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THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP

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A new Mediterranean strategic setting

In the 1990s, the end of the East-West confrontation brought about sweeping changes in the regions beyond the Mediterranean further than in the European East. During the Cold War many Middle Eastern and North African countries had received support from the USSR and sided to varying extent and in different ways with it. Thus, the Mediterranean region had been regarded by NATO as its "southern flank". In fact, conflict in that area could give way to a "horizontal escalation" and shift the confrontation from regional to global level.

In the new post-Cold War situation, the threat the Southern regions used to put to the Alliance disappeared. The root causes of regional conflict and instability were still there, however: namely, a set of international and domestic disputes that could generate dangerous spillovers and, more broadly speaking, affect Western interests and the emerging international order. The new setting was considered by Alliance in the 7-8 November 1991 North Atlantic Council in Rome. The NATO 1991 Strategic Concept[1] says that risks to the Alliance's security can hardly result from "calculated aggression". Western countries' security remains subjected, however, to the risk of "the adverse consequences that may arise from serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes which are faced by many countries".

In general, the new strategic setting, as defined in Rome by the allies, called for cooperative responses. In the Southern approaches to Europe, the Western countries responded by setting in motion the Madrid/Oslo process for peace in the Middle East and other frameworks for regional political and security cooperation, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership-EMP and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue.

After ten years the balance sheet is not very encouraging. Western responses didn't match expectations. The Madrid/Oslo process, more and more challenged and successfully weakened by its adversaries, in the Israeli as well as Palestinian camp, has finally collapsed. While the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue has remained very limited in its scope and goals, the EMP has proved unable to live up to its political and security ambitions, partly because the failure of the Middle East Peace Process made any multilateral security cooperation between Israel and the Arab countries impossible; partly because no degree of security co-ownership resulted acceptable to both the EU and the Arabs. The EU was unwilling to conceive of the EMP as something more than its own Mediterranean policy. The Arabs proved unable and unwilling to own any agenda of political and economic reforms fitting with EU requirements. In sum, the Partners could not find out any satisfactory common ground and the EMP failed to work in the way the Partners had hoped for when it was established in Barcelona.

[1] See Part I, point 10 of "The Alliance's Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rome on 7-8 November 1991", in *NATO Handbook*, Brussels 1995.

The balance sheet of Mediterranean cooperation is thus unsatisfactory and asks for being reshaped. On this backdrop, however, the strategic perspective of Western-Southern relations across the Mediterranean is being further transformed by the emerging post-11th September US foreign policy and its policy implications. The American response to 11th September attach is not just asking for adaptations to Western policies on the Mediterranean and the Middle East. It asks for a sweeping change, in which cooperative responses are trivialized and military responses tend to be emphasized instead. In the transatlantic perspective, this change brings about considerable differences among the allies.
This paper will, first, comment on old and new challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and try to look at them in a transatlantic perspective. Second, it will assess the role of the EMP and the adaptations it may require to respond more effectively to the needs of Mediterranean as well as transatlantic cooperation.

Old and new challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East

In a broad perspective, risks and threats in the Mediterranean regions stem from three major epicenters: (a) the unsolved conflicts in the Middle East - namely the Israeli-Arab & Palestinian conflict and Iraq - and the Balkans; (b) the absence of democracy, the rule of law and good governance in most of the regional states; and (c) the gap between wealth and order in Europe and poverty and instability in the southern regions.
Let's concentrate on the Near East, namely the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and relating Israeli-Arab conflicts and tensions. In this area, unsolved conflict and lack of democracy coalesce in generating both domestic and international instability. They are the primary source of instability, political tyranny and economic decay domestically. Furthermore, they project instability regionally and even globally by stirring up WMD proliferation, refugees, emigration and terrorism's spillovers, thus nurturing the conditions for international crime to prosper.
The responses to instability under (a) and (b) are also linked to one another. Some believe that a previous process of domestic political and economic reforms would enable the countries concerned to establish peaceful relations within the region. Thus, attaining democracy would be the condition to make peace rather than the other way round. By the way, this seems the view underlying President George W. Bush's 24 June 2002 Rose Garden statements on Palestine. All in all, it seems very difficult to ascertain what has to come first. In general, the two processes of peace and democratization should be complementary.
It must be noted, however, that the two goals - peace and democracy - belong to two different temporal spheres: peace may be a shorter-term goal, whereas democracy is definitely a longer-term one. Furthermore, while the absence of peace makes countries hostages to nationalism and is a strong obstacle to reform, the absence of democracy may render peace more difficult to attain but it is not in itself an absolute obstacle to it, as its was shown by the Egypt- and Jordan-Israel treaties of peace. In sum, the only effective strategy is peace in the short-term to make long-term reform possible and thus consolidate peace. It is in this sense that the two processes are complementary.
The disruption of the peace process, that is the more-than-ever violent re-eruption of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has made things worst in at least two respects: (a) it has reinforced hard-liners and, by the same token, weakened moderate forces and regimes,

that is the only forces able to achieve peace in the shorter-term (as feeble as the latter may result); (b) by failing to generate peace, it has magnified obstacles to reforms in the longer-term. This means, that unless a peace-making perspective is restored, not only violence will continue to prevail in the shorter-term but whatsoever longer-term action to foster reform is bound to become more difficult and even futile. An immediate and determined political and diplomatic action by the West with a view to restore the peace-making perspective is therefore a condition for making national efforts and Western support for long-term policies of democratization and peace-consolidation effective.

The third major epicenter of instability is the relentless socio-economic gap between North and South. Here again we have failures and shortcomings in international diplomacy besides failing domestic policies and negative ideological approaches towards international integration. These approaches have brought about rejection of trends to globalization rather than attempts at finding out new balances between opportunities and liabilities. The RDWG and the MENA Economic Summits agendas have declined and subsequently evaporated with the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process. At the same time, the EMP program for regional trade integration and financial aid has weakened.

After seven years were spent in pursuing a Euro-Med common free trade area, the pattern of integration in the Mediterranean regions reflects political rather than economic impulses and is very fragmented: Cyprus and Malta have cleverly worked to establish the conditions to become members of the EU; Israel and Turkey, each one according to its format, have increased their integration with the EU and, at the same time, reinforced bilateral cooperation; a number of Arab countries have initiated an inter-Arab process of integration with the Agadir Pact. More in general, every country has tried to extract the best possible outcome from its bilateral relations with the EU, while neglecting horizontal ties. MEDA has consequently privileged a largely bilateral approach as well. In this mostly bilateral framework, success stories are not lacking, as in the case of Tunisia, Morocco and, in a sense, Turkey. Still, the agenda for implementing a multilateral integration directed at opening the door to an independent and significant economic growth seems gone and replaced by stagnation and some marginal, individual success instead.

Like the absence of peace, that of development is not bound to foster democratization - although it is not an impediment in itself either. As in the case of peace and democracy, the interplay between economic development and democracy cannot be defined easily. Democracy is an inherent dimension of economic development and the other way round. Still, there are thresholds of economic development that have to be overcome in order to materialize the minimal conditions for attaining democracy, for instance overcoming poverty and vulnerability or improving income distribution. This is not to say that democracy must be overlooked as a condition to attain development (as in Tunisia) but that, definitely, the absence of development will not help any democracy to emerge. In the last years, Morocco may be regarded as a good example of virtuous interplay between democracy and economic development.

In sum, in the current situation, risks are not new in their character. They are magnified, however, by the failure of the 1990s attempts of crisis management and conflict resolution.

As a result of the poor Mediterranean performance in the economic realm, the most important driver of emigration being the existence of strong economic differentials - definitely more than growing demographic gaps - the failure of Western and national

efforts to start economic development in the region is now magnifying risks stemming from emigration and associated spill-over effects, including crime and trafficking.
As much so magnified are the risks from political instability and conflict: the continuation and aggravation of ongoing conflict, political refugees, displaced persons, sudden and uncontrolled mass movement of persons, terrorism, and all the criminal activities that, as always, prosper thanks to disorder and despair.
What this evolution suggests in terms of policy response is that cooperation did not constitute the wrong response. Rather, instruments and policies for achieving cooperation have to be improved and made more effective. In this sense, the restoration of an effective, concerted Western effort to bring compromise and peace in historical Palestine along with the improvement of the EMP and NATO Mediterranean Dialogue looks like a strong and urgent priority.
The consequences of the 11th September events may put in question this conclusion. In fact, the US foreign policy tends now to construe terrorism as a fourth epicenter of instability and conflict, independent on the other three, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
The terrorist attack carried out by Al Qaeda's agents on the American territory has been regarded by the American administration as a declaration of war on the United States. Subsequent statements by Mr. bin Laden's have confirmed the intention of the Al Qaeda organization to attack the United States and the West as responsible for Muslims' sufferings in Palestine, Iraq and worldwide. These circumstances, as they bring about a direct threat to American national security, have exposed Al Qaeda's terrorism as a global factor and an absolute priority in the American and Western foreign and security policy.
This new approach is bringing about a strong impact on the Mediterranean and the Middle East. First of all, it tends to equalize terrorism stemming from national conflicts to global terrorism. Admittedly, the globalization of terrorism is a consequence of Mr. bin Laden's political discourse, where the Palestinian struggle for independence is seen as a dimension of the wider Muslims' struggle against Western oppressors.
Second, the incoming global engagement of the United States brings about a sweeping change in American security priorities. In fact, the first priority is now the struggle to global terrorism, whereas the American engagement for peace in the Middle East seems gone. In fact, the primary source of instability is not the Israeli-Palestinian conflict anymore but terrorism. In this sense, engagements towards peace in the region get trivialized and downgraded with respect to American national security.
Third, as the American government suspects a set of regional states to support terrorism in direct association with Al Qaeda - as Taliban's Afghanistan and other Tortuga-states as Somalia - or for their own interests - as Iraq - the so called "rogue" states are bound to become part of the struggle against global terrorism and, thus, a security priority for the United States and its allies.
Thus, at the beginning of the first decade of the new millennium the transatlantic perspective on the Mediterranean and the Middle East looks very divisive. Despite failures incurred by the Western cooperative responses provided in the 1990s, the European believe that such responses are still needed in the new situation. For sure, terrorism and its supporters require military and coercive responses, including so called rogue states. These responses need to combine with political and cooperative responses, however. In some cases, as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, such political and cooperative responses have strong priority. The United States is just not caring of

cooperative responses and is asking European and Arab support in providing due military responses to terrorism and "rogue" states alike.
All in all, there seems to be a situation where emerging common concerns relating to trans-Mediterranean regions are not in tune with responses from the two sides of the Atlantic. In this situation, where is the EU's Mediterranean Partnership going from here? How can the EMP be modified with a view to improve its response to the new and growing instabilities in the Southern regions beyond the Mediterranean Sea? At the same time, how can EMP be reshaped with a view to contribute to a cohesive transatlantic response? In fact, while the Europeans will not drop their approach, their strategic interest require to make their policies as close as possible to American and transatlantic requirements.

EU and the EMP: inadequate responses so far

The EU has initiated the EMP with varying objectives in mind. A Mediterranean framework was primarily urged by the Southern European members to prevent the EU resources and security from being polarized by the European East. Common resources for the Mediterranean were intended to accelerate economic development and prevent or contain mass immigration from the Southern Mediterranean countries as well as other spillovers stemming from political instability there. Last but not least, the framework was regarded as a chance to set up an instrument to allow for a EU proper security policy in the region and meet European interests at appropriate time. The first chapter of the Barcelona Declaration is the expression of this ambition; in particular when, at its very end, it makes reference to the establishment of a kind of stability pact between the parties.
For five years this political ambition has been pursued to no avail, however, in the framework of protracted negotiations aimed at establishing the pact the first chapter of the Declaration alludes to in the shape of a Charter for Peace and Stability. Subsequently, the Charter has collapsed at the EMP Ministerial conference of Marseilles in November 2000, formally as a consequence of the emerging post-Camp David II crisis between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arabs, substantially because the Arabs have never been willing to sign any multilateral security pact with Israel before a full political settlement takes place, at least with the Palestinians. After Marseilles, the Charter has been put aside and - also because of the continuation and aggravation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - the EMP political agenda is now stalling, despite improvements - for instance, with respect to MEDA Democracy funding.
The Common Mediterranean Strategy, approved by the 19-20 June 2000 Santa Maria da Feira European Council, quite surprisingly retains the Charter as its central instrument, thus persisting in making EU Mediterranean policy dependent on a factor it cannot control. While pursuing such futile political ambition, despite the express mandate of the Declaration's third chapter, the EMP has failed to develop any Mediterranean cooperation in regard to migration, the principal early task of the Barcelona process, nor in regard to the numerous and important soft security issues associated to movements of persons in the area, as trafficking, international crime and terrorism.
The Action Plan adopted by the EMP at the 22-23 April 2002 Ministerial conference in Valencia has introduced in the EMP framework a promising focus on soft security issues. The Ministers endorsed a program of cooperation in the field of justice, home

affairs and migration and established an "Ad hoc Group on Terrorism". The Valencia Action Plan has also integrated the emerging European Security and Defense Policy-ESDP in the Barcelona process.
These factors may prove very innovative. Along with improvements in the economic and financial cooperation agenda gradually adopted by the EU in the last years, the Valencia guidelines can provide the EMP the opportunity of a new start. Such new start may prove very much in tune with the requirements of the Mediterranean strategic setting in the post-11th September transatlantic perspective.

Adapting EMP to changes

With the Valencia Action Plan, the EMP may have initiated its necessary adaptation to ongoing changes, with a view to become both more effective and cooperative.
The renewal of the EMP, likewise its establishment, remains fundamentally in European hands. With respect to the EMP, the EU and its member states have to pursue three complementary objectives: (a) providing the EMP with a clear and effective political task; (b) making the EMP an opportunity for strengthening CFSP and ESDP; (c) integrating the EMP in a more cooperative transatlantic perspective. How can these objectives be achieved?
Soft security - The strengthening of EMP soft security capabilities, underscored by the Valencia Action Plan, is an essential building block if a Euro-Med common ground has to be set up. While the idea of a privileged political Euro-Med relationship can fail to accommodate Arab cooperation within the EMP, the soft security focus regards urgent and substantive interests on both sides. A privileged Euro-Med political cooperation raises two questions that may make Arabs uneasy: cooperating with Israel before the peace is made and eventually facing dilemmas with respect to the United States. In contrast, focusing on soft security may well bring about important disputes about solutions to be adopted and difficult negotiations. Still, it may also emerge as a fertile ground for compromise and cooperation.
The focus on soft security is highly consistent with domestic EU interest, too. In general, such focus would be on the magnified risks reviewed above, namely international crime, terrorism and migration. More specifically, it must be noted that the strong difficulties the EU member states are undergoing with respect to increased immigration from the Southern Mediterranean states (and elsewhere ...) are primarily due to the ambiguity between the necessity to tackle an essentially transnational and European-wide issue and the strict national instruments the EU members use to deal with it. In this sense, the EU decision to make more effective the Tampere task of a "common space of freedom, justice and security" by implementing a EU common agenda for regulating migration and its inter-related legal dimensions (asylum, citizenship, etc.) is an extremely important measure. For, it strengthens EU's CFSP as well as the EMP.
A soft security focus may also contribute to reinforce EU-US relations in the new post-11th September transatlantic perspective. The Valencia decision to set up an ad hoc group on terrorism fits with that focus. At the same time, it reflects current efforts of cooperation in the transatlantic framework and may translate in an important contribution to common endeavors to fight terrorism.

While the Euro-Med joint group on terrorism is a valuable asset in both transatlantic and trans-Mediterranean terms, the setting up of a common Euro-Med agenda is not going to be an easy task, however. On the contrary, talks will inevitably reflect dissents between those states, in particular Israel (but in a sense Algeria as well), that tend to construe Mediterranean terrorism as nothing else than an Al Qaeda's branch, and those that guess it necessary to hold careful distinctions between global and regional factors. While the debate will take place in terms of legitimate defense against occupation vs. legitimate defense against terrorism, the real difference will be between those who believe that the struggle against terrorism requires a political response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a condition to defeating global terrorism and weakening Arab and Muslim support to it, and those who do not believe in that and ask for just a quick and stark suppression.
Needless to say, the Euro-Med split is reflecting in a similar transatlantic split. Still, a focus on the question is not necessarily bound to come to a deadlock. On the contrary, it could be a helpful diplomatic tool and generate good results in both political and operational terms. In any case, some regional cooperation on terrorism, by providing a perspective to the management of regional problems and their negative impact on the countries concerned, would ease Euro-American and even Arab-American cooperation in the struggle against global terrorism.

Security cooperation - The EMP as a soft security agenda has thus many advantages in European as well as Mediterranean and American terms. Coupled with the ongoing economic cooperation agenda, it could be the basis for a fruitful Euro-Med cooperation as well as a quiet division of labor between EU and the United States in the Mediterranean and the Near East. Such agenda or focus does not rule out other agendas. One such agendas should be predicated on security cooperation, as limited as the scope of such cooperation may prove to be.
What killed the early EMP attempts in the security cooperation realm was a set of mistaken ambitions; the idea of setting up a kind of mini-CSCE in the area pending the Arab-Israeli conflicts and, most of all, the idea of creating a creeping privileged regional political relation in an area as highly fragmented and penetrated as the Mediterranean. On different assumptions and in a more flexible and pragmatic framework than the strictly pan-Mediterranean and multilateral framework the EMP is providing today, security cooperation seems possible, instead.
To give way to security cooperation, the starting point should be the perception of interdiction and risk the Arabs resent with respect to the powerful Euro-Western alliances. Efforts should concentrate on transparency, information and inclusion in regard to European and Western security policies and developments. In this sense, the integration of the ESDP, first, in the EU Common Strategy on the Mediterranean and, then, in the Valencia Action Plan is the right approach, provided that such integration gives way to a process of inclusion and information towards Southern Partners. EuroMeSCo has already suggested a set of measures. Moreover, the EU, after the absorption of the WEU, should prevent the good work already done by the former WEU Mediterranean Group from being lost by taking up the initiatives of the Group and using the former WEU Institute for Security Studies as an agency of implementation.
Furthermore, a formal inclusion is possible by giving an extensive interpretation to the "third states concerned" category pointed out in the June 2000 Feira European Council conclusions about ESDP. In the Feira conclusions the third states alluded to were

Canada, Russia and Ukraine with respect to their concerns relating to the EU and NATO Eastern European enlargement process and with a view to include them in that process by means of regular information and transparency. That clause could be extended to the Mediterranean, thus recognizing no less dignity to EU concerns in this area[2].

For such endeavor to succeed, it is important that there is no ambiguity on the part of the EU about the use of the Rapid Reaction Force in the strict framework of the Petersberg Tasks and fully in tune with the Helsinki mandate. If the Southern countries will be convinced of the peaceful mandate of the EU Force, on one hand there will be no problem to include them operationally and even politically; on the other, to receive their support and adherence. In a broader perspective, it is clear that such ambiguity would be dispelled, if the EU finally decided to work out its own strategic or security concept, something that presently is just lacking. This concept does not need to be necessarily the same as the one approved in 1999 in Washington by NATO. On the contrary, the EU should adopt a strategic concept and military instruments of its own. Both the concept and the instruments should be in tune with its character of civilian power. In this way, the peaceful character of the ESDP would result crystal-clear.

In the framework of EU-US relations, the development of the ESDP with its attendant force is complementary rather than alternative to United States interests: European-led forces would pursue crisis management tasks the US government would agree or not disagree upon but would be either unable or unwilling to carry out. Otherwise, EU forces would contribute to common crisis management interventions. In the end, the ESDP and the EU Rapid Reaction Force stems from the Balkans' lessons. However, while the EU forces have strictly evolved as a peace support instrument to be used according to and legitimated by a UN or other regional security organizations (e.g. OSCE) mandate, the United States, after President Clinton has been replaced by George W. Bush, and the events of 11th September have reshaped its foreign policy, seems more bent on using *ad hoc* coalition: Art. 5 has been activated, but military support has been accepted only from very selected allies on a bilateral basis rather than from the Alliance or the EU. In sum, it seems as if EU military forces are developing in a way that is less suited to transatlantic than trans-Mediterranean cooperation. Ironically, while in the transatlantic framework the ESDP is suspected of decoupling, the Southern Mediterranean countries continue to see it as an integral part of the Western Armageddon rather than an opportunity of cooperation.

Conflict prevention - Further to soft security and security cooperation, the EMP should develop some capability to maintaining peace. The hesitations by the EU member states to advance and strengthen their CFSP and - in the case of the EMP - the inability to find out with the Partners a clear security common ground coalesce in pushing the EU to develop its conflict prevention capabilities more and more towards a structural sense and a long, some time very long term. In fact, the Commission is mainstreaming conflict prevention in its action. But, as its action is mostly geared to economic development, conflict prevention is boiling down to the hope that successful structural reforms would help downing violence in the long run and thus preventing conflict at large.

[2] I owe this remark to Dr. Fred Tanner.

This is not to say that the EU commitment to long-term conflict prevention is mistaken. However, it is not enough. In a landscape featured by strong risks and hard challenges, as that of the Mediterranean today, some short-term conflict prevention capabilities are definitely needed.
The attempts at developing an EMP conflict prevention capability have collapsed because included in the ambitious agenda of security cooperation of the Barcelona Declaration. If de-linked from that agenda, the establishment of some Euro-Med instruments of conflict prevention should be acceptable by the parties. The absence of Euro-Med conflict prevention capabilities has emerged painfully at the occasion of the Perejil/Leila crisis between Spain and Morocco in July 2002. A more robust EMP could have done the work the EU proved unable or unwilling to do and that ended up quite ironically in the hands of Secretary of State Colin Powell.
Some regional EU capabilities to maintain peace by using short-term instruments of conflict prevention would be in tune with both more effective transatlantic and trans-Mediterranean relations. Even without establishing formal Euro-Med instruments for short-term conflict prevention, a reinforced and better-organized political dialogue in the EMP could well perform the task.

Conclusions

Independently of ongoing sweeping changes in the Mediterranean and the Middle East unfolding 11th September events, the EMP needs to be reshaped and made more effective. Still, when it comes to the kind of changes and redirections that have to be introduced in the EMP, these depend on such factors as transatlantic relations, the future of the CFSP and the broad interplay between Europe and the United States. A more cooperative EMP at the regional level should not turn out to be a divisive factor in the transatlantic perspective.
In this sense, this paper has suggested to focus EMP reform on three points: (a) enhancing soft security capabilities; (b) activating a simple security cooperation based in the increase of information and transparency as well as a more flexible format than the EMP strict multilateral shape is now allowing for; (c) reinforcing the political dialogue to enable the EMP to set up joint conflict prevention activities with a view to maintaining peace in the short-term in addition to its tendency to mostly evolve capabilities in structural conflict prevention. These policies would enhance the EMP's potential for regional cooperation and, at the same time, would secure important capabilities to support global goals in the transatlantic framework.
The increased cooperative potential of the EMP towards the Mediterranean could be frustrated, however, by a transatlantic cooperation unable to go back to and enforce a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This conflict, in European eyes, remains the primary source of regional instability and the legitimacy global and national terrorism enjoy in the region. Whatever military response to global terrorism would be undermined by further failure to provide a political response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Any renewed EMP cooperation would be weakened, too.
On the other hand, any increased cooperative potential of the EMP would result consistent with the strengthening of transatlantic relations only to the extent the EU develops its CFSP and more particularly the ESDP as a civilian power or peace power. Other models of EU development could contribute to strain transatlantic relations. They

would also detract from EMP security cooperation with regard to the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern counterparts, by making such cooperation less credible and sensible.