**STATEMENT BY THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CITIZENS’ FOUNDATION (FACM)**

**Held at Casa Mediterráneo, Alicante, Spain, on June 10, 2022**

**A DECADE OF CITIZEN RESISTANCE**

In this 21st century, far from any appeasement, crises continue to multiply. The advantages of globalization are numerous, but they bring with them other problems, due in particular to the excesses of capitalism, and to the consequences of an insatiable appetite for profits which most often comes at the expense of human rights and a economic and social growth that could benefit a large part of the planet.

The systemic crisis of 2008 had devastating economic and societal consequences worldwide. Inequalities have widened between territories as well as within countries. These inequalities have favored the emergence of oligarchies whose wealth has increased exponentially, while at the same time the majority of populations have suffered from increased vulnerability. The precariousness of working conditions has generated the renewed category of “poor workers”, with the rise in unemployment affecting mostly women and young people.

Behind these social effects, which nobody denies and few dare to refute, the political duality security-freedom is outlined. The acquired rights and freedoms have been reduced under the pretext of granting security. The open paths towards freedom and the strengthening of human rights have been closed.

At the same time, old conflicts have also been revived within our societies and between States, which we thought had been overcome after the disastrous consequences of the confrontations of the 20th century. Those that have not yet been resolved in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean or North Africa, have been cruelly prolonged. The violent form of these conflicts, identifiable on all the shores of the Mediterranean, activates the infernal logic of the language of arms instead of that of debate and reason.

**STATE OF ART**

The ray of hope that the popular revolts in the Mediterranean aroused more than ten years ago has been extinguished both by external interventions at the service of the economic interests of the energy oligopolies or their ambitions of domination, and by the reactionary political forces in the inside these countries. The latter, first surprised and then overwhelmed by the magnitude of the popular demands, immediately resume their positions of strength, resorting, openly or covertly, to the old methods of repression and censorship.

The intervention of regional and global actors on all shores of the Mediterranean is a matter of great concern. It has serious consequences, whether it is direct and violent interventions as in Libya or Syria, or the occupation that persists in Palestine.

In Europe, the enlargement of the European Union to the East was followed, not to say inspired, by an expansion of NATO, with the thinly veiled intention of encircling Russia, in a kind of remake of the Cold War. This has led first to the regression of social and political progress throughout Eastern Europe, then to war, largely caused by Russia, and whose evolution is unpredictable, although with dramatic consequences.

In addition, the United Kingdom's exit from the EU has allowed the Anglo-Saxon oligarchic elites to exercise their interests: developing the arms race for the benefit of their military-industrial complexes, controlling food production and prices for the benefit of agri-food companies and , of course, by asserting its dominance over fossil energy sources, hand in hand with several of the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

The current systems also practice a policy of "double standards" when they describe the Russian regime as authoritarian and dictatorial while voluntarily compromising with the theocratic and absolutist regimes typical of many of its allies in the Gulf or Egypt, to name just a few examples.

The universalization of democratic values ​​and principles, advocated after the implosion of the USSR, is therefore postponed, even in established democracies, which also claim to be fully democratic. Rearmament is now the priority of governments and supranational institutions, challenging the demands of the social majorities, which are oriented towards peace and the fight against inequalities.

The COVID 19 pandemic has been added to the economic, social, political, military and cultural crises, which are also joined by the unstoppable effects of climate change. In this context, the health and environmental crises faced by citizens, given their priority importance, do not receive the universal attention they deserve.

Civil society, men and women, are excluded from decision-making, from the formulation of objectives and priorities that would benefit them. The logic of using brute force and cracking down on activists dominates in some cases; in others, it is the logic of the search for profit that prevails, sustained by crises. It leads to a growing disrepute of countries that advocate representative democracy. The prospect of an increase in migratory flows makes intra-Mediterranean mobility a key issue.

Institutional political responses to popular demands suffer, for their part, from an increasingly weak signal. This is the case of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), whose languor contrasts with the violence that we often see unleashed against the citizens of the Member States. This is also the case of the United Nations, which struggles to influence the resolution of conflict situations and democratic crises such as the one currently affecting Tunisia.

The subordination of some of our States and of some institutions of the European Union to the economic and military policy of the United States of America also demonstrates its structural weakness in this part of the world, even if Russia was and continues to be a potential threat to the cohesion of their ranks.

Finally, the complicity of the EU in this strategic plan is evident in the case of Ukraine, but also in the case of Western Sahara, the Israeli colonies in Palestine, without forgetting the aforementioned tolerance of many dictatorial regimes.

**PROPOSALS**

In this context, the FACM Advisory Council:

1. Reaffirms the principles contained in its Charter and calls for increased and effective participation of civil society in all countries and in particular in the Mediterranean region;

2. Condemns the setback to which our societies are subjected in terms of democracy, freedoms and respect for human, cultural, economic and social rights. It is also concerned about the decrease in press freedom, religious freedom and possible violations of places of worship;

3. Expresses its concern at the rise of the far right in several European countries;

4. Notes and is alarmed at the worsening of the difficulties of movement of citizens. s between Mediterranean states, both European and non-European;

5. Is alarmed by the increasingly threatening conflicts related to the ownership and management of common goods such as land, water, energy, food, rare earths and strategic minerals;

6. Reiterates its opposition to the escalation of the arms race which, in addition to the danger it poses to the populations, reduces the resources available for health, education, social services, the improvement of the environment and the fight against inequalities;

7. Stresses that the origin and effects of the multiple conflicts in the Mediterranean go beyond the countries bordering the Mediterranean, to reach the countries of the Sahel and the Middle East;

8. States that good neighborliness and cooperation policies must in no way be used as security pretexts intended, among other things, to limit migratory flows considered by some – most of the time wrongly – to be a threat;

9. Underlines its concern about the growing tensions between Morocco and Algeria, between Greece and Turkey, as well as the setbacks observed in the anti-democratic practices of countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey. Is alarmed by the recent tensions between Morocco, Algeria and Spain over Western Sahara;

10. It requires the will, maturity, tenacity and capacity of citizens. s and its democratic institutions are recognized as tools capable of building alternatives that, putting an end to regression, restore dignity to the peoples and allow them to move forward and look to the future in peace, harmony and freedom;

11. Calls for a ceasefire in Ukraine and the establishment of transparent follow-up mechanisms for its establishment.

12. Lastly, it calls for greater cooperation between States, giving priority to the urgent issues of peace, protection of the environment, democracy and respect for and consolidation of human rights.

**THE ACM FOUNDATION**

During its decade of existence, the Mediterranean Citizens Assembly Foundation (FACM) has repeatedly and unequivocally demonstrated its contribution to understanding, mutual knowledge, dialogue between cultures and convictions, with the objectives of peace, freedom, integration and the commitment to eradicate inequalities in our societies.

The FACM advocates for the urgent construction of alliances such as the one recently achieved with the adoption of the Palermo Convention on human rights in the Mediterranean region. The ACM Foundation, which brings together citizens from all the Mediterranean countries, is one of the key players in citizen action. It wants to be a collective force that acts in favor of peace, respect for the rights of migrants, women and young people. She works for a revival of culture, for a radical reform of education, for the protection of the environment and against all forms of dictatorships and threats to democracy that we face today.

Casa Mediterráneo/Alicante/Spain/ June 10, 2022