

A WORD FROM THE FOUNDERS



PANAGIOTIS
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TEN YEARS BUILDING THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD OF TOMORROW

Over the past twenty years, the relations between the Mediterranean and Europe have gone through many phases. In 1995, the signing of the Barcelona Agreement brought hope for many defenders of this alliance. In 2004, the weakness of this process, combined with the entry of CEECs in the European Union, led the European Commission to launch a European Neighbourhood Policy. For the first time, Europe adopted a strategic vision towards its neighbours. In 2008, the project of a Union for the Mediterranean was a wonderful initiative that triggered much hope.

In addition to these institutional initiatives, the Mediterranean World Economic Foresight Institute (IPEMED), created in 2006, was regarded as an alternative solution offering a unique approach: encouraging the rapprochement of both shores of the Mediterranean, mostly via the economy.

IPEMED was founded ten years ago as a reflection and action tool at the service of the actors contributing to the rapprochement of both shores of the Mediterranean - Northern and southern company managers, public authorities and scientific community. Three principles guide our action: foresight, general interest and the capital that is already at work.

First of all, we made the choice of foresight. We resolutely favoured a long-term approach and the analysis of strong heavy trends to build the future as, according to Fernand Braudel "*One cannot predict the future, but one can prepare for it*". This is one of our strengths and specificities. At the heart of our approach lie the regionalisation of the global economy and the implementation of "crescents".

IPEMED also wished to defend the general interest, to offer a deep regional integration answering the needs of Southern populations, bringing sustainable inclusive growth and fostering employment.

This choice led us to combine intelligence. To gather people rather than divide them.

Finally, we chose to work closer to companies and analyse the industrial strategies they implement in the region. Our objective is to support the new "win-win" partnership dynamic that is currently developing. It is coproduction. Coproduction is the result of a heavy trend identified by IPEMED: compacting of value chains, sharing of added value and technology transfer.

Thanks to these strategic choices, we developed an efficient Institute, IPEMED, and a network of trust and skills. Over the last ten years, IPEMED has mobilised several hundreds of experts, industrials and politicians from both shores of the Mediterranean, sharing the same desire to build a common future and foster a more integrated Euro-Mediterranean region. We have taken in intelligence and passion, and we keep doing so.

Our think tank also generated new ideas. Administrations and companies acknowledged our studies.

With the all-out globalisation, the Mediterranean found itself in a marginal neighbourhood position, especially regarding the European Union. It is progressively becoming again an exchange hub between Europe, Africa and Asia. This is Braudel's vision of the "Global Mediterranean". The Mediterranean also lies at the heart of the project La Verticale. The future lies in the Africa-Mediterranean-Europe vertical economic development, revolving around a central Mediterranean.

Henceforth, our Institute carries a project that is no longer a utopia. We must build this great 21st century region by supporting IPEMED and the foundation La Verticale.