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**INSTITUTIONALIZING MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS:  
COMPLEMENTARITY AND COMPETITION**

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## INSTITUTIONALIZING MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS: COMPLEMENTARITY AND COMPETITION

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In the past and particularly the last five years, numerous institutional schemes have been put forward with the aim of establishing cooperation and security within the North-South Mediterranean dimension (which, for the purposes of this paper, will be taken to mean North Africa and the Middle East). Yet, with the exception of the EC's longstanding Mediterranean Policy--a network of EC-related bilateral agreements rather than a multilateral scheme--none of them has been implemented. A few projects were initiated, but they proved very short-lived.

Since the end of the 1990-91 Gulf war and the beginning of Arab-Israeli negotiations, a new generation of proposals aimed at giving Mediterranean relations a more stable and institutional form is being debated.

These institutional responses can be evaluated from different points of view. One fundamental question is how the parties concerned assess their mutual strategic and political relevance. As almost everywhere in the post-Cold War world, the search for new international relations is not yet based on firm strategic visions. Whether and why the areas across the Mediterranean matter for Europe and the West, on the one hand, and for the Arab countries and Israel, on the other, is not fully clear.

In a less distant perspective, another important question is whether and to what extent the schemes being put forward today are complementary or competitive in the international and regional contexts. The past proliferation and inconclusiveness of such schemes suggest that a response is required. Which processes are warranted by present international conditions? What schemes or constellation of schemes seem more conducive to cooperation and building confidence in the present situation?

These are the questions that will be addressed in this paper. Consequently, an attempt will be made to underline the complementary and competitive aspects of the most important proposals and processes of institutionalization presently emerging in the Mediterranean area and to understand which factors are conducive to complementarity/cooperation and which spur competition.

The paper is divided into three parts: the first considers schemes that are currently functioning or have been proposed in the past; the second discusses whether and to what extent these schemes are complementary or competitive; the third draws some conclusions and suggests how to maximize the effectiveness and complementarity of the schemes and thus Mediterranean cooperation.

### ***Present institutional trends in the Mediterranean***

The Gulf crisis and the beginning of the Arab-Israeli negotiations--the first consequences of the end of the Cold War in the Mediterranean and the Middle East--marked a turning point in the political situation in this area and its search for an institutional configuration. After these events, the schemes which had previously been debated or had begun to work were swept away, while new proposals and initiatives were put forward. The Western Mediterranean Forum, also known as the "5 + 5" Group, is dormant. No substantive progress is in sight for the so-called "Mediterranean Dimension" of the cumbersome CSCE framework, although the Mediterranean

countries' role in the organisation was formally enlarged<sup>1</sup> at the end of 1994 and the Review Conference in Budapest confirmed the CSCE members' interest in this scheme. Finally, the CSCM is being debated within the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which took it up as one of its major initiatives,<sup>2</sup> but governments have shelved the scheme for the time being and it no longer constitutes a part of relevant diplomatic efforts. At the same time, four major initiatives are now being debated.<sup>3</sup>

First, Egypt has proposed to establish a Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (also referred to as the Mediterranean Forum) concentrated on a limited group of North African and South European countries: Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey. The Mediterranean Forum's profile has not yet been clearly defined, but the inter-ministerial meeting in Alexandria (July 1994) adopted a document called the "Med-2000 Report",<sup>4</sup> which stresses the need to develop a pragmatic and flexible institution within the Forum dealing with Mediterranean Political Cooperation (MPC) and to couple it to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The Mediterranean Forum is now evolving through three Working Groups related to political cooperation, inter-cultural dialogue and economic and social cooperation. The "Med-2000 Report" gives prominence to the development of private cooperation and cultural dialogue; it suggests that MPC should focus on mitigating the contrast between global trends and regional identities by strengthening cultural and non-governmental factors.

The second initiative is the Arab-Israeli negotiations and their multilateral dimension. Although the various aspects negotiated within their framework are not organically and explicitly linked to one another, two are extremely relevant to our discourse: the working group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) and the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG). The ACRS is composed of Israel and twelve Arab countries (excluding Syria). It addresses a large range of military and security issues, ranging from nuclear weapons to confidence-building measures, with the aim of establishing a multilateral understanding on forms of collective and regional security, such as the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the area.<sup>5</sup> The REDWG seeks to establish a regional framework for economic integration and cooperation. It includes a large and diversified number of "donor" countries, whose efforts focus on the countries directly affected by the negotiations (i.e. Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria).<sup>6</sup>

The multilateral dimension of the Arab-Israeli negotiations provides important non-regional and international actors, such as the US, the Russian Federation, Japan, the EU and the World Bank with important roles. Like the proposed CSCM (and the CSCE), it therefore has an important global component, which is not present in the above mentioned Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Finally, it must be noted that the accent put on the Levant in the negotiations is a totally novel trend with respect to traditional Mediterranean attempts to establish cooperative groupings and that this novelty is the result of the beginning of negotiations between Israel and the Arab front-line countries. Indeed, the attention to the Levant may not be unrelated to the Egyptian proposal to initiate a Forum focussing west of the Levant and including regional actors only.

Third is the North Africa and Middle East Economic Summit, known as the Casablanca Economic Summit because of the meeting convened in that town by King Hassan on 1 November 1994 and organised by two private American associations under the sponsorship of Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin. The summit has been turned into a permanent organisation under the guidance of a secretariat. The Casablanca Economic Summit aims at stimulating both

governments and firms to promote growth and private economic activities throughout the entire North African and Middle Eastern area.<sup>7</sup>

The global component of the Casablanca Economic Summit is no less important than the multilateral dimension of the Arab-Israeli negotiations. In addition, the REDWG and the Casablanca Economic Summit could turn out to be mutually reinforcing and highly complementary for three reasons: (i) economic integration may be more easily induced in the broader area contemplated by the Casablanca initiative (which includes North Africa) than in that of the Middle East alone; (ii) the emphasis put on private business and resources by the summit may emerge as a strong factor in increasing growth and investment opportunities; (iii) the enlargement of the REDWG area may help decouple the debate on regional economic integration from that on political and security relations and thus facilitate working economic relations between Israel and the Arab countries. This is not to say that the two processes must merge: they may well remain separate, but they could be managed so as to generate and exploit complementarities.

Fourth, the EU intends to embark on a third edition of its "Mediterranean Policy". In addition to the strengthening of the financial and commercial scope of the policy, what sets it apart from previous EU schemes is the idea of discussing the scheme prior to implementation in a multilateral Euro-Mediterranean Conference to be held under the Spanish EU presidency in the fall of 1995 with the participation of the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries already associated to the EU,<sup>8</sup> and the integration into the Mediterranean Policy of a security and foreign affairs dimension, in tune with the enlarged EU competences set out by the Treaty of Maastricht.

The EU's goal is to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the task of merging economic, political and security aspects; it is clear from the EU Commission's document that "a swift economic development, social change and . . . political pluralism" would be functional to the creation of a "zone of peace, stability and security". This combination of elements--the multilateral conference, the integration of economic and political aspects and the links between the latter--brings the EU initiative very close to the CSCM: it may, in fact, result in a CSCM that is less global in nature (e.g. it would not include the US) and in which the EU has pivotal responsibility.

In sum, it seems that there are three processes working towards the institutionalization of relations in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern area today: (a) a CSCM-like Mediterranean initiative stemming from the EU, based on the integration of both political and economic dimensions under European guidance; (b) a scheme for regional economic integration and security cooperation in the Middle Eastern area (the economic aspect of might might be enlarged to North Africa) basically conceived of in a global dimension; (c) a Forum limited to North Africa and Southern Europe which seems intended, however, to be coupled to the EU.

### ***Complementarity and competition***

There are clear areas of overlap among the processes mentioned above. At times sub-regional trends seem to emerge--for example, a Mashreqi framework within the Arab-Israeli process or a Maghrebi framework within a closer partnership with Europe--but at other times they are blurred by more comprehensive trends--for example, the Maghreb is included in the Casablanca Economic Summit and attached to the Arab-Israeli process, while the Middle Eastern countries belonging to the core of the Arab-Israeli process are also included in the EU-sponsored Euro-Mediterranean Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

In general, the processes at work in the Mediterranean region tend to become more comprehensive rather than more specialized (a tendency that arose with the CSCM proposal and the "5+5"). The Arab-Israeli negotiations include both security and developmental aspects, in

addition to bilateral political negotiations. At the same time, the Euro-Mediterranean Conference now has the ambition to create a security and political dimension beside the more traditional developmental relations developed by the EC's Mediterranean Policy over time.

*Factors of duplication and competition* - Problems of duplication, low complementarity and competition stem essentially from two factors.

First, the Mediterranean--as is widely recognized--is devoid of internal coherence. Thus the forces to provide it have to come (more often than not) from outside the region. For this reason global and regional components are intertwined in the Mediterranean area and the institutional projects referred to previously largely reflect that. As a result, Mediterranean coherence reflects the problems of coherence which may affect relations among external actors. Now that the US and the EU are both important and almost exclusive partners of the North African and Middle Eastern region, problems affecting trans-Atlantic and intra-EU relations have a great impact on the coherence of the Mediterranean area. (It may be noted that, despite important differences in substance and circumstances, the same issue is affecting Western relations with Eastern Europe and the attempts at institutionalizing those relations.)

Second, regional coherence is affected by competition among countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean and by the attempts of these countries to use relations with the West and Western incoherences for their own competitive purposes.

*South-South competition* - South-South competition is an important factor in the contemporary picture. The Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean was initiated by Egypt as a means of seeking reassurance against the threat it perceived in the region's strategic evolution. The Arab-Israeli process, the implications of the 1990-91 Gulf war and the policies that the US is pursuing from its dominant position in the region acquired after the end of the Cold War are perceived as a threat to Egypt's traditional leadership and, in a more distant future, to the enormous foreign assistance it currently enjoys, largely because of its important regional role.<sup>9</sup> In this perspective, the REDWG is seen as challenging Egypt's future economic role, while the Forum is regarded as a way of containing American influence by bolstering the European role in the region. Moreover, if the Forum succeeds and paves the way for a privileged Euro-Egyptian relationship, this could help reaffirm the country's leadership in North Africa and the Middle East. Finally, a strong relationship with Europe may insure the continuation of the significant flows of financial and economic transfers.

The Forum, therefore, is both an instrument of competition for regional leadership and an instrument for using competition among external powers in regional competition. Egypt's request for membership in the Arab Maghreb Union (put forward in November 1994) must be regarded as a way of pursuing the same goal of reassurance as the Mediterranean Forum.

Another example of South-South competition is provided by Morocco, which opposed the Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean in early 1994 as an unwelcome alternative to the CSCM-like conference it had organized only a few months earlier during the 1993 CSCE conference in Rome. Morocco felt that its prestige and regional role might be put in jeopardy by the Mediterranean Forum. Furthermore, it felt that the latter might prove a futile exercise as it does not include important global components such as the US and the EU.

The Casablanca Economic Summit can be regarded as a second round in the regional competition for political and economic bonuses. But while the Forum bets on Europe, the Casablanca initiative seems to reflect the more widespread belief in the region that the US should play the dominant role.

*The impact of trans-Atlantic contradictions on Mediterranean cooperation* - Jockeying for positions in the Mediterranean South-South circle is not beneficial for institutional processes. It

may matter less, however, than policies and signals coming from Europe and the West. A clear and well coordinated Western policy for organizing cooperation and institutions in the area would act as a driving force and strongly discourage South-South competition. But is there such a Western policy? There are important convergences in current trans-Atlantic policies towards the Mediterranean, but also important contradictions.

There are no major disputes between the US and the EU about the Mediterranean and the Middle East today: there are dissensions in Europe about continuing sanctions against Iraq and, to a lesser extent, Libya, and Europeans are not certain about the rationale of "dual containment" in the Gulf; but there is agreement on most important policies, such as proliferation and Islamism.

Above all, the end of the Cold War has resulted in a lower profile for the EU in the Middle East and unprecedented condescendence to the US. Western Europe, including France, chose to align with the US in the Gulf and agreed to make a special economic contribution to the Arab-Israeli negotiations, even though the EU and Europeans were unceremoniously excluded from political negotiations. This low European profile was epitomized in the statement of Mr. Roland Dumas, French Foreign Minister, that France's Arab policy had to be dismissed as a "sheer illusion". All in all, there is convergence and unprecedented accord between the US and Europe in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Nonetheless, contradictions spring from the deep changes that have taken and are taking place within the Atlantic Alliance. With the end of the East-West confrontation, the US is trying to lessen its international commitment. It expects the EU and the European countries to shoulder more responsibility in neighbouring areas, such as Central and Eastern Europe, former Yugoslavia and the Balkans, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Exactly how this division of labour between the US and Europe should be, however, is not very clear. In the Middle East and the Gulf, for example, the US commitment, both political and military, is more central than ever. This is due to the fact that President Clinton's foreign policy is far from isolationist: it lies somewhere between weak multilateralism and selective unilateralism,<sup>10</sup> meaning that the US wants to maintain its global leadership while reducing its cost through strategic discrimination in disengagement and commitment. In the framework of this policy, the Middle East and the Gulf have retained great strategic prominence for the US and therefore remain an important commitment.

There is also a more specific reason for the continued US commitment towards the Mediterranean area. Since the area is not covered by the Atlantic Alliance, the US sees the establishment of any Euro-Mediterranean institution going beyond economic cooperation and international aid as a risk: if the US is not included in the institution, it could be faced with European or Euro-Arab policies that contrast with US national security interests or NATO interests; if the US is included, its role in the region--in the Arab-Israeli circle as well as in the Gulf--could be unduly constrained by endless and inconclusive collective diplomacy.

Thus the US stance towards Europe's role in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Gulf is somewhat ambiguous: an increased European role is sincerely desired, but the extent and limits of that role are not clear.

Europeans are not helping to solve the American dilemma. The end of the Cold War has been accompanied by a tendency towards renationalization of foreign policy which is hindering and slowing down the formation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the defence policy set out by the Maastricht Treaty. This evolution is also preventing Europeans from taking on substantive responsibilities in the Mediterranean area (as in former Yugoslavia). Together, European hesitations and American doubts are generating a kind of vicious circle.

Finally, the alliance with the US and the survival of a US military presence in Europe is perceived by the Europeans as strategically crucial for avoiding disruptions in European integration and the reappearance of fault lines and conflicts among European nations. In this sense, many Europeans more or less consciously see greater political and military autonomy from the US as a factor that could accelerate American disengagement from Europe.

Yet there is ambiguity here, too. Europe would like to take on more international responsibility but is unable and unwilling to give precise indications about the extent and the limits of this responsibility with respect to the US.

Trans-Atlantic problems in working out a division of labour derive essentially from the difficulty in reconciling the global and regional dimensions of common security in the new post-Cold War situation. Debate has progressed but remains open. The Treaty of Maastricht has essentially reconciled emerging contrasts between NATO and the EU defence identity by construing the WEU as the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance (rather than the defence pillar of the EU). Interlocking between the Eurocorps and NATO has also been agreed upon. Finally, an optimal variable geometry has been worked out by the creation of the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) approved by the North Atlantic Council on January 1994. The CJTF can provide the Europeans with the (American) logistics, intelligence and mobility they now lack, thus allowing for autonomous European military operations under WEU, multinational or national umbrellas.

Nevertheless, CJTF military operations are inconceivable outside of the framework of a prior political agreement between the US and its European allies.<sup>11</sup> This kind of political agreement can no longer be anticipated automatically by NATO today as it was at the time of East-West confrontation. After due transformations, the Atlantic Alliance could become the locus for common political decision making, but this direction does not seem very convincing (NATO proved unable to reconcile the allies' political differences in Bosnia even though these differences risked discrediting the military credibility of the Alliance).<sup>12</sup> So where can the US and the EU take common political decisions--if they should feel so inclined--about areas like the Mediterranean and the Middle East? The question of a trans-Atlantic political forum for common US-EU decision making (mainly with respect to Eastern Europe) was raised at the February 1995 annual Wehrkunde meeting, but no answer was found.

If the question is not solved, the ambiguities pointed out above will remain. The US would like Europeans to shoulder more of the burden in the Mediterranean, but without assurances of a forum for making prior joint political decisions, Americans will not feel confident about the outcome. Thus they will prefer to retain the upper hand on security policies and will tend to be against establishing any CSCE-like Mediterranean-centered institution dealing with security. By the same token, without a common forum, Europeans will not be encouraged to take on increasingly clear-cut political and security responsibilities in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

These ambiguities tend to complicate identification of complementarities for implementing cooperation in the Mediterranean.

*Arabs and trans-Atlantic contradictions* - There is yet another ambiguity to complicate things. The general attitude of the Arabs towards the European and American sides of the US-EU-Arab triangle is a far cry today from that which inspired the Euro-Arab dialogue policy<sup>13</sup> in the 1970s. At that time, Arabs thought they could reach a preferential agreement with Europe and play it against US Middle Eastern policy. Today, very few Arab governments would accept a Euro-Arab or Mediterranean understanding decoupled from the US. Most feel that present efforts at cooperation with Europe must go hand in hand with more cohesive and cooperative trans-

Atlantic cooperation: cooperation should not come from across the Mediterranean alone, but also from across the Atlantic.

Yet this is not exactly the way things stand either. As important a partner as the US may be for Arab peoples today, the latter remain fundamentally uneasy about the US. More generally, there is a confused and ambiguous Arab belief that Europe is closer to the Arab world than the US.<sup>14</sup> The South-South attempts at exploiting trans-Atlantic competition mentioned earlier reflect these feelings and perceptions.

*Competition and contradictions within the EU* - The trend towards renationalization of foreign and security policies in the EU may also have a negative effect on the attempts underway to institutionalize Mediterranean relations.

The European Council, other EU institutions and the WEU have on numerous occasions stressed the need for coherence in CFSP and the importance of integrating the Mediterranean side of European security into the CFSP. The most serious European stance against the EU's alleged tendency to privilege Eastern Europe and neglect the Mediterranean area can be found in the October 1994 European Commission communication to the Council of Ministers (already mentioned) putting forward the idea of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This communication recognizes the imbalance in the flow of EU resources presently going towards the two areas (in a 5 to 1 ratio for the East against the South) and proposes a significant increase (up to 5.5 bn ECU in 1995-1999) in EU aid to the Mediterranean.

In December 1994, the European Council in Essen accepted the broad argument made by the Commission, but refrained from spelling out any specific aid figure with respect to the East or the South. At the same time, the Essen Council recalled that European Council decisions taken in Edinburgh in 1992 on 1993-1999 EU financing set precise ceilings on EU expenses, including external assistance. This means that there will have to be negotiations among EU members on the future amount of external assistance and its destination. Northern members of the EU are not against the idea of increasing resources towards the Mediterranean but they do not want to pay for it or to pay for it in full. Given the ceilings, there are two solutions to such negotiations: Southern European EU members will have to either give up a part of the EU assistance allotted to their economies so as to enable the EU to shift some of those resources towards Mediterranean countries, or increase their contribution to the EU budget substantially so as to allow the latter to increase the Union's financing in favour of Mediterranean countries.

The upshot of this kind of intra-EU competition may become clearer after the French presidential elections in spring of 1995. Germany and France are widely regarded as the *chefs de file* of the "pro-Eastern" and "pro-Southern" groups in the EU. Commenting on the future of the German-French relation--a relation which has provided leadership for European integration so far--Michael Stürmer pointed out that the "Germans view co-opting the countries of central and eastern Europe into the EU as being in their national interest as well as a wider European concern. France, on the other hand, is more worried about troubles in the Mediterranean basin, from Casablanca to Amman".<sup>15</sup> If the outcome of the French elections allows for a renewal of the German-French axis, such a deal may include revision of the EU ceilings on external assistance in favour of both Southern and Eastern Europe and the countries south of the Mediterranean.

As a result, competition and complementarity inside the EU is bound to have a significant impact on the future of cooperation and institutions in the Mediterranean. If European resources for external cooperation are not significantly increased because of intra-European competition or disunity, EU-led schemes will have a slim chance of preventing competition or encouraging complementarity in the Mediterranean.



*Complementarity and competition: the case of the Mediterranean Forum* - Unlike other cooperation schemes, the Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean is characterized by the limitations on its geographical scope: on the southern side, it includes North Africa and excludes the Levant countries; on the northern side, it includes Southern European countries and excludes the northern members of the EU. In addition to this narrow Mediterranean scope, the Mediterranean Forum does not contain any global component among its members.

The most important question arising from these limitations concerns the Forum's relations with the EU as a whole: in what way should North African countries' special relations with their Southern European partners be distinguished from their ordinary relations with the EU? Will the Southern European members of the Forum provide their North African Arab partners with more political and/or economic solidarity than the EU and the European countries not included in the Forum? Will the Forum be the locus for developing a special kind of Mediterranean solidarity and reaping the benefits of proximity?

The "Oral conclusions" provided informally by the Egyptian government at the end of the July 1994 first inter-ministerial meeting of the Mediterranean Forum in Alexandria are very general and do not answer these questions. As already mentioned, however, the "Med-2000 Report" adopted by the meeting includes two important ideas for trying to give the Mediterranean Forum a precise purpose and, at the same time, bring it into line with the EU's wider framework of cooperation. According to the Report:

\* "Mediterranean cooperation must receive a specific institutional framework within which the [EU] countries of Southern Europe can take on special responsibility towards their partners both on the Southern Rim and in northern European countries. Whatever its degree of institutionalization, this framework must be linked to the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)";

\* "the institutions for political cooperation must pursue two main objectives: i) increased coherence between the consensus-building mechanisms in individual countries and international cooperation so that better management of interdependence and global economic, social and cultural processes may be achieved, thereby attenuating and solving possible crises and reducing risks; ii) definition of the type of dialogue required to bring the Mediterranean area into the processes of globalization, thus reducing tensions between globalization and specificities; the human dimension is bound to be predominant in Mediterranean cooperation".<sup>16</sup>

A Southern European role in mediating between the countries south of the Mediterranean and the EU was already suggested at the Western Mediterranean Forum in Tangiers, where the concluding document refers to Southern European countries as "mentors" of the Arab countries participating in what was to become the "5 + 5" Group. The "Med-2000 Report" tries to substantiate this (very Mediterranean) metaphor by coupling local political cooperation (called MPC, Mediterranean Political Cooperation, in the document) to broader political cooperation with the EU (i.e. the CFSP) and by arguing that proximity and shared cultural heritage may contribute to solving contrasts between global trends and regional identities. Such a contribution could in turn be an important factor in smoothing Euro-Mediterranean relations, thereby facilitating their institutionalization.

If the Mediterranean Forum proves incapable of working out an institutional and political identity consistent with the wider European framework, survival will be difficult. It is more likely that survival will be linked to attempts at using it in a competitive way in the South-South arena--as mentioned earlier--or in the North-North context (e.g. as an element of attrition between France

and Germany or between southern and northern members of the Union). This would be detrimental to the Mediterranean Forum itself.

### ***Towards complementarity***

*The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Mediterranean Forum* -As pointed out earlier, there is potential for complementarity between the Mediterranean Forum and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Yet, while the latter can perform even in the absence of the Forum, the reverse is not necessarily true. In order for the Forum to work and provide its members with the benefits of its geopolitical specialization, it has to be coupled to the EU (e.g. through Mediterranean Political Cooperation). If the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership does not materialize or if it is too weak to tackle the challenge of institutionalizing multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean, the identity of the Mediterranean Forum will be easier to assert, but it will lack significance since the decoupling from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership would almost certainly reflect some form of disunity within the EU. If this were the case, the Mediterranean Forum could even prove detrimental to the interests of its southern members.

The most favourable solution from the point of view of Mediterranean cooperation would be a strong Euro-Mediterranean Partnership flanked by and well connected to a viable Mediterranean Forum intent on developing cultural proximity and relations.

*Euro-Mediterranean Political Cooperation* - Mediterranean Political Cooperation (MPC) is bound to play a pivotal role in any cooperation scheme between European countries and the countries across the Mediterranean.

A flexible and effective MPC is a necessary condition for both European-Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic complementarity: if the MPC proves ineffective, any Euro-Mediterranean arrangement will lose its interest for the countries concerned; if the MPC is inflexible, it will create problems within the trans-Atlantic sphere.

The kind of effective and flexible MPC that is required to make Euro-Mediterranean institutional cooperation work has been outlined in the "Med-2000 Report":

MPC should not be seen as one complex, multi-faceted institution, but rather as a set of "light" institutions which can be adapted to circumstances and requirements and adjusted to the real level of possible cooperation. It should be able to link up with the other existing international organisations and multilateral cooperation activities in different ways on specific initiatives or when the latter involve important interests or commitments in the area.

The MPC's tasks should be dialogue and consultation among governments and the organisation of multilateral communication between the public and private spheres. Ideally, the MPC should set up a list of priorities and objectives to serve as a stimulus and guideline for all cooperation (whether bilateral or multilateral, public or private). It should constitute a useful institutional interlocutor and a possible instrument for verification of progress in the desired direction.

. . . the MPC must be endowed with a permanent network for consultation (with special technical equipment) among participating countries. Another permanent network can be envisaged for exchange of information between countries not involved in cooperation. Both would be linked to the European CFSP. These networks could also be integrated by periodic meetings at different levels and *ad hoc* meetings. . . .

MPC should also include multilateral consultations on the more general issues of global security (proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) and other issues that go beyond foreign policy, such as the legal matters dealt with by European cooperation, the fight against organized crime and international terrorism, and other aspects of government policies.<sup>17</sup>

To conclude on this point, it is difficult to conceive of separate MPC schemes, even if a plurality of Euro-Mediterranean institutional arrangements were to emerge. In that event, the countries concerned should be prepared to set up an intimate link, or better, to share the same institution of political cooperation from within different institutional schemes.

*Trans-Atlantic impact on Mediterranean cooperation* - All in all, despite Arab perceptions and current discrepancies and gaps between the US and Europe, it would be grossly unfair to say that there is trans-Atlantic competition with regard to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. There are uncertainties in both the US and Europe about strategic perspectives. But inconsistencies do not come from competition or conflict; they come from the absence of a unifying strategic vision.

Trans-Atlantic relations are not fuelling competition or hindering cooperation in the Mediterranean today, but they are not encouraging it either. US-EU relations suggest a division of labour, but this division of labour does not stem from firm political agreements and a clear-cut strategic vision. As a result, it is fragile and indefinite instead of being evident and effective.

This situation of flux does not insure complementarity. While waiting for the establishment of a US-EU forum for political decision making, Mediterranean relations should be based on policies giving strong priority to complementarity in the short term and planting the seeds for more European responsibility and a more effective US-EU division of labour in the medium term.

In this sense, two main directives should be applied to regulate the relationship between the emerging EU Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the US-led Mediterranean processes. First, the EU should be allowed to take on more responsibility for security. It is obvious that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will only be able to deal with some arms control and limitation issues after the Working Group on ACRS has provided an understanding on this point between Israel and the front-line Arab countries. Nonetheless, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should be able to set up a framework of comprehensive Mediterranean CBMs and CSBMs<sup>18</sup> without suffering significant limitations or delays because of the on-going Arab-Israeli process.

Second, the EU should accentuate its economic regionalization towards its southern approaches, just as the US is trying to do with Mexico. At the same time, the EU's role among the global components of assistance to structural adjustment and stabilization in the Mediterranean should be increased. In other words, the EU should increase its economic and financial responsibility towards the Mediterranean, while being allowed to increase its voice within the international organizations. The IMF decision to support Algeria was the outcome of special European (French) pressure and concern. But it is only one case. The EU cannot pursue an effective economic cooperation policy in the Mediterranean without promoting its own role in international organizations regarding actions directed at the Mediterranean and a more Mediterranean-directed policy within these same organizations.

## *Notes*

(1) *Helsinki Monitor*, no. 2, 1994, p. 89.

(2) See the Document approved in Malaga, 15-20 June 1992, at the 1st Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean, and Victor-Yves Ghebali, "De la CSCE à la CSCM", in *Bulletin Interparlementaire*, no. 2, 1992, pp. 114-135 and pp. 149-152, respectively.

(3) The new situation is outlined by Laura Guazzone, "The Neighbours Europe Has Too Long Neglected", *European Brief*, vol.2, no. 4, February 1995, pp. 23-24.

(4) The Italian International Affairs Institute, "Cooperation and Stability in the Mediterranean: An Agenda for Partnership", *The International Spectator*, vol. XXIX, no. 3, July-September 1994, pp. 5-20.

(5) On the ACRS, see Shai Feldman, "Progress Towards Middle East Arms Control", in Shlomo Gazit, Zeev Eytan, *The Middle East Military Balance 1993-1994*, The Jerusalem Post & Westview Press for The Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Jerusalem and Boulder (Co.), 1994, pp. 182-210; Mahmoud Karem, "The Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and of Ballistic Missiles", in Chantal De Jonge Oudraat (ed.), *Conference of Research Institutes in the Middle East. Proceedings of the Cairo Conference (18-20 April 1993)*, UNIDIR, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 1994, pp. 39-50.

(6) Stanley Fisher, Dani Rodrik, Elias Tuma (eds.), *The Economics of Middle East Peace*, Cambridge (Ma.), MIT Press, 1993; Rodney Wilson, "The Economic Relations of the Middle East: Toward Europe or within the Region?", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2, Spring 1994, pp. 268-287.

(7) The Summit was attended by representatives of 61 countries. See Edmund O'Sullivan, "Marching to a new tune", *Middle East Economic Digest*, 11 November 1994, pp. 6-7, which also report the document approved by the conference: "The Casablanca Declaration".

(8) Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Occupied Territories of Palestine (Cyprus and Malta are candidates to become members of the EU, which means that they will sooner or later be on the other side of the EU Mediterranean Policy). The outline of the EU's proposal is included in the EC Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament, *Renforcement de la Politique Méditerranéenne de l'Union Européenne. Etablissement d'un Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen*, COM(94) 427 final, Brussels, 19 October 1994.

(9) Wadouda Badran, *Egypt's Security Policy*, paper presented to the ISS-WEU International Seminar on "Security and Defence Policies of the Maghreb Countries and Egypt", Paris, 9-10 March 1995 (unpublished); Gema Martín Muñoz, *L'Égypte et la stabilité en Méditerranée. Les conséquences pour l'Afrique du Nord et l'Europe*, paper presented to the ISS-WEU International Seminar on "L'Égypte et la stabilité au nord de l'Afrique et en Méditerranée: les conséquences pour l'Europe", Paris, November 3, 1994 (unpublished); Abdel Monem Said Aly, *From Geo-Politics to Geo-Economics. Egyptian National Security Perceptions* (unpublished: draft circulated by the author at the end of 1994 within the framework of the UNIDIR Expert Group on Confidence Building Measures in the Middle East); Mohammed El-Sayed Selim, *Mediterraneanism: A New Dimension in Egypt's Foreign Policy*, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, 1994 (unpublished).

(10) Current American schools of thought in relation to international policy and European relations are outlined in R.D. Asmus, "The Rise--or Fall?-- of Multilateralism: America's New

Foreign Policy and What It Means for Europe", in Marco Carnovale (ed.), *European Security and International Institutions After the Cold War*, London, MacMillan Press, 1995 (forthcoming).

(11) See the comment by Daniel Vernet, "L'Europe, l'OTAN et la Russie", *Le Monde*, 7 February 1995.

(12) Recently, NATO took the decision to initiate an informative dialogue with a selected group of Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries: see *Atlantic News*, no. 2688, 25 January 1995, p. 1. This dialogue, however, is not targeted to establish any kind of institutional link with the countries concerned (Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and does not link necessarily with the broader question of a US-EU forum for political decision making pointed out in the text.

(13) Bichara Khader, *L'Europe et le monde arabe...*, cit., pp. 91-139; Jaime Munich Gasa, "El diálogo Euro-árabe", *Revista CIDOB de Afers Internacionals*, no. 16, 1989, pp. 23-36. Earlier: David Allen, "The Euro-Arab Dialogue", *The Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, June 1979, pp. 323-342; Edmund Volker (ed.), *Euro-Arab Co-Operation*, Sijthoff, Leyden, 1976.

(14) This is very perceptively noted by Ghassan Salamé, "Torn between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean: Europe and the Middle East in the Post-Cold War Era", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2, Spring 1994, pp. 226-249 (see p. 228), who cites Ellen Laipson, "Europe Role in the Middle East: Enduring Ties, Emerging Opportunities", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1 as saying: "Europe has, and is to continue to have, a more sustained and durable political, economic, and cultural presence in the region than either the United States or the Soviet Union" (p. 7).

(15) "An open relationship", *Financial Times*, 27 January 1995.

(16) "Cooperation and Stability in the Mediterranean: An Agenda for Partnership", *cit.*, p. 9.

(17) *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11.

(18) Antonio Marquina, Hans Günter Brauch (eds.), *Confidence Building and Partnership in the Western Mediterranean. Tasks for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Avoidance*, UNISCI Papers no. 1, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 1994.