



The **European Documentation and Research Centre (EDRC)** in conjunction with the **Malta European Studies Association (MESA)** with the support of the **French Embassy in Malta** announces a lecture by:

Dr Dorothee Schmid, researcher on Mediterranean and Middle East issues at the *Institut Francais des Relations Internationales* (IFRI, Paris)

Title:

“The Union for the Mediterranean: French Track or New European Policy”

Abstract:

In February 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, campaigning at the time to become the French President, spoke for the first time of a « Mediterranean Union ». A little more than a year later, while Sarkozy is effectively in power, his Mediterranean Project seems to have substantially evolved, having finally met with hard Mediterranean realities and soft EU constraints. The contents of the new « Union for the Mediterranean » (EU-Med), thus re-labelled under German pressure, is still uncertain. What can be presently said about this initiative, which was supposed to be a highlight of the French presidency of the EU to come?

Historically, the Mediterranean has always remained a centre piece of France's external system of influence.

While the French partly relied for the last 15 years on the EU's capacity of action to uphold a Mediterranean development perspective, their disillusion with the Euro- Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) has grown with the launching of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). At the same time, Nicolas Sarkozy's Mediterranean Project should be understood in the context of the President's global diplomatic ambition, and as an example of his willingness to restore France's autonomy within the EU frame of action.

The usefulness and viability of the EU-Med was questioned from the outset by several EU member states and notably caused a critical debate in Spain, Italy and Germany. The French Project seems now on its way to be reintegrated into the EU's cluster of external policies, as little more than an appendix to the EMP. It is now necessary to reflect upon its possible contribution to the development and stabilisation of the Mediterranean region.

Date: **Tuesday 29th April 2008 at 1800hrs.**

Refreshments: **at 1730hrs**

Venue: **Corinthia Palace Hotel, Attard**

Book by sending the following details to Ms Doris Mangion:

Name, Organisation, and E-Mail by 25th April 2008 @ 10.00a.m

E-Mail: doris.mangion@um.edu.mt

Entrance: Free