

A NEW COMPACT FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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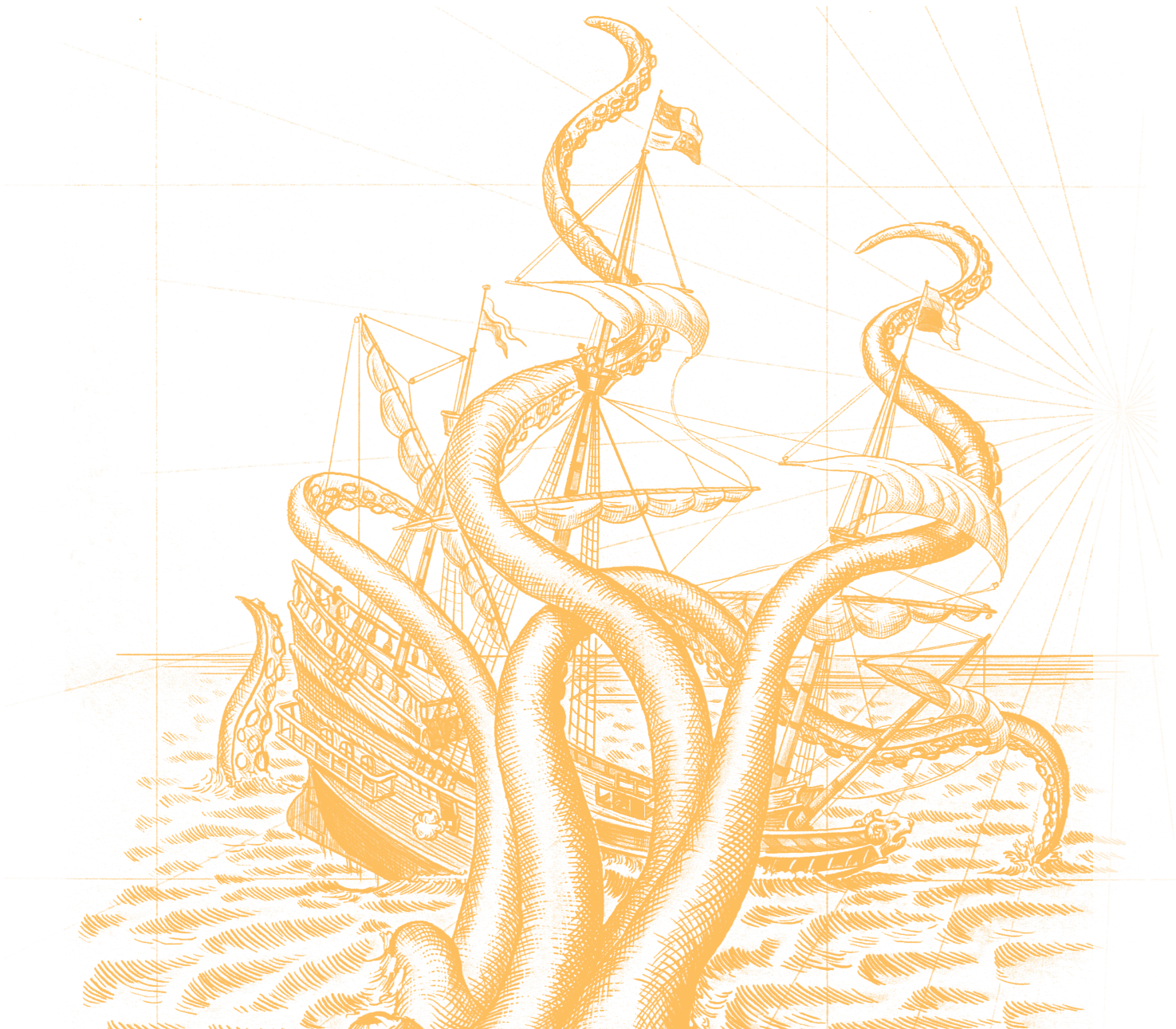
The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was nurtured in the Mediterranean, in spite of its universal scope seeking to address the various challenges posed by increasingly cultural diverse societies and the widening rifts between them.

Launched in November 2006 by the Prime Ministers of two key Mediterranean countries, Spain and Turkey, with the support of the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Alliance of Civilizations aims at building bridges between societies, promoting dialogue and understanding and contributing to forge the much

needed collective political will to address the world's imbalances.

Because of the unique role that the Mediterranean region has played in the history of humanity from the earliest times to the present, as a crossroads of cultures and peoples and the cradle of the three great monotheist religions, this part of the world is among the top priorities of the UNAOC. This is why in November 2010 a Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean was adopted at the First Alliance of Civilizations' Regional Meeting for the Mediterranean, held in La Valetta, Malta. This Regional Strategy sets a framework for a five year Action Plan (2011-2015),





underpinned by five major objectives which are: a) to build bridges in order to promote dialogue and understanding among peoples, cultures, religions and beliefs, and foster a culture of peace in the Mediterranean region; b) to reinforce trust, tolerance and respect for diversity through cooperation, partnership and inclusion; c) to contribute to good governance and the rule of law with a view to protecting and respecting cultural diversity, religious freedom and pluralism; d) to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance including discrimination against persons based on their religion or belief and incitement to hate; e) to promote the integration of legal migrants to further social cohesion and participatory societies and avert the marginalization and exclusion of vulnerable migrant groups.

The major ongoing transformations in the southern and eastern Mediterranean as well as the changes that the European Union members are experiencing make the need for a renewed engagement towards common action more urgent than ever.

There is a unique opportunity to overcome past divides, fix old fault-lines and develop further cooperation in strengthening dialogue, democracy and development in the

whole region. Because of globalisation and an ever growing inter-dependence between societies and peoples, all Euro-Mediterranean countries face similar challenges, notwithstanding the varying situations from country to country and the huge disparities between the North and the South of the Mediterranean.

Stability, security, tolerance, prosperity and peace will not be achieved in a sustainable way in this region unless shared solutions are sought and innovative avenues for a new Mediterranean compact explored and implemented. The shared commitment to democracy and its core values sets up a totally new context for a win-win cooperation based on synergies and complementarities. The serious crisis currently affecting the European Union and the complex challenges ahead facing the new Arab democracies need a new vision for a more integrated Mediterranean region.

In this regard, the international community, notably the UN system, can play an active role not only by supporting grassroots projects and civil society-driven actions that in the long term can make a difference, but also in acting as a platform for dialogue that delivers.