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**WEU AND SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN:
ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS**

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International relations have changed radically. We are all well aware of it by now, not only decision-makers and their advisors such as ourselves, but even the man in the street, i. e. the electorate. The essential issue facing an increasing number of institutions nowadays, is how to cope with the implications of globalisation not necessarily accepting or conforming to it, but relating and adjusting in the many different ways that the respective historic traditions suggest. The immediate reaction, at the inter-State level, was to increase and multilateralise connections, breaking free from the constrictions of bloc-to-bloc confrontation. The other result, at the sub-State level, was to open up societies, taking advantage of the many more opportunities and the increased communications available.

This takes much of the burden of responsibility off state structures, the function of which is not anymore to take care of every international occurrence, but to establish and manage a network of solidarities and co-operative projects to deal with the many transnational and multifaceted challenges of today. Opening up markets, investment and trade has its advantages and disadvantages, many of them yet unexplored, but the effects are in any case hardly controllable by individual states, as recent events have demonstrated. Interdependence is both a fact of life and an instrument to deal with it. A broader concept of cooperative security, dealing with both the causes and the consequences of tension and conflict has thus developed.

The role of the international community, as imagined and organised by the founding fathers of the UN, is not to come up with a world government, strictly structured and hierarchical, which is but a utopian goal, but to establish instead broadly shared convictions and develop thereby general conditions conducive to stability, security and prosperity. Each nation will participate in it, in the convergence of the many different contributions that respective traditions and civilisations suggest. The essential result should be that the overall "playing field" is broadened, and therefore leveled, thus allowing the many national ambitions and reservations to even out, and every society to profit from it.

Europe, the "whole and free" Europe that President Bush evoked when the Berlin wall fell, has long ago embarked in this enterprise, in which the benefits that one gets out of it are related to the amount that one invests in it. The gradual integration of Europe is a demand-driven process. Central and Eastern European countries seek increased involvement and participation, to which EU and WEL' respond: other countries particularly in South-eastern Europe are less responsive, which accounts for some of the effects that are there for all to deplore.

The concern, expressed by Mediterranean partners from the moment that the Cold War ended, that, in its Eastward drive, Western Europe would neglect its Southern neighbours, is unfounded. The fact is that the opportunities and challenges that Europe has created for itself and, by implication, for others do not elicit yet a comprehensive response from the Mediterranean partners. The reasons are of course objective as well as subjective,

ranging from security concerns and institutional inadequacies to political misunderstandings and socio-economic imbalances. The multilateral process established in Barcelona was designed to allow for progress in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership across the full spectrum of political, economic, social and cultural issues. This should have allowed co-operation and exchanges to develop in a multiplicity of ways, through governments but also directly between the many strands of the respective civil societies, a broad process that was designed to circumvent individual sticking points, or even major stumbling blocks, occurring in some areas. This approach is no different than the method that Europe has adopted for itself ever since the Rome Treaty of 1957, a method that Barcelona has now put at the disposal of all the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

Disappointingly, however, WEU has so far been kept out of the Barcelona process. It did not attend the original meeting in the Catalan city. It is still waiting to know, from the EU and its Mediterranean partners, if and to what extent it can contribute to it. It is ready to do so, having lately developed its political and operational capabilities to an adequate level of readiness. Member countries intend to increase WEU's operational role in humanitarian, crisis prevention and peacekeeping missions. Yet, ministerial communiques state that, with respect to the Mediterranean, WEU will act "in response to requests from the EU". This corresponds to the position of WEU as the operational arm of EU, from which the political impulse must originate, especially in the light shed by the Amsterdam treaty. But the Mediterranean partners are equally called upon to contribute to the extension of the Barcelona partnership to the cooperative security and stability fields.

Waiting for a specific role to be entrusted to it, WEU's Mediterranean Group develops information exchanges and promotes a comparison of national experiences, individually, with the seven Mediterranean countries involved in a structured dialogue. Similarly to EU's European enlargement, the dialogue is inherently incremental. Hopefully, mutual confidence in security matters will build up, and with it a capital of trust conducive to the co-operative endeavours that circumstances will suggest, on a case by case basis.

The Mediterranean region as a whole, not only the North African and Middle Eastern parts of it, is still very politicised, fragmented, often confrontational. Geo-economics still find it hard to break the mould of some long-standing factors of tension and strife. And the cause-and-effect vicious circle has yet to be loosened. What remains to be achieved on every shore of the Mediterranean is a sense of common purpose in multilateral co-operative endeavours, moving away from the traditional balance-of-power attitudes that recent history has so decisively discredited. Here again, the European integration process has conclusively contributed to national and international stabilisation and security, in ways that tend to prevent using military means or, if needed, to use them for non-military purposes. As a ((civilian power)), contrary to NATO, Europe (i.e. WEU) is best able to deal with the causes of instability and crisis, or with the post- conflict rehabilitation phase of things. Its DNA throughout these forty years is about prevention, persuasion, involvement, not deterrence or enforcement. The political conditionalities it holds out to countries aspiring to EU accession are a form of persuasion to converge, rather than a straight-jacket.

Confidence-building measures is what the Mediterranean needs, all around its shores. For the moment, some prefer to speak of partnership-building measures, only to refuse an extension of the partnership-for-peace model. So be it: it's the process that counts, not the terminology, provided that transparency about each other's intentions, predictability (the

mother of security), convergence and compatibility are sought. They will not in themselves solve existing problems. but they will help identify their many components. familiarise the many actors with them and thereby promote co-operative arrangements. bilaterally and multilaterally. A common denominator of common interests. in a longer term vision. will gradually be restored in our common sea.

WEU has already very successfully embarked in this very process, among European countries, regardless of their present conditions. According to the Amsterdam Treaty (art. J 7) WEU is an integral part of the development of the European Union providing it with «access to an operational capability». It «supports the European Union in framing the defence aspects of the common foreign and security policy», with a view to the possible eventual integration of the two organizations. Its ten full members (members both of the EU and NATO) have gradually involved eighteen other European countries (members of either the EU or NATO, or having established a Euro agreement), and set-up systematic dialogues with many others, in a web of co-operative security arrangements. Their involvement extends to participation in common planning of peace support operations that WEU may be asked to undertake, not only by the EU or NATO, but also the UN or the OSCE. For them all, WEU stands as a possible operational instrument to organise directly or co-ordinate the use of national military forces, also for non strictly military purposes. Their exact configuration will depend on the willingness of individual countries to participate, and on the consensus of the country or countries that would benefit from such an international contribution.

The missions carried out to control the ex-Yugoslavian arms embargo are a demonstration of WEU's practical utility, as is the support activity still underway with regard to Albanian police. Furthermore, WEU's operative capacity has reached a standard that would allow the EU to carry out significant military missions. In addition, a number of member countries have made available some particularly qualified military units for WEU's purposes, such as, for example, the multinational task forces EUROFOR (army) and EUROMARFOR (navy) in which France, Italy, Portugal and Spain participate.

Some misunderstandings have developed about these Euroforces. No priority areas have been decided for their use, but they are certainly not intended specifically for the Mediterranean area. Had they been in operational readiness at the time. they might even have been deployed in a Bosnian type scenario, or for humanitarian aid distribution operations in situations such as the Ruandan crisis. It should also be noted that those two formations are not permanent forces, nor do they have a predetermined composition or size it has been decided that they shall be formed on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the particular needs and missions, choosing the components from units which have only been pre-identified, earmarked by each of the participating countries.

Some Euro-Mediterranean initiatives useful for «broad security» purposes could already be considered and enacted pragmatically, within established institutional frameworks or on the basis of existing multi-bilateral links. Navies naturally solidarise on the high seas; the military structures are the only ones that can speedily and efficiently provide materiel for civil emergencies, wrought by natural or man-made disasters; illicit trafficking of all kinds (drugs, arms, people) which evade the control of individual states are another area where exchange of information, and whenever needed common interdiction, could be inobtrusive and yet effective. Political consultations and expert discussions could look at more ambitious cooperative projects for arms control or conflict prevention purposes. And yet, in a broader

regional context the Euro-Mediterranean partners could act together; conflict prevention and crisis management are formally inscribed in the ambitions of the Organisation for African Unity. Its North African members have been very active in calling for early warning and subregional crisis management projects. This is a most appropriate field where European and Arab states could act together, in advisory, training and logistical supportive capacity, in what is "out of area" for both, who could therefore hardly be accused of ganging up against sub-Saharan Africans.

In the end, the Common Foreign and Security Policy established by the Maastricht Treaty, and refined by the Amsterdam Treaty, will be essentially shaped by how EU deals with neighbouring areas and third countries, by how it responds to their needs. By its very experience, Europe is best equipped to promote, encourage, support. As one of its operational instruments, WEU will ensure the involvement of the twenty-eight countries connected to it. No contradiction will result between the Eastern and the Mediterranean policies of either the EU or WEU, provided that the nations which may benefit from it converge and share a common purpose. It could even be argued, given the track-record of the EU, that CFSP can only be defined, adjusted and developed together with the recipient countries.

Western Europe has been for years involved in the very same co-operative process that challenges today the world at large. Europe is and will become an ever more effective international actor to the extent that its interlocutors engage with it and contribute to its progression. The great French historian Fernand Braudel reminded us that "in the concert of the Mediterranean, the Western man must not listen only to the voices that are familiar to him; there are always the other voices, the foreign ones; and the keyboard needs two hands". An Italian sociologist, Franco Cassano, in book just published about the Mediterranean, exhorts the countries that belong to it to reacquire their ancient dignity of thinking positively, breaking the long historical sequence of self-consciousness and mutual criticism, Europe cannot by itself provide the common denominator, let alone substitute, for co-operative ventures between Mediterranean partners, be it in North Africa, the Balkans, the Aegean. It acts not by imposition, but by aggregation. It must speak up clearly and listen carefully. WEU will be at its side, as needed.