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Roundtable Discussion on the Mediterranean challenges and the EU stance

The resounding absence of the European Union on what is happening in the Mediterranean region and particularly in the Eastern part of the basin, such as the war in Syria, the Cyprus issue, the questioning of the international treaties' mandate on issues of national sovereignty and exclusive economic zones and the intensity of immigration, was highlighted during the discussion on "Europe and the Mediterranean: Contemporary Challenges".

The workshop was organized by the Institute for the Mediterranean of the European Public Law Organization (EPLO) at the Conference Hall of the EPLO in Plaka, Athens, on Friday March 17, 2017.

The speakers were:

- **Dimitris Papadimoulis**, Vice President of the European Parliament
- **Petros Liacouras** Professor at Piraeus University,
- **Fawaz Al-Etan**, Ambassador of Jordan, the country that holds the Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM),
- **Vassilis Papaioannou**, Ambassador (Ret.), former Greek Ambassador to Syria and
- **George Kapopoulos**, Journalist.

Ambassador **Sotirios Varouxakis**, Director of the Institute for the Mediterranean was the coordinator of the workshop while the welcome addresses were given by **Yiannis Politis**, journalist on behalf of the EPLO and **Joseph Cuschieri**, the Ambassador of Malta, the country that holds the Presidency of the European Union.

Mr Papadimoulis referred to an upcoming international refugee relocation program that will defuse countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain and Malta while Prof. Liacouras made a thorough analysis on the gas deposits at the East Mediterranean sea and the alliances created through "triangles" such as the Greece-Cyprus-Israel one and the Greece-Cyprus-Egypt.

H.E. the Ambassador of Jordan Fawaz Al-Etan referred to the significant refugee problem in his country and the absence of willingness to cease the wars which constitute the cause of the problem, while the Ambassador ad h., Vassilis Papaioannou and the journalist George Kapopoulos talked about a no-nexistent or at least a short-sighted approach of the European Union on all issues concerning the Mediterranean region, from Libya to Syria, stressing that the stability in the Mediterranean is a pre-condition for the EU survival.