

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3472/08
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to the Council

Subject: 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' - Inclusion of the Western Balkans

Following the presentation of the Commission Communication (COM(2008)0319) on the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean', a formal decision is to be taken on this document by the Heads of State and Government at the EU Summit on 13 July 2008 in Paris. The proposals contained in the Commission Communication are to be discussed at the Council meeting in June 2008. The Barcelona Process was launched in 1995 and currently covers 27 EU Member States and 12 countries on the southern Mediterranean rim. The countries of the Western Balkans - Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania - also border the Mediterranean but are not currently members of the Barcelona Process. Montenegro and Croatia have welcomed the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' initiative and have already expressed an official desire to attend the Summit. As stability in the Western Balkans is a priority for the EU, it is all the more important that the countries of the Western Balkans are included in EU policies, including those in the field of EU-Mediterranean relations.

What is the Council's position on the desire expressed by the countries of the Western Balkans to take part in the 13 July 2008 Summit as full members of the Barcelona Process, even though these countries have yet to receive an invitation to attend? Does the Council envisage any alternatives to full membership, such as the possibility of observer status? How will the Council react to the possibility that key EU Mediterranean partners such as Turkey or Egypt might not turn up?