



EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: EMBRACING THE MEDITERRANEAN MEANS SAVING EUROPE *A P P E A L*

The Mediterranean has always been the cradle of civilisations for the whole of Europe, and when we defend the concept of two separate and opposing sides we simply ignore a millenary history at our peril. The Mediterranean has given birth to languages, religions, philosophical systems and scientific disciplines which have nurtured the civilisations developed in the region over the course of history. It has represented the privileged space where the cultures of the peoples of the Near East, North Africa and Southern Europe could enter in contact, mix and amalgamate. It is indeed the cradle of the first urban societies in the East, the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian and Muslim civilizations, of enlightening periods such as the Renaissance, and where cosmopolitan cities like Alexandria, Tangier, Venice, Constantinople/Istanbul, Thessaloniki and Dubrovnik were born. The Mediterranean is a crossroads, where for millennia everything has merged and enriched: people, animals, goods, ships, ideas, religions, lifestyles, and even plant life.

Reshaping Citizenship To Save Europe

Today, many political forces are engaged in “saving” the EU project from nationalism, identity-based narratives and anti-liberal regimes, all of which deny the major progress made on the European continent in terms of recognition of rights and freedoms and democratic accountability. However, “saving” Europe without embracing the Mediterranean is a lost cause. Europe cannot be revived by closing its geographical and psychological borders: that would only announce the end of the European integration project.

Rights cannot be the privilege of some nations at the expense of their neighbouring ones. Today’s scattered geography of citizenship regimes in the Mediterranean, with multiple statuses and loyalties and vacillating rights, duties and obligations, can only be overcome by establishing a transnational citizenship framework, inspired by the Mediterranean spirit of diversity, exchange and hospitality, where neither Eurocentrism, nor authoritarianism can generate individual or social discrimination based on nationality, religion, gender or social class.

A Common Destiny, Extraordinary Opportunities

On the eve of the European elections, this is our appeal to European citizens: Europe can be resurrected if it offers a common destiny to the cradle of its civilizations – the Mediterranean. Europe will remain a beam of humanism if it empathetically embodies the positive values we have inherited from the Mediterranean crossroad. It must complete its integration process vis-à-vis the Mediterranean to prevent its own disintegration.

We thus ask the political forces participating in the 2019 European Parliamentary Elections to advocate for a new initiative toward integration between the European continent and the Mediterranean space. The Mediterranean means a community of around half a billion people, a unique cultural heritage, the home of over thirty languages, breath-taking landscapes and an amazing biodiversity second only in importance to rainforests, a globally recognised rural and food culture, extraordinary energy sources, and – last but not least – fantastic human potential in sciences, culture, economic development, spirituality, labour and creativity.

A Region-wide Dialogue Initiative And A Far-reaching Constitutional Process

What we need now is a clear and common vision for Europe and the Mediterranean, which results in a region-wide dialogue and a far-reaching constitutional process, involving the citizens and communities of the two shores. There is no solution to regional challenges if Europe looks only at itself. Neither in terms of reshaping the development model, applying fair migration policies, stopping environmental degradation, generating job opportunities and welfare, consolidating democratic spaces, nor in dismantling terror and hate-based nationalisms.

Seventy-five years ago, when World War II was still raging, a group of antifascist intellectuals and militants, interned on the island of Ventotene, wrote a *Manifesto for a "Free and United Europe"*. That Manifesto launched the vision for European integration as a driver for peace and prosperity exactly at the moment when nobody would bet on it. Today, we are de facto living a new global war, which plays cultures and religious identities against each other; frustrates people's struggles for freedom and justice in the name of stability, growth and national interest; pushes families to flee despair; and places human beings and nature in opposition.

The hottest front line of this fabricated war runs through the Mediterranean. This is why we have launched this call for a “Free and United Mediterranean sharing a common destiny with Europe”, exactly in the moment when nobody would bet on it.

European Elections 2019: The Right Opportunity To Embrace The Mediterranean

When the two shores will finally meet and embrace, we are convinced that their institutions, resources, intelligence and human potential will provide the solutions to save Europe from the temptation of disintegration and its Mediterranean neighbours from the perils of authoritarianism and chaos.

This is the programme we would like the 2019 European Elections to bring to the table. This is the legacy Europe and the Mediterranean deserve today, so that – together – they can step onto the world stage once more as a beacon of enlightenment, humanism, hospitality and progress.



MAYDAN is an association of citizens, women and men, including activists, intellectuals, artists, entrepreneurs, researchers and others, engaged in the construction of a Mediterranean citizenship and a common destiny among the peoples of the region.

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