

the Union for the Mediterranean "has good days ahead"(ambassador)

Paris, 20/02/08- The French ambassador in charge of the project of the Union for the Mediterranean (Umed), Alain Le Roy said that this Union has generated too many expectations throughout the Mediterranean, "has good days ahead".

"With Italy and Spain, France launched on December 20 the Appeal of Rome which makes it clear that the Union for the Mediterranean will aim to be the heart and engine of cooperation in the Mediterranean and for the Mediterranean," he said in an interview published on Wednesday in the newspaper "La Croix", adding that 22 countries out of 25 were declared for the project.

Mr. Roy said that among these 25 states, there are three other countries, Portugal, Jordan and Mauritania, not directly but residents who consider themselves almost residents of the Mediterranean, noting that there is a real interest for the project.

While acknowledging that there is the reluctance of Northern Europeans, with the first plan to Germany, the French diplomat assured that there is a real desire in Paris as well as in Berlin to find solutions to their disagreements on the subject of the project of the Union for the Mediterranean.

"There was never any question that Germany is or intended to be excluded from the Union for the Mediterranean," he stressed, noting that the first summit must be held on 13th and 14th of July in Paris it can not take place without Germany.

When asked whether the projects that the Union will defend must have the backing of all, Mr. Le Roy explained that it is the countries themselves that works on their projects which they will discuss at the first summit in Paris.

"What they like in this Union is that they are all, from north to south, on an equal footing, what is in their view that of a paramount importance," he said, noting that projects of the Union for the Mediterranean will concern in a first phase the water, energy and infrastructure.

"We rely on the European Investment Bank (EIB), on the private sector and if possible on the funds of Gulf countries. They want to be observers in the Union for the Mediterranean," he concluded.

Source: MAP