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**THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN INITIATIVE
A VIEW FROM SOUTHERN EUROPE**

by Roberto Aliboni

IAI's contribution to a EuroMeSCo research project on "Putting the Mediterranean Union in Perspective"

THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN INITIATIVE A VIEW FROM SOUTHERN EUROPE¹

Roberto Aliboni²

1. The setting

French President Sarkozy's agenda to promote a Mediterranean Union has raised a lively debate in the European Union and among the Southern Mediterranean EU partners. This debate has revealed an inclination on the part of France's proposal to evolve and change.

In fact, it started out as a Union of the Mediterranean or Mediterranean Union, including the riparian countries only and excluding non-Mediterranean EU members. Then, in Rome, on December 20, 2007, the mini-summit between the heads of state and government of France, Italy and Spain adopted the "Appel de Rome",³ in which the initiative was turned into a Union for the Mediterranean (UFM), excluding the membership but making room for some form of participation of the Commission and, eventually, non-Mediterranean EU countries eager to play a role towards the area. Thereafter, at the March 3, 2008 meeting in Hanover between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Sarkozy, it was decided that the EU members would not be divided into Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean and given different roles with respect to the Union for the Mediterranean. "It will be" in the words of Chancellor Merkel "a project of the 27 member states of the [European] Union".⁴

Finally, in the European Council of March 13-14, 2008 in Brussels, the initiative (which the "Appel de Rome" had apparently construed as a Franco-Spanish-Italian demarche) was brought to the attention of the other EU members as a common Franco-German endeavour in view of the final decisions on content and shape to be taken in the Euro-Med summit that France will hold in Paris on July 13-14, 2008. While the EU members took good note of the Franco-German initiative, the latter has not been officially approved.⁵ The Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels Council are very general and refer to the issue in extremely general terms in a very brief annex, inviting "the

¹ This paper is IAI's contribution to a EuroMeSCo research project on "Putting the Mediterranean Union in Perspective". The project is led by the Leonard Davis Institute of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, co-led by IAI and supported by EuroMeSCo itself. The EuroMeSCo report generated by the research project will be published shortly on EuroMeSCo website <http://www.euromesco.net> thanks to EU Commission funding.

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³ "Appel de Rome pour l'Union pour la Méditerranée de la France, l'Italie et l'Espagne", December 20, 2007; in the web site of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

⁴ From the French text of the "Conférence de presse conjointe de Mme Angela Merkel, Chancelier de la République Fédérale d'Allemagne et de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République", on the web site of the French Republic Presidency.

⁵ During the press conference on the night of March 13, President Sarkozy took it for granted "la décision de transformer le processus de Barcelone en Union pour la Méditerranée ... sur la base du papier franco-allemand"; however the European Council's Presidency Conclusions do not corroborate his view. See "Conférence de presse de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, lors du Conseil Européen de Bruxelles, Jeudi 13 mars 2008 » on the French Republic Presidency web site.

Commission to present to the Council the necessary proposals for defining the modalities of what will be called ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean’ ”.⁶

After this long sequence, the contours of the relationship between the EU and the UfM have begun to emerge. Although the final result will only become clear when the July Paris summit is over, one can argue the following on the basis of what has unfolded so far:

(a) The UfM, as a union of sovereign states, cannot be an organic part of the EU. While the EMP is an EU policy to which the Southern Mediterranean Partners are closely associated, an inter-state UfM will remain outside the EU ambit;

(b) Apparently, the Brussels Council figured out a way to enlarge the Barcelona Process so as to include the UfM under its umbrella in addition to the EMP. In truth, the Barcelona Process has been technically synonymous with the EMP so far, although in a broad and discursive sense other processes, such as the 5 + 5 Group, the Forum for the Mediterranean and the Agadir Pact, could be included in it. The March 13-14, 2008 Brussels Council could turn out to be historic in that it has established the Barcelona Process as a diplomatic constellation of different Euro-Mediterranean processes (the EMP, the UfM, the 5 + 5, etc.) that are in some way related to one another – a kind of “greater” Barcelona Process;

(c) The EMP and the UfM will remain two distinctive endeavours, each with its own internal organisation. The same countries will, thus, participate in different capacities and roles in the UfM as well as the EMP. In the Brussels Council, the Commission was mandated by EU members to provide suggestions on the “modalities” whereby the UfM can stay under the umbrella of the Barcelona Process in addition to the EMP, in other words, how the two entities can govern their reciprocal relations by implementing two different agendas with respect to the same objective (and how the EU will re-organise itself in the EMP);

(d) To conclude, one has to note that, when they gather in Paris, the EU members (as well as the Southern Mediterranean partners) may agree unanimously or not upon setting up the UfM. If only part of the EU members agree, and the others nonetheless accept the principle of the UfM as an EU action within the “greater” Barcelona Process, the result will be a reinforced cooperation. Indeed, were the UfM to constitute the source of a plurality of projects, it would look more like a cluster of reinforced cooperation actions than a single action, or a kangaroo-like reinforced cooperation action. It may well happen that EU members that are not willing to be a regular part of the UfM, would be willing to take part in one or more of its projects. No doubt, the EU will have to put its lawyers to work to make the UfM feasible as a reinforced cooperation and, more generally, to work out the right governance model for the new “greater” Barcelona constellation;

(e) In past years new flexibilities in external relations between member states and the Commission have developed: ways and means to share responsibilities have emerged as well as flexibility in members states’ options to participate in sub-regional cooperation schemes stretching across EU borders, as in the case of the Nordic Dimension and, to some extent, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation-BSEC. In following up on the Brussels Council’s request to set out proposals with a view to including the UfM in the

⁶ “Statement on ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean’ ” in the Annex 1 to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council 13-14 March 2008, on the web site of the EU Presidency.

Barcelona Process, the Commission could use such flexibilities.⁷ This perspective of flexibility, however, may result severely limited by the inherently rigid nature of an inter-state union such as President Sarkozy wishes the UfM to be. The talks, which will take place between now and the July Paris summit, will obviously strike a balance between flexibility and rigidity. As pointed out, the French UfM proposal shows an inclination to evolve. It may well keep on evolving.

Meanwhile, this Report tries to explain the options made available and to provide information on the different views existing in the main zones of the Euro-Med area. This section of the Report is devoted to Southern European EU countries: their views on the Euro-Med perspective and their reactions to France's proposal. The French proposal has raised special interest in these countries, as they have felt themselves directly called into question as Mediterranean countries and potential members of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). In fact, the debate on both the future of the Euro-Med framework and the UfM initiative has been more intense in Spain and Italy. The UfM initiative has also raised interest in Slovenia, if only because this country is running the EU Presidency in the first semester of 2008. It has also been debated in Greece and Malta, much less so in Portugal. This report is essentially based on reactions from Spain and Italy.

In general, the Southern European EU countries are attracted by the UfM as a way to refocus EU interest on the Mediterranean; nevertheless they are concerned by its inherent antagonism with the EU "acquis" towards the area. This is why we will consider Southern European EU countries' responses to President Sarkozy's initiative and, more broadly speaking, the question of the Euro-Med's future first in a "Mediterranean" perspective and subsequently in a "European" one. On the basis of that analysis, we will draw some conclusions and recommendations.

2. The Mediterranean perspective

The Marseille ministerial conference of 2000 still has to be seen as a turning point in the Barcelona Process. After four years of negotiations, the Partners admitted at that conference that they had been unable to establish a common ground. The Northern Partners had called upon the Southern countries, in particular the Arab Partners, to promote political reforms on the assumption that reforms would strengthen long-term security in the area. This demand was however perceived by the Southern Partners as a threat to domestic stability. Furthermore, the EMP, despite its declaratory policy in favour of a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, was able to do nothing substantial to address a conflict which the Southern Partners regard as a major threat to their security. In the Arab view, the EMP was intended to meet the EU's security requirements, while neglecting theirs. This is why the Arabs considered the EMP unsuited for security cooperation and asked for an EMP essentially aimed at co-development in the framework of a broad diplomatic dialogue. In Marseille, the Partners proved unable to reconcile these opposing views, but decided to retain the EMP as a broad framework for diplomatic dialogue and cooperation and continue to work together in this framework. Since the turn of the century, the EMP has been affected by three strategic changes, namely: (a) the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the

⁷ See Michael Emerson, *Making Sense of Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean*, CEPS Policy Brief No. 155, March 2008.

ensuing global war on terrorism launched by the US administration; (b) the enlargement of the EU to Eastern Europe in 2004; (c) the increase in immigration towards the EU from the Mediterranean's shores or coming across the Mediterranean from distant areas. With the latest enlargement, the EU took the decision to pursue one single policy towards its neighbours, whether in the east or the south, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This decision largely amputated the second pillar of the Barcelona Process and has focussed the Commission's efforts on the ENP. Consequently, there have been a number of changes in the EMP profile: the relative weight of the political dialogue within the Partnership has become far more significant; the role of EU governments has become more important than that of the Commission, the regional dimension has substantially weakened to the advantage of bilateral relations; important economic goals, such as the free trade area, remain as part of the EMP, but their implementation depends to a large extent on the ENP as well; the network of Association Agreements are *de facto* more functional to the ENP than the EMP. Despite the assumption that the EMP and the ENP will be complementary and mutually supportive, the EMP looks seriously diminished and somehow depleted. Today, the EMP is essentially an intergovernmental forum. Ironically, it focuses on the field – political and security dialogue – in which it proved least effective and cohesive. As a result, the early EMP agenda went lost and something new is badly needed.

Then again, terrorism and immigration have brought about a shift in the EU's broad security vision with respect to the Mediterranean. The EU response has been a strong securitization of these two issues and, more broadly speaking, other soft security factors.⁸ Despite progress in the implementation of the EU space of freedom, justice and security, terrorism and immigration remain mostly in the hands of European governments, which have quite different visions and policies with respect to the two issues, especially immigration and related questions (citizenship, asylum, etc.). The only orientation they share is the need to keep issues as domestically sensitive as immigration and terrorism under their sovereignty. As a result, while governments take terrorism and immigration into consideration as part of the EMP agenda, it is definitely not in the EMP that they make or implement their decisions. As a result, with respect to issues of vital interest to the Mediterranean, such as terrorism and immigration, the EMP hardly plays a significant role today. All in all, the ENP touches upon a number of varied and important questions, but not the key ones. This is particularly embarrassing with respect to immigration, which at the end of the day is the most serious issue in current Euro-Med relations.

The marginalisation of the EMP has been met with different responses in Europe. The most conventional response, coming from a good number of EU governments, is that despite limits – as serious as they may be – a shared Euro-Med framework is an irreplaceable and indispensable instrument of foreign policy, international governance and broad security. Other responses, in contrast, express strong dissatisfaction with this situation and emphasise the need to go beyond the EMP to enable Europe to tackle the real challenges the Mediterranean and the EU are facing after the strategic changes of the last decade. Among them are the Euro-Mediterranean Union (EMU) advocated by Spain and the UfM put forward by France. Let's consider these different responses.

The first, widespread response is that the conditions for a common ground in the Euro-Med space are objectively weak and that this reality can hardly be changed for the time

⁸ Sarah Collinson, "Security or Securitisation? Migration and the Pursuit of Freedom, Security and Justice in the Euro-Mediterranean Area", *EuroMeSCo*, No. 19, November 2007, www.euromesco.net

being. In this perspective, the initial expectations for the EMP will have to be downgraded: the political and security dimension cannot go beyond the present results of good socialization. Thanks to this socialization, the EMP – so the argument goes - is in any case a valuable asset. Fruitful cooperation is possible on a case-by-case basis. For this school of thought, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the institution of the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly are good achievements attesting to the value and capabilities of the EMP as a conduit for EU cooperation with its Southern neighbours. In this view, it is worth trying to improve and reinvigorate the EMP without looking for qualitative changes.

By contrast, another school of thought maintains that the EMP's institutional setting has to be decidedly upgraded so as to reinforce the Southern partners' sense of ownership with respect to the organisation. In 2006 and 2007, the Senior Officials discussed a number of non-papers proposing reforms for the EMP's organisational setting, such as a rotating North-South presidency, a strengthened secretariat and other measures (suggestions resurfacing regularly from previous efforts in the same direction).⁹ While the Officials proved unable to come to an agreement, it is worth pointing out they did not aim at transforming the EMP from an EU policy associating external partners into an organisation of peers. They did not aim at upgrading its institutional and political substance; they merely wanted to make the EMP more efficient. So the reforms the Officials considered were, at the end of the day, more in keeping with the previous school of thought. Instead, the response genuinely moving towards an upgrading of the EMP so as to turn it into a coalition of peers is the one championed by Spain.

In 2007, Spain suggested turning the EMP into a Euro-Mediterranean Union. The Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, outlined the proposal in a speech at the University of Malta on May 4th. His ideas were subsequently presented, in a slightly extended fashion, in an article in *El País*.¹⁰ It envisages a Euro-Mediterranean Council of Ministers, made up of the heads of state and governments; inter-ministerial meetings of Foreign Affairs or Sectoral Ministers every time this would be required by the implementation of the EMU's agenda; a Committee of permanent national representatives and a Commission with secretarial tasks (made up of officials coming from both sides of the Mediterranean); a reinforced Parliamentary Assembly. In his article, Moratinos adds that the Union would be instrumental to *integrating* relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean, in particular in assuring people greater freedom of movement in the area, something neither the EMP nor the EU is able or willing to do today. It is worth noting that what matters in this Spanish initiative is not so much the institutional configuration as the task of integrating the European and the Southern Mediterranean area with the objective of allowing people to circulate freely. This response is an attempt to overcome the European self-deceiving idea that economies can be integrated while people are separated.

The third response is the UfM. Like the EMU, the major concern of the UfM is to assure Southern Mediterranean ownership. For this reason, it proposes a G-8 summit-like structure headed by a EU/non-EU co-presidency. It would involve a biennial meeting of heads of state and government and ministerial meetings that would be

⁹ Dorothee Schmid, *Optimiser le processus de Barcelone*, EU-Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Papers No. 36, July 2002.

¹⁰ "Del Proceso de Barcelona a la Unión Euromediterránea", August 2, 2007.

prepared and followed-up by a light secretariat formed by EU/non-EU personnel.¹¹ The UfM would not implement policies, as the EU does, or be involved in too many fields, like the “holistic” EMP, but would pursue specific projects in key areas such as energy, education, training for immigrants, etc.¹² While in its earlier formulation the UfM was intended as quite apart from the EU and its EMP, in its most recent configuration, it seems it would be integrated into the EU alongside the EMP.

Whether integrated or not in the Barcelona Process and the EU, the UfM stems from a substantively different vision than the EMP. Apparently, there is convergence between the UfM and the EMU, as both aim at upgrading Euro-Med relations institutionally and superseding the ENP experience. But they are also quite different in that they are based on different strategic visions. The EMU is based on a long-term objective of integration across the Mediterranean. In this sense, as aptly noted by Jean-Robert Henry,¹³ its pivotal feature is the freedom of human beings to move in the Union’s space, as of tomorrow, and a policy of openness towards immigration, as of today. The UfM, on the other hand, reflects the political platform of President Sarkozy and, in this sense, is based, among other things, on a broad sense of confrontation with the Muslim world, beginning with Turkey. Apart from the rhetoric of Mediterranean solidarity and common heritage, the UfM has a technocratic and business-oriented agenda. On this agenda, immigration is anything but a crisis to manage. Its final aim is control rather than provide freedom of movement.¹⁴ Furthermore, while the EMU proposal is clearly based on EU values and its experience of freedom, international integration and social cohesion and while it tries to expand the area of communitarian power with respect to national power, both the UfM and today’s intergovernmental EMP are outcomes of the ongoing process of European re-nationalization.¹⁵ In this process of re-nationalization, President Sarkozy plays a role that goes well beyond Euro-Med relations. As for other EU governments, they could be more “European” as far as the EU is concerned, but when it comes to immigration and terrorism in the EMP, they advocate an approach that is as re-nationalized as that of France.

¹¹ The structure illustrated here is the one outlined in the confidential Franco-German note circulated in the European Council of March 13-14, 2008.

¹² A concept similar to the UfM (apparently contributing to its cultural background) is the “Community of the Mediterranean World” put forward in the works of Jean-Louis Guigou – a community which, following his line of thinking, would be distinct from and complementary to the EU. The rationale of this community is based on a doctrine asserting the superiority of North-South integration in the different hemispheres (which he calls “quartiers d’orange”), one being Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa. See: Jean-Louis Guigou, “La reconexion des nord et des sud: l’émergence de la région Méditerranéenne (ou la théorie des ‘quartiers d’oranges’)”, *Géoéconomie*, No. 42, 2007, pp. 55-60 ; Pierre Beckouche, Jean-Louis Guigou, *Méditerranée : d’un Euromed en panne à une région industrielle Nord-Sud*, *Horizons Stratégiques*, Centre d’analyse stratégique, No 3, January 2007.

¹³ “La Méditerranée de Nicolas Sarkozy”, *La Croix*, October 9, 2007, and “Méditerranée: le malentendu”, *Liberation*, July 9, 2007. Henry points out that an integrationist proposal of sorts has been put forward by Dominique Strauss-Khan, who today “prefers to talk about a reconstitution of the Roman Empire”; in fact, the integrative logic would sooner or later bring about a common citizenship as in the late Roman Empire.

¹⁴ In his electoral campaign, Mr. Sarkozy spoke of “immigration choisie” (selected immigration), following a paradigm widely advocated in the European right.

¹⁵ See the essay by José Ignacio Torreblanca, *Sarkozy’s foreign policy: where do European interests and values stand?*, FRIDE Commentary, Madrid, February 2008, who is afraid that the Treaty of Lisbon, another offspring of the European trend towards re-nationalization, may involve the risk “that the European Union (like the Mediterranean Union) might become a ‘union of projects’ rather a ‘project of unity’ ”.

In conclusion, three approaches can be discerned in Southern European EU countries:

(a) A conservative project aimed at preserving the EMP as a collective diplomatic framework, subsidiary, though, to increasingly national policies, especially in securitized issues such as immigration and terrorism - as they have developed in the last decade;

(b) An innovative (though ideologically conservative) project to establish a strongly inter-governmental UfM, in which the Commission, while not excluded, is bound to play a limited role, and the governments would have more freedom to agree on key projects and issues without being too concerned by EU principles (or values);

(c) A third, also innovative, approach institutionally similar to the second (two parallel Unions), but politically and ideologically very different: the EMU would take up the EMP agenda and effectively advance it, taking advantage of its platform of strongly reinforced ownership. In the long term, the EMU aims at integrating the EU with the Southern Mediterranean. In his article, Spain's Foreign Minister says "The moment has come to put a stop to this process and build up an effective geopolitical space by establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Union".

3. The European perspective

All these approaches are now competing in the Euro-Med arena. After the European Council's recent decisions in Brussels, it seems as though the approach based on a "continuation cum improvements" of the EMP is the weakest one. The competition is between the UfM and the EMU. Although the former looks like the winning approach, it may well be that the UfM will be hybridised in further negotiations by elements of the EMU.

As pointed out, there are differences between the UfM and the EMU from the Mediterranean perspective. There are also significant differences from the European perspective. Let us now look at the latter.

The EMU approach is ideologically and politically linked to the EU.¹⁶ This is not the case with the UfM approach. President Sarkozy's proposal, in its earlier formulations, was not only critical towards the EMP but also politically hostile to EU primacy in the Mediterranean. French officials have sometimes spoken of complementarities between the UfM and the EMP.¹⁷ More often than not, though, they have pointed out that the UfM is something quite different from the Barcelona Process.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, what the UfM project suggests is that Sarkozy's France would like to leave the EMP to its fate, not waste any more time by trying to reform or reinvigorate it, and use the UfM initiative as a means to assert France's leadership in the Mediterranean.

¹⁶ The details of its possible implementation have recently been set out in a research report by Gonzalo Escribano and Alejandro Lorca, *La Unión Mediterránea: una unión en busca de proyecto*, Real Instituto Elcano, Working Paper No. 13, Madrid, March 3, 2008.

¹⁷ "Le relations euro-méditerranéenne aujourd'hui", interview with François Gouyette, Ambassador in charge of the Euro-Mediterranean process, conducted by Catherine Véglio, *Confrontations Europe*, January-March 2008, pp. 15-17.

¹⁸ Henri Guaino, political advisor to President Sarkozy, points out "the UfM is neither against Barcelona nor for it, it has a different kind of focus on it", quoted in Dorothee Schmid, "La nueva paradoja francesa", *El País*, July 15, 2007.

Against this backdrop, in France itself,¹⁹ as well as elsewhere in Southern Europe, the French initiative has been appreciated from the beginning for its call in favour of the Mediterranean. Yet it also immediately generated a feeling that it had to be “tamed”, in other words “Europeanized”. As pointed out, the European diplomacy has actually worked in this direction – in particular, the Italian and Spanish diplomacies with the Declaration of Rome, and the German diplomacy with the compromise reached in Hanover – and the result seems to be a compromise whereby the UfM will be put under the umbrella of the Barcelona Process as a common EU endeavour. How this will happen precisely depends on the talks that will take place in the next months and the work of the Commission. One point is already clear, though: independently of other features, the new initiative will be a Union with the Mediterranean countries in which all the EU members or a part of them will participate. On the other hand, although the UfM may look like a winning approach, it may well be hybridised by elements of the EMU in further negotiations. In any case, hereinafter we will speak of a UfM/EMU initiative. While waiting for developments, in the following we speculate very briefly on ways in which the UfM/EMU can be related to the EU in its Euro-Mediterranean sphere.

The intersection of the UfM/EMU with the EU involves, first of all, the institutional and economic dimensions. To begin with the economic point of view, any kind of new initiative, whether lying inside or outside the EU, makes sense only if it adds something new to the Euro-Med policies of economic integration already at work in the EMP and ENP, in other words, only if it comes up with ideas and instruments that can overcome the limits of the long-standing EU policies intended to integrate the Mediterranean neighbours.

The broad limit of the Euro-Med “acquis” in this respect is that, while EU policies are able to help the Southern Mediterranean countries liberalise their economies, they are unable to jumpstart development. What has to be added, from the economic point of view, is the necessary action of dynamic factors. Now, the ideas aired under the French plan for a UfM seem to go in this direction, or may prove able to do so. Indeed, a number of well-selected projects in key sectors, such as education and energy, efficiently developed by agencies without too many bureaucratic and political hindrances and with the participation of the private sector could be pivotal in providing the dynamic factors presently missing in the Euro-Med equation. (The same is true for the institution of a Mediterranean Development Bank, on the model of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD): an initiative that could be taken even independently of the UfM).

Furthermore, if, thanks to its upgraded political and institutional format, the UfM/EMU were actually able to increase the sense of ownership of the Southern partners and, ultimately, provide the coalition with that common ground the EMP sought so hopelessly in the past, the UfM/EMU might eventually provide solutions to the crucial question of immigration and the freedom of movement in the Euro-Med area. This would introduce a most significant, decisive dynamic factor into the picture. As we

¹⁹ The Rapport Reiffers has been a pioneer in declaring the need to make the UfM complementary to the EU; had President Sarkozy followed the Rapport Reiffers’ suggestions, the European diplomacy would have avoided wasting a lot of time and the EU suffering political shocks. See Institut de la Méditerranée, *Rapport du Groupe d’experts réuni par l’Institut de la Méditerranée sur le projet d’Union Méditerranéenne*, Marseilles, October 2007 (Rapport Reiffers).

know, the spirit and the objectives of the UfM and the EMU are quite different. Any hybridising should pick up more from the latter than the former.

When it comes to the institutional dimension, we can envisage two different scenarios, according to whether there is unanimous EU agreement on instituting a UfM/EMU or whether this agreement would be limited to some members. The Reiffers Report has explained quite clearly that the option is doable and workable. In both cases, however, the EU will have to solve the problem of coordinating its own Euro-Mediterranean programme with the UfM/EMU and the action its members will take in the latter. In other words, it is obvious that, first of all, the apparently emerging “greater” Barcelona Process will have to establish an institutional setting allowing for a good division of labour between the dynamic role the UfM/EMU is expected to play, on one hand, and the “acquis” of past Euro-Med relations, on the other. The present governance of the EMP may easily be affected. The ENP may also not remain unaffected.

It is very likely that the Commission will be a member of the UfM/EMU. This would facilitate the overall governance of the “greater” Barcelona Process. One has to keep in mind, though, that the UfM/EMU will have its own secretariat. As a consequence, the role of the Commission in the UfM/EMU will hardly be the same as the role it plays in the EMP. The presence of the Commission would be important with respect to financing. In this respect, the UfM/EMU is expected to raise funds for its projects. However, the UfM/EMU could prove eligible for ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) and other EU funds presently devoted to “regional cooperation”. No doubt, the Commission will make up its own mind up about whether to finance the UfM/EMU projects and to what extent. Whether the UfM/EMU can take advantage of EU funds for its projects is a political problem as it may throw the present financial equilibrium within the EU into question. In fact, Eastern and Northern countries will have to be assured that the new Mediterranean undertaking is not detracting funds from them or their interests. While the decision to make the UfM a common EU project has put an end to concerns about EU cohesion, misperceptions about financing could reintroduce such concerns. In this sense, accurate and well-balanced rules on this point will be very important.

Conclusions and recommendations

With the Europeanization of the French UfM initiative, most of the concerns it raised have been eliminated. Nevertheless, the need to set out a clear governance pattern in relations between the UfM/EMU, on the one hand, and the EU/EMP (and ENP), on the other, remains vital, especially to keep concerns from resurfacing. This is true for financing above all.

Things seems more uncertain and complex from the Mediterranean perspective. Here, EU members’ opinions seem to diverge. Some, such as EU Northern countries, are happy with the EMP as it is. Others, such as Spain and France, believe that the EMP experience is exhausted and, for this reason, want to undertake an institutionally upgraded formula. Clearly, EU Northern and Southern countries have different views on the relevance of the Mediterranean: the former are happy with a low-profile Euro-Med agenda whereas the latter need a higher-profile.

Both the UfM and the EMU aim at upgrading EU-Mediterranean relations and capacities, however the substance and finalities of their respective agendas are quite

different: the EMU is committed to the long-term integration of the two shores and focuses on the freedom of movement of people in a progressively unified Euro-Med space; the UfM is business-oriented and considers immigration as functional to this orientation. It calls for a well-regulated but not necessarily integrated area of mobility.

All these approaches are united by a distinctive preference for dealing with Mediterranean relations in a mostly inter-governmental framework. While the EMP, because of securitization and the amputation entailed by the ENP, has become objectively more inter-governmental than it used to be, both the UfM and the EMU are clear manifestations of the belief that an inter-governmental coalition would be more effective in finding a common Euro-Med ground than the EMP has been able to do. Whether or not that is true remains to be seen.

That the new inter-governmental framework could work better than the EMP may stem more from the absence of the intention to promote political reforms than from the framework's upgraded institutional content (ownership). For, at the end of the day, the struggle for promoting reforms and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean has been the real stumbling stone of the Barcelona Process. The EMP has abandoned the struggle (partly taken up by ENP Action Plans); the EMU does not contemplate abandoning it, however, it deceives itself in believing that an inter-governmental Union will be more active in pursuing reforms than the EMP (at the end of the day, there is a negative correlation between fostering Southern Mediterranean ownership and reforms); the UfM, realistically or cynically, has just removed reforms from the picture. It may be that it will be the winning approach precisely for that reason and that governments, having overcome their problems with EU cohesion, will now look upon it favourably.

Having considered the arguments above, the following recommendations seem to be in order:

1. From the angle of EU cohesion as well as the effectiveness of the UfM/EMU agenda, a project at 27 would be better than any reinforced cooperation;
2. A well balanced and clear governance pattern to manage relations between the various entities of the "greater" Barcelona Process constellation, in particular the UfM/EMU and the EMP is essential both to foster the Euro-Mediterranean agenda and to avoid discontinuities in and risks for EU cohesion; financing of respective projects looms as an especially vulnerable point;
3. The overwhelmingly inter-governmental character the Barcelona Process constellation is taking on should be attenuated and corrected by an increased role of the Commission and civil societies, including the Parliamentary Assembly;
4. The reshuffling of the "greater" Barcelona Process should not fail to take immigration into due consideration. As said, the UfM is considering projects devoted to improving the quality of immigrants (training, education) and the social conditions of immigration. Yet, while these projects are welcome, in the UfM they will be inserted into a policy framework of control and limitation of immigration. This tendency to exclude has to be attenuated, if not altered, in step with the broad trend towards openness supported instead by the EMU scheme; in any case, whether in a UfM- or an EMU-like framework, one should not forget that EU immigration policy will reflect the EU members' will and ability to make significant progress in the space of justice, freedom and security and become more cohesive. All in all, whatever the shape of the "greater" Barcelona Process constellation, immigration will remain the most important issue and its ability to deal with it will depend less on the Barcelona Process itself than on EU integration in immigration and related fields (asylum, citizenship, etc.);

5. The last recommendation is that the EU should recover its interest in reforms and respect for human rights; regardless of the failures and exaggerations of the past, the EU cannot renounce this dimension lest it regress to a mere inter-state undertaking no longer able to reflect EU values. The UfM does not envisage political reforms or human rights; it considers other issues and, in a sense, is the offspring of an era of disappointment with the concrete possibility of promoting reforms. Consequently, efforts to undertake a new and more effective policy to foster political reforms should not be made in the UfM framework, but elsewhere in the emerging wider Barcelona Process: in the EMP or ENP. In any case, neither of these policies should be neglected in favour of the intergovernmental and business-oriented mood that seems to be prevailing in the broad context of Euro-Med relations.

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