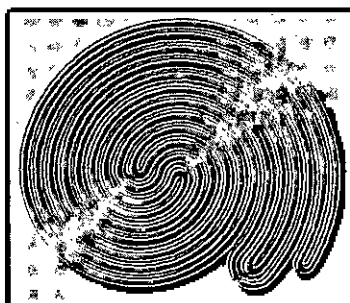


TOWARDS A EURO-MED REGIONAL GROUP:  
FROM THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS TO A FREE  
TRADE AREA

Estoril, 26 June 2000

Instituto de estudos estrategicos e internaci



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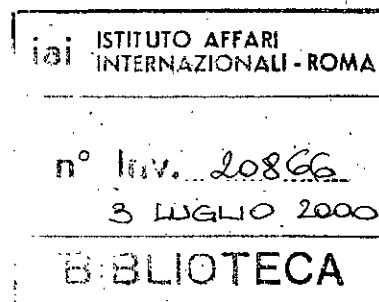
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**TOWARDS A EURO-MED REGIONAL GROUP:  
FROM THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS TO A FREE TRADE AREA**

Instituto de estudos estratégicos e internacionais (IEEI)

Estoril, 26/VI/2000

- a. Programme
- 1. "EMP watch : progress in the Barcelona process"/ George Joffé
- 2. "Les obstacles politiques et les perspectives pour la sous-région maghrébine"/ Fouad Ammor
- 3. "Obstacles to sub-regional cooperation in the Middle East"/ Mark A. Heller
- 4. "Energy as a factor for regional and sub-regional integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in the Maghreb and Middle East"/ Giacomo Luciani
- 5. "NGO roles in regional and sub-regional cooperation"/ Mahdi Abdul Hadi

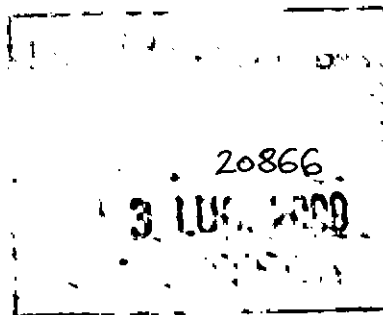


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**Towards a Euro-Med  
Regional Group:  
From the Association Agreements  
to a Free Trade Area  
MEFTA**

**Vers un groupe régional  
euro-méditerranéen:  
Des accords d'association à  
la Zone de libre-échange  
MEFTA**

**Construir um Grupo Regional  
Euro-Mediterrânico:  
Dos Acordos de Associação  
à Área de Livre Comércio  
MEFTA**



**09.30 Sessão de Abertura**  
Luís Amado, Secretário de Estado dos Negócios Estrangeiros e da Cooperação (*Portugal*)  
Embaixador José Calvet de Magalhães, Presidente do IEEI, *Lisboa*

**10.00 Apresentação do Relatório EMP-Watch**  
*Presidente:* Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisboa*  
*Orador:* George Joffé, IEEI, *Lisboa*  
*Comentários:* Embaixador Said Benryane, Alto Funcionário (*Marrócos*)  
Subidey Togan, FEMISE, *Ankara*  
Alejandro Lorca, AGREEM, *Madrid*

**11.30 A Cooperação Sub-Regional e o Processo MEFTA**  
*Presidente:* Mrah Rabah, INESG (*Argel*)  
*Oradores:* O Magrebe, Fouad Ammor, *Rabat*  
O Médio Oriente, Mark Heller, JCSS, *Tel-Aviv*

**13.00 Almoço**

**14.45 Factores de Integração Regional e Sub-Regional**  
*Presidente:* Nadim Shehadi, CLS, *Londres*  
*Panel:* Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA, *Jerusalém*  
Giacomo Luciani, *Florença*  
René Leray, Fundação Notre Europe, *Paris*  
*Comentários:* Embaixador Pedro Lopez de Aguirrebengoa, Alto Funcionário (*Espanha*)

**16.30 Debate de Encerramento**  
Regionalismo e Sub-Regionalismo no Processo de Barcelona  
*Presidente:* Embaixador Paulo Barbosa, Alto Funcionário (*Portugal*)  
Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisboa*  
Michael Webb, Comissão Europeia  
Embaixador Umayya Toukan, (*Jordânia*)

**09.30 Séance d'ouverture**  
Luís Amado, Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères et à la Coopération (*Portugal*)  
Ambassadeur José Calvet de Magalhães, Président de l'IEEI, *Lisbonne*

**10.00 Le rapport EMP-Watch**  
*Président:* Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisbonne*  
*Intervenant:* George Joffé, IEEI, *Lisbonne*  
*Commentaires:* Ambassadeur Said Benryane, Haut fonctionnaire (*Maroc*)  
Subidey Togan, FEMISE, *Ankara*  
Alejandro Lorca, AGREEM, *Madrid*

**11.30 La coopération sous-régionale et le processus MEFTA**  
*Président:* Mrah Rabah, INESG (*Algérie*)  
*Intervenants:* Le Maghreb, Fouad Ammor, *Rabat*  
Le Moyen-Orient, Mark Heller, JCSS, *Tel-Aviv*

**13.00 Déjeuner**

**14.45 Les facteurs de l'intégration régionale et sous-régionale**  
*Président:* Nadim Shehadi, CLS, *Londres*  
*Intervenants:* Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA, *Jérusalem*  
Giacomo Luciani, *Florence*  
René Leray, Fondation Notre Europe, *Paris*  
*Commentaires:* Ambassadeur Pedro Lopez de Aguirrebengoa, Haut fonctionnaire (*Espagne*)

**16.30 Débat de clôture — Régionalisme, sous-régionalisme et le PEM**  
*Président:* Ambassadeur Paulo Barbosa, Haut Fonctionnaire (*Portugal*)  
Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisbonne*  
Michael Webb, Commission européenne  
Ambassadeur Umayya Toukan, Haut fonctionnaire (*Jordanie*)

**09.30 Opening Session**  
Luís Amado, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation (*Portugal*)  
Ambassador José Calvet de Magalhães, IEEI Chairman, *Lisbon*

**10.00 The EMP-Watch report**  
*Chair:* Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisbon*  
*Speaker:* George Joffé, IEEI, *Lisbon*  
*Comments:* Ambassador Said Benryane, Senior Official (*Morocco*)  
Subidey Togan, FEMISE, *Ankara*  
Alejandro Lorca, AGREEM, *Madrid*

**11.30 Sub-regional Cooperation and the MEFTA Process**  
*Chair:* Mrah Rabah, INESG (*Algiers*)  
*Speakers:* The Maghrib, Fouad Ammor, *Rabat*  
The Middle East, Mark Heller, JCSS, *Tel-Aviv*

**13.00 Lunch**

**14.45 Factors for Regional and Sub-regional Integration**  
*Chair:* Nadim Shehadi, CLS, *London*  
*Panel:* Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA, *Jerusalem*  
Giacomo Luciani, *Florence*  
René Leray, Fondation Notre Europe, *Paris*  
*Comments:* Ambassador Pedro Lopez de Aguirrebengoa, Senior Official (*Spain*)

**16.30 Closing debate — Regionalism and Sub-regionalism and the EMP**  
*Chair:* Ambassador Paulo Barbosa, Senior Official (*Portugal*)  
Álvaro de Vasconcelos, IEEI, *Lisbon*  
Michael Webb, European Commission  
Ambassador Umayya Toukan, Senior Official (*Jordan*)



# EMP WATCH

**Progress in the Barcelona Process**

INTERIM REPORT

**George Joffé**  
IEEI, Lisbon

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process) is now approaching the fifth anniversary of its inception at the Barcelona Conference in November 1995 and it seems an appropriate moment to examine to what extent the aspirations of its authors and participants have been realised. With this in mind, the Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais (IEEI) in Lisbon, with the support of the Portuguese government, decided to carry out a review of the Process to date in these terms. To carry out this study, IEEI circulated selected member-institutes of the EuroMeSCo network and independent commentators with a standard questionnaire that sought their views and the views of their governments on the three chapters of the Barcelona Declaration, with particular emphasis on the progress made in achieving the objectives set in 1995<sup>1</sup>. The major emphasis was placed on the bilateral free trade area agreements, as these are the best-defined aspects of the Partnership and have had the most obvious and immediate effects of member-states, particularly in the Southern Mediterranean. The Institute's staff carried out additional research into associated aspects of the Partnership, in order to provide a balanced picture of the contemporary situation.

The Barcelona Declaration sought to outline a policy process designed to create a zone of shared stability, peace and prosperity within the Mediterranean basin. It drew on the experience of both the European Union's bilateral cooperation and association agreements with the South Mediterranean states, going back to 1969, and on the experiences of multilateral confidence and security building initiatives, as developed in the European arena at the Helsinki Conference in 1975 and as proposed for the Mediterranean basin in a series of initiatives, from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean, proposed in 1990, through the "Five-plus-Five" discussions initiated by France to the Mediterranean Forum created by Egypt in 1994. It was, by definition, holistic in nature and had to be designed to complement the Middle East peace process, which started in Madrid in October 1991 under American aegis.

Insofar as the Partnership policy enshrined in the declaration was an initiative of the European Union, its day-to-day management has been largely confined to the European Commission, where it forms part of the responsibilities of the directorate-general for external affairs. Strategic responsibility, however, remains with the foreign ministers of the countries concerned and is usually articulated through their representatives, the senior officials. This arrangement has had several important consequences on the way in which the Partnership has operated to date, some of which are reflected in the responses received to the questionnaire.

- Firstly, management of the Partnership is an intensely bureaucratic affair – inevitable in the circumstances but an aspect that often hampers relations with civil society institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> This is included with this document as Appendix 1.



- Secondly, since the bureaucratic input is generated within the Commission, the available staff is extremely limited – a factor which hinders rapid response and which has also led to complaints about efficiency, particularly over the financial aid aspects of the process.
- Thirdly, partly because of European administrative control of the Partnership and partly because of difficulties related to the Middle East peace process, Southern Partner states do not appear to feel any real ownership of it. This is an aspect to which considerable attention should be paid, as it undermines the confidence and security building aspects of the Partnership.

Within these constraints, the Partnership has evolved in three different ways, all of which are addressed in this report.

- There are first, in the economic chapter of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, the bilateral association agreements which enshrine the principle of free trade in industrial goods and services, as a mechanism to stimulate economic growth.
- Then there is the multilateral aspect of the process which, in many ways, is its real core and which is enshrined in two of the three chapters of the Barcelona Declaration. These cover political and security matters in one basket and cultural and social issues in another.
- Finally, there is the parallel financial aid programme, known as the MEDA (Mésures d'ajustement) programme, which, under the first MEDA I programme, was budgeted to provide 4.685 billion for the first five year period – just 1.27 per cent of the European budget, a limit agreed upon at the European Union's Edinburgh summit in the early 1990s. This programme is now being considered for renewal as the MEDA II programme. It should also be borne in mind that a similar amount of soft loans and other aid is available to South Mediterranean states under this protocol from the European Investment Bank.

This report will try to address all three aspects of the Partnership, although priority will be given to the three chapters of the Barcelona Declaration.

#### *Attitudes towards the Barcelona Process*

Not surprisingly, the evolution of attitudes towards the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has developed very differently on each side of the Mediterranean. European states tend to have developed more holistic and integrated views of the Process whilst South Mediterranean attitudes are far more specific, focussing on the economic aspects of the Partnership.

### The European dimension

As far as European states are concerned, official attitudes towards the Barcelona Process largely reflect the degree to which specific governments were originally involved in its actual formulation, as well as the role that the Mediterranean region would play within national foreign policy formulation. At the same time, anxieties exist over the effectiveness of the Partnership in achieving its stated objectives in some capitals and there is an awareness that European interest in extra-European affairs has, in general diminished in recent years as domestic and specifically European affairs come to dominate the European agenda. There is also a remarkable ignorance of and disinterest about the Partnership amongst the media and within public opinion which becomes more marked the more distant the target audience is from the Mediterranean region.

Thus, the Spanish government – as one of the most active states in organising the Barcelona Conference in 1995 – sees itself as a major contemporary supporter of the Partnership and is active in every forum related to the Barcelona Process. Given its Mediterranean location, it is also extremely active on a bilateral basis, in initiatives that run in parallel with the Partnership. There are, however, very active concerns over the likely outcomes in Spain. Government and non-governmental institutions are particularly concerned over the economic implications of the Process, as well as over the associated phenomenon of migration since it sees itself at the European “frontline” in this respect. These concerns are, of course, reflected in popular attitudes as the Elijo riots earlier this year made clear. Discontinuities can therefore arise in Spanish attitudes towards the Process when governments change or as a result of domestic lobby pressure – the row over Jordanian tomato exports which has delayed the ratification of the free trade area agreement with Jordan being a good example.

Italy and Portugal also have similar commitments to the Process at official levels. For Italy, the Mediterranean is clearly a major arena of traditional policy interest, given its trade and energy relations in the South Mediterranean region. The Italian government is, however, very concerned about the continuing disparities in economic relations across the Mediterranean and within the Southern Mediterranean region. It feels that there is not yet a truly European commitment to handle these disparities on a common and concerted basis. For the Portuguese government, the multilateral nature of the Process is extremely important, although it recognises the significance of the bilateral economic agreements as well, provided their multilateral implications are recognised. It is also extremely anxious to ensure that the inherent tendency within the Partnership for the creation of bureaucratic mechanisms be resisted as strongly as possible.

As a major European state, France – which differs from other major European states because it is also a Mediterranean power – nevertheless shares many British and German concerns over the Process. Nonetheless, the French government, given its traditional involvement, primarily in the Western Mediterranean, continues to be a strong supporter of the Partnership and is anxious to support all initiatives directed towards the South Mediterranean region. However, such commitments are also

subordinate to French perceptions of national interest, rather than being an inherent element within it.

The other two major European states – Germany and Britain – are very supportive of the Partnership but take a more remote view of its potential and evolution. The German government continues to be very supportive of the Barcelona Process but, since the Mediterranean basin – outside the issues of the Middle East peace process and Turkey – plays little part in Germany's perception of its own strategic interests or in affecting public opinion, the Schroeder government recognises that the Partnership has slipped down its list of priorities.

The British government, rather like its German counterpart, has little intrinsic interest in Mediterranean affairs, despite its traditional naval and strategic concerns there. It also takes a much more pragmatic view of the Process, setting it off against other Mediterranean concerns, such as the Middle East peace process. Although the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is anxious to underline its support for the Partnership, it is also ready to express its reservations. There are concerns in London over its effectiveness for, although it is wide-ranging and inclusive, its objectives are vague and are threatened by vested interest in the South Mediterranean, particularly as far as the economic basket is concerned, for the British government is not convinced that economic reform and restructuring has yet been pushed far enough. There is also a belief (which seems to reflect British Atlanticism) that, until the Middle East peace process has been successfully resolved, real progress in the Barcelona Process cannot be expected. At present, therefore, the costs of Barcelona are felt to outweigh the benefits and full British commitment will only come when this position is reversed.

### Ratification

Several of these attitudes have emerged in the process of ratification of the association agreements. Of the agreements currently in force – with Morocco, Tunisia, the Palestine Authority, Israel and Turkey – there had been no fundamental problem as far as most European states were concerned. The arrival of the Netanyahu government to power in Israel in 1996 had, however, led to a significant delay in ratification of the Israel-EU agreement by the French Assembly in protest at the new Israeli government's obstructive attitude in the Middle East peace process. Otherwise the French Assembly had ratified the agreements by large majorities, with the Communist Party abstaining. The Turkish agreement, being a straightforward customs union agreement with the Union, did not need subsequent ratification and the Palestinian agreement, since it only had interim status, posed no problem in France either. The ratification of the Moroccan-EU agreement had also been delayed in Spain because of anxieties over the implications of the agricultural quota system and over migration issues, but these were generic concerns in the Cortes, which affected and will affect other agreements in the context of the Barcelona Process.

The one European state where problems did arise and will arise over the question of ratification was Italy. Italy was the last country to ratify the Moroccan agreement, which it did only after five years, so that the agreement only entered into force in March 2000, and there was a two-year delay in the ratification of the Tunisia agreement as well. In both cases, the delays reflected concerns over agricultural competition – although agriculture did not form part of the free trade arrangements, being covered instead by the pre-existing quota arrangements. In the case of Morocco, Italian anxieties were spurred over the question of citrus imports and, with Tunisia, there were concerns over the special agreement given to Tunisia over olive oil exports to Europe. It seems to be the case that, for Italy, despite its general enthusiasm for the Barcelona Process, difficulties will arise if Italian produce in the agricultural and textile fields is threatened.

It is, perhaps, legitimate to raise the question of whether similar problems over ratification are likely to arise with those agreements now being negotiated or projected – with Syria, Lebanon, Algeria and Egypt. An agreement with Libya is still some way off since Libya has not yet officially accepted the all-important Barcelona *acquis*. Once again, since few European states anticipate major problems of competition, there appears, on the face of it, to be little danger of any significant problem over the ratification of such agreements. Once again, however, national interest influences the overall picture. Spain, Portugal and Germany anticipate few problems over ratification since the most sensitive issues, for them, have already been addressed. France anticipates that negotiations with Syria and Algeria will be long drawn-out and is, in any case, only concerned in the implications of economic liberalism, as expressed in the free trade areas, for its own national interests. This has been the major concern of the Assembly, which is currently concerned with the new MEDA II funding programme. Spain, since it sees no real threat to its national interests from those countries now in negotiation – it has minimal interests in Lebanon and Syria and, with Egypt, is more concerned about product standards – anticipates no ratification problems. In Germany, both government and parliament consider that the creation of economic liberalisation through free trade in the Mediterranean is inevitable and this encourages prompt ratification.

Britain does not anticipate difficulties over the ratification procedures themselves but there are likely to be considerable difficulties over the terms of the agreements. The Egyptian agreement should soon be ready for ratification, although there have been bureaucratic delays in Egypt itself and South European anxieties over the agricultural implications will cause delays in ratification there. Britain is also unwilling to accept the anticipated Algerian demands for political concessions within its proposed agreement with the Union. With Syria, internal bureaucratic resistance to liberalised markets will occasion delay, as will domestic opposition to the political scrutiny implied by the *acquis*. Similar difficulties will occur with Syria, although outline agreement is expected by 2001.

British anxieties over difficulties in the negotiating process are borne out by Italian concerns. The agreement with Egypt is likely to run into considerable difficulties

during the ratification process because of the anticipated threats to Italy's domestic textiles and rice production, for Italy and Greece are major rice importers from Egypt but Italian domestic rice production in the Po valley fears that the agreement will increase rice imports from Egypt. Indeed, the rice growers' federation – the Confriscolti – has already made its anxieties known. Few problems are expected with Algeria, but negotiations with Syria and Lebanon are likely to be slowed by the fact that both countries are traditional competitors with Italy, particularly in the field of textiles.

Surprisingly, in view of these specific concerns and the differences in the attitudes of European states, there appears to be little desire to impose special conditions on the association agreements themselves. France has no special concerns since the association agreements are limited to industrial free trade, thus avoiding problems with its powerful domestic lobby, although there are related concerns over migration in the short-term. Spain and Italy are also concerned over agricultural issues but these are not at present integrated into the free trade area agreements – although they may soon be, if the discussions on agricultural free trade, initiated at the start of this year, are accelerated. Italy, in short, supports the logic behind the Barcelona Process but has concerns over competition, whilst Spain is anxious over the status of the European Union's fishing agreements with Morocco, a concern shared by Portugal.

Not surprisingly, Germany and Britain have few worries about the structure of future agreements because they have little direct impact in either country. Germany is not anxious to initiate such a discussion because of its isolation from Mediterranean problems. Britain is primarily concerned to ensure that the philosophy behind the Barcelona Process and the association agreements is maintained, so that there is an inherent consistency throughout the process, the model of the association agreements is standardised as far as possible and the political dimension of the Process, in terms of good governance and respect for human rights, continues to be a shared principle that binds the Partnership together.

### Southern attitudes

Determining Southern attitudes towards the Barcelona Process and the Partnership is a little more complex than analysing European views because the situation in the South is more fragmented. Although the two multilateral chapters of the Barcelona Declaration are holistic in their intentions, their application is complicated by the Middle East peace process, which creates an immediate divide between Israel and Arab states, and by the very different attitudes adopted by their governments towards political and cultural issues. Furthermore, the global similarities in the bilateral agreements implied by the association agreement model is complicated by the fact that Israel and Turkey enjoy agreements which differ in detail and intent – Turkey's customs union agreement, together with the implications of full EU membership, obviously create different attitudes and expectations, whilst Israel has had a free trade agreement with the Union since 1975 and the current agreement is thus an extension

of an existing arrangements. All other states are, to a greater or lesser extent, having to confront completely new circumstances as a result of the agreements they have signed or will sign.

The Turkish government considers that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has ended what it considered as a fragmentation of the Mediterranean space as far as Turkey was concerned. Through its membership of the Islamic Conference Organisation, its good relations with Israel and its customs union agreement and status as a candidate member of the European Union, Turkey can now develop holistic policies towards the region. Although the Turkish elites and Turkish public opinion is, as yet, unaware of this new potential, the government anticipates developing new commercial opportunities in the Maghrib, exploiting niche markets in the Mashriq and expanding its relations with Greece, Spain and Portugal. To this end, it has sought to make commercial agreements around the Mediterranean and already enjoys free trade agreements with Malta and Israel. No progress has been achieved, for obvious political reasons, with Cyprus and Syria. Turkey's overriding objective is to increase Mediterranean trade in time for the anticipated economic integration of the South after 2010, so that it can maximise the dynamic effects of such a development and prioritise its Mediterranean over its European concerns.

Israel's attitude towards the Barcelona Process is far more closely allied towards its desire to reinforce its relationship with Europe – despite its suspicions of European Union policy over the Middle East peace process. Both government and elite are well aware of the potential of closer partnership with Europe, in the economic sphere, at least. Israeli public opinion, however, ignores this consideration largely because it is unaware of the Barcelona Process and its implications for Israel. The government expects the 1995 free trade agreement, which only came into operation this year as an extension of the 1975 free trade agreement to help towards reducing Israel's trade deficit with Europe and towards avoiding trade diversion. The four-year delay in ratification, with Belgium and France being the last to sign, meant that little progress was made in improving free trade, except through a few agricultural concessions via the interim agreement that was brought into effect during the delay. There were no customs tariff reductions and Israel was under no pressure to speed up its privatisation campaign. Israel would now like the special status offered to it at the Union's Essen conference in 1994 to be implemented, to improve its economic integration into the European space. It specifically seeks access to the EU scientific arena and the grant of diagonal rules-of-cumulation in order to allow it to exploit the comparative advantage and cooperative opportunities offered by South Mediterranean partner states.

Jordan's aspirations were originally more typical of the South Mediterranean partner-states. In 1995, the Jordan government had a predominantly instrumental view of the Barcelona process. It expected that membership would attract foreign direct investment and facilitate technology transfer, as well as giving it better access to global markets. It also anticipated that economic restructuring along the lines anticipated by the European Union and implicit in the association agreement it signed

in April 1997, together with competition from European industry, would stimulate competitiveness and improve product quality, and that this would be aided by the MEDA programme, even though it had not adopted investor-friendly legislation and had not even developed a reliable statistical base. The Jordanian elite shared these aspirations and sought new markets, although a minority was anxious to prioritise the Arab world. For the Jordanian population at large, the potential of the Barcelona Process was not seen as separate from their general aspirations for employment and increased prosperity. Few of these hopes have been realised since eight European states have yet to ratify the agreement and it has not, consequently, entered into force.

The only significant changes of the type that the Barcelona Process is intended to introduce that have occurred in Jordan have been those consequent upon Jordan's accession to World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership. These have resulted in tariff reductions and consequent new fiscal initiatives with sales tax being expected to rise from 13 to 20 per cent. In addition, import deposit schemes have been introduced, even for inputs that will eventually be re-exported. In this case, the deposit is held as a commitment for future input imports so that the exporter is paying an involuntary tax, estimated at up to 10 per cent of working capital. On the other hand, Jordan has met the general requirements of WTO membership and has slowly begun a privatisation programme.

Yet the privatisation programme lacks transparency and government expenditure has risen – by 7.7 per cent in the first quarter of this year. In addition, there are grave anxieties over the social implications of the reforms imposed by the WTO. In a revealing comment by Dr Mohammed Kheir Mamser, a former minister, recently, it emerged that the figure for absolute poverty in Jordan had risen from 12 per cent of the population before the economic restructuring programme began to 22 per cent today. Official sources have privately admitted that the true level was of the order of 33 per cent, with abject poverty rising from 1.5 per cent to 11 per cent during the same period. Of course, Jordan's situation is unique, given the effect of sanctions against Iraq and the problems it has in its economic and political relations with Israel. Nonetheless, such statistics may reveal a serious short-term consequence of the reforms proposed in the context of the Barcelona Process without the necessary financial support-base.

Attitudes towards the Barcelona Process in Jordan at present illustrate the consequences of this frustrated history of negotiation and ratification. The government has created a technical support unit to aid companies through the reform process, but this has proved to be virtually irrelevant to the real needs of the industries affected. The Jordanian elite has become sceptical over the benefits of reform, not least because it feels that Jordan lacks the essential economic structure to be able to properly benefit from open industrial competition with Europe. Public opinion is unaware of the potential implications of the Partnership for its own well-being and when, occasionally, comment is made, it is to the effect that the elite will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

Despite these disappointments, the Jordanian government continues to believe that accession to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will stimulate direct foreign investment which will help to correct the chronic trade deficit and the unemployment situation. Commentators are not so sure, arguing that the lack of an appropriate legal framework will vitiate such initiatives and questioning whether an economy as under-developed as that of Jordan can really benefit from Barcelona-type developmental initiatives. There is also a basic suspicion that whatever wealth is created will not trickle down through the economy, being retained by the elite (*al-hitan* – the “whales”) instead.

The Jordanian case is particularly interesting for it contains many of the fears and hopes voiced elsewhere in the Mediterranean in a more extreme form. For the Moroccan government, for instance, the Partnership was to be a means by which investment flows could be encouraged, although the Moroccan elites feared that it would become a means by which North-South imbalances would be increased, rather than diminished and for the population at large, the Partnership seemed irrelevant because it did not appear to respond to their profound and immediate needs. In Tunisia, the picture was similar, although the government had long before recognised that it had no other real future but alongside the European Union.

In Algeria matters were somewhat different, although the government was anxious to convince foreign investors that Algeria was now a safe investment destination in order to revive the non-oil private sector. It was also anxious to enforce upon Algerian entrepreneurs a realisation that economic liberalisation was an inescapable consequence of the changes of recent years and to persuade foreign opinion that Algeria was now a respectable diplomatic partner. The power elite held similar views but was also worried about the negative implications of the process for their interests, whilst the private sector worried about the negative consequences of openness and of the loss of access to oil rent. Public opinion, once again, was indifferent, seeing the Partnership merely as a mechanism for regime legitimisation and not realising the communal possibilities offered by the Process itself. Negotiations on the Algerian agreement continue and are expected to last for two more years, unless President Bouteflika finds more freedom of manoeuvre against the opaque *nomenklatura* of the regime.

Indeed, today, the Algerian government could argue that its strategy has succeeded for it has regained international credibility and has seen a modest increase in non-oil foreign direct investment. Yet its continued reliance on oil rent – as Algeria's foreign reserves recovered in the light of the recent sustained rise in oil prices – has made the government reluctant to contemplate the real sacrifices required by the Barcelona Process and this has hindered the negotiations. Elite attitudes have been slightly more welcoming towards foreign investment because of the implied political stability it brings, although the elites do not yet appreciate the full implications of economic restructuring. At a popular level, the redundancies of the past two years have made the population-at-large acutely aware of the likely short-term outcome of the



Barcelona Process. Nonetheless, there is a general enthusiasm for a free trade area agreement because of its promise of industrial growth and employment.

In Morocco, however, there is a more sober attitude in which government and elite wait to see what the association agreement will bring. Although modernisation along the lines proposed by Morocco's extensive reform and restructuring programmes, stretching back to 1983, is welcomed, there is also a fear that, without sufficient aid and investment, the project will fail – and recent good investment inflows are weighted by Morocco's privatisation programme. There is still a belief that up to 60 per cent of Moroccan industry is threatened or will disappear under the weight of European competition, as there is in Tunisia unless the *mise à niveau* programmes are successful – and they depend on adequate funding.

Tunisia, in some respects, is the key experiment for the association agreement has been in operation since March 1998 and a proper *mise à niveau* programme has been instituted. In essence, although economic growth has become more sustained and macro-economic stability has been increased but investment rates and export growth rates have both declined, whilst debt service has risen. Nor has there been a marked improvement in foreign investment flows. In short, the benefits of the economic basket of the Barcelona Process may take longer to emerge than had originally been expected. Yet, in Tunisia as in Morocco, there is an acute desire to use the process for economic modernisation and rationalisation in both the public and the private sectors, whilst increasing foreign investment flows.

### *Economic hopes and failures*

One of the major concerns in Europe has been domestic reactions to the association agreements, coupled with disappointment over the apparent lack of viable investment opportunities in the South Mediterranean region. As negotiations begin on expanding the free trade area arrangements to include agriculture, domestic protest can be expected to rise. It is not so clear that investment interest will follow! For South Mediterranean partner states – where the Barcelona Process is still essentially the association agreements – there are growing anxieties over the economic implications of the agreements in terms of future fiscal arrangements and in terms of industrial restructuring, together with a growing perception of what should be done to make the Partnership more equitable, particularly in economic terms.

### Lobbies and investment

Once again, the issue of agricultural trade created well-defined splits within the European Union over the Partnership, even though agriculture, at present, does not fall within the ambit of the association agreements. The intra-European split was not merely over the question of the political significance of the agricultural sector within domestic economies, it was more a question of direct product competition that

exercised governments and lobbies. Thus olive oil, tomatoes and rice were the commodities that most exercised agricultural leaders in Europe and will again, as the negotiations on agricultural trade continue.

France is Europe's largest agricultural producer and is also susceptible to South Mediterranean competition. It was, as a result, very sensitive to the implications of agriculture being included within the Partnership economic arrangements. However, unlike other Southern European agricultural producers which seek to retain the quota system for agricultural exports to Europe – although French officials would be sympathetic to such an arrangement over Morocco, particularly for citrus fruit – France would be prepared to make concessions in negotiation. Interestingly enough, the French government appears to be prepared to do so without prior agreement from its powerful agricultural lobby, an approach that seems certain to cause domestic protest!

Spain and Italy are more directly affected by the agricultural question. For Spain, the largest agricultural exporter in Europe, Moroccan fruit and vegetables – tomatoes, potatoes and strawberries, in particular – offer a direct challenge, not least because the harvesting season occurs just before that in Spain. Spanish agricultural producers also feel that the Moroccan government does not fully observe existing restrictions – or, indeed, production standards – and they therefore fear that a more liberal regime will allow for greater abuse. They also feel that European states not affected by this problem discriminate against Spain and are not prepared to share the burden of agricultural liberalisation equally. There is particularly strong feeling over the question of fisheries access in Moroccan waters, where Spain feels victimised by relative European indifference. Interestingly enough, there are not similar concerns about Tunisia in Spain, despite the fact that the two countries are direct competitors in terms of olive oil.

Italy's anxieties over agriculture, particularly over Egyptian rice and Tunisian olive oil, have been mentioned above and will continue to dog the negotiations over the liberalisation of agricultural trade. There has, however, been little public debate on the issue in Italy, despite the opening of negotiations. Nonetheless, the producers' association, Confagricolte, has indicated that it does not believe that a holistic approach to the issue is appropriate. Instead it would prefer selective quotas imposed on a country-by-country basis. It is unlikely that Northern European states would accept this.

This rejection of Italy's approach reflects the fact that Northern European consumers can only be the beneficiaries of liberalisation in agricultural trade whilst Northern European producers will not be directly affected – their problems will come with the advent of former Eastern European states to the Union. Britain, therefore, has little concern about the issue, although, because of lobby pressure, Germany has expressed anxieties about specific products – potatoes and non-traditional exports, such as cut flowers – in the past. The German government, like the Benelux governments, is sensitive over these issues today and will, no doubt, make these concerns clear in the negotiations. Portugal, interestingly enough, does not have a major problem over

agricultural trade liberalisation, partly because economic restructuring there has significantly reduced the role of agriculture within the Portuguese economy.

There has, of course, been no comparable lobbying from the European industrial sector, since it perceives that it will benefit from the association agreements. However, in two respects, the outcome of the agreements to date appears to have been disappointing. European industry does not appear to have been impressed by the potential comparative advantages of South Mediterranean labour costs – a feature that has also characterised Israeli economic relations with the Arab world – and European investors have not yet seized the opportunities created through the Partnership. This is a serious concern because, as indicated above, foreign direct investment was the major reason why Southern partner governments were prepared to engage in the Partnership in the first place.

The actual level of direct foreign investment in the region has doubled during the 1990s (See Appendix 4). However, great care needs to be taken with these figures because they include one-time receipts as a result of privatisation programmes – Morocco, for instance, will have received over \$1 billion in 1999 simply because of the sale of its mobile telecoms licence. They also need to be considered in the context of portfolio equity investment – of which Israel was by far the largest recipient but which was also a factor in recent privatisations. Finally, allowance must be made for the fact that much of the investment in some countries is related to the oil and gas sectors – hence the remarkable turn-around in the figures for Algeria. Once these factors are taken into account, it is clear that those states that have been most active in pushing forward the Barcelona agenda have been the major beneficiaries of foreign investment – states such as Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. However, this has not been at consistent levels and anomalies, such as the level of investment in Egypt, still emerge.

The scepticism voiced by most European countries over the investment potential of the South Mediterranean region therefore still applies. In nearly all cases, governments and investors feel that it is too early to say whether or not the Partnership's economic basket will improve the investment climate. Once again, a split appears between the attitudes of Northern and Southern European investors and governments, with North Europeans being the most sceptical and least involved. Both the British and French governments feel that the right climate has not yet been created to encourage foreign investors and that much more needs to be done in the arenas of transparency, legal regimes and bureaucracy. The communications and physical infrastructure is also inadequate in comparison with other parts of the developing world which are winning the battle to attract foreign investment. Even issues of simple physical security still affect investor confidence.

For Germany, there is considerable hope that a successful conclusion to the Middle East peace process may unlock investment flows to the Eastern Mediterranean, at least, for Turkey has traditionally been Germany's major investment destination and Israel, Jordan and Lebanon would then be added to the list. In any case, German investment decisions are still based on agreements made in the 1970s and a successful

Mediterranean free trade area would obviously condition the investment strategy for the medium-term future. The Partnership area would be of greater interest than the Gulf Cooperation Council, were conditions appropriate, because Germany would seek to maximise its capital goods exports alongside investment. In this context, Morocco and Tunisia would be preferred investment directions. Investment in the region in 1997 was \$1.67 billion.

Spain and Italy represent the alternative European response, for they have long been significant investors in the South Mediterranean region. However, this role needs to be placed in context, for the region itself has not been so significant in terms of their total foreign investments. In the case of Italy, for example, the Mediterranean region as a whole only absorbed 2 per cent of total Italian foreign industrial investment and only 1.8 per cent of direct foreign investment, with Asia and former Eastern Europe being the preferred destinations. Most of the investment went to the Maghrib and, during the 1990s, it declined in both relative and absolute terms. Energy investment now heads the list but is largely directed towards Libya. Spain has been more active, with medium-term investors looking towards opportunities in financial services, tourism and manufacturing in the Maghrib. Some Spanish regions, such as Valencia, have sought to collaborate with private groups in promoting investment opportunities and the Spanish government has been active in debt conversion programmes.

### The Southern response

Southern governments, in general, feel that too little attention has been paid to the progress already made and worry that European demand for further reforms neglects the very real difficulties they face in terms of the social and political consequences of the restructuring they seek to put in place. They also feel that there have been specific consequences of the reforms and restructuring undertaken to date that need to be understood before further demands are placed upon them. One of the most important of these consequences, particularly in the Maghrib, has been the loss of government revenue because of the reduction in customs receipts as tariff barriers are removed. Although, ultimately, this should be countered by the increase in domestic economic activity, if the free trade area principles work, and the resultant increase in tax receipts, in the short-term, at least, this has meant an increase in the tax burden imposed on populations ill-prepared to deal with such demands. Several South Mediterranean countries have, as a result, introduced value-added tax systems which have increased the indirect tax burden and brought groups into the tax net that had been excluded before. Although the tax reforms forced by these changes are, no doubt, in themselves welcome because of the increased fiscal efficiency, the social and political tensions they involve are also important.

Nor are these the only adverse consequences. Jordan and Turkey both consider that the increase in their external trade deficits is related to the reduction in tariff barriers they have introduced. They also note the stress placed on domestic industry to survive the competition introduced by European products and point out that it is

precisely the medium-to-small-sized enterprises (SMEs) which face the greatest threat, although it is this section of the manufacturing and industrial sector that is expected eventually to generate real economic growth. Restructuring has already brought massive increases in unemployment, particularly in Algeria and, in Morocco, there are fears that this could become a permanent feature of the Partnership if the economic benefits are too long delayed. There is, in short, a growing fear that the costs of the Partnership in economic terms may well outweigh its benefits, not least because the region also has to counter increasing competition from the Far East.

In Algeria, however, the anxieties are slightly different; Algerian entrepreneurs anticipate that the Partnership will finally break Algerian dependence on oil rent as the motor of the economy. They believe that, unless this is done, there can be little meaningful economic change there. There is also a fear that the agreement could be used as a scapegoat for the failure to introduce effective political change, if it is not successful. The Algerian elite would therefore like to see conditionalities introduced into the Partnership's economic basket, as is the case in World Bank programmes.

The same is true in Israel where the major problems faced in the Partnership relate to additional reforms that Israel seeks but which the Union is not yet prepared to grant. Trade in services has not yet been adequately liberalised and the 1995 Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on laboratory certification has yet to be signed. Non-tariff barriers still exist and Israeli hopes of cumulated rules of origin, which would reduce its fixed costs as far as imports of semi-finished goods are concerned, remain unfulfilled so that Israel is not able to maximise its competitiveness. Not surprisingly, Israel would like to see these areas included in the Partnership in future. It has therefore welcomed European willingness, since Mr Barak was elected premier, to start negotiations over the MRA but regrets continued delays over cumulation of rules of origin.

Other states have very different hopes over any amplification of the association agreements and related accords. Morocco, for example, would like to see its UMA partners, Libya and Mauritania, brought into the Partnership. Turkey, on the other hand, is anxious to extend the Partnership to cover agricultural and textile trade, with special encouragement for SMEs – currently excluded from the agreements. Jordan has been relatively satisfied with the agreement it has, although the Jordanian political and economic elite were completely excluded from the negotiating process, both directly and indirectly. In any case, Jordan's most immediate problems reflect its relationship with Israel and surrounding states, rather than the Mediterranean. The Union, however, is generally criticised for its slowness and its bureaucratic response to criticism, whilst European states are criticised because of their inability to present a common approach outside the confines of the Process itself.

### *The political dimension*

As mentioned above, the two multilateral chapters of the Barcelona declaration could prove, in the longer-term to be the most important in creating a genuine Mediterranean community associated with Europe. The most accessible of them is the chapter dealing with political issues, which is reinforced in the association agreements by the generic statement that the parties bind themselves to actively encourage democratisation of the political process and respect for human rights. In part, it seems that the designers of the Barcelona Process anticipated that these objectives would be achieved partly on a government-to-government level in what would have been, in effect, a form of political conditionality attached to the association agreements. More generally, however, emphasis was also placed during the Barcelona Conference on the potential role of civil society and considerable efforts have gone into trying to create non-state initiatives to foster civil society contact across the Mediterranean. This has in large measure focussed on the issue of human rights.

### European concerns

In the light of this background it is, therefore, interesting to note that few European governments take the issue of "good governance" – the term now preferred since it does not directly raise the issue of whether governmental behaviour is democratic or not – and that of human rights very seriously beyond the rhetorical level. Scandinavian governments are, perhaps, the most committed to these issues, although even they have been prepared to compromise the principles for the sake of broader issues in the context of, for example, the Middle East peace process. The Portuguese government, too, has made a point of seeking good governance as a first step towards true democratisation, insisting that none of these desirable objectives can be achieved, however, unless there is frank and open dialogue about them amongst the Mediterranean partners. The British government also pays a principled adherence to the issue within the context of its own foreign policy objectives and did intervene – ineffectually – in the Algerian crisis in February 1998. It would, as a result of this experience, seek to articulate such concerns through the Troika, rather than through the Association Councils linked to the association agreements, for these are seen to be general for a in which such matters would not be properly discussed.

Other European governments tend to take a more formalistic view of the matter. The French government, for instance, pays rhetorical attention to the issue but feels that too active an involvement would not be useful. Although it recognises that a formal political conditionality has characterised European Union agreements in the 1990s, it does not believe that active insistence on such terms would be productive, leading instead to crises within the Partnership, and should only be used in extreme circumstances as a deterrent. It would argue, instead, for progress through education and training. The German government provides strong rhetorical support for these objectives, which it sees as the key to political stability. As a result it supports

initiatives involving the promotion of civil society and non-governmental organisations. There is a special concern in Germany over the issue of human rights in Turkey but active intervention is left to the German political parties. In Spain, despite, once again, strong rhetorical commitment to the issue – expressed most recently by the Spanish premier at the Formentara symposium organised at the end of last year by the Repsol Foundation to encourage foreign investment in North Africa – but economic development is seen as the priority. The Italian government takes an even more pragmatic view of the issues and does not see a need for a particular commitment on its part.

Parliamentary interest in Europe is generally more positive and, in France for example, there have already been four debates on the Barcelona Process, together with debates on Israel and Tunisia, in which the human rights issue was of primary importance. In Germany, the Christian Democrat, Green and Liberal parties made a common declaration in 1996 emphasising the importance of respect for human rights, the rule-of-law, and political pluralism in the maintenance of collective and cooperative security. There is also a parliamentary human rights commission and the political parties, together with government, are anxious for greater non-governmental organisation involvement in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Despite the recent riots in Spain, parliamentary opinion is anxious for improved immigrant rights there whilst at the same time being very critical of problems in the countries-of-origin of migrants, particularly over issues such as the Middle East peace process, the Western Sahara issue and the crisis in Algeria. Generally speaking Spanish parliamentary opinion has resisted government desires for more severe legislation, especially over migrant issues. Portugal has been anxious to push these issues through Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary meetings in order to raise awareness amongst the Southern partner states of their importance. Italian parliamentarians discuss the issues but have taken little action and in Britain, Parliament has taken very little interest outside moments of crisis, as in January 1998 in Algeria.

European public opinion is generally ill-informed and little concerned over governance and human rights issues in the Mediterranean region, unless a particular crisis forces it to take note. Outside the specific problem of spill-over effects of the crisis in Algeria, French public opinion is generally unaware of the Barcelona Process, although non-governmental organisations are better informed, particularly over human rights issues in the Maghrib, and receive active government encouragement. German public opinion reacts to issues connected with Turkey, the Middle East peace process, drugs and international crime, and radical political Islam; the government is expected to seek to encourage public interest in the Mediterranean region in future. Spanish public opinion is only concerned with specific issues which mirror the concerns of parliamentarians – the Middle East peace process, the Algerian crisis and the Western Sahara issue, together with generic concerns over migrants and the status of women in the South Mediterranean.

In Portugal, Italy and Britain, there is very little public awareness of these issues, outside the Middle East peace process. There is a traditional interest in the role of civil society in Italy and in cultural projects promoted through the MEDA programme. In Britain, there is a public concern over the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the activities of Amnesty International have raised awareness at critical moments over the situation in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.

### South Mediterranean responses

As far as the South Mediterranean partner states are concerned, the issues of governance and human rights are most directly expressed through the association agreements. Their governments therefore interpret the issues in these terms only at present, largely because there appear to be no sanctions that could make the multilateral chapters of the Barcelona Process more relevant to them. No government, except that of Turkey, therefore, feels in any way threatened by demands made upon them by the European Union, European states or European public opinion. For the Moroccan government – which has made progress in ensuring proper respect for human rights and for political reform – there is a strong official feeling that these two issues should be given a high priority but should be considered quite separately from the issue of economic development. In other words, political conditionality is to be discouraged. Jordan does not believe that it has a human rights problem, so the conditionality implicit in its relations with Europe is not relevant. The non-governmental sector would argue that there is a serious problem over governmental transparency in Jordan, however, and would like to see IMGf-style conditionality introduced. The Algerian government is most reluctant to tolerate external criticism of human rights and governance issues inside the country and, in view of its experiences in 1998, the European Union has not yet been able to come to a meaningful common position on the issue. Israel believes that the issue is not relevant to it, despite repeated non-governmental organisation attacks on its behaviour in the Occupied Territories. Only in Turkey does there appear to be a recognition that, as a result of its changed status as a candidate European Union member required to meet the Copenhagen criteria, attempts must now be made to improve human rights observance and 300 million is to be spend on democratisation and human rights issues.

Southern partner states are generally more concerned about potential domestic opposition to the Partnership. At present there appears to be no popular opposition to the Process, although this could change if the association agreements are perceived to have introduced widespread economic hardship through the restructuring process. There is often, however, criticism of other aspects of European policy.

- In Morocco, for instance, there is considerable criticism of European migration policy at both the Union and the national level.
- In Jordan, despite governmental desire for more intimate European involvement in political and security matters in the Middle East, public



opinion often resists this because of perceived threats to indigenous culture, in particular because of the widespread perception that the West considers Islam to be behind terrorism in the region.

- In Algeria, there is considerable resistance to the idea of security cooperation with Europe, although the government would like this and has frequently complained over the apparent support given to its political opponents through European procedures on political asylum.
- In Israel, where public opinion has very little interest in the Barcelona Process, there has been little adverse comment as well, except on the Right where some journalists have lamented the exclusion of the United States from the Partnership. The elite sees the Barcelona Process as an instrument towards comprehensive regional peace and therefore welcomes it, although there are criticisms of the exclusion of agriculture from the association agreements and over European treatment of migrants.
- In Tunisia, public support is generally positive, although government and elite criticise European reluctance to consider debt recycling as a means of improve financial inflows for investment. There is also a growing interest in the implications of the Eizenstat Initiative, a private sector initiative between the United States and the three Maghrib states proposed three years ago, which has received considerable rhetorical support from the Clinton Administration but minimal financial support to date<sup>2</sup>.
- In Turkey there has been a more active response to the Barcelona Process, with public opinion being far more aware of it since the 1999 Helsinki summit and Turkey's promotion to candidate membership status. There are fears, however, that the Process could become essentially an Euro-Arab initiative – something which Turkey would see as discriminatory to its interests.

### *The security arena*

The security agenda of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is one of the most complex issues within it. Although the Declaration seeks cooperative security, it is clear that this will essentially involve soft security issues. Considerable confusion still exists as to how hard security issue should be addressed; indeed, if there even are hard security issues that need to be addressed across the Mediterranean at all. Additional confusion has been created by the fact of growing NATO interest in the region, so that the future NATO Mediterranean agenda might cut across the security concerns of the Partnership, particularly in the fields of drugs, international crime and international terrorism. This may even apply to the issue of migration as well. A Charter for Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean is due to be adopted during the French presidency of the Union towards the end of the year 2000, but it is still not clear precisely what the Charter will achieve in terms of clarifying the cooperative soft security objectives of the partnership.

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<sup>2</sup> In February, Congress allocated \$5 million to the Initiative

### European concerns

It is therefore not surprising that European responses over the security basket of the Barcelona Process are also complex. France, not surprisingly, regards the Charter as essential for Mediterranean security; Britain has no interest in it unless it provides genuine added value in security terms. Indeed, Britain would prefer to simplify the security agenda by amalgamating it with that of NATO in order to avoid unnecessary overlap. Portugal would like a comprehensive approach to Mediterranean security that responded both to security realities and to the perceptions of the partner states, both collectively and individually. For Italy, Mediterranean security has traditionally been a major concern and it is anxious to foster a cooperative approach to the general issue. In 1996, it proposed a Joint Action Plan that had to be abandoned in the light of problems in the Middle East peace process and because of Arab suspicions of European intentions; now it supports the proposed Charter as an acceptable alternative. Spain is very concerned over terrorism, drugs and migration in connection with the Maghrib; it also supports the Middle East peace process and the Mediterranean Forum as key elements in regional security. Germany takes a similar point of view, seeing peace in the Middle East as key to regional stability and to success in the Barcelona Process. It looks to confidence-building measures in the short-term and to the Charter in the longer-term to reinforce regional security and anticipates active initiatives to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons.

All European states are concerned over one aspect of the common security agenda; the issue of migration. Illegal migration is of general concern, although Portugal and Britain suffer relatively little from migration from the Mediterranean basin at present. The Mediterranean tends, however, to be an access route to Europe from points-of-origin further afield and this causes growing general concern. Unfortunately, despite the Schengen agreement, there is, as yet, no common European policy on migration and this is also beginning to cause serious organisation and regulatory problems for European states.

It is also an issue that can be seized upon by the European rightwing and, in Germany, has been exploited to hinder the liberalisation of visa regulations – a major source of complaint in the South Mediterranean region where persons with legitimate reasons for travel to Europe have regularly been prevented from travelling. One common fear is that migration patterns can cover criminal and terrorist activities – a fear particularly expressed in Germany and, increasingly, in Britain where some migrants have turned out to be GIA activists. Britain, however, is not prepared to allow funding to be diverted, as often proposed by Southern European states to ease the burden of dealing with migration problems on a common European basis.

Spain and Italy tend to take the matter far more seriously, with Spain being particularly concerned about Maghribi and sub-Saharan migrants in terms of the dangers of access, living conditions amongst illegal migrants and the exploitation of

such migrants in Europe itself. A new law in 1999 laid down a migrant quota, in collaboration with Morocco for an entry of 80,000-to-120,000 persons a year, in an attempt to reduce illegal migration in Spain which is estimated to have reached 800,000 persons. Italy has also introduced two new laws to improve conditions and to regulate migration flows through a quota system with Tunisia and Morocco. It has also proposed burden-sharing as a European frontier-state and has engaged in joint patrolling with Greece against illegal migration.

### South Mediterranean responses

South Mediterranean partner states are certainly anxious to participate in cooperative security in the Barcelona context but have equally grave anxieties over hard security initiatives which they tend to see as directed against them – as was made clear in the EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR initiatives and over the Kosovo conflict. At the same time, most states in the region are anxious to collaborate with the NATO dialogue and several have engaged in peace keeping and peace enforcement alongside NATO troops. They also realise that, outside the issues of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery system acquisition, there is no hard security threat from the South to the North.

South Mediterranean states do appreciate, however, that there could be hard security issues in their own region and that these can only be countered by growing diplomatic and economic integration within the South. One of the objectives of the Barcelona Process is, of course, to see to what extent it can aid the process of sub-regional integration. This has begun to develop between Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt but there is a long way to go before the post-2010 objective of full Southern economic integration will be achieved. Southern states also have different views of the effectiveness of the Partnership itself in achieving this.

- Morocco, for example feels that Europe could do far more to aid the integration process, particularly as, at present, its effects through the Partnership is merely to bring Southern national economic policies into line – something which will certainly aid the integration process but does not promote it.
- Algeria has similar views, feeling that the Partnership can, at best, only have an indirect on regional economic integration. For Algiers, Europe's main task is to help in the removal of barriers to integration and to encourage the development of market economies in the region.
- Tunisia considers that the Barcelona dialogue over sub-regional integration will only advance once proper market economies have developed there and thus looks to Europe to accelerate this process.
- For Jordan, the Partnership is irrelevant to its major and most immediate concerns – economic integration with the surrounding Arab World and the improvement of trade links with the West Bank and Iraq. Attitudes towards future economic cooperation with Israel are complex; the government and part

of the elite would favour it on the grounds of enhanced benefits from regional integration, public opinion and much of the elite rejects such an idea on principle and a small group of economists argues for autarkic economic development as a first step before regional integration, in order to avoid the dangers of economic asymmetry.

- Israel is concerned that the Barcelona Process will become politicised by such an approach and will thus hinder essential initiatives at the national level over economic integration and environmental protection.

### *The financial component*

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was also provided with a financial component to encourage and aid the necessary economic transitions in the South Mediterranean region and to finance the multilateral initiatives proposed in the Barcelona Declaration. This project, for which 4.685 billion was allocated in 1995 was approved by the European Commission as the MEDA (Mésures d'ajustement) I Programme in July 1996. Its declared aims were to support economic restructuring and to ease the social consequences, as well as to reduce economic disparities in the South Mediterranean region as part of the process leading up to a regional free trade area after 2010. Its major priorities were, therefore, to support economic restructuring, ease the consequent social costs, aid regional cooperation and, through the Meda Democracy Programme, support respect for human rights.

The distribution of funding was designed to encourage economic restructuring and the funding programmes were subject to annual review on the basis of three-year National Indicative programmes which acted as national budgets for the programme overall. Some 90 per cent of the funding was directed towards national funding and 10 per cent was reserved for regional cooperation. For the first five year period of the MEDA I Programme, the 4.685 billion of MEDA funding was to be supplemented by access to 2.31 billion of bilateral aid from the European Investment Bank. By the end of the MEDA I Programme, only 3.47 billion had actually been allocated to the various budgets, with 2.944 being allocated to national expenditures. Actual expenditure, however, had only amounted to 890 million – just 26 per cent of the committed allocations. Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan benefited from structural adjustment funding, Egypt obtained support for job creation and for the provision of social funds, Lebanon was aided to revive its administration and Morocco received support for rural development. Syria received \$12 million-worth of aid to improve domestic competitiveness in the private sector.

The European Investment Bank had lent 3.5 billion to the Mediterranean between 1992 and 1997, of which the major portion was committed under the Partnership. The funds were mainly in the form of long-term loans, but there was also some risk capital made available. In 1998, for example, the Mediterranean received 886 million, 86 million of which was risk capital. The bank's overall commitments during the same year totalled 4.41 billion, of which 358 million was in the form of risk capital. In

1999, of the 810 million committed to the region, 335 was devoted to the industrial sector, 150 million to SMEs and public infrastructure, 125 million to water and 200 million to the environment, the energy sector and to chemical industry. The main beneficiaries were the West Bank, Jordan, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco – all states which had made significant progress towards effective economic restructuring.

#### *A tentative conclusion*

It is clear that the Partnership has not yet achieved the objectives set for it, nor has it satisfied the hopes placed upon it, particularly in the South Mediterranean region. There has also been a growing sense of disillusionment in Europe itself over the potential of the Process to achieve its objectives. Yet, at the same time, all partners find a utility within it and therefore desire its success. There are, no doubt, many ways in which it could be improved but three aspects seem to dominate the agenda for improvement:-

- (a) The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is virtually unknown to the European public, let alone the publics of the South Mediterranean. This is something which must be urgently corrected;
- (b) The Southern Partners do not feel a sense of ownership of the Process and the initiative still has the feel of a European imposition on the region. This, too, requires urgent attention; and
- (c) This can best be done if the creation of a Mediterranean-European Free Trade Area (MEFTA) is made the priority of the Process so that the Southern Mediterranean Partners can take a direct part in the management of the Process alongside their European counterparts.

## APPENDIX 1

### BARCELONA PROCESS QUESTIONNAIRE

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#### Issues for European Union members

- (1) What is your government's attitude towards the Barcelona Process?
- (2) How has the agricultural lobby reacted towards the free trade area agreements and the proposed negotiations over the inclusion of agriculture within the free trade area?
- (3) Have the industrial and financial sectors taken advantage of the investment opportunities created in the South Mediterranean area and, if so, what has been the pattern and magnitude of investment been since November 1995?
- (4) What problems have been encountered in the ratification processes of the agreements already signed (Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, Israel and the Palestinian Authority).
- (5) Will there be any special problems in ratifying future agreements (Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Lebanon and Libya).
- (6) How has parliament reacted towards the free trade area agreements?
- (7) Has your government sought to establish any special conditions on the free trade area agreements?
- (8) Has your government taken an active interest in furthering the good governance and human rights observance clauses of the agreements?
- (9) Has parliament taken an interest in these issues?
- (10) Have public opinion and civil society been concerned about these issues?
- (11) What has been your government's attitude towards Mediterranean security issues?
- (12) How has it responded to migration concerns over the South Mediterranean basin?

### South Mediterranean Concerns

- (1) What had been the expectations of the free trade area agreement before it was implemented?
  - a. By government
  - b. By economic and political elites
  - c. By the population-at-large
- (2) What is the current status of implementation?
  - a. Ratification
  - b. Customs tariff reduction
  - c. Fiscal adjustments
  - d. Economic adjustment (mise à niveau)
  - e. Parallel economic restructuring
- (3) What are the current attitudes towards the free trade area agreements?
  - a. By government
  - b. By economic and political elites
  - c. By the population-at-large
- (4) What outcomes are now expected from the free trade area agreements in economic terms?
- (5) What economic problems arising from the structure of the agreements need to be addressed?
- (6) What additional areas need to be included in the agreements?
- (7) What has been the response of European governments and the European Commission to criticisms of the agreements made by your government, by professional bodies or by civil society?
- (8) What effects, if any, have the agreements generated on the issues of governance, development of civil society, respect for human rights?
- (9) What kind of domestic opposition has there been to the political and security, economic and socio-cultural baskets of the Barcelona Declaration?
- (10) What effect has the Barcelona Process had on inter-state diplomatic relations or on the process of economic integration within the South? How important is this considered to be in your country?

## APPENDIX 2

### RESPONDANTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### EU member states

France  
Germany  
Italy  
Spain  
Portugal  
United Kingdom

#### South Mediterranean partner states

Algeria  
Israel  
Jordan  
Morocco  
Tunisia  
Turkey

Responses are still awaited from institutes and commentators in the remaining member-states of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.



## APPENDIX 3

### STATUS OF THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS

Partner state	End negotiations	Signature	Come into effect
Tunisia	June 1995	July 1995	March 1998
Israel	September 1995	November 1995	June 2000
Morocco	November 1995	February 1996	March 2000
PNA (interim)	December 1996	February 1997	July 1997
Jordan	April 1997	November 1997	By the end of 2000
Egypt	June 1999	Awaited	
Lebanon	Under negotiation		
Algeria	Under negotiation		
Syria	Under negotiation		

## APPENDIX 4

### DIRECT PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTMENT

\$ mn	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Algeria	-59	22	-24	447	630	500
Cyprus	83	75	80	48	64	37
Egypt	493	1256	598	636	891	1076
Israel	596	432	1337	1382	1622	1850
Jordan	-34	3	13	16	361	310
Lebanon	7	23	22	64	150	230
Malta	56	152	182	325	165	325
Morocco	491	551	332	354	1079	258
Syria	176	251	100	89	80	100
Tunisia	562	432	264	238	339	650
Turkey	636	608	885	722	805	940
<b>Total</b>	<b>3007</b>	<b>3805</b>	<b>3789</b>	<b>4321</b>	<b>6186</b>	<b>6276</b>

**Sources:** Nord-Sud Export 400-9 June 2000; World Investment Report 1999; IMF International Financial Statistics, March 2000.

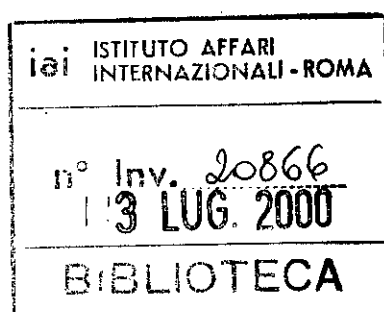
**Note:** European Union direct foreign investment into the South Mediterranean as only 2 per cent of total Union foreign investment. Total investment was below \$7 billion in 1998, whereas China received \$30 billion and Latin America \$70 billion for the same period. Inter-Arab investment was also weak, totalling only \$18.5 billion between 1975 and 1998, whilst Arab investment abroad in total (mainly in Europe and the United States) was said to have reached \$647 billion by 1998.

## APPENDIX 5

### THE MEDA 1 PROGRAMME

	Funding ( million)	Proportion (%)
Algeria	145.75	4.95
Cyprus	9.96	0.34
PNA	81.20	2.76
Egypt	844.38	28.68
Jordan	148.24	5.04
Lebanon	96.10	3.26
Malta	69.75	2.37
Morocco	564.47	19.17
Syria	54.50	1.85
Tunisia	276.90	9.41
Turkey	235.51	8.00
Regional cooperation	417.08	14.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>2943.84</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: DG1B European Commission





**Vers un groupe régional euro-méditerranéen:  
Des accords d'association à une zone euro-méditerranéenne  
de libre-échange**

***Les obstacles politiques et les perspectives  
pour la sous-région maghrébine***

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Estoril, 26 juin 2000

## Résumé:

L'importance géo-stratégique de la Méditerranée vient du fait que ce bassin incarne et cristallise un condensé ambigu, complexe et contradictoire de l'Histoire ancienne et moderne plein d'espoir et de paix mais empreint de turbulences et d'antagonismes.

La Méditerranée avec ses trois conventionnelles sous-régions (occidentale, centrale et orientale) se caractérise par des niveaux de développement disparates et un contentieux historique où les responsabilités sont largement partagées.

Le Maghreb, espace au contour fluctuant, et à histoire tumultueuse est à la fois une utopie, donc une idéologie mobilisatrice, et une déception. Au nom de son édification que de discours ont été échafaudés et que de réunions furent organisées. Toutefois, les obstacles politiques à caractère plus personnels et d'humeur des gouvernants que d'ordre institutionnel ont entravé ce rêve qui reste, sommes toutes, périodiquement entretenu. Les accords de Barcelone, les perspectives de l'instauration de la zone de libre échange en l'an 2010 vont-ils amener les frères ennemis à plus de raison et de clairvoyance ?

## 1/ Rappel

L'Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA) est née à Marrakech le 17 février 1989. Il s'agit d'un ensemble régional regroupant le Maroc, l'Algérie, la Libye, la Tunisie et la Mauritanie. L'idée unitaire maghrébine est très ancienne, l'évoquer c'est parler plus d'un rêve que d'une réalité<sup>1</sup>. C'est en effet, au début de ce siècle<sup>2</sup> que le rêve unitaire fera son apparition pour servir d'idéal mobilisateur à une « jeunesse » dite « Nord Africaine » pour qui l'Afrique du Nord constitue une « nation unique » que seul un « front commun » peut contrer l'occupant. Les efforts pour concrétiser cet idéal ont abouti à l'organisation d'un congrès du Maghreb Arabe au Caire dont l'institution permanente fut le « Bureau du Maghreb Arabe » dont la présidence fut confiée en 1947 à Abd-El Krim El Khattabi et dont le travaux débouchèrent sur la charte dite de Caire. Celle-ci s'afficha comme une « première élaboration idéologique du projet unitaire Maghrébin » marquant ainsi une étape historique dans ce processus. Cette étape allait se terminer avec la conférence de Tanger en avril 1958 qui a regroupé les trois principaux mouvements nationaux maghrébins (l'Istiqlal, le Néo-destour et le FLN) et qui a trop insisté sur la constitution d'un grand Maghreb « comme nécessité dictée par l'histoire, la religion et la civilisation commune ». Après les indépendances nationales, « l'égoïsme étatique » l'emportera largement sur « l'idéal unitaire maghrébin ».

Au fil du temps, le Maghreb devait subir des affluences espagnoles et italiennes, françaises... La culture est riche en éléments berbères, juifs, andalous qu'on occulte souvent dans le discours politique

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1 L'origine du « mythe unitaire maghrébin » remonte à l'Antiquité et plus particulièrement à l'époque des Rois Berbères appelés également Prince Numides tels Massinissa, Yugurtha, Juba... qui ont vécu entre 238 et 246 avant JC. Massinissa, fils de Gaie (Roie des Numides : 238 – 148 av J.C) a pu reconquérir la totalité du Royaume de ces ancêtres et réaliser l'unité de l'Afrique du Nord, grâce à sa victoire sur syphax Roi des Masaesyles ou Maures de l'Ouest.

Avec l'ère Islamique, le « désir d'union » demeure le « vœu pieux » de toutes les dynasties qui se sont succédées en Afrique du Nord. Seuls les Almohades (dynastie berbère) ont pu réaliser cette unité, sous les règnes des califes Abd-El Moumen El Goumi, Youssef Ben Abd-El Moumen et Yaakoub El Mansour. Ces derniers régnèrent sur tout l'Afrique du Nord jusqu'au Soudan et la moitié de l'Espagne (Andalousie) de 542 à 664 de l'hégire (1147 – 1269) de l'ère Grégorienne. Après le démembrement de la Dynastie Almohades « le rêve unitaire, tomba, pour des siècles dans l'oublie ». Avant de refaire surface au début du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle sous la colonisation.

2 Entretien avec Errachid Idriss relatif « aux problèmes du Grand Maghreb » in la Revue ' Chooun arabia' , Revue de la Ligue arabe. Aout 1983 p 97

officiel. De part même sa situation géographique, le Maghreb a longtemps constitué une plaque tournante des civilisations (phéniciens, romains, Goths, Vandales, Arabes, Turcs, Français). Ces vagues successives ont favorisé l'émergence d'une culture ouverte et riche en éléments divers.

Après plus de quatre décennies d'indépendances pour l'ensemble des Etats du Maghreb, les pouvoirs en place sont acculés à reconnaître leur échec, face à la lutte contre le sous—développement. Les discours nationalistes qui ont servi de base de renforcement de la légitimité des pouvoirs deviendront de plus en plus insuffisants et chaque Etat cherchera à se ressourcer à sa manière. L'Algérie, dès son indépendance, sera dirigée par un Front de Libération National à dominante populiste dont l'orientation idéologique radicale provoquera crainte et suspicion de la part des Etats voisins. Cette orientation sera maintenue, en dépit du coup d'Etat qui a écarté Ben Bella. C'est en Algérie essentiellement que le processus de décolonisation et de remise en question des structures héritées de la colonisation a pris l'aspect le plus radical. L'Algérie donnera priorité à l'industrie lourde avec pour ambition de mettre un terme à la dépendance économique externe. Au même moment, au Maroc et en Tunisie, la décolonisation se fera de manière plus lente, transférant le pouvoir économique à certaines catégories sociales autochtones aisées plutôt qu'à l'Etat. Les codes d'investissements y seront conçus de manière favorable au maintien et même au renforcement du capital étranger. Mais malgré l'attitude officielle favorable au capitalisme privé, national ou étranger, c'est l'Etat qui a assumé, au Maroc et en Tunisie et a fortiori en Algérie, directement ou indirectement la charge principale du financement de la croissance.

Cette période sera paradoxalement caractérisée par des orientations différentes mais avec des résultats proches. Aucun Etat du Maghreb n'a réussi ni à rompre avec la dépendance externe, ni à s'imposer dans la division internationale du travail<sup>3</sup>. Les taux de croissance réfèrent à des taux d'investissements inégaux, l'Algérie investissant à la fin des années soixante dix fois plus que le Maroc. En matière d'enseignement et de formation professionnelle, l'Algérie, là aussi, est en tête, suivie de la Tunisie. L'analphabétisme des adultes demeure cependant la caractéristique commune à l'ensemble des Etats du Maghreb. Les principaux secteurs, fournissant l'emploi à cette époque, ont été l'administration et le tertiaire.

Plus important encore sera l'évolution des structures sociales qui donnera des résultats assez proches dans les Etats du Maghreb. Ainsi, si au Maroc on assiste à l'émergence d'une grande bourgeoisie terrienne et compradore qui aggravera les différenciations sociales, en même temps qu'on observera un élargissement des couches moyennes, ce qui est proche de l'évolution sociale en Tunisie. Par contre, la situation en Algérie semble plus complexe. Celle-ci est plutôt caractérisée par une élite de type administratif appelée à se développer et à se renforcer, devenant ainsi une véritable bureaucratie et après plusieurs années de développement solitaire, l'Algérie, tout comme le Maroc et la Tunisie, n'a pas réussi à mettre fin à son hétéronomie. De même, à l'exception de la Libye, l'Algérie rejoindra le Maroc et la Tunisie dans leur préoccupation face à la démographie.

A côté des facteurs conjoncturels nombreux et différents qui permettent de situer le traité de l'U.M.A. dans le temps et l'espace, l'existence de facteurs durables révèle la dimension profonde de l'idéal maghrébin et lui confère une urgence vitale. Deux principaux domaines permettent d'illustrer les aspects structurels de la dépendance des Etats Maghrébins l'alimentation et l'industrie. Aucun de ces Etats, après plus de quatre décennies d'indépendance, n'a pu réaliser une auto—suffisance alimentaire. Aucun d'eux n'a pu créer une infrastructure industrielle capable de briser les liens de dépendance technologique. Ces résultats créent une situation objective où la réunion des efforts et la

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<sup>3</sup> L'Algérie du milieu des années soixante-dix a assumé un rôle de leadership africain, et en partie du Tiers-Monde, mais cette fonction n'a pu être reconduite faute de moyens humains et matériels.

complémentarité des richesses au niveau régional peuvent contribuer à atténuer les effets du retard pris par ces pays.

La nécessité de l'effort de rapprochement entre les pays du Maghreb est d'autant plus urgente que l'élargissement de la Communauté Economique Européenne aux pays du sud de l'Europe (Grèce, Espagne et Portugal) constitue une remise en cause des formes de coopération avec les pays du bassin Sud de la Méditerranée. L'Espagne apparaît comme un « colosse agricole méditerranéen » qui rendra l'Union européenne autosuffisante, pour presque toutes les productions. Cette situation a fortement gêné l'exportation de bon nombre de produits en provenance de la rive sud de la Méditerranée.

Les préférences d'accès au marché européen dont disposaient les Etats du Maghreb se sont progressivement érodées suite aux accords signés à Marrakech fondant l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce (O.M.C). La généralisation des accords de libre-échange et la mise en œuvre de l'O.M.C exposent ces pays à une rude concurrence. On estime, pour le cas de l'habillement marocain et tunisien, la perte d'accès au marché européen de 22 à 40 % d'ici 2010<sup>4</sup>. Le bilan global serait-il positif une fois, la zone de libre-échange aura été complétée. On ne peut que l'espérer.

En effet, tant que la configuration des tissus économiques des pays du sud de la Méditerranée reste la même, ce sont les industries européennes qui profiteront des accords de Marrakech et de la zone de libre-échange. Un grand effort, de restructuration et de modernisation du tissu économique des pays du Maghreb s'avère indispensable. Toutefois, une bonne coopération scientifique et de recherche entre les deux rives est incontournable. Jusqu'à quel point, il y a une véritable volonté de la part des pays européens à aller dans le sens du rapprochement ? Cela dépendra, fondamentalement, de l'évolution du poids géostratégique du bassin méditerranéen. La Conférence de Barcelone de 1995 a fait renaître de l'espoir quant à une meilleure coopération entre les deux rives. Les résultats concernant la mise à niveau des économies du sud ne sont, jusqu'à présent, pas probants.

Pour comprendre les obstacles à l'édification de l'UMA aujourd'hui, il est nécessaire de rappeler certaines données de l'histoire récente des pays de la région. Les pays du Maghreb ont accédé à la souveraineté nationale dans des conditions très différentes. Cela s'est traduit dans le temps d'abord : plus d'une décennie s'est écoulée avant que l'ensemble ne devienne indépendant : du 21 janvier 1951 pour la Libye, au 5 Juillet 1962 pour l'Algérie, sans parler du Sahara occidental que les forces armées espagnoles ont quitté en Octobre 1975, et que les dirigeants du Front Polisario ont proclamé République arabe sahraouie démocratique (RASD) le 27 Février 1976 et dont le sort n'est toujours pas réglé au début de 2000 en raison des revendications marocaines sur le territoire.

Cette différenciation est également marquée dans l'espace : étendus (Algérie, Libye, Mauritanie) ou non (Maroc, Tunisie), relativement peuplés (Algérie, Maroc, Tunisie) ou à très faible populations à la fin de leur colonisation (Libye, Mauritanie), les Etats du Maghreb ont tous eu avec leurs voisins des problèmes de frontières (« guerre des sables » algéro-marocaine, en 1963; reconnaissance tardive de la Mauritanie par le Maroc, en septembre 1969; différend sur le Sahara occidental à partir de 1975, entre autres), problèmes qui ont obéré les relations régionales pendant de longues années.

La conquête de l'indépendance en Algérie, la plus tardive, a été aussi la plus dure sans qu'aucune n'ait été obtenue de façon tout à fait pacifique. Presque partout des troubles internes plus ou moins graves ont précédé, accompagné ou suivi les indépendances. Les trois premiers régimes indépendants étaient monarchiques (Idriss 1er en Libye, Lamine Bey en Tunisie, Mohamed V Au Maroc); Mauritanie et

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4 Michel Foucher « La Méditerranée occidentale au seuil du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle : une interaction à repenser » in « Pour le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle des échanges méditerranéens », Synthèse du colloque international, Première session Europe-Maghreb les 19-20 Octobre 1995, Académie de Lyon, MAFPEN/ Région-Alpes, Lyon p 20.

Algérie s'étant constituées dès le départ en républiques. Trente ans plus tard, il ne restait qu'un royaume, celui du Maroc avec pour roi Mohamed VI, succédant à son père depuis 1999.

Enfin, aux indépendances, les Etats maghrébins présentaient des économies liées aux anciennes métropoles, peu développées, rurales et pastorales, et quelques industries minières et manufacturières. Toutefois, caractéristiques communes: un taux d'analphabétisme uniformément élevé (aux alentours de 90 %), peu d'élites, peu de représentants de professions libérales (pas un seul médecin libyen en 1951), de cadres supérieurs, d'entrepreneurs. Après les indépendances effectuées, mutatis mutandis, «dans le désordre» et la violence, les Etats du Maghreb étaient plus soucieux d'affirmer leur souveraineté et consolider leur structure politique que de répondre à l'idéal d'un Maghreb uni.

Malentendus et conceptions divergentes se sont exprimés à propos des relations régionales, avec le monde arabe, avec le Tiers-monde, avec les grandes puissances, sur la notion d'indépendance et sur l'édification économique; et les égoïsmes nationaux et rivalités entre chefs d'Etat dotés, chacun, d'une forte personnalité auront finalement raison des bonnes intentions, même si, dans un premier temps, une ébauche d'union maghrébine allait prendre corps avec la création du Comité permanent consultatif maghrébin (CPCM) en 1964.

## **2/L'UMA continue à être plus un projet qu'une réalité**

Depuis la conférence des partis nationalistes marocain, algérien et tunisien à Tanger en 1958 en passant par la création du CPCM (Comité permanent consultatif maghrébin) jusqu'au traité de Marrakech du 17 Février 1989 instituant l'Union du Maghreb arabe (UMA), le projet maghrébin est une des lignes de force récurrentes de la géopolitique régionale sans pour autant avoir encore connu un véritable commencement de traduction dans les faits. Si de nombreux accords de coopération sectoriels ont été signés depuis 1989, si les dirigeants des cinq Etats de l'UMA se rencontrent à intervalles plus ou moins réguliers pour essayer, avec des succès mitigés, de faire avancer l'« union », force est de constater, toutefois, que l'intégration n'a guère progressé. Le commerce intra-zone n'atteint même pas 5 % des échanges extérieurs des pays maghrébins.

De l'avis général, pourtant, une accélération du processus d'intégration devrait permettre, au moins aux trois Etats du Maghreb central, de bénéficier de meilleurs atouts pour négocier un inévitable renforcement de leur insertion dans le marché mondial. Une telle accélération est nécessaire pour faire face à certaines des échéances les plus urgentes qui les attendent, comme l'urgente nécessité d'accroître les créations d'emplois pour une population active appelée à augmenter de presque 1 millions par an. et dont près du tiers est aujourd'hui au chômage, ou celle de diversifier leur tissu industriel. Ce dernier est en effet encore trop désarticulé et davantage fondé soit sur la première transformation de produits primaires destinés à l'exportation, soit sur la multiplication d'industries manufacturières peu intégrées et dépendantes de l'Europe pour leurs approvisionnements et pour leurs débouchés. Les complémentarités entre les économies maghrébines, quoique peu développées, ne sont en effet pas totalement inexistantes. Mais sur le plan politique comme sur celui de l'économie, les logiques nationales et les rapports avec l'UE priment encore largement sur une dynamique proprement régionale.

Enfin, la volonté de construire un Maghreb «par le haut», c'est-à-dire essentiellement par la voie bureaucratique, qui a laissé peu de place à l'initiative des opérateurs économiques et des acteurs sociaux, montre ses limites à l'heure où les pouvoirs en place sont soumis à de fortes pressions déstabilisatrices. La montée du chômage et des frustrations de toutes sortes qui ont nourri la puissante poussée islamiste a sérieusement mis à mal la solidité de régimes longtemps réputés pour leur stabilité



. Et l'on risque à défaut d'avoir su jeter les bases d'un espace économique et institutionnel commun susceptible de jouer un rôle actif dans la recomposition en cours de la zone euro-méditerranéenne, de voir l'islamisme prendre en charge l'édification de ce «Maghreb des peuples» qui fait partie, malgré la vivacité des particularismes nationaux, des rêves d'unité de ses citoyens.

A l'heure où l'UE peaufine et parachève patiemment l'architecture commune, le Maghreb demeure une construction fragile et inachevée, malgré tout le chemin parcouru depuis le traité de Marrakech en Février 1989. Pourtant force est de reconnaître qu'il devient urgent pour l'UMA d'accélérer le rythme de sa construction, pour mieux se situer par rapport aux grands changements géostratégiques qui se dessinent à l'horizon 2010. La disparition de bipolarisme, l'émergence de l'Europe du Japon et des NPI asiatiques risquent de renforcer davantage la marginalisation du Maghreb. Il est évident qu'un Maghreb uni se prêterait donc mieux à la négociation avec les ensembles régionaux. Les pays de l'UMA connaissent d'ores et déjà une baisse sensible des apports de la population émigrée, suite aux restrictions quant à la circulation des maghrébins en direction de l'Europe.

Face au nouvel ordre européen, le Maghreb est loin d'être capable de s'affirmer comme un pôle autonome de développement et espace attractif des investissements étrangers. Il s'agit plutôt d'un espace qui reste à réorganiser; un espace fragile socialement, politiquement et économiquement, avec de nombreux contrastes et inégalité tant au niveau des échanges intra— régionaux qu'en ce qui concerne la qualité et la nature de ses rapports extérieurs.

### **3/ Les facteurs politiques de déstabilisation de la région maghrébine**

L'avenir de la région maghrébine semble menacé, d'une part, par les dangers qui planent sur sa stabilité politique interne, stabilité liée principalement à deux phénomènes étroitement liés, la faiblesse des structures démocratiques et le développement de l'intégrisme. D'autre part, au niveau régional par des conflits anciens non résolus, notamment le tracé des frontières et particulièrement la question du Sahara. Une part non moins importante incombe aux partenaires européens quant à leur attitude à l'égard de la région maghrébine en termes d'investissements, et en termes de respect de la dignité humaine et de circulation des hommes.

#### *1-La faiblesse des structures démocratiques*

L'ensemble des Etats du Maghreb semblent aspirer à devenir des Etats de droit. Mais cette aspiration commue connaît une réalisation lente et inégale. Les pays de la région sont caractérisés par une centralisation excessive du pouvoir politique, avec, évidemment, quelques nuances d'un pays à un autre. Ainsi, dans des Etats où le pouvoir politique est fortement centralisé, la participation des acteurs émergents des sociétés civiles a du mal à peser sur les événements.

Mais au delà des textes et des discours c'est surtout dans la pratique politique réelle qu'il est possible de saisir le degré de démocratisation effectif dans les Etats du Maghreb. Ce degré se mesure à l'aune du respect des droits de l'homme par les autorités publiques. Certes, les lois fondamentales des Etats du Maghreb contiennent l'engagement des pouvoirs publics au respect et à la protection des droits de l'homme, ce qui en constitue, sommes toutes, une garantie formelle. Mais en fait, souvent, des atteintes aux droits de l'homme sont commises, ce qui crée des rapports de méfiance et de crainte entre les gouvernants et les gouvernés.

Quel rapport avec le processus d'intégration maghrébine? Ce processus étant conçu comme le mouvement global d'un acteur collectif et non pas comme un acte isolé relevant uniquement des acteurs officiels que sont les Etats, il est possible de saisir à quel point la démocratisation est un

moyen nécessaire à sa dynamisation. L'accent est souvent mis sur la complémentarité nécessaire de la démocratie et de l'intégration. Plus les populations concernées se sentent majeures et s'expriment librement, plus l'intégration avance dans un sens irréversible sur des bases solides.

Si la démocratie est une, les pratiques qui y sont afférentes s'imprègnent forcément des pesanteurs locales. Pour le Maroc le problème est la conciliation entre les exigences de la modernité, dans un monde en mutations importantes et un système makhzénien basé sur des rapports autoritaires hérités du passé<sup>5</sup>. Certains et non des moindres parlent de la nécessité de la révision de la Constitution afin qu'elle réponde à l'exigence d'une « monarchie moderne et démocratique »<sup>6</sup>. En effet, si le Maroc est assez performant sur le plan de la politique internationale, en politique interne, le bilan est loin d'être brillant en dépit des ouvertures notables en termes de respects des droits de l'homme et de reconnaissance des abus à l'égard des opposants d'opinion de ces dernières années.

Pour le moment tout porte à croire que Le roi Mohamed VI est en voie de devenir le « Réformateur » et le « Conciliateur »<sup>7</sup>. L'élite au pouvoir, suite à l'investiture du gouvernement d'alternance est entrain, timidement certes, de faire usage à bon escient de cette « marge démocratique » rappelée par A. El-Yousfi à plusieurs occasions en tentant de frayer le chemin aux grands changements. Certes, il ne faut s'attendre à des miracles de la part du gouvernement actuel ; sa marge de manœuvre est limitée : certains départements ministériels et non des moindres lui échappe (le Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Défense nationale, de la Justice, des Affaires islamiques, des Affaires étrangères). L'échec de l'« alternance » serait grave et dangereux aussi bien sur le plan interne (cela mettrait du « vin » dans l'eau de certains) que sur le plan international. Officiellement, et surtout depuis l'avènement du gouvernement de l'alternance en mars 1998<sup>8</sup>, et la relève prise par le nouveau roi du Maroc, Mohamed VI, des signes forts ont été déployés à l'égard de l'UMA.

L'Algérie connaît à partir de 1991, la crise la plus grave depuis son indépendance. Les gouvernements successifs algériens justifient leur « encerclement » de la société par la menace du « péril » islamiste. Quant au pouvoir tunisien, il maintient son quadrillage policier du pays. Il réprime la moindre contestation en dépit de la réunion des conditions d'une véritable transition démocratique<sup>9</sup>. Ce constat est confirmé par ce professeur de l'Université de Georgetown à propos de l'expérience tunisienne « (...) Le péril islamiste qu'ils (le Président Ben Ali et son gouvernement) évoquent n'est qu'un prétexte pour réduire au silence tout individu, groupe ou journal soupçonné de nourrir la moindre opposition au pouvoir »<sup>10</sup>. Une police omniprésente et en crescendo<sup>11</sup>.

Cette situation quasi explosive des pays de la région non seulement renvoie aux calendes grecques l'idéal maghrébin mais, pis encore, encourage les formes d'extrémisme et de radicalisme.

## *2-L'intégrisme religieux au Maghreb*

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5 Abderrahim Lamchichi « De formidables défis pour le jeune roi Mohamed VI », Confluences Méditerranée, L'Harmattan 1999, p12.

6 Abraham Serfaty, le 25 juillet 1999 in Confluences Méditerranée, n° 31 Automne p 36.

7 Paul Balta « Hassan II, du féodal au (presque) libéral » Confluence Méditerranée, L'Harmattan 1999, p 33.

8 Dans cette déclaration il est dit « Le renforcement des relations du Maroc avec les autres pays du Maghreb arabe vient au premier rang des priorités de notre politique étrangère. L'Union du Maghreb Arabe est pour nous une option stratégique irréversible ; elle constitue à la fois une exigence historique, humaine, culturelle, économique et politique, à l'heure notamment des regroupements économiques régionaux ».

9 Jacqueline Boucher « Développement économique et quadrillage policier : la société tunisienne privée de parole » in Le Monde diplomatique, de février 1996, p 11.

10 Hamid Ibrahim « Le Maghreb confronté à l'islamisme : les libertés envolées de la Tunisie » in Le Monde diplomatique, février 1997 p 4.

11 Les effectifs de la police auraient été multipliés par quatre depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir de Ben Ali.

La situation dans les trois pays du Maghreb est très contrastée, le régime marocain est fondé sur une légitimité fondée sur l'Islam, l'Algérie, a connu par le passé des ruptures brutales qui ont favorisé la radicalisation de l'Islam et sa « privatisation ». La Tunisie, affichant explicitement sa propension pour la laïcité et sa « modernisation autoritaire » tout en renforçant la personnalisation du pouvoir attise la radicalisation de l'Islam.

En fait, il serait faux de croire à l'existence d'un seul islam ou du moins d'une seule pratique de l'islam. Celui-ci n'est pas monolithique il est multiforme. On a un islam de compromis et même institutionnel (cas du Maroc), un islam oppositionnel, quasi-populaire parfois radical (cas de l'Algérie).

Les conditions d'éclosion de l'islamisme ne sont pas difficiles à détecter. La misère sociale, l'explosion démographique et urbaine, les difficultés de la vie quotidienne, la crise identitaire, née du choc de la modernité<sup>12</sup>, le chômage et surtout celui des jeunes diplômés favorisent l'éclosion de cette forme de protestation et de contestation. En outre, la fin de la bipolarité du monde, qui est aussi la fin des espoirs réels ou imaginaires d'une part et la déconfiture des modèles de développement aux yeux de l'écrasante majorité de la population du pourtour de la Méditerranée d'autre part, ont constitué un terrain favorable à l'émergence de certains mouvements de contestation dont les contours ne sont pas toujours clairs. C'est dans cette ambiance, entre autres, que l'Islam politique s'est confirmé.

L'islamisme ou l'Islam politique connaît une ascension significative depuis la révolution iranienne. Celle-ci a donné la preuve que d'autres alternatives sont possibles. Il est évident que depuis vingt ans l'image politique iranienne a beaucoup terni à l'épreuve des faits. Toujours est-il que ce renouveau de l'Islam trouve un terrain favorable dans la multiplication des formes de l'exclusion sociale<sup>13</sup>. Les modèles de développement testés et mis en pratique par les pays en développement du pourtour de la Méditerranée sont dans leur quasi-totalité en panne. Face d'une part à l'effondrement du modèle communiste et la sauvagerie du modèle ultra-libéral d'autre part, l'islam politique est érigé comme le *deus ex machina*<sup>14</sup>.

Il est à rappeler que l'islamisme ne relève nullement d'une « quelconque internationale » Il va de l'extrémisme au conservatisme, du mysticisme au fondamentalisme en passant par le radicalisme. Il est véhiculé selon les circonstances par les classes moyennes paupérisées<sup>15</sup>, par la grande bourgeoisie qui marie aisément morale religieuse et libéralisme, et même par certains régimes à des moments différents de leur histoire. Il est aussi traité différemment par les régimes en place (par la répression ou par la relative tolérance). En outre, en fonction des situations objectives et subjectives les formes d'expression de l'islam politique diffèrent.

Au Maroc, les fractions les plus radicales de l'islamisme sont les seuls opposants au régime. Ce radicalisme, « s'alimente des frustrations sociales, économiques et culturelles ». Certaines franges modernistes ne sont pas insensibles à cet islamisme. La politique à l'égard de l'islamisme vise à exclure les plus radicaux et à intégrer les modérés le système politique<sup>16</sup>. Actuellement, neuf députés

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12 L'Algérie confronte les trois pôles de son identité : ses racines berbères, sa culture arabo-musulmane et son imprégnation européenne... Cf. Thierry Michalon « Des Etats contre leur société » in *Monde diplomatique*, nov 1994.

13 Samir Nair « Bouleversements au sud de la Méditerranée : Pourquoi cette montée de l'islamisme » *Le Monde diplomatique*, Août 1997, p 13.

14 Rien d'étonnant à cette attitude si on sait que la charria (loi islamique) s'ordonne autour et de l'ordre moral et de la solidarité sociale.

15 Zakia Daoud « Chute du niveau de vie, frayeurs politiques : la frustration des classes moyennes au Maghreb », *Le Monde diplomatique*, nov 1991 p 6.

16 Pendant les élections législatives de février 1998, la frange modérée des islamistes est entrée dans le « Mouvement populaire démocratique et constitutionnel (MPDC) de Abdelkrim Khatib avant de créer son propre parti politique « Partie de

islamistes siègent au Parlement marocain. L'invitation faite par le nouveau roi Mohamed VI d'un des ténors de la mouvance islamiste marocaine à présenter sa conférence dans le cadre des causeries ramadanesques ne constitue-t-elle pas le signe d'un tournant dans les rapports entre la monarchie et l'islam politique ? Nous pensons que ce geste doit être interprété comme la manifestation du rôle ancestral que le roi est au-dessus des différents enjeux des forces politiques en présence. Et que le souverain est le roi de tous les marocains abstraction faite de leur coloration politique et idéologique. En tout état de cause, le jeune roi, par ses visites dans les provinces du royaume et par la sollicitude soutenue à l'égard des régions déshéritées et des franges pauvres de la population « concurrence » les islamistes marocains sur leur terrain de prédilection traditionnel à savoir le caritatif.

Une question se pose : quelle relation y a-t-il entre islamisme et intégration régionale, et la question a-t-elle un sens ? Chaque Etat du Maghreb a tenté de maîtriser ce phénomène socio-politique de manière différente. Les retombées de ce phénomène n'en sont pas point immédiates sur chaque Etat voisin et sur le processus d'intégration régionale à peine envisagé avec l'institution de l'U.M.A. L'intégrisme religieux est officiellement perçu par les Etats du Maghreb comme une menace pour les ordres politiques internes. Il est aussi perçu comme un danger commun au niveau régional.

Menace-t-il pour autant le processus d'intégration amorcé avec le traité de l'U.M.A. ? L'intégrisme religieux traduirait le refus d'une jeunesse marginalisée face à une société incapable de répondre aux nouvelles aspirations. Dans cette situation, l'Islam devient une idéologie de combat à l'intérieur du Maghreb et vis-à-vis de l'extérieur. « Ce serait réaction contre le matérialisme qui imprègne les sociétés occidentales capitalistes et contre l'athéisme proclamé ». Cette position se nourrit des sentiments de frustration et de révolte éprouvés par des populations jeunes dont les moins de vingt ans représentent 60 % à 65% de la population totale au Maghreb. Le discours intégriste est moral et égalitaire. Il met l'accent sur une certaine lecture des principes coraniques d'équité, de justice sociale et de solidarité.

En fait, le recours à la religion comme base théorique de la contestation sociale et politique n'est pas propre aux formations sociales où domine l'Islam. L'intégrisme religieux est certes l'expression d'une crise identitaire, de la marginalisation de certaines élites traditionnelles et la réaction de masses appauvries. A défaut d'une véritable démocratisation et de l'instauration d'Etat de droit qui auraient permis de gagner la confiance des populations et leur participation, l'intégrisme a trouvé un champ fertile dans les sociétés maghrébines caractérisées par une faible liberté d'expression et des structures politiques autoritaires. Mais l'Islam en tant que religion n'est pas un obstacle au progrès de l'intégration.

Le « péril islamiste » est souvent exagéré dans les écrits des analystes, l'expérience démontre que lorsque la marge de parole et d'expression est réellement ouverte dans les règles de l'art démocratique, les électeurs font des choix plus nuancés<sup>17</sup>. La modernisation libérale ne peut être imposée autoritairement, mais plutôt par la voie démocratique.

### *3- L'affaire du Sahara occidental*

On peut dire sans risque d'erreur que l'affaire du Sahara occidental a fortement conditionné les rapports entre les pays du Maghreb. Ce conflit continue de conditionner les relations

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la Justice et du Développement » (PJD), dirigé par Abdelilah Benkirane.

17 Il nous semble exagéré d'adhérer aux propos catégoriques de Sami Nair lorsqu'il dit que « Si des élections libres, démocratiques, étaient organisées dans le monde arabo-musulman, il y a fort à parier que presque partout l'islamisme l'emporterait haut la main pour aboutir à des régimes de despotisme » in *Le Monde diplomatique* de Août 1997.

intermaghrébines et le processus d'unification du Maghreb<sup>18</sup>. Historiquement, le Sahara occidental a toujours fait l'objet de revendications de la part du Maroc<sup>19</sup>.

Si au milieu des années 70, les décideurs politiques maghrébins utilisaient avec des fortunes diverses, le conflit du Sahara occidental – conflit dérivé de la Guerre froide<sup>20</sup> – pour en partie détourner leurs populations des problèmes internes, il n'en est plus de même aujourd'hui où les perspectives actuelles militent en faveur d'un statu quo pour une région devenue « province marocaine » alors que le Front Polisario est devenu « coquille vide et qu'Alger (en grande partie pour des raisons internes) ne souhaite désormais qu'une chose : en finir avec ce conflit – qui a failli déstabiliser toute la région<sup>21</sup>.

Parmi les contraintes, les frontières héritées de l'époque coloniale constituent un facteur de tension. Mais la construction du Maghreb contient déjà en elle — même un dépassement de cet obstacle<sup>22</sup>. A

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18 En 1976 : rupture des relations diplomatiques entre l'Algérie qui a reconnu la RASD d'avec le Maroc et la Mauritanie  
1979 : rétablissement des relations diplomatiques entre Nouakchott et Alger. La Mauritanie met un terme à sa participation à la guerre.

1983 : L'Algérie et la Tunisie signent un traité de fraternité auquel adhérera, un an plus tard la Mauritanie.

1988 : l'acceptation par le Maroc du Plan de paix de l'ONU qui prévoyait un cessez-le-feu et l'organisation d'un référendum sur la libre détermination a permis le rétablissement de rapports entre Rabat et Alger.

19 Après avoir réglé les conflits avec la Mauritanie mais surtout avec l'Algérie (traité d'Ifrane en 1969, et accord de Tlemcen en 1970), le Maroc s'est fixé comme objectif la récupération du Sahara espagnol. Le territoire du « Rio de Oro » est une vieille possession espagnole comptant une centaine de milliers d'habitants, nomades pour la plupart. En décembre 1968, l'assemblée générale de l'O.N.U. vote une résolution invitant l'Espagne à organiser, sous les auspices des Nations unies, un référendum d'autodétermination des habitants du Sahara espagnol, après consultation du Maroc, de la Mauritanie. Sur le terrain, plusieurs mouvements de libération allaient voir le jour, se concurrencer et s'allier avec la Mauritanie, avec le Maroc, avec l'Algérie et la Libye pour obtenir le soutien des uns puis des autres.

En 1973, le premier mouvement de libération du Sahara, créé en 1968 donne naissance au front Polisario (Frente popular para la liberacion de Saguia el-Hamra y de Rio de Oro). Le programme du Polisario, est l'indépendance du Sahara espagnol dans ses frontières coloniales et la création d'une république arabe non alignée. Le Polisario reçoit l'appui de la Mauritanie qui tolère ses activités militaires à partir de son territoire. L'Algérie, la Libye et la Tunisie soutiennent, à cette époque, un autre mouvement, le Morehob ou Mouvement de résistance des hommes bleus. Mais bien vite ce mouvement se ralliera à la thèse marocaine. L'assemblée des notables représentant les « tribus », créée en 1967, accepte au début de 1974 un statut d'autonomie, en attendant le référendum annoncé pour 1975 sous les auspices de l'O.N.U. Le Maroc obtient le report de ce référendum et l'envoi d'une mission d'enquête sur place. Rabat demande par ailleurs (et obtient) l'avis de la Cour internationale de justice de La Haye sur le statut juridique du territoire avant la colonisation espagnole. La Cour reconnaît que le Sahara espagnol n'était en rien un territoire sans maître avant la colonisation ; elle affirme également que des liens d'allégeance unissaient les tribus nomades de la région aux souverains du Maroc.

Fort de l'avis de la Cour et de l'appui de tous les partis marocains, le roi du Maroc lance, le 16 octobre 1975, la « marche verte » (350 000 Marocains à la frontière, avec le Coran pour tout bagage). Un mois en effet suffira à l'Espagne pour « abandonner » sa colonie et signer l'accord de Madrid le 14 novembre 1975. Cet accord qui partage le Sahara espagnol entre le Maroc et la Mauritanie est refusé par l'Algérie et le Polisario. Le 10 décembre 1975, l'assemblée générale de l'O.N.U. vote une résolution approuvant les accords de Madrid mais demandant aux signataires d'organiser une consultation d'autodétermination en présence d'observateurs de l'O.N.U. Le 26 février 1976, l'Espagne quitte officiellement le Sahara, et le Maroc fait entériner l'accord de Madrid par la Djemaa. Pour le Maroc l'affaire est terminée : le Sahara ex-espagnol fait désormais partie intégrante du territoire national. Le 28 février 1976, le Polisario, soutenu par les pays voisins et surtout l'Algérie déclara d'abord la constitution de la « République arabe sahraoui démocratique et ensuite la guerre au Maroc.

Devant, l'échec de la médiation de l'O.U.A. et la pression des pays amis au Maroc, celui-ci accepte l'idée d'un d'un référendum. Mais la question qui s'opposa alors et qui continue d'être la pomme de discorde et la suivante : qui votera ? La MINURSO (organisme de l'ONU veillant sur l'organisation du référendum et l'établissement des listes électorales) a accompli un travail appréciable, mais un certain nombre d'erreurs ont été commises (en voie de règlement, toutefois)<sup>19</sup>. Le Conseil de Sécurité a reconduit le mandat de la MINURSO jusqu'au 30 avril 1999 pour finaliser les protocoles relatifs à l'identification des 65.000 candidats restants et à la mise en œuvre du processus dans le respect des principes et règles établis par le plan de règlement. Nous adhérons à la note d'optimisme annoncée par notre Ambassadeur à cet égard, car nous voulons faire de cette partie de la Méditerranée un espace de paix de compréhension et non d'exclusion et d'affrontement « Notre espoir est grand de voir les protocoles et les directives qui vont régir cette prochaine étape du processus, tenir compte des principes et des règles qui doivent permettre la participation de tous nos candidats des provinces du Sud à cette consultation référendaire ».

20 Rabat et Alger furent les représentants clefs des deux grandes puissances au Maghreb.

21 Abderrahim Lamchichi op cit p20.

22 Ecoutant ce que dit Tony Hodges à propos du Sahara occidental « Le Sahara occidental n'a jamais constitué une nation avant sa colonisation, et le nationalisme actuel est un phénomène très récent, qui ne s'est manifesté qu'aux derniers moments de la période coloniale espagnole » in « The Origins of Saharawi Nationism » ; 'The Western Sahara Conflict', Pinter, Londres, 1987, p 31.

court terme, il est envisagé de développer les échanges et mettre en œuvre des projets qui touchent les zones frontalières. Mais l'obstacle principal au niveau régional demeure la question du Sahara Occidental.

Depuis l'institution de l'U.M.A, les rencontres officielles se sont contentées de tourner le dos à cet obstacle. La volonté de créer une entité régionale est opposée en principe au soutien d'un mouvement ayant pour objectif la création d'un nouvel Etat indépendant et souverain au Maghreb. La tendance intégrationniste est opposée à la tendance sécessionniste. Créer un nouvel Etat, c'est aussi accroître la division et affaiblir les Etats de toute la région du Maghreb.

#### **4 – Rôle de l'Union Européenne : le hiatus entre le discours et l'acte**

Après avoir favorisé la politique du «diviser pour régner» et en avoir bénéficié au maximum, les anciennes puissances coloniales, France et Italie, d'abord, Espagne et Portugal depuis leur entrée dans la CEE, en 1986, déplorent le retard pris dans l'édification du Grand Maghreb et encouragent son accélération. La commission de Bruxelles, de son côté, souhaite traiter avec une entité unifiée, semblable au conseil de coopération du Golfe, constitué en 1981, sachant que l'Europe voisine ne pourra que subir les contrecoups d'un Maghreb désuni et désarticulé.

C'est dans ce sens d'ailleurs et afin de dissiper les inquiétudes légitimes exprimées au Maghreb, que l'UE a exprimé dans la déclaration de Lisbonne, en Juin, 1992, son soutien de tout projet d'intégration maghrébine.

On ne peut toutefois, s'empêcher de constater que le fossé entre l'UE d'une part et les pays du Maghreb d'autre part ne cesse de s'approfondir et de s'exacerber. Sur le plan économique l'asymétrie économique et financière entre l'Europe occidentale et l'Europe Centrale d'une part et entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée d'autre part n'a pas cessé de s'aggraver ces trente dernières années. Plusieurs données confirment cet écart. En effet, les pays méditerranéens de l'Union Européenne représentent 15% du commerce international contre moins de 3% pour les pays de la rive sud. En plus l'écart de niveau de vie entre les deux rives va de 1 à 20 (ce rapport va de 1000 à 20.000 dollars). Le PIB de l'ensemble des pays de la rive sud équivaut à celui de la Grèce et du Portugal. Les PRSM (Pays de la Rive sud de la Méditerranée) connaissent un faible taux de croissance économique et de productivité et un accroissement de leur hétéronomie face au développement accéléré des échanges intra-régionaux de la Rive nord. En outre, on remarque un écart flagrant entre le poids de chacun des rives par rapport à l'autre : d'un côté l'Union Européenne représente plus de 60 % des exportations de la rive sud, de l'autre côté, le poids des exportations des pays sud de la Méditerranée ne dépassent guère 3 % des importations totales de l'U.E.

L'amélioration des relations UE-Maghreb passe par la concrétisation et l'instauration de nouveaux rapports dans les domaines prioritaires<sup>23</sup> à même de favoriser le progrès et la stabilité dans l'ensemble de la région méditerranéenne.

La dynamique de la transition dans les pays du Maghreb est conditionnée autant par les contraintes internes que celles externes en termes d'ouverture du marché européen, de financement et surtout d'investissement. C'est la raison pour laquelle, l'UE a une lourde responsabilité quant à la stabilité de la région : le codéveloppement pour résoudre le problème de l'emploi. Il y a lieu de créer chaque année un million d'emplois. L'émigration, soupape pour les Etats maghrébins, n'est plus possible comme il y a quinze ans. L'Europe est devenue depuis le début des années quatre vingt dix plus

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<sup>23</sup> Un dialogue politique de haut niveau.

Une coopération économique, technique et culturelle avancées ; des rapports commerciaux plus actifs ; une coopération financière plus dense ; une coopération sociale intense.

qu'une « citadelle »<sup>24</sup>. Jusqu'à présent, existe-t-il réellement une volonté commune de faire de la Méditerranée un ensemble solidaire<sup>25</sup> ? Les espoirs nourris depuis le milieu des années quatre vingt dix se sont vite transformés sinon en désespoir du moins en interrogations.

### En guise de Conclusion

Les économies maghrébines sont caractérisées par une grande hétérogénéité de leurs structures économiques et politiques, une grande extraversion à l'égard de l'Union Européenne, des difficultés d'ordre socio-culturel manifestes. Comble du paradoxe, l'UMA est confrontée aux mêmes défis (plus exacerbés que par le passé) qui dix ans auparavant ont motivé sa naissance. Chômage est sous-emploi touchant de plus en plus une jeunesse diplômée, une forte dépendance à l'égard de l'extérieur, une sécheresse structurelle attisant le mécontentement populaire et menaçant la sécurité alimentaire de la région.

Ces réalités et les conflits plus ou larvés conjugués à des problèmes socio-économiques risquent à tout moment de mettre le feu aux poudres. Ils sont tellement imbriqués les uns aux autres qu'ils appellent une approche intégrée et globale.

En effet, l'examen des indicateurs macro-économiques fondamentaux démontre que les chances qu'à l'UMA de jouer un rôle sur la scène internationale ne sont pas prometteuses. Les membres de l'UMA affrontent toute une série de problèmes qui handicapent leur développement économique et leurs potentialités : faiblesse du PIB, dépendance alimentaire, déséquilibre des échanges commerciaux, faiblesse du niveau de vie, l'analphabétisme, lourdeur du fardeau de la dette... Ces problèmes menacent directement ou indirectement la stabilité du Grand Maghreb.

La démocratie s'avère la seule voie de salut quant aux aspirations des sociétés des pays de la région, quant aux nécessités du développement et quant à l'accès à la modernité et à la mondialisation. La modernisation devrait se baser sur une véritable démocratisation de vie à tous les niveaux. Mais, l'avenir dépendra des enjeux des forces en présence, en articulation avec la justice sociale.

Les fondamentalismes<sup>26</sup> naissent de l'absence de culture démocratique. La démocratie est auto-créatrices des ses propres conditions de succès. La dimension sociale de l'UMA n'est pas mentionnée dans les actes de l'accord de constitution de cet ensemble régional<sup>27</sup>. L'Union des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Maghreb Arabe (USTMA) lors du dixième anniversaire de l'UMA tenu à Casablanca ont exprimé dans un mémorandum adressé aux dirigeants de l'UMA la nécessité d'intégrer les principes de justice sociale, de démocratie, de dialogue avec l'ensemble des forces politiques et civiques ainsi que sur une coopération tripartite (gouvernement, patronat, syndicat) respectueuse de la liberté syndicale<sup>28</sup>.

L'ère dans laquelle nous sommes insérés est celle de grands ensembles régionaux. Mais, il serait faux de croire que l'Unité allait résoudre tous nos problèmes, à supposer même que la volonté politique de l'établir existe<sup>29</sup>.

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24 « Les marocains qui, hier, étaient prêts au sacrifice pour leur patrie meurent aujourd'hui dans le détroit de Gibraltar, en tentant de fuir la misère » Mohamed Basri « Le rendez-vous manqué de l'histoire » in Monde diplomatique, octobre 1993.

25 Cf document préparatoire à la conférence euro-méditerranéenne à Barcelone les 27 et 28 nov 1995. Ce document met l'accent sur le fait que les efforts politiques pour créer une « zone de paix, de stabilité et de sécurité en Méditerranée ».

26 « La stabilité du Maghreb n'est pas menacée par la seule contestation islamiste » in 'Manière de voir' n° 24, 1998.

27 les quatre axes retenus sont : les relations internationales, la défense, l'économie et la culture

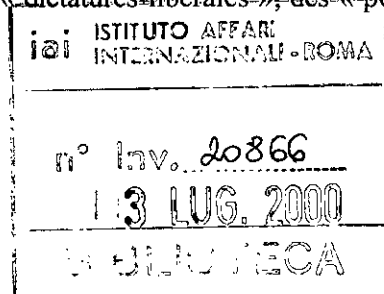
28 Les syndicalistes de l'USTMA ont reçu l'appui de la Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres (CISL) dans leur démarche par la voix de son secrétaire général, Eddy Laurijssen, qui a assisté à la réunion de Casablanca. Le responsable de la CISL s'est dit prêt à apporter tout son appui à l'USTMA.

29 L'union est inéluctable dirait un certain discours politique parce que le passé commun de la région maghrébine sa langue, sa religion et ses croyances incarnent une force telle que les facteurs de l'unité l'emporteraient sur les facteurs de division.

les Maghrébins sont de plus en plus conscients de la nécessité impérieuse d'édifier par eux-mêmes et pour eux-mêmes (avec au besoin l'aide d'autres institutions régionales et internationale) un ensemble solide, pour ne pas être progressivement marginalisés dans un monde où s'est accéléré le rythme de l'histoire et du développement technologique. Donc c'est pour des raisons et des mobiles d'avenir plutôt que du passé que l'engagement devrait être fait. La fuite en arrière, pratique très courante dans la culture arabo-musulmane, fait consciemment ou inconsciemment l'impasse sur les véritables enjeux du présent et de l'avenir. Certes, la communauté de la langue (des langues), de la religion (différentes pratiques) des coutumes peut constituer un terreau favorable, mais jamais déterminants dans la constitution maghrébine, comme l'édification de tout ensemble régional. Seule la prise en considération des véritables préoccupations du présents et a fortiori d'avenir en termes économique, social, culturel s'avère véritablement payante. Les exemples d'intégration régionale les plus réussis sont ceux-là mêmes qui ont mis davantage regarder en avant que dans leur rétroviseur.

On peut certes regretter les dissensions, les rivalités, les erreurs, les défaillances qui ont jalonné la renaissance du Grand Maghreb. Auraient-elles pu être évitées? Rien n'est moins sûr, car elles résultent de l'évolution historique des Etats maghrébins, il aurait été possible de progresser d'un pas plus décidé, plus rapide, si le conflit du Sahara occidental n'avait aussi longtemps obstrué la voie. Tous Ces facteurs ont conditionné les choix des responsables qui ont présidé au destin des Etats devenus indépendants. Sans céder à un déterminisme simpliste, on constate qu'ils ont largement fléchi les itinéraires empruntés par les chefs d'Etats et par les peuples. C'est en suivant le cheminement des uns et des autres qu'on pourra analyser la nature des obstacles que chacun a dû franchir dans la marche vers la coopération régionale, étape obligée pour atteindre l'unité du Grand Maghreb. C'est aussi en suivant ces itinéraires depuis les indépendances qu'on dégagera les raisons qui ont favorisé la création de l'Union du Maghreb arabe, édifice encore fragile et guetté par mille périls.

L'islamisme contemporain traduit le désarroi des sociétés sans parvenir à penser le changement social. Et il nous paraît que la seule voie du salut est davantage de démocratisation de la vie sociale, davantage de participation à la destinée de ces pays par leur société civile, et davantage de développement économique. Les ONG dans les pays du Maghreb qui se sont montrées assez actives dans le rapprochement des composantes de la Société civile de ces pays<sup>30</sup> sont à encourager. De même, le concours et responsable des pays de l'UE en termes d'investissements (Le volume d'investissements européens dans les économies du sud de la Méditerranée ne dépasse pas 4 % des investissements totaux de l'Europe à l'étranger dont 2 % profitent à la Turquie et à Israël), d'une plus grande liberté de circulation des marchandises et des personnes s'avère nécessaire si l'on veut éviter la déstabilisation de la région et les dérives des « dictatures libérales », des « populismes religieux » et des « démocratie élitaires ».



Une question légitime s'impose : quand l'Histoire constitue-t-elle un véritable facteur d'unité ? Et à partir de quelle période cette Histoire commence ?

De même une autre version de ce discours insiste sur l'existence de ressources économiques en tant que facteur d'unité. L'UMA n'est qu'une étape vers une unité plus globale et complète à savoir l'Unité arabe. Le simplisme de ce discours très courant jusqu'au début des années soixante est que l'indépendance politique signifie l'Unité en politique.

30 M. Lahcen Moussaoui, ministre algérien délégué chargé de la Coopération et des Affaires maghrébines, a souligné le rôle de l'action maghrébine non gouvernementale dans le renforcement du processus unioniste. Ce constat a été fait par le Comité de suivi de l'UMA lors de sa 35<sup>ème</sup> session tenue à Alger





**Towards a Euro-Med Regional Group:  
From the Association Agreements to a Mediterranean-European  
Free Trade Area**

***Obstacles to Sub-Regional Cooperation in the Middle East***

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The aspiration to a comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean zone of stability, security and prosperity remains the goal of the Barcelona Process. But this general goal, along with the more specific target of a Mediterranean-European Free Trade Area by 2010, are unlikely to be met without some significant changes in the patterns of inter-state relations within the Partnership. Thus far, the Partnership essentially consists of one sub-regional grouping, the European Union, and many individual states on the southern and eastern rim of the Mediterranean. The individual Mediterranean Non-Member Countries (MNMCS) are intensifying their bilateral relations with the EU to one degree or another, but there has been little structural change in the nature of inter-MNMC relations since the start of the Process in 1995. In other words, the dynamics of the EMP still resemble the "hub-and-spoke" system of many airline companies: it is still easier for Rabat and Algiers or Jerusalem and Cairo (much less Damascus) to interact institutionally through Brussels than directly with each other.

That would not be such a major problem if the ultimate intention of Barcelona were to expand the EU southward as it is being expanded eastern, in other words, to integrate the MNMCS into the EU. But that is manifestly not the case. Not only does the constitutional basis of the EU preclude membership by non-European states; many of the latter would have serious reservations about joining (i.e., accepting the *acquis communautaire*) even if that option were available.

Consequently, movement towards a meaningful Euro-Med regional grouping can only take place via another route: the pursuit of more direct and open relations among the non-European members of EMP. This requires normal, cooperative interactions at the level of both governments and civil societies. Geographical proximity and geo-political sensitivity would then lend some kind of special sub-

regional character to these interactions, to which an institutional underpinning would be appropriate. In other words, sub-regional cooperation in other parts of the Euro-Med region is not, as some have argued, an obstacle to the overall goals of Barcelona (any more than is the existence of the EU itself). Instead, it is an important building block, perhaps even a prerequisite for achieving those goals.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence thus far that trends in the Middle East point in this direction. There is not a single cooperative or even consultative organization for the entire sub-region (in contrast to Latin America, Africa, South Asia, or Asia-Pacific), and the few sub-sub-regional organizations that exist (Arab League, GCC) do not have an overly impressive record of effective cooperation.

Overcoming this legacy will not be easy. There are two main obstacles to the development of cooperative relations, not to speak of an institutional basis for them, in this part of the world. The first is the persistence of regional suspicions, rivalries and conflicts, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second is the character of the domestic political-economic systems that prevail in the region.

On the first, it is often suggested that sub-regional cooperation cannot yet proceed in the Middle East because territorial and boundary disputes remain unresolved and national aspirations for self-determination (independence or autonomy) remain unsatisfied. In particular, decision-makers in some of the leading Arab states have insisted that these problems must be resolved first before any institutional basis for cooperative relations with Israel can be put in place. Indeed, some have come to equate sub-regional cooperation with "normalization," which they view in instrumental geopolitical terms, i.e., "as a reward for Israel."<sup>1</sup> This view is not universally shared, but the pressures of inter-Arab politics, notwithstanding the end of pan-Arabism as a vibrant

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<sup>1</sup> Emad Gad, "Regional Cooperation in the Middle East: Settlement Leads to Cooperation" (mimeo), p. 6.

political force, mean that even those states whose own bilateral conflicts with Israel have been solved or whose leaders incline to a different approach, are very hesitant to move forward. Consequently, sub-regional cooperation is effectively held hostage to the resolution of all outstanding Arab-Israeli issues, i.e., some Arab partners have a veto of sorts on the actions of others.

There is no intrinsic reason why this sequencing must predominate. Experience elsewhere (e.g., in South-East Asia) suggests that the opposite approach might actually be more productive, i.e., that the conscious pursuit of cooperative inter-state relations in functionally compartmentalized fields could help contain, manage or even resolve conflicts. That was the logic behind the creation of ASEAN even while member states continued to hold to contradictory views on a variety of territorial, maritime, and other issues. And while mutual suspicions in situations of unresolved conflict might explain the reluctance to undertake cooperative relations that have some direct or even indirect bearing on national security (e.g., CSBMs), they do not so obviously explain the inclination to shy away from cooperation in areas (e.g., economics, environment) where there is a clear potential for mutual benefit. However, there is little point in arguing the abstract logic of the proper sequence between cooperation and dispute settlement. The idea that peace is a precondition for Arab-Israeli normalization is so deeply entrenched that any institutional expression of sub-regional cooperation will almost certainly have to wait for more significant progress along that track.

Having said that, it is also the case that the mere absence of conflicts as severe and complicated as the Arab-Israeli one is not a sufficient condition for more effective sub-regional cooperation. As the EuroMeSCo Working Group report indicates, "The Arab Middle Eastern [and North African] countries' record of regional cooperation

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among themselves is not much better."<sup>2</sup>

All this points to the second obstacle to sub-regional cooperation: domestic structural factors. Many states in the region are ruled by unresponsive, unaccountable governments. Although the degree of authoritarianism varies, most of these governments rely to one degree or another on neo-patrimonial bureaucracies and military and/or other security organs to maintain themselves in power. And almost all of them must confront important domestic constituencies opposed to the open exchange of goods, services, capital, ideas, information and cultural influences that are part of cooperative relations with other states and civil societies. For these reasons, many governments in the region are highly suspicious of anything that might impinge on the unfettered exercise of state sovereignty or of regime authority. Both sovereignty and authority are often seen to be threatened by cooperative inter-state relations or by the structural demands of cooperative relations between civil societies (e.g., independent judiciaries in the economic sphere, free flow of information in the economic and cultural spheres).<sup>3</sup>

In fact, if institutionalized sub-regional cooperation demands greater political and economic open-ness, it can be profoundly destabilizing to these governments and their bases of support in society, in the same way that the Helsinki Agreements eventually proved destabilizing to Communist systems in Eastern Europe. Freer cultural and information flows undermine their control of information and challenge statist-nationalist or ethno-religious values; freer economic flows challenge the political and material benefits of state regulation for national treasuries and for state bureaucrats,

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<sup>2</sup> Gamal Soltan, "Sub-Regional Cooperation: The Case of the Middle East," p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Problems with economic transparency and legal security also contribute to the failure of MNMCs to attract direct foreign investment, which makes it difficult even for well-intentioned economic restructuring plans to succeed. George Joffe, "The Domestic Implications of The Free Trade Area Agreements" (mimeo), p. 2.

holders of licenses and monopolies, and producers of import-substitutes. It is therefore not surprising that those whose vested interests and values are threatened by greater open-ness not only resist institutionalized sub-regional cooperation (which implies normalized relations with neighboring states). They are also suspicious of the broader trend of globalization (which they depict as a process intended to subvert their authentic identity). In this sense, even free trade can be a subversive idea.

Given these obstacles, there is little likelihood that sub-regional institutions for cooperation in the Middle East will emerge in the foreseeable future, and this raises serious questions about the viability of a Euro-Med regional grouping or a functioning MEFTA by the year 2010. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the potential for progress that does exist and that can be nurtured by judicious policies on the part of the EU. The potential lies largely in the phenomenon of differential bilateral cooperation among MCMCs in the eastern Mediterranean. This is most advanced where bilateral disputes are least intrusive AND where domestic political and economic systems are most open (internally and externally). The clearest example is the case of Turkish-Israeli ties that include, in addition to their security component, extensive trade relations (over 50% of intra-regional trade) and interaction between civil societies. But it is also apparent in Israeli-Egyptian relations. Notwithstanding the psychological and other barriers that remain in effect, there has been a noteworthy development of tourism, academic exchanges, and trade ties between the two countries (Israel is Egypt's second largest trading partner in the Middle East). This is a direct outcome of Anwar Sadat's decision to make peace with Israel. But that decision, in turn, was in many ways derivative of a prior decision: to abandon the Nasserist model of development and open Egypt to the outside world (the term for that decision – *infitah* – implies

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endorsement of the ideology of globalization and open regionalism). In a similar vein, the development of Israeli-Jordanian relations is not just a function of the peace agreement between the two countries, but also of Jordan's experiments in democratization and structural economic reform. And it is not coincidental that the least resistance in Jordan to normal ties with Israel is found precisely in that sector of Jordanian society most receptive to the open-ness implied by globalization: the private sector.

What this suggests is that, while the emergence of a sub-regional Middle Eastern grouping as a building block of the Euro-Med idea is at best a distant prospect, the emerging web of bilateral ties already provides a foundation for sub-sub-regional cooperation on instrumental grounds. These coalitions of the willing or like-minded have produced numerous examples of focused institutionalized cooperation, the most recent of which is the air traffic management organization whose establishment was agreed by Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan and Israel in mid-June.<sup>4</sup> Such institutions are not, in and of themselves, equivalent to a sub-regional grouping, but they signal recognition of the mutual benefits of cooperation and provide the precursors or building blocks of the more ambitious sub-regional cooperation needed to turn the Euro-Med idea into a reality.

This has certain implications for those in the EU committed to the idea of promoting a Euro-Med zone without actually expanding the Union. For one thing, it reinforces the principle of gradualism or incrementalism in institution building. In practical terms, that means encouraging the expansion of functional sub-sub-regional networks in the Middle East among the willing or like-minded, even when others choose to refrain from joining or actually criticize such developments. Encouragement

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<sup>4</sup> Ha-Aretz, 18 June 2000.

needs to take the form, not only of political support, but also of financial and/or technical assistance where that is appropriate.

But beyond that, there is a clear interest in expanding the circle of the willing or like-minded partners. This ought to be done along two parallel, simultaneous tracks. One is the promotion of settlement of the disputes that complicate the pursuit of sub-regional cooperation. This clearly requires European coordination with the United States, with the aim of working out some coherent division of labor based on the comparative advantages of the partners in the Trans-Atlantic relationship. The other is the promotion of domestic open-ness (legal, political, social and economic), the deficit of which also complicates the pursuit of sub-regional cooperation. Here, the EU has a greater ability to act autonomously to strengthen government transparency and accountability, the rule of law, the private sector and civil society around the Mediterranean. Such actions are entirely consistent with the declared goals of the Barcelona Process. Beyond that, they are needed to give content to the idea of a common Euro-Mediterranean space.



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**Towards a Euro-Med Regional Group:  
From the Association Agreements to a Mediterranean-European  
Free Trade Area**

***Energy as a factor for regional and sub-regional integration in the  
Euro-Mediterranean region, in the Maghreb and Middle East***

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Estoril, 26 June 2000

Energy is a very important component of Mediterranean relations, but a less important component of Mediterranean co-operation and integration. In fact, more often than not, energy has tended to be a factor of division and conflict rather than integration.

Energy was originally barely mentioned in the Barcelona Convention and, notwithstanding repeated efforts on the part of the concerned parties (energy ministers of the Mediterranean countries, Mediterranean energy companies and the DG for Energy in the Commission) it has so far failed to acquire the attention that it deserves in the context of the EMP.

In this paper, I will mostly discuss oil and gas. This is not entirely satisfactory: one should speak also of power generation as well and of renewable sources of energy. But this would entail an excessive broadening of the scope of the paper.

The discussion is organised in four main aspects:

1. energy trade
2. development of energy resources
3. satisfying energy trade
4. energy and the EMP

### ***Energy trade***

Energy products are a very important component of Mediterranean trade. For the oil and gas exporting countries (Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Syria), they constitute by far the dominant export commodities. For the oil and gas importing countries (all others) they constitute invariably a very important component of total imports. Exporters may export to non-Mediterranean countries and importers may buy from non-Mediterranean countries, however in fact the bulk of energy products trade takes place between two Mediterranean countries.

The dimension of trade in oil and gas creates an important area of common interest. However, a fundamental difference exists between the two. In fact, the market for oil is global, and has always been so, while the market for gas is regional. This is because oil is easy and cheap to transport, while gas is difficult and expensive.

For oil, the dimension of regional co-operation has never acquired any real importance. Relations between buyer and seller are intrinsically conflictual, because of price indetermination in the short term. Both demand and supply of oil are rigid in the short run; hence fundamentals only determine the upper and lower limit of a wide band within which the price oscillates quite violently.

Determination of price within this band is a matter of speculative market behaviour and market power, leading to intense conflict between the two sides. (To be precise, notwithstanding repeated attempts at understanding what drives prices in the short run, no satisfactory explanation has been found yet, and forecasts are therefore impossible).

At the regional level, while trade is intense, it is not necessitated: each side in turn may threaten to abandon its customary suppliers or clients in order to gain better prices, and both sides do exactly this in turns, thus preventing any regional co-operation agreement. Looking for alternative sources or clients remains a largely sterile exercise, because prices are determined globally, and who is the supplier of each specific importer has no importance whatsoever.

For gas the situation is entirely different. The difficulty of transportation means that the gas market is segmented: regionally and also by each supplier and client. In other words, not all clients pay the same for Algerian gas, not all suppliers charge the same to Snam or GDF. Prices are in fact kept rather jealously secret in order to prevent open competition. Things are changing in this respect in Europe, and the progressive creation of a unified European gas market will force greater transparency and possibly competitiveness, but there is a long way to go. Relations between buyer and seller are of course conflictual with respect to price determination, but both sides also have huge shared interests, with respect to maximising the utilisation of transportation infrastructure and stabilising market share – which is difficult and costly to acquire and would be disastrous to lose. Gas suppliers and clients have therefore been locked in a relationship which is very close to a catholic marriage: you can quarrel as much as you want, but divorce is simply out of the question.

Whether this kind of relationship can be called co-operative is debatable to say the least. It is for sure a relationship of interdependence, in which neither side can prosper without the other. But both sides are always suspicious that the other may gain an advantage in bargaining power, and historical experience tells us that no close co-operation in other areas was generated by gas trade.

At the same time, experience also demonstrates that the existence of gas trade establishes a very solid base for bilateral relations, creating a favourable climate to containing conflict and overcoming differences. This may at times be called complacency or appeasement (e.g. towards Russia or towards the military repression in Algeria) but it does have a stabilising effect in the long run.

The difficulty and cost of developing gas transportation infrastructure explains the unbalanced development of gas in the Mediterranean. To this date, Algeria is the only gas producer in the Mediterranean that has developed substantial gas exports, and Italy and France are the only two consumers that have developed substantial imports. Spain has lagged behind, though its gas business is developing fast, and Portugal, Greece and Turkey have followed suit with some delay relative to Spain, though they too are expected to expand consumption very rapidly.

Algerian exports to Italy have taken place by way of a pipeline that has been operational since the early 1980's, while exports to France have been based on LNG. Because the pipe to Italy crossed Tunisia, it created a degree of sub-regional integration, which, however, was viewed as a cost rather than an opportunity by both Sonatrach and Snam. Sonatrach is constantly searching for a solution to

access the European (Italian and/or French) market by way of a pipeline that will not pass through Tunisia, and Eni has manifested no interest in developing gas consumption in Tunisia, nor in routing a proposed pipeline from Libya through Tunisia. Libya, in any case, insisted in a direct routing across the sea, and turned down any suggestion of transit across Tunisia.

More recently, establishing a pipeline to Spain has forced transit through Morocco, but none of the parties involved has been interested in making the best of this opportunity and developing gas consumption in Morocco in a big way: rather, a minimalist approach has prevailed.

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Greece and Turkey receive piped gas from Russia, and LNG from Algeria, but no other international gas flows exist in the region.

1. Egypt has long has significant gas production, recently more and more in excess of its domestic needs, and an export project has been on the drawing or negotiating table for years, but no development is to be expected anytime soon.
2. Libya possesses gas reserves that are small relative to its oil reserves but in no way insignificant in absolute terms, and will become an exporter when the pipeline to Sicily will be laid and operational.
3. Lebanon is in need of gas but receives none, though Syria has promised to share some of its gas with it: but Syria itself does not produce enough to satisfy its full potential needs, and what it is pledging to Lebanon will be insufficient to meet Lebanon's needs.
4. Turkey is severely short of gas,
5. and Jordan, to close the list, has none.

Force is to recognise that outside the Western Mediterranean political considerations have prevented the development of gas ties. Hence we are obliged to admit that gas is highly political, though it is not at all clear why this should be the case, as gas is fungible and does not establish a condition of dependence that may have serious security implications. Yet, as we said, gas contracts are in many ways catholic marriages, and presumably you don't get married if you seriously dislike each other.

### ***Development of energy sources***

Before they are traded, oil and gas need to be found and developed. The Mediterranean region has experienced the alternation of phases that has been common to the industry in general: domination on the part of multinationals, re-assertion of national control, new opening to international companies. This process has created powerful forces and actors, which shall have a bearing on future regional relations.

Algerian oil and gas was discovered when the country was still part of France; elsewhere in the Mediterranean discoveries took place in independent countries, and at a relatively late date, when

the power of the major international oil companies was already being questioned. Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Syria were therefore able to adopt rules which avoided the extreme conflicts that characterised relations with the international oil companies in Iran, Iraq or other Gulf states.

On the northern shore, the governments of the importing countries created or encouraged the creation of national oil companies, generally state-owned: Repsol in Spain, Elf in France, Eni in Italy, TPAO in Turkey. In their search for partners different from the over-powerful international oil companies, the Southern Mediterranean countries invited these national oil companies alongside American independents to create competition and enhance their control. This policy had a measure of success and remains predominantly linked to the name of Enrico Mattei, who first drove Eni into Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, and supported the Algerian independence struggle.

- Eni remains
  - the first largest gas producer and the second largest oil producer in Egypt,
  - the largest oil producer in Tunisia,
  - and the largest active oil producer in Libya (when the American companies whose properties are kept in trust by the Libyans come back, this will change).
- The presence of the French companies was logically concentrated in Algeria and has never quite recovered from nationalisation there,
- and Repsol was less aggressive and less fortunate with discoveries.

With the exception of Elf's presence in Algeria, this pattern of relations in upstream oil and gas has weathered the nationalist phase remarkably well. Some of the major international oil companies' properties were nationalised, notably in Libya, but the national oil companies of the Northern Mediterranean countries were able to maintain their positions. To some extent, this created the feeling that there existed some kind of preferential relationship between Mediterranean national oil and gas companies from the two sides, producers and importers.

We leave it to historians to discuss whether this preferential relationship was for real, but surely it has been undermined by various recent developments.

1. Firstly, all the former state-owned national oil companies of the major importing countries have been privatised and subjected to much closer scrutiny on the part of financial analysts and markets, leaving precious little room of manoeuvre to undertake co-operative projects that are not immediately profitable.
2. Secondly, some of these companies have entered into international alliances (Total took over Fina first and then Elf, Repsol took over YPF) that have relatively reduced their interest in the Mediterranean.
3. Thirdly, the countries of the Southern Mediterranean have opened their doors to international investment and sought to diversify their partners – i.e. looked for partners

outside the Mediterranean. Hence, Algeria granted concessions for major projects to BP, Amoco and Arco when these were independent companies, and BP-Amoco that has taken over Arco will undoubtedly become Sonatrach's main partner in due course of time. Other companies that have been very active in Algeria are Anadarko of the US (in which Sonatrach owns a 10% stake) and BHP of Australia. Eni and Total have also been active in the country, but their presence is very much put in a different perspective by recent developments. No doubt, as soon as the American government will allow US companies to go back to Libya, they will be allowed considerable space there.

4. Finally, a process of transformation of the national oil companies of the producing countries has begun. Sonatrach here is leading the way, being partially privatised, and mandated to behave like any international oil companies, investing outside Algeria and maximising profit. It will be some time before this strategy is fully implemented, but the direction of change is clear.

The bottom line of these various concurrent trends is clear: the development of Mediterranean oil and gas will be increasingly globalised and less and less of a regional affair.

### *Satisfying energy demand*

Many political analysts that are not experts in the energy field are led to believe that the essence of energy co-operation is in developing new resources and in energy trade. In fact, the most promising area for co-operation is meeting the rapidly growing energy needs of the Southern Mediterranean countries. These countries are confronted by very rapid population growth, and their people expect to enjoy the conveniences and lifestyle that only the availability of network energy can accommodate (which is not synonymous with affluence). Their per capita consumption level is at present extremely low when compared with Southern European standards: in short, there is no way that one can conceive of economic development in the Mediterranean Partner Countries which is not accompanied by a steep increase in energy consumption.

There is significant evidence that energy consumption is repressed in much of the Mediterranean, meaning that more would be consumed at current prices if it were available. But not all areas are connected to network energy (electricity and gas, but the former is most important) and in those that are so connected the energy is not always available, because of insufficient generation capacity, breakdowns and unreliability of the systems.

The insufficient extension of the networks is an important motivation for people to move away from the rural areas and the smaller centres and contribute to the flow of migrants into the large and unmanageable metropolises. The unreliability of energy supply is a direct blow to industrialisation and simply adds an additional burden to residential and service users (including tourist establishments) that must invest in a generator of their own (which, of course, will generate very high cost electricity).

Hence, satisfying the energy demand of the Mediterranean Partner countries must be recognised as a key priority for the EMP. In line with the prevailing international doctrine (the Washington consensus) it has been maintained that the solution can only come from privatising the old-style state owned utilities, opening the field to international investment and adopting prices in line with market realities.

It is difficult to quarrel with these indications, and yet countries that have followed them have scarcely improved their situation. A few of the Mediterranean countries have called for private investment in IPPs, but where projects have been adjudicated and investors' consortia chosen implementation has lagged behind. Privately generated power still has to make a significant contribution to total power supply in the MPC.

Besides, there is more that needs to be done, not just power generation. The entire energy chain is seriously underfunded and underinvested, and the EMP has not succeeded in stimulating the massive flow of private investment that is required.

### ***Energy and the EMP***

This unsatisfactory state of affairs is the direct consequence of the fact that the importance of energy – specifically of improving energy systems in the MPCs – has never been recognised by the Partnership. In earlier drafts of the Barcelona Convention, energy was not mentioned at all as a priority field of interest for the Mediterranean Co-operation. Later, a simple mention was included, but it had no teeth. Attempts of the part of DGXVII first, and now the Directorate for Transportation and Energy, to raise the profile of Energy in the context of the Mediterranean Partnership have so far failed. Yet the need to do so has been clear for years and it is sanctioned in various official documents.

The Ministerial Conference of Trieste, which took place on June 7-9, 1996 clearly pointed to the satisfaction of the energy needs of the Southern Mediterranean countries as top priority, and also pointed to other important objectives, notably the extension to the MPC's of membership into the Energy Charter Treaty and creation of a EU mechanism of non-commercial risk insurance for larger infrastructure projects. No real progress has been achieved on either of these objectives.

Now that both the electricity and the gas directives have come into force in the Union, the extension of these important regulatory instruments to the entire Mediterranean region appears of paramount importance to promote private investment in the energy cycle.

For several years, opportunities for debate and for reaching common conclusions have abounded. It is time to implement some of the things on which a broad consensus has been found, recognising the importance that energy supply has and will continue to have for economic growth in the MPCs, and the inadequate response that we have so far been capable of eliciting.



## Appendix

### Conclusions of the Trieste Ministerial Meeting, June 7-9, 1996

Following the fruitful debate between all the participants to the Trieste Conference, and in order to reinforce and enhance the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the energy sector, agree that:

- \* the Energy Charter Treaty could be considered as a reference instrument which would be able to promote investments and trade and create the conditions for efficient and transparent relations in the partnership. For the countries who have not yet signed this instrument, the accession to the Treaty may be considered as an appropriate form of participation. The Conference welcomes the European Commission initiative to organise in Autumn 1996 a briefing session on the Energy Charter in order to have all interested countries informed on the Energy Charter itself and the modalities for organising consultation with a view to their participation in the forms most closely corresponding to the needs of each country;
- \* an effort should be made to harmonize legal and contractual rules applied to the energy sector in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, taking into account individual characteristics, in particular in the field of hydrocarbons in order to favour investments by foreign companies;
- \* the development of a Euro-Mediterranean interconnected network in the gas and electricity sectors, including the Trans-European regional and local energy networks, constitutes a significant contribution to economic and social development in this area and strengthens the security of supply for all the partners;
- \* an effort should be made to identify efficient ways to promote international investments, including methods of providing better cover of investment risks with the participation, where appropriate, of interested companies, to allow the financing of projects aiming at improving the energy situation in countries of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean;
- \* considering the important interrelations between energy and environment, environmental objectives should be taken into account in the framework of the energy partnership, being compatible with the improvement of the supply security and the networks interconnection;
- \* an effort should be made in order to improve energy efficiency, to develop renewable energy sources, in particular for thermal use and electricity production and to provide electricity in rural areas;
- \* the "Euro Mediterranean Energy Forum", which will constitute a flexible framework could ensure the continuity of dialogue amongst all the partners at political as well as expert level and could promote projects for regional interest.

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**Towards a Euro-Med Regional Group:  
From the Association Agreements to a Mediterranean-European  
Free Trade Area**

***NGO Roles in Regional and Sub-Regional Cooperation***

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With the beginning of the new millennium, NGOs of the eastern Mediterranean region are at a crossroads facing many challenges, among which is the challenge to cope with, coordinate, and if necessary to have their inputs along the line of their governments' political and socioeconomic agendas. The culture of peace and cooperation in the Middle East with European as well as American support launched since Madrid in 1991 has still to genuinely develop, but has opened a window for establishing and strengthening the exchange of information, joint research in the region and common implementation of projects,

The importance of NGO roles in regional and sub-regional cooperation lies in their relative freedom from the constraints of official government institutions: NGOs are able to form connections that may be deemed politically unpopular or sensitive, and can often act as trailblazers, setting precedents and establishing working relationships between the personnel of opposing camps that may later be utilized by the official channels. Examples of this are manifold in the fields of regional stability and security, as well as democratization.

Unfortunately, the activities of NGOs in this region have been hampered by an obsession with obtaining funding and resources, and as a result a non-productive and non-altruistic mentality has developed. For example, the theoretically sound "people-to-people projects" in the Israel-Palestine region have produced little in the way of substantive results, as NGOs and governments rush towards these projects for the sake of the funds, and in some cases pay little attention to the substance, context or the value of the work.

Although there have been internal attempts to attack this mentality, the projects undertaken thus far have been counterproductive, misused, and the NGOs that undertake them risk losing their values and/or reputation. If people are not convinced of what they are doing and for whom, what they are achieving and how to build on it, the current basket of regional and sub-regional cooperation will continue to be hijacked by professional businessmen who see the relationship based on material

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