to strengthen the basis for the development of more extensive Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation in the future.

Background of the seminar

The seminar "Baltic-Mediterranean Axis: A New Framework for Cooperation?" is an inter-regional and cross-disciplinary forum, which aims to find different ways to develop Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation with the help of the experiences and ideas of the group of expert participants. The seminar is also part of the ongoing project "Facilitating Political Dialogue in the Baltico-Mediterranean Axis", and serves as a forum for presenting and developing further the results and ideas generated during the project.

The project "Facilitating Political Dialogue in the Baltico-Mediterranean Axis" is coordinated by the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys, and funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation. It aims to improve networking of civil societies in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions and to provide an

opportunity for civil society actors to present policy recommendations for decision makers. The dialogue develops through round table discussions, which bring together representatives of civil society, researchers and other experts to discuss issues connected to mobility, culture and environment, which are relevant both in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean regions. The discussions take place in virtual space in the form of video conferences.

Contacts

Rilli Lappalainen

Secretary General
Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys

tel. + 358 9 2315 0560
gsm + 358 50 561 3456
fax + 358 9 2315 0565

rilli.lappalainen@kehys.fi
www.kehys.fi

Mikko Lipsanen

Project coordinator
Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU,
Kehys

tel. +358 9 2315 0564
fax. +359 9 2315 0565

mikko.lipsanen@kehys.fi
www.kehys.fi