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Euro-Mediterranean Statistic 2007 published

Mediterranean and EU countries coming closer

The Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) are coming closer to the EU Member States, with their higher literacy levels, growing trade links and increasing tourism, according to the second annual Euro-Med statistical data bulletin published by the MEDSTAT II EU-funded Programme.

The ***Euro-Mediterranean Statistics*** bulletin, released today, shows that the annual growth rate is above 5% in most of the MPCs, with Morocco reaching 8% in 2006. On the other hand, the GDP per capita in the MPCs is lower than in Bulgaria, that has the lowest rate among EU-27, with the exception of Israel, where it is around the level of Slovenia and Portugal.

The figures highlight the fact that for the third year in a row trade in goods between the MPCs and the EU has significantly increased,

Imports from all countries on the south and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea (including Turkey, the occupied Palestinian territory and Jordan) represent 7.3 % of EU-27 imports, while exports to these countries account for 9 % of EU-27 exports outside the EU.

Regarding tourism, Egypt is the most visited partner country, with more than 9 million tourists in 2006, followed by Morocco, Tunisia and Syria, with over 6 million.

As far as literacy among women is concerned, the highest rates are recorded in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanon and Jordan (more than 85%), compared to over 90% in EU-27 countries. The literacy rate among young people rises to 90% for most of the MPCs, while the gap between young men and women has decreased and disappeared totally in the four countries mentioned above.

More information and trends can be found in ***Euro-Mediterranean Statistics***, the principal publication of the MEDSTAT II statistical cooperation programme launched in 2006, for a duration of three years. The publication includes more than eighty tables and graphs on the latest statistical data for the nine MPCs, plus Turkey, the EU Member States and EFTA countries.

It is divided into nine distinct chapters: General profile of the countries, National Accounts, External Trade and Balance of Payments, Social statistics, Energy, Agriculture, Environment, Tourism and Transport. It is based on data from the ten Mediterranean countries, mainly national sources. The publication can be downloaded and ordered free of charge on the Eurostat website:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073.46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-DI-07-001

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