

**The First Ministerial Conference  
for Cooperation in Scientific Research  
in the Western Mediterranean  
(5+5 Dialogue)  
Rabat, September 19 – 20, 2013  
"The Rabat Declaration"**

The First Conference of Ministers in charge of Scientific Research in the Western Mediterranean "5+5 Dialogue" was held in Rabat on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lahcen Daoudi, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Executive Training of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Also took part in this conference:

Mr. Mohamed MEBARKI, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria,

Mrs. Carmen VELA OLMO, Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation of the Kingdom of Spain,

Mrs. Geneviève FIORASO, Minister of Higher Education and Research of the French Republic,

Mr. Marco ROSSI DORIA, Under-secretary of State for Education, Universities and Research of the Italian Republic,

Mr. Adel Al-MASHAT, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Libya,

Mr. Emmanuel SINAGRA, Adviser to the Minister in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Malta,

Mr. Isselkou OULD AHMED IZIDBIH, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania,

Mr. Nuno CRATO, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Portugal,

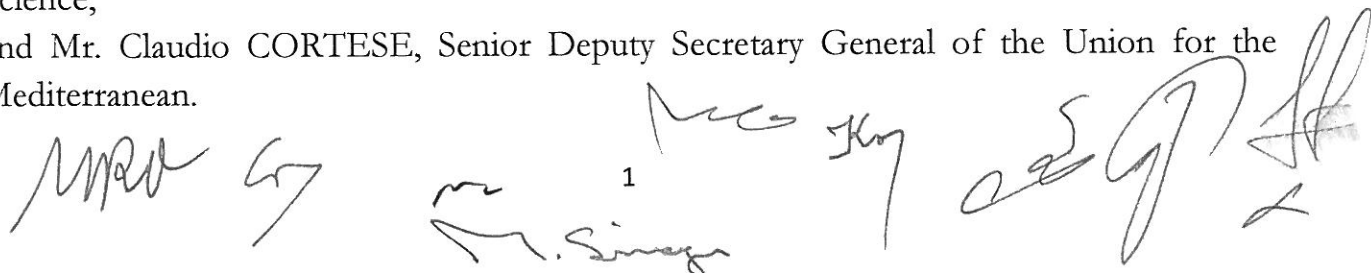
and Mr. Moncef BEN SALEM, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Tunisia,

Those who attended as observers:

Mr. El Habib BEN YAHYA, Secretary General of the Union of the Arab Maghreb,

Mr. Rupert JOY, Head of Delegation of the European Union in Rabat, representing Mrs. Maire GOGHEGAN-QUINN, European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science,

and Mr. Claudio CORTESE, Senior Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean.



Handwritten signatures of the participants and observers, including Mr. Mohamed MEBARKI, Mrs. Carmen VELA OLMO, Mrs. Geneviève FIORASO, Mr. Marco ROSSI DORIA, Mr. Adel Al-MASHAT, Mr. Emmanuel SINAGRA, Mr. Isselkou OULD AHMED IZIDBIH, Mr. Nuno CRATO, Mr. Moncef BEN SALEM, Mr. El Habib BEN YAHYA, Mr. Rupert JOY, Mrs. Maire GOGHEGAN-QUINN, and Mr. Claudio CORTESE.

The Ministers in charge of Scientific Research in the Western Mediterranean welcomed the achievements and recalled the conclusions adopted at the Second Summit of the Heads of State and Governments of the member Countries of the “5+5 Dialogue” held in Valletta on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012; and the meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Rome on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and in Nouakchott on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the “5+5 Dialogue” as a fertile ground for the development of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and a model of North-South partnership and solidarity between the two shores of the Western Mediterranean.

They stressed the importance and added-value of the “5+5 dialogue” in strengthening cooperation among the member Countries, by exploring new fields and extending them to areas of cooperation in higher education, research, and innovation.

They welcomed the Moroccan initiative, taken in coordination with the partners of the region, to hold the First Conference on the topic of scientific research, while considering the links and interactions with higher education, with the main objective to offer a qualitative boost to the process of cooperation and consultation in the Western Mediterranean.

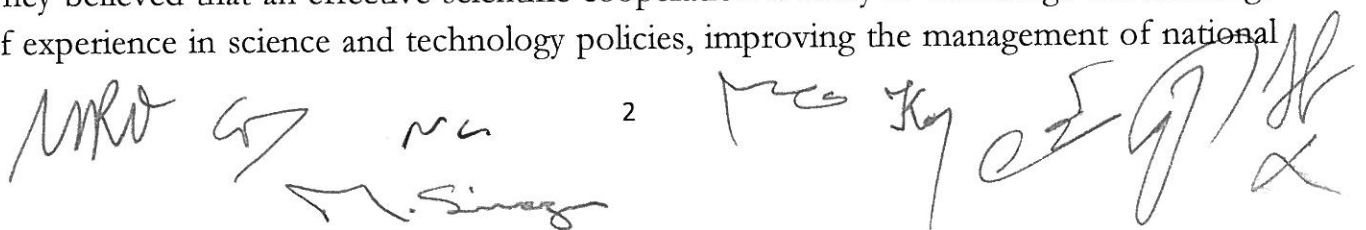
They recognized the useful role that regional organizations, especially the Maghreb Arab Union, the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean, and the League of Arab States could play in deepening the partnership among the countries of the “5+5 Dialogue”.

They strongly emphasized the importance of scientific research as a tool for socio-economic development and as a motor for sustained growth, driving an economy based on knowledge and innovation, creating jobs and wealth.

They were convinced of the necessity to put to common use the know-how in their respective countries in order to foster creativity and pool together their resources to strengthen cooperation in science and meet together all current social challenges.

In this context, the Ministers lauded the initiative “Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean area (“PRIMA”)”, based on the Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, that will establish in short delay a stable long-term and sustainable frame of partnerships on specific topics on the basis of co-ownership, co-decision, and co-financing.

They believed that an effective scientific cooperation is likely to encourage the exchange of experience in science and technology policies, improving the management of national

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research and innovation systems, and the development of centers of excellence at the national and sub-regional levels.

They resolved to promote regional integration among the countries of the Maghreb Arab Union and the continuous deepening of relationships between the Maghreb and the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean and Partner States, based on a shared vision of collective responsibility and participation, in addition to solidarity among the countries.

They lauded, in this context, the initiatives aiming at consecrating this cooperation and broadening its horizons, following the example of the project of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Fez, labeled by the Union for the Mediterranean Project, and the Euro-Mediterranean Institute of Technology (INSA International), evolving from a Moroccan-French initiative to a multilateral partnership.

They were convinced of the complementarities and synergies that could exist or get created through projects and programmes approved within a European or Euro-Mediterranean framework.

They supported, in the context of the current economic crisis and the efforts to develop new job opportunities in particular for young generations, the necessity to construct a regional area of higher education and scientific research between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean.

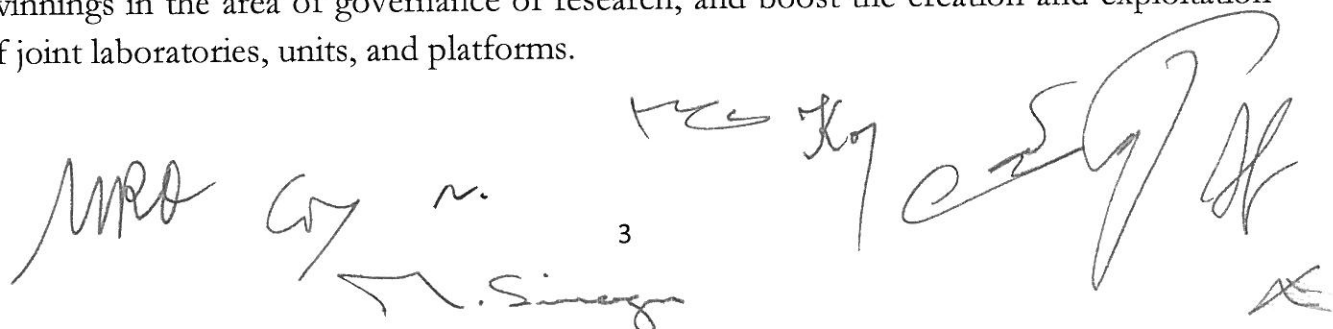
The Ministers in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Western Mediterranean agreed on the following:

### **Cooperation Actions:**

The Ministers decided to encourage and to facilitate the multilateral mobility (North-South, South-North and South-South), including the support of the granting of scientific visas.

They also planned to support and promote joint training of researchers, while opting for access to the research infrastructures and initiatives.

They agreed to facilitate the use and transfer of technology, to promote institutional twinings in the area of governance of research, and boost the creation and exploitation of joint laboratories, units, and platforms.

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In order to face up to common challenges, the Ministers encouraged the implementation of concrete actions of research and innovation in priority domains as foreseen in the Action Plan.

In this endeavor, the Ministers called for prioritizing multidisciplinary and the use of information and communication technologies, as well as the humanities and social sciences as relevant tools.

### **Instruments:**

The Ministers called for a significant use of all instruments foreseen in the Framework of the Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020; as well as those that could be developed under joint initiatives (information dissemination, networking, project Engineering, exchange of experience, collaborative projects, mobility programmes).

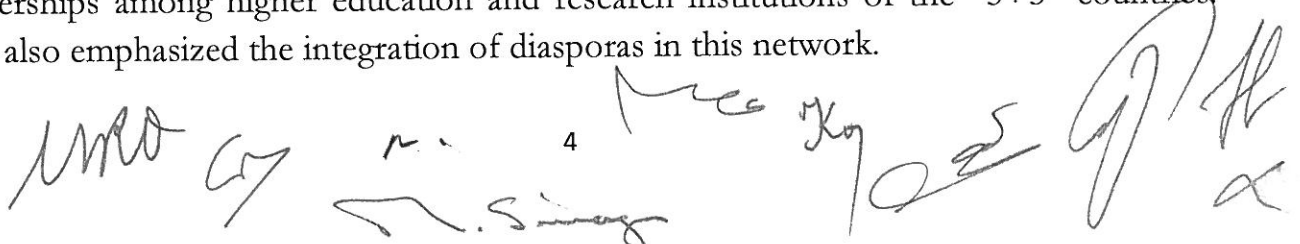
The Ministers supported the membership of the countries of the southern shore of this Dialogue in the ERANET scheme, aiming to facilitate the coordination of national programmes (such as ARIMNET, ERANETMED...) and their partnership with initiatives of joint programming, joint technological initiatives and public-private partnerships. In addition, they encouraged the participation in the European Initiative for Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).

These instruments can be used as part of a strategy to support and encourage the participation of neighboring countries in technology and science networks at the European level.

The Ministers called for holding multilateral seminars and events aimed at introducing projects dedicated to the Mediterranean region, while allowing researchers to meet and work together in consortia in the context of project applications submitted annually.

The Ministers encouraged experts in their respective countries to examine the possibility of creating, in the Mediterranean countries, antennas of existing co-location centers of communities of knowledge and innovation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

The Ministers encouraged the setting up of a network of partnerships among institutions with the aim of implementing concrete actions in training managers and top-executives. Such initiatives, open to students from within the Mediterranean region, will rely on partnerships among higher education and research institutions of the "5+5" countries. They also emphasized the integration of diasporas in this network.



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In this regard, the Ministers expressed their full support to the foster of academic and scientific mobility within the training structures and research institutes in the member Countries, starting from already existing initiatives, such as the Mediterranean Office of Youth and the Erasmus Plus Programme which will be launched in 2014. They expressed their support to student mobility programmes that will be launched in 2014 in the framework of the UfM.

The Ministers stressed the importance of mobility as a motor for proximity and mutual understanding between the two shores of the Western Mediterranean, thus raising qualifications and strengthening employment opportunities.

### **Follow up and Implementation**

To ensure the implementation of the Rabat Declaration, the Ministers decided on the creation of a Follow-Up Committee.

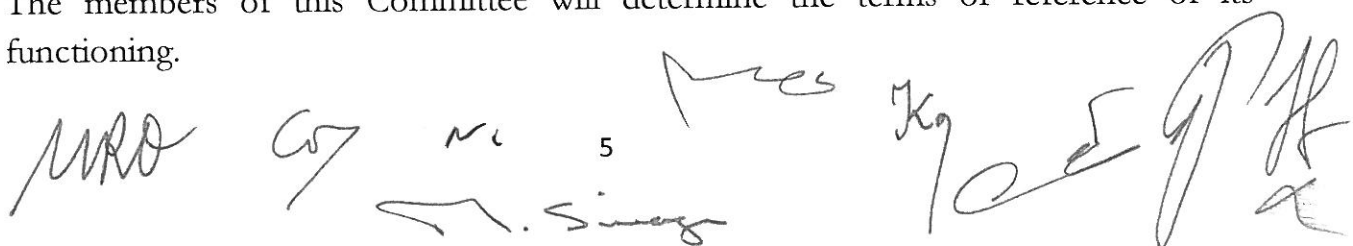
In order to operationalize cooperation in higher education, scientific research and innovation among the ten countries and ensure the sustainability of this new governance body of the “5+5 Dialogue”, the Ministers entrusted this Committee with the setting up, in conjunction with the General Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, of an action plan that is ambitious and regularly evaluated. The guidelines of this Action Plan will be annexed to the Rabat Declaration.

The Action Plan should be based on the following agreed upon principles:

- Establishing balanced North-South partnerships for the benefit of all partners,
- Funding based on the capabilities of each country, with the possible support of EU agencies,
- Fixing thematic priorities, actions and instruments,
- Promoting synergy among existing and future bilateral, multilateral and EU programmes,
- Emphasizing the valorization of research results, boosting innovation and facilitating the creation of spin-offs and start-ups,
- Promoting the integration of new technologies.

The said Action Plan will favor the emergence of new promising projects with a high added value taking into consideration common priorities and mutual interests.

The members of this Committee will determine the terms of reference of its functioning.

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The Ministers invited Morocco to take up the role of the secretariat of the "5+5 Dialogue" on "Scientific Research initiative" until the next meeting of Ministers.

In this regard, they welcomed the proposal by Spain to host the Second Ministerial Conference for Cooperation in Scientific Research and higher education in the Western Mediterranean. During this conference the theme of higher education, research and employability will be also addressed.

A report on this Conference will be addressed to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the "5+5 Dialogue" countries during the next meeting.

The Ministers thank His Majesty King Mohammed VI, his Government and the Moroccan People for their warm hospitality and the excellent organization of this Conference.

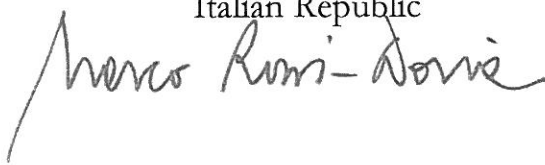
A collection of handwritten signatures and initials. On the left, there is a signature that appears to be 'M. King' and a smaller signature below it. In the center, there is a small mark resembling a checkmark or a short horizontal line. To the right, there is a large, stylized signature that looks like 'M. King' followed by a large, looped flourish.



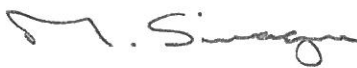
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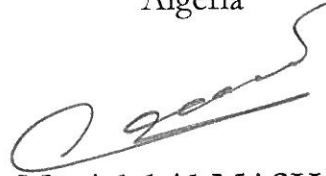
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**Mr. Mohamed MEBARKI**  
Minister of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
Democratic and Popular Republic of  
Algeria



**Mr. Adel Al-MASHAT**  
Deputy Minister of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
Libya



**Mr. Isselkou OULD AHMED IZIDBIH**  
Minister of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
Islamic Republic of Mauritania



**Mr. Lahcen DAOUDI**  
Minister of Higher Education, Scientific  
Research and Executive Training  
Kingdom of Morocco



**Mr. Moncef BEN SALEM**  
Minister of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
Republic of Tunisia

