

Preface

Dr. Joe Borg, Chairman of the Board of MEDAC

The Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) has been established for over two decades. During this period the world has witnessed many dramatic changes but none as important to our region as the Arab uprisings of 2011. MEDAC has consistently sought to contribute to a more peaceful, stable and prosperous Mediterranean through its diplomatic training programmes, intercultural dialogue on issues ranging from human rights to conflict resolution and by means of numerous publications and conferences which brought together academics, practitioners and thinkers from our region. Over the past 20 years MEDAC has had more than 600 graduates from the Euro-Mediterranean area and beyond. Hundreds of others have participated in MEDAC's conferences, summer schools and workshops.

It is thus natural for MEDAC to seek to continue to offer its contribution to 'Mediterranean thinking' at such a crucial time, when the future of the region as a whole is at stake. The contributors to this volume of essays are all distinguished academics, policy-shapers and policy-makers who give unique insights on the challenges, opportunities and themes that are now at the heart of Mediterranean reality. The need for open and transparent dialogue on the future of the region, in particular of its southern shores, is more salient than ever before.

The concept behind this volume is clear: that we all must listen, learn and be willing to change in order to create a more democratic region where good governance and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms are the rule not the exception. This objective must be achieved for the sake of the people of the Southern Mediterranean in particular. Many of them have laid down their lives for these ideals and this sacrifice must not be wasted.

On our part MEDAC will continue to strive to serve as a platform where all the stakeholders from the Mediterranean, be they diplomats, politicians, academics, the business community and civil society, can engage in forward-looking and constructive discussions. These discussions will nourish practical ideas and policy recommendations that can serve the people of our region. The collective and collaborative approach, as witnessed in this publication, is essential if the people of the Mediterranean are to progress and prosper.