

IRES

Study day

**“ISSUES of FUTURE CHALLENGES facing the MOROCCO-
EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERSHIP”**

**Introduction by
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you today at the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES) as part of this day study, devoted to "issues of future challenges facing the Morocco-European Union partnership".

I want to thank our speaker, Professor Jean Louis REIFFERS, Chairman of the FEMISE Scientific Committee for kindly accepting our invitation despite his busy agenda. His enlightenments will certainly shed more light on the reality of relations between Morocco and EU and its prospects regarding the dynamic change that is assisted by the region South-Mediterranean .

Let me emphasize that the topic under discussion is part of the IRES draft study on the advanced Morocco-European Union status which falls under the "Competitiveness and global positioning of Morocco in the global system" program.

This theme, which the IRES has been concerned with since December 2009 and has devoted a seminar therefore in June 2010, is currently the subject of further study within the Institute working group on regulatory issues in relation to the EU acquis.

This study aims (1) to compare national legislation with the EU acquis to determine their offset, (2) to evaluate the impact on the political, economic and social plan of normative and regulatory reconciliation with the EU acquis, (3) to establish a priority actions order to promote the interests of the countries (4) and to identify the accompanying measures to maximize the institutions involvement in this process, and finally to mobilize actors and finance regulatory convergence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, Morocco is attached, since October 2008, to the European Union by an advanced status, which is positioned in the continuation of the European Neighborhood Policy. This status gives Morocco a unique platform for cooperation, which was dominated exclusively and until recently, by candidates accessing the EU. It is supported by a political dialogue on piloting and by bilateral relations at the level of heads of state. The advanced status also offers the Kingdom, on the one hand, the opportunity to integrate the European internal market through a comprehensive free trade agreement and, on the other hand, to participate in Community programs and agencies, some of which are reserved to member countries or countries accessing the European Union.

The advanced status subjects morocco to several challenges. In fact, Morocco will have to deal with such challenges to pass the reforms induced by this new relationship. In addition to the societal impacts, it put under question the Moroccan human and institutional capacity as well as the financial resources to ensure that the regulatory and normative convergence with the EU acquis is respected. Fulfilling this status depends, also, on Morocco's ability in mobilizing its neighboring potentials to making it a central axis to achieve it regional and international influence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The strong proximity of Morocco with the European Union is consistent with the strategy of opening the country into its neighboring Mediterranean countries. Such act is deemed an irrevocable strategic choice. Conversely, Morocco has always worked towards the

strengthening of the Euro-Mediterranean integration since the establishment of Barcelona Process in 1995.

For this reason, the sociopolitical developments, which the south shore of the Mediterranean experience, make Morocco face challenges in more than one area and raise the question of the reliability of the development vision promoted in terms of the European neighborhood policy.

Also, the claims of the people of southern Mediterranean for more democracy do not resemble the movement occurred decades ago in some European countries such as Portugal, Spain or Greece, which have become today true democracies.

While these events reflect in its core the beginning of a democratic transition process, the medium- and long term prospective of the southern Mediterranean region remains shrouded in uncertainty. Removing these uncertainties depends on the creation of political and socio-economic conditions in order to succeed in the democratic transition and to plant deeply the practices of good governance.

The support of Europe in the ongoing transition process is unavoidable. Besides the economic and financial support for the SMCs in these difficult times, Europe would benefit from promoting the anchoring of these countries to the values of democracy and law. For this reason, it is time to revisit the founding principles of partnership between the two sides of the Mediterranean with a standard approach in rupture with the narrow logic of trade integration that has prevailed until today.

Today, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership shall more than never be based on the vectors capable of structuring the accelerating convergence and reducing the multiple fractures that separate the two banks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Those are the core issues to be discussed as part of this study day. The presence of a panel of senior expert is an appropriate opportunity to further the debate on relevant aspects of relations between Morocco and Euro-Mediterranean countries in terms of in this crucial phase of political transition taking place in the region.

Before I finish, I would like again to thank Professor Jean-Louis REIFFERS, and all the participants for responding to the IRES invitation.