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Promoting Democracy in the EMP

Which Political Strategy?

Working Group I
Third Year Report

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Foreword

Six months after the signature of the Barcelona Declaration, at the beginning with the second semester of 1996, the then 27 governments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Commission tried to articulate a number of principles, objectives and guidelines in a "Charter" intended to set out the shared foundations of and rationale for a political relationship in the framework of the Partnership.

The talks on the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability, first initiated by the Arab partners that aimed to contain European desires to implement a fully-fledged (including Israel) regional security co-operation along the lines of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe-CSCE (and the Middle East Peace Process Track-2 Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security-ACRS), gradually shifted towards, on one hand, a pressing European demand for democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the Southern partner countries, regarded increasingly by Europeans as a central element of their regional security interests, and an equally pressing Arab rejection of such demands so as to protect regime stability and security.

Given this impasse, the "Charter" talks failed and were suspended in November 2000 at the ministerial conference of Marseilles. Nonetheless, European Union (EU) attempts to promote political reform in the EMP partner countries continued, although the Charter failure suggested that it was precisely on the issue of human rights and democracy that there was no common Euro-Med ground. Since Marseilles the EU has sustained its efforts to advance democracy and good governance proposals within the EMP framework, more recently in the context of the enlargement to Eastern Europe.

In 2001-04, the EuroMeSCo Working Group I assessed how democracy could be interpreted to create a Euro-Med common ground and bring the same level of security to all partners. The Group issued a first report in 2001.[1] Roberto Aliboni, coordinator of the group authored a second report that discusses the issues debated in 2002-03.[2]

This is the third report, again authored by the coordinator. It concludes the debates and research initiated in 2001 on the "Search for Common Ground on Euro-Med Security" and takes stock of the result of the final seminar held in Rome on 8 May 2004 (see Annex). While previous Reports were devoted essentially to EMP policy agendas, this report reflects on the EU strategy to promote democracy in the EMP, an issue that after the stalemate at Marseilles has become a central concern in the EU, in the US with President George W. Bush's initiatives towards the Middle East and the Islamic world, and in trans-Atlantic relations.

Findings and Recommendations

Recent endeavours in the EU and the US have aimed to reinforce and improve policies to promote political reform in the Mediterranean and the Wider Middle East. It is argued in this report that what is needed is less an improvement of current policy agendas than a new strategy. The renewal and effectiveness of the EU policy agenda depends on the willingness and ability of member states to work out a new strategy.

The strategy the EU has developed in years past is predicated on reinforcing partnership by strengthening inclusion, dialogue, consultation and ownership within a co-operative framework. In so doing, the EU partnership strategy has succeeded in including the Southern partners in the process but has largely failed to give them a stronger sense of ownership based on the perception of common ground. After almost ten years, the Southern partners only very partially and ambiguously 'own' (and sometimes reject) the Barcelona process.

The EU has reacted to this lack of Arab ownership by reasserting its democracy promotion aims strongly, and reinforcing its instruments and policies. The adoption of the European Neighbourhood Policy makes EU policy stricter and more rigorous, but it does not introduce any new ways to enable the EU to win the hearts and minds of its Southern partners.

The crux of the matter is that the dialogue for domestic reform in the Mediterranean and MENA takes place with the wrong partners. Southern governments and their elites are the least interested in reform. They oppose or circumvent them. Civil society, on the other hand, is fragmented and not necessarily aspiring to reform and is much of the time in line with incumbent regimes. Who, then, should the EU and the West talk with in the Mediterranean and the Middle East?

1. EuroMeSCo Working Group I, Istituto Affari Internazionali & Association des Etudes Internationales, *Security and Common Ground in the Euro-Med Partnership. First Year Report*, EuroMeSCo Paper No. 17, Lisbon, June 2002.
2. Roberto Aliboni, *Common Languages on Democracy in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, EuroMeSCo Working Group I, Second Year Report, EuroMeSCo Paper No 31, Lisbon, May 2004.

It is argued here that reform means the West must engage with mainstream Islamic reformers. Past developments after the assassination of President Sadat held the West hostage to a perception of Islamic revivalism as a monolithic authoritarian, violent and anti-Western movement. This does not correspond to reality. Old and new extremists represent a minority in a movement of religious and political renewal, most of which is not anti-western but rather ready to consider challenges posed by modernity and inter-cultural relations, albeit on the condition that the West refrains from interfering and claiming its superiority under the mantle of universalism.

The Report discusses whether mainstream Islamic movements are liberal in character. Religious liberalism may have little visibility in secular Western eyes and evolve according to patterns different from Western liberalism. It is maintained here that there are liberal trends in the movement, which make moderate Islamists privileged partners for Western reform-oriented policy. If this perspective is correct, the EU strategy to promote democracy must focus on a preferential dialogue with mainstream Islamic reformers.

The re-focusing of the EU strategy on moderate Islamists would require, among others, five most important policies to be implemented: (a) using a less value-laden concept of democracy than it is generally done in relations with the Arab partner countries; (b) attenuating or eliminating double standards in policies in general and, in particular, in relations with the Broader MENA countries; (c) carrying out relations with these countries in a rigorous international institutional framework; (d) adopting more pragmatic and relaxed attitudes in relations with partners involved; (e) improve information and analysis capabilities with respect to "moderate" Islamists and Islamism.

Policy Agendas and Strategy

It was only after the Cold War that the EU began to develop a policy to promote democracy and political reform in the Southern Mediterranean countries. The proposal of instituting a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) and the establishment of the so called "Five plus Five" Group of the Western Mediterranean countries were manifestations of the impact of inter-European relations on European-Mediterranean relations. These early efforts were interrupted by the 1990-91 wars in Iraq and the subsequent crisis in the Arab countries. The EU only returned to the Mediterranean in 1994, a move that culminated in the creation of the EMP in November 1995. The EMP was a sophisticated co-operative policy intended to promote peace, stability, and prosperity by means of political and economic reforms, largely following the model of EU policies towards the European East. In June 2000, the EMP was formally subsumed into a EU Common Strategy towards the Mediterranean, which fully confirmed the goals and rationale of EMP, particularly political reform.

In its almost ten years of existence, the EMP has accumulated a respectable *acquis*, although the objective of political reform has proved very difficult to attain and has largely failed. In fact, the attempt to promote political reform as a common Euro-Med endeavour was suspended in November 2000. Nonetheless, the desire and rationale of the EU to promote political reform has been strengthened rather than weakened. EU members have reaffirmed the role that they expect democracy to play in promoting international security and co-operation. Recently, the "European Security Strategy", approved by the European Council in December 2003, states that: "the best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states".

At the same time, there is growing significance attached internationally to democracy promotion in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. The United States has put democracy promotion on the top of its MENA policy agenda, with the use of both coercive (the intervention in Iraq) and co-operative (the Middle East Peace Initiative-MEPI,[3] and the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Greater Middle East and North Africa[4]) instruments. The democracy "deficit" in the Arab MENA countries has meanwhile become a major concern of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as witnessed by the 2002 Arab Human Development Report.

What these developments indicate is that there is a need to rethink strategic visions and make current policy agendas more effective. Fresh strategic perspectives are a priority. This is what the US attempted first by toppling the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and later, perhaps more appropriately, by attempting to work out a comprehensive

3. On MEPI, see Tamara Cofman Wittes, "The Promise of Arab Liberalism", *Policy Review*, No. 125, June-July 2004; Marina Ottaway, "Nation-building in the Greater Middle East: The View from Washington", in R. Aliboni (ed.), *Peace-, Institution- and Nation-building in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, IAI Quaderni English Series, No. 4, December 2003, pp. 29-37.
4.In http://www.g8usa.gov/home.html

scheme for long term cooperation and reform with the "Greater Middle East Initiative" (GIME).

The EU has also resumed its endeavours to implement a credible and feasible democracy promoting policy within EMP, starting with the 2002 Action Plan endorsed by EMP Foreign Ministers in Valencia.[5] These efforts are reflected in a number of documents either relating to broader EU dimensions such as the European Security Strategy[6] and the European Neighbourhood Policy,[7] or in the context of the EMP. In addition to the Valencia Action Plan, EU democracy promotion is based on the important Communication of the Commission on "Reinvigorating EU Actions on Human Rights and Democratisation with Mediterranean Partners"[8]. Also significant are the subsequent Presidency Conclusions of the Ministerial Conference of Naples (2-3 December 2003) and the Mid-Term Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Dublin (5-6 May 2004).[9]

In principle, the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", endorsed by the 17-18 June 2004 European Council in Brussels[10] is part of the same endeavour. However, it must be said that it fails to add anything new to the already existing democracy promoting strategy documents. It does list systematically the items on current EU policy agenda, in some cases adding interesting new suggestions, and it focuses on the measures to co-ordinate (the EMP, the accords with the Gulf Co-operation Council and Iran) and complete (Iraq and Yemen, as well as Libya and Mauritania) EU relations towards the broader MENA area, although it notes that this will be done within the limits of available instruments rather than according to a new and more comprehensive policy framework. The document is essentially a response to recent US initiatives and aims to affirm that the EU can intervene in the greater Middle East on its own terms and with its own resources.

Whatever the value of the EU Strategic Partnership in the current debate, as noted, the European and American documents share the sense that a strategic breakthrough is badly needed. As yet, however, they do not provide full and satisfactory responses to the need for a coherent strategy. The currently deep divisions between Europe and the United States with respect to MENA areas compound the challenge.[11] As a European analyst put it recently "A series of summits in June 2004 (G8, EU-US, NATO) have tried to forge a set of policy ideas. But other than an abstract realization that the crisis of governance is acute, policy-makers lack a clear strategy on how concretely to promote higher standards of governance, with more respect for political pluralism, human rights and religious tolerance."[12]. Indeed, the discrepancy between the ability to set out "policy ideas" (i.e. policy-agendas) and the weakness of the strategic perspectives that should shape and streamline policy agendas seems to be a crucial feature of the current EU, US and trans-Atlantic predicament.

European institutions have made and continue to make helpful contributions and successful efforts to refine policies, which are more palatable for southern partners, and to also strengthen EU instruments to promote democracy. The Commission improved EU instruments and made them more coherent and articulated with past efforts with its Communication on "Reinvigorating EU Actions on Human Rights and Democratisation with Mediterranean Partners." It is doing the same with the new European Neighbourhood Policy. Further, the Presidency Conclusions of the ministerial conferences in Naples and Dublin and the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East" make various valuable suggestions in terms of the policy agenda.

Nonetheless, while the EMP policy framework and agenda have been improved, this has not curbed the unwillingness of the southern partners to implement reforms, which means that the European EMP initiative is still unable to promote change and reform in the Southern Mediterranean countries rather than simply support the *status quo*. The GIME situation is similar. All this indicates a need for a fundamental revision of the overall EU strategic perspective underlying its Mediterranean policy. The improvement of policy agendas cannot be a substitute for clarifying the underlying strategy.

This report aims to draw attention to this strategic "deficit." First, it considers the strategy the EU is pursuing currently to promote political reform in the EMP. Second, it suggests how the latter can be improved and become better equipped to attain its self-ascribed aims.

5. For document see *EuroMed Report*, Issue No. 42W, 26 April 2002; The Valencia Plan is annexed to the Presidency Conclusions of the Fifth EMP Conference of Foreign Ministers; *EuroMed Reports* are available at:http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/news_interviews.htm#Euromed%20Synopsis

6. *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003. The document is available on the website of the EU Secretary General/High Representative for the CFSP.

7. Communication from the Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper*, Brussels 12 May 2004, COM (2004) 373 final; see previous documents: Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, *Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, Brussels 11 March 2003, COM (2003) 104 final; Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission, *Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument*, Brussels, 1 July 2003, COM (2003) 393 final; see also European Parliament, *Report on "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours"*, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, Rapporteur: Pasqualina Napoletano, 5 November 2003 (Final A5-0378/2003).

8. COM (2003) 294 final, Brussels 21 May 2003.

9. For document see *EuroMed Report*, Issue No. 71, 12 December 2003, and No. 76, 7 May 2004, respectively.

10. For document see *Euro-Med Report*, No 78, 23 June 2004.

11. For the trans-Atlantic perspective see *Istanbul paper # 1, Democracy and Human Development in the Broader Middle East: A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership*, paper presented at the Conference on "The Atlantic Alliance at a New Crossroads", organised by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, Istanbul June 21, 2004; the paper is available in the website of the GMFUS http://www.gmfus.org/.

12. Steven Everts, "The Ultimate Test Case: Can Europe and America Forge a Joint Strategy for the Wider Middle East?", *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 4, 2004, pp. 665-686, see p. 682.

The "Partnership" Strategy: Inclusion and Ownership

"Partnership" is the EU co-operative strategy to implement foreign policy broadly speaking. Partnership is also the strategic framework for the EU promotion of reform where appropriate. Partnership means a joint undertaking with common aims, in which the parties (partners) have a say in establishing methods and goals, although they may have quite different roles. The notion of partnership arises from mercantile law. As neo-liberalism has gained increasing weight in the theory and practice of international relations, the notion of partnership has become more relevant in the organisation of inter-state relations. In international relations partnership means a contractual relationship and a co-operative strategy.

Partnership was a concept already common in Ancient Rome. In the Middle Ages, while the Europeans borrowed from the Arabs the concept of "simple partnership" ("qirad"), the Arabs borrowed from Europe the more complex concept of "limited partnership" giving way to the modern Islamic concepts of "mudaraba" and "musharaka" contracts[13]. It is therefore a concept that crossed the Mediterranean Sea in both directions, which makes the adoption of a relationship based on a partnership particularly fitting and meaningful in the Euro-Mediterranean context.

The EMP encompasses the EU strategy towards the Mediterranean, and aims primarily to promote reform and, ultimately, co-operation and security. How is the strategy working? It is commonly maintained that the Euro-Med partnership is not working properly because it is a EU rather than a common policy. In many respects the EMP is an infrastructure that enables the EU to implement the most recent and sophisticated version of a long-standing Mediterranean policy. Those who analyse the organisational and institutional structure of the EMP will find an extremely interlinked fabric in which EMP decision mechanisms are functional in the complex EU decision-making process rather than distinctive and autonomous[14].

And the Euro-Med Partnership is unilateral when it comes to MEDA decisions and the EMP secretariat services. MEDA decisions are mostly prepared in consultation with the Southern partners, but the final decision on granting funds is a EU prerogative and adopted by a EU-exclusive Med Committee (not to be mistaken with the Euro-Med Committee for the Barcelona process), and the Commission controls the EMP Secretariat. While it is understandable that funding decisions must be up to the donor and although the role of the Commission as EMP Secretariat makes sense in practical terms, it is symbolic of the basic inequality of the Euro-Med Partnership.

This critique misses the point in several ways, however. First, while equality is a constitutive condition for a partnership as private contract, partnership in international relations is more of a political process than a legal state of affairs. There are partnerships based on strong common ground, like the Atlantic Alliance or the EU. Indeed, there are partnerships that begin with a small nucleus that aim to attain fully-fledged parity among the parties. While the former can operate immediately on the basis of common actions, the latter are self-reinforcing and learning processes for the attainment of a true partnership. In such cases, partnership has a functional meaning: its methods serve to allow the partnership to emerge. The EMP is such a functional process, and it is therefore unfair to criticise it for not being fully equal.

Second, in order to assess properly the EMP functional partnership-building process it is necessary to consider the means the EMP is using to generate real partnership and co-operation among its members. The EU has adopted and continues to adopt various initiatives to introduce and consolidate instruments and methods that will promote a fully-fledged partnership. Inclusion, consultation and dialogue are the most commonly used EMP instruments and methods. The Presidency Conclusions of the 5-6 May 2004 Mid-Term Meeting of the EMP Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Dublin confirmed "the importance of partnership and co-ownership as essential elements of the process". The Valencia Action Plan had already pointed out "the sense of ownership of the process by all partners must be reinforced". It is important to consider these varying modes – inclusion, consultation and dialogue – of partnership at this point.

Inclusion essentially means involving countries in a common political process in order to attenuate or dispel perceptions of unilateral behaviour and prevent security dilemmas. Inclusion is the basic element of any policy of co-operation and co-operative security. It is of crucial significance in relations between regions with significantly different levels of development and very different political regimes, as is the case of the EMP. There is no doubt that inclusion has worked positively in the EMP. Despite modest political achievements and the aggravation of violent conflict among members, merely being

13. See Iqbal Ahmed Khan, " Pratiche della finanza islamica nel contesto giuridico occidentale", in R. Aliboni (a cura di), *Banca e finanza islamica. Autonomia e cooperazione [Islamic Banking and Financing. Autonomy and Co-operation]*, Quaderni della Camera di Commercio Italo-Araba, Roma, 2003, pp. 121-130.

14. Jörg Monar, "Institutional Constraints of the European Union's Mediterranean Policy", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 3. No. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 39-60; Stelios Stavridis, "Mediterranean Challenges to the EU's Foreign Policy", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 5, 2000, 35-62; Geoffrey Edwards, Eric Philippart, "The EU Mediterranean Policy: Virtue Unrewarded Or ...?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No 1, Summer/Fall 1997, pp. 185-207; Dimitris K. Xenakis, Dimitris N. Chryssochoou, *Europe in Change. The Emerging Euro-Mediterranean System*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2001.

15. In the decisions of the 17 June 2004 EU Council in Brussels the list of the countries considered by the ENP are Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Libya and Mauritania may be added. In subsequent developments, Russia has disdainfully rejected its inclusion in the ENP as an unacceptable EU unilateral move. On the ENP, see Erwan Lannon, Peter van Elsuwege, "The EU's Emerging Neighbourhood Policy", in Peter G. Xuereb (ed.), *Euro-Med Integration and the Ring of Friends*, European Documentation and Research Centre, University of Malta, Malta, pp. 21-84; Tobias Schumacher, "Riding the Winds of Change: The Future of the Euro-Mediterranean

included in the process remains of interest to all the partners. It creates common ground for more active future co-operation. After all, the EMP is still there.

Dialogue and consultation further consolidates the interest of the partners. The Barcelona process ensures that the parties meet regularly in various semi-institutional forums: the conferences of the Foreign Ministers, the meetings of the Senior Officials and those of the Euro-Med Committee for the Barcelona process. While the Ministers and the Senior Officials have a more "legislative" function, in the Euro-Med Committee the partners endorse and approve measures to be executed, such as the National and Regional Indicative Programmes for the Southern partners. Furthermore, the Southern partners meet frequently and informally with the EU Commission and national representatives to discuss and prepare policies and documents to be submitted to the EMP. Finally, formal dialogue and consultation occurs through the institutions of the bilateral Association Agreements, which must endorse the documents on EU financial and economic support and planning. It must be noted that the Council and the committees of officials in the Associations can discuss any political issue and questions relating to human rights.

Ownership has been neglected for a long time within the EMP framework. Indeed, it is a latecomer with respect to EU relations with the ACP countries as well. The concept of ownership arises with development policies, although ownership as referred to by Ministers in the Valencia and Dublin documents involves political as well as developmental relations. Co-ownership is the right way to achieve substantive equality among partners.

In conclusion, the widespread and systematic use of inclusion, consultation, dialogue, ownership and similar instruments over the last few years is promoting greater equality of status among members and giving southern members more voice. Early criticisms of the EMP as a EU owned policy have been almost superseded. The functional process has worked. A combination of EU initiatives and the successful socialisation of partners have created the conditions for true partnership. The co-ownership rule will undoubtedly improve this tendency.

That the EMP is closer to a real partnership by enhancing the status of the Southern partners is an important factor in the success of the EU strategy of promoting governance in inter-regional relations (or neighbouring relations). However, while the problem of equal status has been very present in the public debates on the EMP, the key challenge is finding common ground or making the principles and aims of the partners converge. Parity of status does not necessarily bring about common goals, although it may be a necessary condition for the latter to emerge.

After ten years, EMP convergence is still very modest. The partnership is less of a political success than it is a diplomatic one. Progress with the formal requirements of partnership helps but it cannot substitute for convergence of political will. Consequently, it cannot create common ground on which a substantive working partnership must be based. This is the real challenge faced by the EU strategy to promote democracy.

In response to the question of whether the partnership works as a strategy to promote reform it can be said that the EU has succeeded largely in including the Southern partners in the process, but has had less success with creating a stronger sense of ownership based on the perception of the existence of common ground. This is not satisfactory when the EU interest is to promote reform. The current arrangement has contributed to create a fairer environment in Euro-Med relations that may be an important factor in promoting broad co-operative relations, but it has not necessarily created the conditions for Southern partners to activate political reforms.

The Impact of the European Neighbourhood Policy

This conclusion must be considered in the light of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The ENP is the new EU foreign policy to strengthen its own security with respect to the new neighbours it has acquired since the last enlargement[15]. The notion of neighbourhood brings Mediterranean and Eastern European countries together within the same policy framework. The enlargement is an immediate cause of the ENP, but the roots of this policy are more clearly pointed out by the European Security Strategy, which notes that: "even in an era of globalisation, geography is […] important. It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed." The impact of the ENP on EU Mediterranean policy and the EMP is bound to be very significant.

ENP gives neighbours the chance to further economic integration with the EU market and move towards the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital in the long term. As with previous EU regional and inter-regional co-operation initiatives, economic integration is the path to political and economic reforms within a communitarian framework based on shared values, such as democracy and respect for human rights. In this sense, the ENP is economically more intensive than EMP but, politically, it is very similar. The EU has presented it as considerably expanding the opportunities for inclusion already on offer. Furthermore, it is presented as a policy that will give partners clearly privileged relations with the EU as compared with non-neighbouring countries. How relevant will the expansion of EU inclusiveness in strategic terms be with regard to the EU ability to promote reform?

To respond to this question, the new ENP policy framework must be more closely examined and also seen in the broader context of an uninterrupted strengthening of EU human rights, democratisation, conflict prevention policies and their mainstreaming into EU foreign policy as a whole over the last few years.

The Action Plans are the key instruments of the ENP. They will regulate relations between the EU and each neighbour, creating the basis for EU economic aid and co-operation. The Action Plans are akin to the current Country Strategy Papers[16]. In the last years, these have acquired a more pronounced political profile, as conflict prevention aims are mainstreamed. The Action Plans will have an even stronger political profile. Political commitments will be carefully identified and included, and will be measurable through benchmarks and conditionality. In addition to the usual broad commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the EU is thinking of including specific political and security commitments on terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, reflecting the decisions it made recently about mainstreaming terrorism and WMD into all its policies and agreements with third countries[17]. The greater stringency and comprehensiveness of the Action Plans are coupled by the fact that, in contrast with disappointing past performances[18], the ENP promises a sharp, even automatic application of conditionality.

This more stringent policy will be applied with flexibility, however. The level of EU support in the ENP is determined by the extent to which a country is willing to submit itself to constraints and conditions and its success in implementing the plans agreed with the EU. If a country accepts a high level of economic and political conditions and, according to established benchmarks, achieves them, EU support will be high. Otherwise it will be low and can even be withdrawn. The Presidency Conclusions of the May 2004 Dublin Mid-Term meeting outlined the sequence: "The level of EU support to the implementation of reforms should be related, on a mutually agreed basis in a spirit of co-ownership, to the intensity of the efforts of the partners assessed under the framework of agreed evaluation instruments". Thus, while political commitments and available instruments will be similar for all neighbours, their application will differ according to the much-stressed principle of country-by-country "differentiation".

Obviously, there will be a regional focus where appropriate. The ENP Strategy Paper points out that ENP "will reinforce existing forms of regional and sub-regional co-operation", like the Black Sea Economic Co-operation-BSEC, the Pact of Agadir, the Arab Maghreb Union and the EMP. This point is not elaborated on, however. Given the strong bilateral rationale of the ENP, it is doubtful whether the regional perspective will be as significant. As regards the EMP, for the time being what the Strategy Paper suggests is that "The ENP ... will be implemented through the Barcelona process and the Association Agreements with each partner country". This means that the management of Mediterranean relations will remain in the hands of the Directorate for the Mediterranean and the Middle East. It is likely that the Directorate will work essentially bilaterally through the Association Agreements within the ENP.

With the ENP, co-operation with the EU will become more constraining and conditioned for the Mediterranean countries. The commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law is, as in the EMP, a non-binding political commitment[19]. However, the ENP is decidedly more rigorous. While the CSCE-inspired Barcelona Declaration presents democracy, human rights, the rule of law as aims to be achieved, the ENP sees it rather as a given. There will be no discussions on whether that "common" ground is acceptable but rather debates as to how far those aims are being implemented so as to determine levels of EU co-operation.

The broad perspective of ENP should be operational before the end of 2004. The

16. During the current transitional stage, the Commission title for the documents it produces and discusses with the partners is "Country Policy Papers".

17. The revised Plan of Action on terrorism (adopted by the European Council on 21 September 2001) provides for including "effective counter-terrorism clauses in all agreements with third countries". Similarly, the EU Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, endorsed by the European Council on 12-13 December 2003, provides for "mainstreaming non-proliferation policies into the EU's wider relations with third countries ... inter alia by introducing the non-proliferation clause in agreements with third countries".

18. Dorothée Schmid, *Interlinkages within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Linking Economic, Institutional and Political Reform: conditionality within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, EuroMeSCo Papers No. 27, Lisbon, December 2003; Karen Smith, "The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations with Third Countries: How Effective?", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer 1998, pp. 253-274; Laura Feliu, "Human Rights and the Barcelona Process", in Fulvio Attinà, Stelio Stavridis (eds:), *The Barcelona Process and Euro-Mediterranean Issues from Stuttgart to Marseilles*, Giuffré editore, Milano, 2001, pp. 67-95.

19. Article 56 provides for "European Neighbourhood Agreements" of a normative and contractual nature with reciprocal rights and obligations. See Erwan Lannon, *Le Traité constitutionnel et l'avenir de la politique méditerranéenne de l'UE élargie*, EuroMeSCo paper No. 32, Lisbon, June 2004, p. 22.

effect of the ENP "differentiation" in the Mediterranean is likely to be important as countries pursue different levels of economic and political engagement. Even if the EMP survives as a structure and political *acquis*, the regional Mediterranean dimension is bound to shrink or disappear and, EMP regional political co-operation become marginal as a result. This view may be too pessimistic, but ENP will certainly ensure a sharpening of conditionality and a weakening of the regional dimension as bilateral relations are strengthened.

This scenario results partly from the end of EU attempts to create a space for cohabitation for Israel and the Arab partners, one of the "idées-force" that presided the birth of the EMP. The ENP country-by-country co-operation pattern will certainly confirm the economic disintegration between Israel and the Arab EMP members that prevails today. This is a reality that nobody can ignore. The trivialisation of the EMP in the framework of the ENP can thus be seen as a deliberate EU policy[20]. There may, on the other hand, be a return to a EU *politique arabe.* This is hinted at in an *en passant* remark in the European Security Strategy: "A broader engagement with the Arab World should also be considered". Clearly, this refers to EU policy eventually transcending the Mediterranean. In the event, this will require a less piecemeal approach than that of the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", and a more cohesive stance among EU members and in trans-Atlantic relations.

More immediately the question is whether the ENP will allow for a more effective strategy of partnership and reform? It is perhaps the most systemic and paramount assertion of the EU interest in promoting reform thus far (one can also argue that the way the ENP presents a "community of values" that partners should adhere to is also the most arrogant policy devised thus far). This in itself, however, is insufficient to foster reform in the domestic politics of southern partners that current policies do not already address. What is new about the ENP is that the promotion of democracy and reform will not address the region as a whole, but rather individual countries. The differentiated approach may create a situation in which every country sets a different price for cooperation. Some may decide to 'buy into' an insignificant minimum to get what they need and minimise commitments; others may enter into a long, ambiguous and debilitating negotiation with the EU for which there is no yardstick to measure success. Would the EU be able to differentiate its strategy of democracy promotion accordingly? There can be no strategy that is entirely "à la carte". Bilateral relations should be governed by general guidelines, as envisioned by the pre-ENP version of the Barcelona process.

It is possible that the more bilateral approach and offering packages that are more tailored to individual requirements (rather than what the EU condemns today as a "one-size fits-all approach") will lead some countries to feel greater confidence to proceed with some reforms. Flexibility is a virtue that may pay by increasing the perception of opportunities. However, national reforms here and there will help, but they do not obviate the need for a regional approach to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, the Arab and the Islamic worlds. If there is a real working correlation between democratic regimes in the region and EU (Western) security, fragmented reform will produce fragmented security. Thus, it is likely that the re-introduction of a regional and collective approach in EU policy will become an issue. Whatever the case, the ENP does not appear to create the environment most conducive to implementing an overall strategy to promote reform in the Southern Mediterranean countries.

The Risk of an Inward-looking Approach

It is appropriate to now bring together the above points to define and evaluate the EU strategy to promote reforms in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. As noted, the paramount EU objective of promoting political reform in the MENA area is being pursued through a partnership and cooperation strategy, which has led to the inclusion of southern countries in a joint process of political dialogue and decision-making. However, the governments and leaders of the Mediterranean and the Middle East are clearly unwilling – indeed refractory – to respond positively to EU democracy promotion by initiating reforms. Under tremendous pressure from a triumphant West after the demise of the Soviet Union, the governments of the region initiated some reforms at the beginning of the 1990s, only to return to the previous state of affairs as soon as the changes made threatened their stability. Since then, the Arab regimes have stubbornly defended their stability by rejecting any EU attempts to promote a reform process. This much was clear in the EMP talks about the "Charter." These regimes have also learnt to accommodate pressures by manipulating change in their

20. Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués, " A 'Ring of Friends'? The Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 2004, pp. 240-247.

economies and polities. This ability to accommodate change without reforming is called the "modernisation of authoritarianism" or the "liberalisation of autocracies" in the literature[21].

Arab rejectionism and manipulation constitutes a weakness of ownership of the Barcelona process. The EU has reacted to this by strongly re-asserting its objectives and instruments rather than deeply revising its strategy to forge common ground. In fact, as pointed out above, promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law has become even more central in EU foreign policy than it was before. Democracy and human rights have been successfully mainstreamed into the wide range of EU policies to produce a coherent, diffuse and firm approach. Furthermore, EU instruments have been reinforced and have multiplied. The introduction of the ENP reinforces the trend. However, while these developments entrench and stiffen EU policy, they do not increase Arab ownership and or generate joint actions or aims. Inadvertently, the EU is talking to itself, and its partnership strategy is paradoxically becoming more inward looking[22].

The stiffening of its resolve to promote democracy and the formidable array of instruments created to pursue that goal may not achieve any results if the EU does not find a way to engage the hearts and minds of its Southern partners. What is more, the partnership strategy has correctly pursued an increased status for the Southern partners, providing them with more voice. This may backfire. Ironically, given the enduring absence of Arab political will to reform, co-ownership may help to legitimate resistance to northern demands for reform. Co-ownership can easily turn into a legitimate veto power exercised in the name of non-intervention and sovereignty. A partnership strategy between more equal partners may fail to produce political conditions for common ground to emerge and play into the hands of southern partners that wish to resist reform.

The introduction of the ENP has not improved the situation. The ENP calls for political reform more vociferously but says nothing about how Southern partners can be made to engage with a reform process. It demands reforms more arrogantly than ever, but fails to create the positive regional environment that has proved so important in the European process of integration and democratisation. For these reasons, the EU response to Arab rejectionism and manipulations must involve a bold revision of its strategy to promote democracy and human rights.

Who do we Talk with in the MENA?

A political strategy for reform in the Southern Mediterranean countries should identify (a) potential allies in the countries concerned, (b) ways to reinforce these forces rather than the *status quo*, and (c) opportunity costs of fostering change rather than stability. This report focuses on who the interlocutors and allies might be, and outlines appropriate policies and best practices. Costs are mentioned only incidentally.

If the arguments made above are correct, one must conclude that the main problem with the current EU strategy to promote reform in the Mediterranean and the Middle East is tied up with the governments and elites in those countries. These form the incumbent authoritarian regimes that the EU hopes to reform if not remove from power. Common sense suggests that these elites will resist, oppose or circumvent any such strategy. This is not to say that incumbent regimes, leaders, officials and elites have to be subverted or toppled. A "Napoleonic" (exporting revolution) or "Clausewitzian" (pursuing foreign policy through military means) approach cannot be excluded in principle but it is not a part of the co-operative strategy that this report is focusing on. By its very nature, a co-operative strategy cannot be exclusive. It must take regimes into account. However, when it comes to reform, the same regimes cannot be preferential partners or allies. The partners and allies for reform have to be those who have the strongest possible interest in bringing about democratic change. To whom should the EU talk in the MENA, then? This is the key question that needs answering and a response is the first step to establishing a coherent policy agenda. The question is not new. To date, the EU and the US have responded by targeting MENA governments. Some governments and think tanks in particular have suggested that civil society should be the preferential partner to promote reform. Western governments have accepted this idea (which has also the merit of being consistent with the management of consensus in Western democracies) and given it remarkable prominence in their policies. The EU has accorded an important place to civil society in its policies, its own countries and the Southern Mediterranean. The

21. Charles Tripp, "States, Elites, and Management of 'Change'", in Hassan Hakimian, Moshaver Ziba (eds.), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon, 2001; Roger Owen, *State, Power & Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Routledge, 1992; Daniel Brumberg, "The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October 2002, pp. 56-68; Marina Ottaway, "Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C.

22. The ideological inclination of the EU reflects the absence of a real foreign policy. Rather than pursuing interests the EU is pursuing values as a surrogate foreign policy, which contribute to reinforce its identity or *raison d'être*; see Richard Gillespie, Richard Youngs, *Democracy and the EMP: European and Arab Perspectives*, EuroMeSCo Briefs, No. 6, Lisbon, December 2003.

Barcelona Declaration and EMP daily functioning involve civil society and give it a role in the process. However, most recent analyses[23] have shown that civil societies are not necessarily interested in reform and are, more often than not, happy with things as they are. Furthermore, there is no direct correlation between nurturing civil society and democracy or reform. This is not to say that civil societies are not important in a reform agenda; because they encourage pluralism, civil societies are a significant social and economic factor. However, they cannot be the EU or Western strategic interlocutors in a reform policy. Political reform calls for partners and allies that are in the political arena. The question is whether there are parties or opposition groups that are interested in reform to make polities more democratic, liberal, open and pluralistic. The perception in Europe and in western countries in general is that there are no such groups. The mostly religious opposition to current regimes not only is regarded as deeply anti-Western but also as inherently authoritarian.

This perception has profoundly shaped Western policy. It has contributed to halt the burgeoning reform process of the early 1990s. The dilemma between promoting reform and avoiding the destabilisation of allied regimes has remained largely unresolved. The global war against terrorism after September 11, 2001 has produced high-flown rhetoric on the need to promote reform as much as it has new alliances and enhanced co-operation with Mediterranean and MENA governments. The war in Iraq that meant to have a domino effect on regional reform has proved inconclusive in this regard. It has given way to unprecedented divisions between the United States and Europe, divisions that are playing into the hands of regimes that should be on a reform path. Arab and Islamic diplomacy has been quick to wedge itself into the trans-Atlantic rift and demonstrate its capacity for manipulation by sponsoring or permitting a number of public meetings on reform and issuing an *ad hoc* statement at the Arab League in its 22-23 May 2004 Tunis meeting[24]. Western governments have responded positively to these gestures.

After a first semester of feverish diplomacy in 2004, the West has nothing to show for it but an initiative with name too long to be credible and apologies made to Arab regimes for not consulting them sufficiently. Thus, both where this initiative and broader Western policy towards the MENA countries are concerned, a response to the dilemma stability-reform is still lacking. This is essentially because the West is still hostage to a view of Islamism as a non-liberal and anti-Western political body. This inarticulate vision does not allow the EU and western countries in general to accept compromises and act in a less intrusive, value-imposing and credible way to the Arab world. The inarticulate and simplistic vision of Islam is paralysing the EU and US strategies, preventing them from identifying the right partners to promote change and from calculating the opportunity cost of sustaining or failing to isolate authoritarian regimes.

The perception of Islamic revivalism as a monolithic authoritarian and anti-Western movement does not correspond to reality. The movement of Islamic reform stems from the questions raised by the Arab-Muslim decline at the end of the 19th century in the face of Western economic, political and colonial expansion. It is intended to enable Muslims to find their own responses to modernity and change through an interpretation of authentic religious and cultural roots. An extremist minority emerged from this large reform movement, particularly after the end of the 1960s. From the 1980s onwards, the war in Afghanistan triggered a further radicalisation that has produced the current transnational terrorist threat. Old and new extremists are in a minority, however. Most are not against the West and are ready to consider the challenges posed by modernity and inter-cultural relations, albeit as long as the West refrains from interfering and claiming moral superiority under the mantle of universalism.

The West has largely ignored this state of affairs in the past. Even today, it remains partly unaware of the facts and fails to understand the nature of the Islamic reform movement. When the extremist wings of the movement acted with violence against established secular and nationalist governments as with the assassination of President Sadat Western countries adopted a unilateral perception of political Islam. They saw the extremists and ignored mainstream moderate reformers. They have stuck to that view and failed to become aware of the more complex underlying reality. As a consequence of this misperception, the West has worked its way into a dilemma: both EU and the US insist that political reforms should be implemented, and yet they are inhibited in seriously pushing for such reform out of fear of radical Islamism.

The interlocutor that the EU and the West should seek out when promoting reform

23. The most convincing of analyses of this kind is: Amy Hawthorne, *Middle Eastern Democracy. Is Civil Society the Answer?*, Carnegie Papers No. 44, Washington D.C., March 2004. Different views can be found in Jillian Schwedler (ed.), *Towards Civil Society in the Middle East?*, Boulder & London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995. On the EU experience with civil society within the EMP see: Annette Jünemann, "From the Bottom to the Top: Civil Society and Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", *Democratization*, special issue on "Democracy Promotion: the Case of North Africa" edited by R. Gillespie and R. Youngs, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2002, pp. 87- 105; Ulrike Julia Reinhardt, *Civil Society Co-operation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: from Declarations to Practice*, EuroMeSCo Papers No. 15, Lisbon, May 2002.

24. The Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa, endorsed by the G8 at Sea Island on 9 June 2004 states in its preamble: "We welcome recent statements on the need for reform from leaders in the region, especially the latest statement issued at the Arab League Summit in Tunis, in which Arab leaders expressed their determination "to firmly establish the basis for democracy". Likewise, we welcome the reform declarations of representatives of business and civil society, including those of Alexandria and the Dead Sea, Sana'a and Aqaba".

is the moderate mainstream Islamist reformer. Clearly, Islamic reformers are not an entirely safe bet where democratisation and political reform are at stake: however "moderate" (non violent, not anti-Western) they are first and foremost "different" from the West and strive to preserve their Islamic and Arab "authenticity". They are political reformers operating within a religious framework, and very distant from Western secular political reformers. Western actors should be aware that the final result of their convergence with Islamic reformers may be close to what we view as liberal democracy in essence, but possibly very different in specifics, particularly in the realm of social and cultural life. The West must take diversity on board if the dialogue is not to sink under the pressure of perceptions of unacceptable intrusion.

Whether this view makes sense depends largely on whether moderate Islamists are liberal. Prospects for democracy depend on whether the society in question is sufficiently liberal. Are Islamic moderates also liberal? The literature is divided on this point, although most authors see a more or less liberal component in Islam from which democracy may eventually stem. Other authors point out the structural incapacity of Islamic political regimes to legislate and hence change what Koranic law establishes for eternity. This pessimistic point of view usually stems from a cultural determinism of sorts. The need for religious reform unites both radicals and moderates, the difference being that, while the former are interested in rereading the Koran to enforce the glorious standards of the past, the latter are rereading the Koran with an eye to deal with a modern society. Current Islamic liberal thinking points out that reform means that the Islamic law has to be read according to individual believers' "rational interpretation" (*ijtihad*). In this sense the current Islamic reform movement is similar to the Protestant reform movement. Although a political non-starter, the experience of President Khatami in Iran strongly suggests that the Islamic reform movement includes a significant liberal wing to which the youngest generation more or less consciously belongs. Many sociologists[25] note that the behaviour of the youngest generation in many Muslim countries is not in tune with any Muslim traditions, or only apparently so.

Islamic liberals combine authenticity and innovation but are Islamic first and foremost. They are therefore very different from Western-minded Arab and Muslim liberals that Europeans and Americans are familiar with. These Western-minded liberals are bound to have little or no influence over any process of political reform. They are usually seen in the MENA countries as subservient to the West. Obviously, liberals are not all alike. There are liberals in the Arab and Muslim world who, close as they may be to Western thinking ideologically, are sincerely concerned with Arab political autonomy from the West and their voice has domestic legitimacy and authority. Nonetheless, these liberals must walk an extremely narrow path between their objective contiguity with the West and their subjective allegiance to their domestic political framework. They are not just cosmopolitan or "déraciné" and may be significant interlocutors in a West-promoted process of reform but they cannot be decisive. Islamic liberals are the fundamental interlocutors. This affirmation is less an empirically tested fact than it is a research agenda. There is some empirical evidence and there are "culturalist" studies of liberal trends embedded in Islam and we know there is a moderate Islamist majority. However, Raswan Masmoudi's "silenced majority" (a potentially liberal majority that is silenced by incumbent authoritarian regimes) is less an ascertained fact than a political or research agenda[26]. What this report stresses is that: (a) Islamic liberals are the natural receivers of Western democracy promotion efforts and (b) the liberal inclination of moderate Islamists is a reasonable basis upon which to build a Western strategy that is more effective than that of the past.

One can doubt about the quality and power of Islamic liberals, but the trend exists[27]. The West has an interest in fostering that trend, as Islamic liberals are the only partners that can eventually reconcile democratic and liberal reforms with authenticity and independence. If this view is true, the EU strategy to promote democracy must focus on a preferential dialogue with mainstream, moderate Islamists. It should not exclude other social and political actors, including governments, NGOs, and civil society, but preference should be given to the mainstream segment of Islamic reformers. Thus, significant changes should be brought to bear on the EU policy agenda and, more importantly, broader strategies.

25. See, for instance, Mohammed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc*, Presses de Sciences Po, December 1999.

26. The liberal Islamic platform is briefly and clearly outlined in: Raswan Masmoudi, "The Silenced Majority", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April 2003; Masmoudi is the leader of the Centre for the Study of Islam & Democracy (www.islam-democracy.org). This Centre is in the US and can therefore be seen as a Western-assimilated organisation. It should not be overlooked, however, that the Centre is linked to and supported by Islamic liberals working and living "in the field". On liberal Islam see: Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001; Sadri Mahmud, Sadri Ahmad (eds.), *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam. Essential Writings of Adolkarim Soroush*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

27. The idea that the West should work with Islamic liberals is supported by Tamara Cofman Wittes, "The Promise of Arab Liberalism", *cit*, but is criticised by Jon B. Alterman, "The False Promise of Arab Liberalism", *Policy Review*, No. 125, June-July 2004, who argues that liberals in a Western sense are not influential politically and does not believe liberalism is a feature of Arab societies today.

Conclusions: Guidelines for a New Policy Agenda

Along with various changes in current EU policy[28], it is argued in this report that establishing a dialogue with the Islamist mainstream would require five key policy options: (a) using a less value-laden concept of democracy than it is generally the case in relations with the Arab partner countries; (b) attenuating or eliminating double standards, particularly in relations with the MENA countries; (c) channelling relations through a rigorous international institutional framework; (d) adopting more pragmatic and relaxed attitudes towards the partners involved; (e) improve information and analytic capabilities on "moderate" Islamists and Islamism.

A. The Concept of Democracy

Democracy promotion, including its co-operative frameworks like the EMP, the MEPI and the new Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa, are not problematic in themselves, but rather because they impose a value-laden concept of democracy. When they promote democracy, the EU and the West have a comprehensive blueprint in mind that is not limited to a core of political institutions but also includes a social and cultural dimension. Inadvertently, the West is selling its own history and "Bildung". Some of the West's legacy is universal and exportable, but much of it is not; further, globalisation is imperceptibly turning some as yet unidentified parts of it into a shared culture. The Western concept of democracy is complex and its core is able to reach beyond the West. Democracy must be understood as a regime that is partly exportable and partly indigenous. The institutions meant to protect citizens from arbitrary acts and offences and give them free choice on a constitutional basis are the exportable component: the substance of choices has to remain fully in the hands of local citizens and should not be imposed from the outside. Thus, Iraqi citizens should be free to opt for a legal order predicated on the *sharia* as the first source of law, even if the West dislikes (and probably rightly so). The reality is, however, that the Western co-operative agenda is – more or less inadvertently – based on a detailed and comprehensive definition of democracy. It therefore imposes solutions or values that go beyond the exportable core of democracy. This is at least the impression of non-Western interlocutors. This kind of agenda is not politically workable. In short, democracy in international relations must be a limited and functional concept. It should be about promoting the institutions needed to attain consensus in addressing social issues. It should not concern the substance of the issues themselves or should only do so to a very limited extent and on a case-by-case basis. In this sense, the concept of the rule of law may come prior to democracy itself.

B. The Double Standard

Relations between the West and MENA countries are filled with examples of an incoherent application of international law: there are interventions to re-establish the rule of law in some places, and the free infringement of that principle in others. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an endless source of double standards that Arab and Muslim countries regularly call to the attention of the West. Arab countries, as in Darfur today and Lebanon before it, also have double standards, and there is a culture of collective victimisation nurtured by an acute sense of nationalism, which governments have no interest in denying. Nonetheless, it is certainly the case that Western policies towards the MENA countries suffer from double standards. Independently of moral judgements, double standards have a strong negative political impact on credibility, particularly for democracy promoters. Double standards affect credibility first and foremost in the eyes of moderate Islamists who should, as has been argued here, be the privileged interlocutors of Western policies to promote reform. Because of double standards, reforms preached by the West and the West itself becomes increasingly less credible for moderate Islamists, which pushes them to sympathise with the arguments of radical Islam and even to join their movements. Double standards also weaken those open to universal and Western values in Arab and Muslim countries. For obvious reason, the question of the double standard does not affect the EU and its member states as much as it does the US. While some EU members engage in traditional power politics – albeit on a lesser scale than the US – the EU as a "civilian power" has consciously developed a principled external policy based essentially on co-operation. However, the EU is only very partially exempt from the acts of its member states, allies and from the behaviour of the West as a whole. Thus, the EU is not free from the issue of double standards as it promotes reform. Confronting this problem does not mean tinkering with details, but calls for a review of foreign and security policy as a whole, and in some cases of difficult domestic issues such as in the case of immigration. Attenuating or eliminating the double standard entails a reassessing strategies and aims in terms of opportunity cost. Policies like that espoused by the EMP and the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future that

28. The EU EMP and MENA policy agenda has been criticised because of poor implementation, lack of boldness and the paucity of resources devoted to democracy promotion. See Richard Youngs, *Europe's Uncertain Pursuit of Middle East Reform*, Carnegie Papers No. 45, Washington D.C., June 2004.

aim to promote reform and long-term transformation through co-operation only make sense if there is a fundamental decision to deal with the question of double standards and a willingness to make sweeping changes.

C. International Institutions and Institution-building

Democracy promotion must be based on the kind of joint institutions the EU has built, particularly those like the EMP. These must create a sense of equal status among southern parties so as to make dialogue workable. The building of a partnership, as noted in this report, is not a sufficient but it is a necessary condition for successful co-operation. Regional institutions like the EMP or the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future must be predicated on a strong relationship with the United Nations. In fact, inclusion cannot be compartmentalised: it must work at the global and regional levels. The EU record here is also positive, but the challenge is to sustain and improve that record in a difficult international context.

D. Pragmatism

Unlike realist foreign policy, cooperation means confronting cultural and value differences and dealing with them. It has already been said that less value-laden policies are necessary; and when facing differences policy-makers must be prepared to react pragmatically. Governments and officials must be more relaxed. As Jon Alterman aptly warns the American government, a more articulated approach to MENA means working "with an array of non traditional partners. Some may say things the US government doesn't agree with on issues relating to women, Israel or any of a number of issues"[29]. The West must not focus on these differences, as though all were equally crucial for the development of democracy, particularly if the partners of choice are to be found in the ranks of moderate and mainstream Islamism. The EU and the West have to oppose extremist religious regimes but they have no interest in preventing the emergence of moderate religious regimes. If they are Islamic but democratic, such regimes will sooner or later distinguish between modernity and religion, co-operation and conflict. Within the framework of moderate democratic Islamic regimes, there can be gradual change in the role of women and human rights as was the case in Southern Europe after the Second World War.

E. Information and Analytical Capabilities

We know that there is a moderate Islamist mainstream, but our knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon is unsatisfactory. It has already been noted that this issue is both a strategic guideline and a research agenda. The latter should be encouraged and supported by the EU and its member states.

29. Jon B. Alterman, *op. cit*.

Annex

EuroMeSCo Group on "The Euro-Med Charter: Searching for Common Ground"

Members of Group 2001-2004

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies-ACPSS, Cairo (Gamal A.G. Soltan)

Al-Ahram Weekly, Cairo (Omayma Abdel-Latif)

American University of Rome (James Walston)

Association des Etudes Internationales-AEI, Tunis (Ahmed Driss, Rachid Driss, Khalifa Chater, Souad Chater, Ahmed Ounaïes)

Association Algérienne des Relations Internationales-AARI, Algiers (Smaïl Hamdani)
Bilkent University, Ankara (Pinar Bilgin)

Centre for American Studies, Rome (Karim Mezran)

Centre for German and European Studies, University of California, Berkeley (Beverly Crawford)

Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche en Sciences Sociales, Rabat (Abdellah Saaf)

Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur le Monde Arabe Contemporain-CERMAC, Louvain-la-Neuve (Amine Aït Chaalal, Bichara Khader)

Centre for Security Policy, Geneva (Fred Tanner)

Centro per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale- CeSPI, Rome (Rosa Balfour)

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