

Ocemo, the voice of civil society

MEDITERRANEAN. On 1 September 2011, Pascale Chabrilat will take up her post as General Director of Ocemo in Marseille. Ocemo (the Office for Economic Cooperation of the Mediterranean and the Middle East) is a new think tank launched by its two co-presidents, Philippe de Fontaine Vive, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), and Jean-Louis Reiffers, Coordinator and President of the Scientific Committee of the Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Economiques (Femise).

The new structure, which was officially created in November 2010, has the support of prominent sponsors: experts from several networks, such as Femise and Anima Investment Network, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille – Provence (CCIMP), the city of Marseille and the EIB.

Then there is french Caisse des Dépôts, which will provide Ocemo with €1.1M over three years and two of its own personnel: its Secretary-General and its General Director, Pascale Chabrilat, head of the Mediterranean division at the Department of European and International Affairs of the CDC Group. The CCIMP has also seconded one employee, while the city of Marseille is providing offices in Villa Valmer.

"The creation of Ocemo has been facilitated by CDC. Our mission to foster France's economic development cannot stop at our borders"

Independent expression

"At the Centre de Marseille pour l'Intégration (CMI), institutions and states work together with great success. This initiative is the product of efforts by the EIB, the Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank. The CMI brings together institutions: Ocemo will do the same for representatives of civil society. I have assumed the co-presidency of Ocemo in a personal capacity; I have not committed the EIB, since no official structure will join Ocemo. Expression in the Mediterranean must be freed up", explains Philippe de Fontaine Vive. According to the co-president of Ocemo, "the budget will not be used to pay salaries, but to conduct research. An annual report will be published on the youth of the Mediterranean, which will gauge the mood and expectations of young people in the region", he says.

"This new structure addresses a subject that is of special relevance to it: the voice of civil society. It is the first association of its kind, bringing together university students, researchers, management schools, business representatives, etc. We want to bring about a new discourse and independent expression", says Pascale Chabrilat.

The new mission of Ocemo's General Director is "to bring networks to life and to share their experiences. We will work in such a way that these associations can create positive externalities. Ocemo will help disseminate expertise on a wider scale."

"Our aim is to give young people the freedom to express themselves, to communicate what they have to say to institutions so that the latter can meet their expectations", adds Philippe de Fontaine Vive.

According to Jean-Louis Reiffers, "major powers must understand that they must help countries in transition, as they have done with East Germany and Eastern Europe."

http://www.econostrum.info/Ocemo-the-voice-of-civil-society_a6471.html