

13 THE
MEDITERRANEAN
DIALOGUE



■ KEY INFORMATION

The geographical proximity of Europe to the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East links the security of these regions together. NATO initiated a dialogue with Mediterranean countries in 1994. Currently, there are seven participants: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

NATO is currently considering the enhancement of this initiative and its transformation into a tailored partnership. Among the options envisaged is the introduction of three key principles: interoperability, defence reform and the democratic control of the armed forces. These changes aim to "develop a more ambitious and expanded framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue" (meeting of foreign ministers, December 2003).

The Mediterranean Dialogue aims to create good relations and better mutual understanding and confidence throughout the Mediterranean, promoting regional security and stability and correcting misperceptions of NATO's policies and goals.

It is progressive, allowing the number of participants to grow and forms of cooperation to evolve. Participants are offered the same basis for cooperation and discussion with NATO and, in principle activities are self-funding although the Alliance can consider requests for financial assistance on a case-by-case basis.

The **Mediterranean Cooperation Group** is the forum within which political discussions take place between NATO countries

and individual participants. They take place on a regular basis and at different levels. Meetings are also held multilaterally with all Mediterranean Dialogue participants and usually take place after each ministerial or summit meeting, or when exceptional circumstances arise. This was the case on 23 October 2001, when a meeting was convened to explain NATO's response to the 11 September terrorist attacks.

An **Annual Work Programme** has existed since 1997. Areas of cooperation include science and the environment, information activities, crisis management, defence policy and strategy, small arms and light weapons, global humanitarian mine action, and non-proliferation. Military cooperation is also part of the programme. For instance, Mediterranean Dialogue representatives participate in courses at NATO schools and observe and/or participate in NATO military exercises.

Intensified practical cooperation and more effective dialogue on security matters of common concern, such as terrorism, have been encouraged since the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Reykjavik, May 2002. Measures include a more regular consultation process, a tailored approach to cooperation and the identification of more focused activities such as improving the ability of Dialogue countries to contribute to NATO-led non-Article 5 operations, defence reform and defence economics, consultation on border security, and disaster management.

NATO's initiative complements efforts made by other international organisations such as the European Union's Barcelona Process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Mediterranean Initiative.



RECENT SUMMIT AND MINISTERIAL DECISIONS

- Brussels, 4-5 December 2003: NATO foreign ministers decide to build on the decisions taken at Prague and look at ways of upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue to open it more to Partnership activities
- Prague, 21-22 November 2002: An inventory of possible areas of cooperation to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue is adopted
- Reykjavik, May 2002: NATO foreign ministers announce their decision to reinforce cooperation on security matters of common concern, including terrorism
- Washington, 23-25 April 1999: Decision to enhance the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue
- Madrid, 8-9 July 1997: Creation of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group
- 1 December 1994: Foreign Ministers declare their readiness to create the Mediterranean Dialogue
- Brussels, 10-11 January 1994: The basis of a dialogue with Mediterranean countries is laid down.



■ CHRONOLOGY

2003 4 December: NATO foreign ministers decide to open the Mediterranean Dialogue more to Partnership activities.

12 September: Visit of HRH Princess Colonel Aisha Al-Hussein of Jordan.

30 June: NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson identifies five priority areas for the Mediterranean Dialogue: combating terrorism, countering weapons of mass destruction, crisis management, defence reform and military-to-military cooperation.

2002 10 December: Visit of the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to NATO HQ.

21-22 November: Heads of State and Government issue an inventory of possible areas of cooperation to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue.

July: The North Atlantic Council agrees that the strengthening of relations with Mediterranean Dialogue countries is among the highest priorities of the Alliance.

May: NATO foreign ministers decide to upgrade the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue and consult with participants on security matters of common concern, including terrorism .

20 March: Joint Israeli and Palestinian group at NATO HQ.

9 January: Second multinational meeting of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group at Ambassadorial level.

2001 20 December: First visit of an Algerian Head of State, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to NATO.

23 October: First multinational meeting of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group at Ambassadorial level to inform Mediterranean participants of NATO's response to the 11 September terrorist attacks.

- 29 May:** NATO gives Mediterranean Dialogue countries the opportunity to sign an agreement on the protection of information to facilitate the exchange of classified information required to participate in certain activities.
- 2000** **24 April:** Israel signs a security agreement with NATO.
12 April: King Abdullah II of Jordan visits NATO.
14 March: Algeria joins the Mediterranean Dialogue.
- 1999** **24 April:** Decision to enhance the political and practical dimensions of the Dialogue, particularly in the military field.
24-26 February: NATO Ambassadors and representatives of the Mediterranean Dialogue meet for the first time in Valencia.
- 1997** **8 July:** Establishment of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group.
- 1996** **15 January:** Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan visits NATO for discussions with NATO Secretary General Solana in the context of the Alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue.
- 1995** **5 December:** Jordan joins the Mediterranean Dialogue.
8 February: NATO initiates a direct dialogue with Mediterranean non-member countries and invitations are extended to Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.
- 1994** **1 December:** NATO foreign ministers declare their readiness "to establish contacts, on a case-by-case basis, between the Alliance and Mediterranean non-member countries with a view to contributing to the strengthening of regional stability".

11 January: Brussels Summit declaration lays down the basis of a dialogue with countries in the region.



■ OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND BACKGROUND READING

Go to the electronic version of the press kit for clickable links
[\(www.nato.int/istanbul2004/presskit.htm\)](http://www.nato.int/istanbul2004/presskit.htm)

Mediterranean Dialogue Work Programme 2003
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/2003/mdwp-2003.pdf>

Mediterranean Dialogue Work Programme 2002
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/2002/mdwp-2002.pdf>

Meeting of NATO foreign ministers, 4-5 December 2003
(paragraph 17)
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-152e.htm>

Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue including an inventory of
possible areas of cooperation
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/upgrading.htm>

NATO foreign ministers announce their decision to upgrade the
political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue,
14 May 2002 (paragraph 15)
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/comm.htm#020514>

Decision to enhance the political and practical dimensions of the
Mediterranean Dialogue, April 1999 (paragraphs 5, 29, 38)
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/comm.htm#990424>

Extract from the Madrid Declaration by NATO Heads of State
and Government, July 1997, announcing the creation of the
Mediterranean Cooperation Group (paragraph 13)
<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/comm.htm#970708>

Final Communiqué of the North Atlantic Council, 1 December 1994, announces the creation of a Mediterranean Dialogue (paragraph 19)

<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/comm.htm#941201>

Brussels Summit Declaration, January 1994, laying the basis for the creation of a dialogue in the region (paragraph 22)

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1994/p94-003.htm>

About the Mediterranean Dialogue – web module containing related official documents, articles, conference reports etc.

<http://www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm>

Speech by Lord Robertson at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London, 30 June 2003, on “NATO and Mediterranean Security: Practical steps towards partnership”, where he outlines five priority areas for the Mediterranean Dialogue

<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030630a.htm>





■ A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES

CONTRIBUTIONS TO **NATO**'S PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS:

Three of the Mediterranean partners – Egypt, Jordan and Morocco – have in the past contributed to the NATO-led peacekeeping missions in the Balkans. By May 2002, only Morocco still had soldiers serving in SFOR and KFOR, which is still the case today.



