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Mapping the Proliferation of Parliamentary Actors in the Mediterranean: Facilitating or Hindering Cooperation?

by Andrea Cofelice and Stelios Stavridis

ABSTRACT

This study offers a preliminary mapping of the parliamentary scene that prevails in the Mediterranean, with a view to answering whether such a proliferation of parliamentary actors hinders or promotes (inter-)regional cooperation. The paper takes a quantitative approach because it is not possible to evaluate qualitatively such a complex parliamentary scene without first knowing how many actors are actually involved. Such an approach does not claim to be fully exhaustive but it tries to be as comprehensive as possible. Even if it only covers formal arrangements, this is not meant to downplay the importance of less formal arrangements – just that this is a first step in setting up a wider research agenda on the subject. The paper's objectives are to find out how many parliamentary actors there are, or at least to give a general indication of their overall numbers; and to identify possible trends explaining the causes and consequences of the proliferation of Mediterranean parliamentary institutions. The paper concludes that the proliferation of parliamentary actors tends to be an obstacle for a better cooperation due to a number of reasons that include limited resources duplication and high personnel and management costs.

*Mediterranean | Interregional cooperation | Parliamentary diplomacy |
International parliamentary institutions (IPIs) | Overlapping institutions*

keywords

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by Andrea Cofelice and Stelios Stavridis*

Introduction

The Mediterranean is an area with very important gaps between its two shores: economic, political, social, cultural – gaps that are often cumulative as well as overlapping.¹ It is also “a zone of violent conflicts”.² The “Arab Spring” revolts have, if anything, further aggravated this situation mainly due to their failure to reach democratic status, except perhaps in Tunisia.³ But in spite of gaps, differences and tensions, the shared Mediterranean has also served historically to link the shores of that closed sea.

The Mediterranean as a space of both cooperation and confrontation has seen numerous projects aiming to ease tensions mainly through collaborative efforts, including even some forms of what can be termed “region building”. Hence, ever since the beginning of European integration efforts in the 1950s, but in particular since the creation of the European Economic Community, now the European Union since Maastricht, there have been constant efforts at linking the two shores via numerous formal and informal arrangements. The institutionalized arrangements have evolved over time from the 1972 Global Mediterranean Policy,

¹ Council of Europe, *The South Programme II (2015-2017): Focus on Democratic Governance*, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/south-programme2/the-programme>.

² Paul Balta, “The Mediterranean as a Zone of Conflicts”, in *Afers Internacionals*, No. 37 (September 1997), p. 151-156.

³ Housam Darwish, “Trajectories and Outcomes of the ‘Arab Spring’: Comparing Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria”, in *IDE Discussion Papers*, No. 456 (March 2014), <http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Dp/456.html>.

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to the 1990 Renovated Mediterranean Policy, and finally culminating in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 1995, revamped in 2008 into the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).⁴

Whether such efforts have been successful or not falls beyond the scope of this paper. Moreover, these efforts have also been conditioned by internal, national, regional and world developments, not least the end of the Cold War, globalization, the "War on Terror", and most recently the "Arab Spring". Therefore, to assess success or failure is not an easy exercise. In all of this, however, less attention has been paid to the proliferation of new actors, in particular parliamentary ones, hence the focus of this paper.

The Mediterranean represents a perfect laboratory for parliamentary diplomacy,⁵ as will be illustrated below with the plethora of parliamentary actors present in the "region". Moreover, as there is a proliferation of international organizations (IOs) in the Mediterranean,⁶ there exists a high level of institutionalization. What is particularly relevant to this paper is the fact that most of these IOs possess a parliamentary dimension, including what the literature has defined as IPIs (international parliamentary institutions) which may depend or not on IOs.⁷ These IPIs, together with state and sub-state parliamentary assemblies, perform a number of activities, functions, and roles. But what has not yet been carried out in the literature is a mapping exercise: how many parliamentary bodies exist in the Mediterranean?

Mapping the proliferation of parliamentary actors in the Mediterranean will be the objective of this paper. The exercise is intended as a first quantitative step towards finding if such a proliferation acts as an obstacle/hindrance or instead as a facilitator of (inter-)regional cooperation.

⁴ Peter Ludlow (ed.), *Europe and the Mediterranean*, London, Brassey's for CEPS, 1994; Filippos Pierros, Jacob Meunier and Stan Abrams, *Bridges and Barriers. The European Union's Mediterranean Policy, 1961-1998*, Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 1999; Richard Youngs, *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy. Europe's Mediterranean and Asian Policies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001; Fulvio Attinà and Stelios Stavridis (eds.), *The Barcelona Process and Euro-Mediterranean Issues from Stuttgart to Marseille*, Milan, Giuffrè, 2001; Dimitris K. Xenakis and Dimitris N. Chrysoschoou, *The Emerging Euro-Mediterranean System*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001; Federica Bicchì and Richard Gillespie (eds.), *The Union for the Mediterranean*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012.

⁵ Or at least one of them as far Europe's immediate neighbourhoods are concerned: see the "Baltic" laboratory for parliamentary cooperation. Cristina Fasone, "The Baltic Sea Region as a Laboratory for Inter-parliamentary 'Dialogue'", in Olivier Costa, Clarissa Dri and Stelios Stavridis (eds.), *Parliamentary Dimensions of Regionalization and Globalization. The Role of Inter-parliamentary Institutions*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 126-148.

⁶ Zlatko Šabić and Ana Bojinović, "Mapping a Regional Institutional Architecture: the Case of the Mediterranean", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (November 2007), p. 317-337.

⁷ See Zlatko Šabić, "Building Democratic and Responsible Global Governance: The Role of International Parliamentary Institutions", in *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 255-271, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsm062>; Olivier Costa, Clarissa Dri and Stelios Stavridis (eds.), *Parliamentary Dimensions of Regionalization and Globalization. The Role of Inter-parliamentary Institutions*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

The first part of the paper will present an overview of the international role of parliaments, with an emphasis on the Mediterranean. The second part will discuss the Mediterranean itself: Is it a region? Is it better to use interregional approaches (New Regionalism)? Why is this area beset by numerous types of conflicts, inequalities and other problems? How do "region building" efforts try to change such a perspective?

The third part, the bulk of this paper, presents a quantitative mapping out of the existing (Euro-)Mediterranean parliamentary scene. Its main objective is to show (i) how many actors there are; (ii) how many overlaps exist; and (iii) whether there is a division of labour of sorts, or if instead there is potentially unnecessary duplication. Finally, the concluding section summarizes the main findings and sets the ground for future research.

1. Parliaments and international affairs

The academic literature on "parliamentary diplomacy" is slowly consolidating itself in a situation of growing interest in non-traditional inter-state diplomacy.⁸ In its broadest definition, parliamentary diplomacy reflects the fact that parliamentarians and parliamentary institutions have engaged in a vast array of international activities – including in some functions that were traditionally associated with state diplomacy: communication, reporting, policy analysis, and even some forms of negotiation and of representation, admittedly with varying levels of involvement. Thus, the existing literature has identified a number of functions for parliamentarians in world affairs: legitimization of multi-level governance, democratic control of public policies, "international moral tribunals", or parliamentary diplomacy *tout court*.

Also the constant overlap of related functions and roles means it is often difficult to know exactly which one is being carried out at any given time. Some authors have stressed that this overlap is not only real, it is positive: what Lorinc Redei has called the "[t]he mutual reinforcement of parliamentary oversight and parliamentary diplomacy".⁹ In addition, there is also parliamentary diplomacy involved in the

⁸ On diplomacy, see Adam Watson, *Diplomacy. The Dialogue between States*, London, Methuen, 1982. On non-state actors and diplomacy, see Brian Hocking, "Non-State Actors and the Transformation of Diplomacy", in Bob Reinalda (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors*, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2011, p. 225-236. On parliamentary diplomacy, see Stelios Stavridis and Davor Jančić, "Introduction: The Rise of Parliamentary Diplomacy in International Politics", in Stelios Stavridis and Davor Jančić (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy Uncovered: European and Global Perspectives*, Special issue of *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 11, No. 2-3 (Spring 2016), p. 105-120.

⁹ Lorinc Redei, "The European Parliament as a Diplomatic Precedent Setter. The Case of Parliamentary Relations with Kosovo", in Stelios Stavridis and Daniela Irrera (eds.), *The European Parliament and Its International Relations*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 279-280.

creation and in the activities of parliamentary assemblies of all sorts and kinds.¹⁰ All of these roles can also be found in the parliamentary diplomacy as exercised in the Mediterranean.

Parliamentary diplomacy thus amounts to the international activities of parliamentarians generally speaking, but also to specific actions that are meant to develop alternative or complementary forms to traditional state diplomacy. Thus, there is a limited definition and a more ample one: parliamentary diplomacy *per se* and international parliamentary activities (in the past known as inter-parliamentary cooperation, usually of a technical kind¹¹).

In view of the depth and complexity of this parliamentary diplomacy landscape, then, it becomes important – before engaging in any future assessment of specific case studies – to identify how many parliamentary actors there in fact are in the Mediterranean. And this is the main objective of this working paper.

2. Why the Mediterranean as a case study?

Among the reasons for choosing the Mediterranean as a case study there are both methodological and conceptual challenges, the most salient of which are addressed below.

First of all, is the Mediterranean a “region”? There is no easy definition of the Mediterranean. Three different notions have been regularly used in the literature: “sea”, “space” or “region”. That is to say: a geographic definition, a political one and a structured regional one – with some even arguing that there is evidence of a “regional security complex”.¹² All three approaches also have at least three versions each: the limited version, the medium version, and the larger one that cover narrower or wider extensions of the Mediterranean, sometimes extending to the Persian Gulf or the Black Sea. This is not the place to enter this interesting debate about the limits of the Mediterranean.¹³ But clearly, which definition of the Mediterranean one adopts is also important in defining how many parliamentary actors there are. In addition, the Mediterranean’s fuzzy boundaries mean that many actors will be involved or important even if they are not directly defined as

¹⁰ See Franklin De Vrieze, “The South-East European Cooperation Process and Its New Parliamentary Assembly: Regional Dialogue in Action”, in Stelios Stavridis and Maria Gianniou (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy in the Mediterranean*, Special issue of *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December 2016), p. 215-234.

¹¹ See for instance, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, “Cooperation and Coordination”, in *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, 2008, p. 141-150, <http://www.ictparliament.org/wepr2008.html>. See also Brian Hocking, “Non-State Actors and the Transformation of Diplomacy”, cit.

¹² Alberto Priego Moreno, “Delimitación geográfico/conceptual del ‘Mediterráneo sur’. ¿Un regional security complex?”, in *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, No. 6 (2016), p. 1-12, <http://revistas.upcomillas.es/index.php/internationalrelations/article/view/6958>.

¹³ For details, see Ibid.

"Mediterranean".

To determine the geographical limits for the current work we follow a categorization of international institutions in the Mediterranean developed by Šabič and Bojinović:

The mapping of international institutions that are present in the Mediterranean geographical space has been done by using four main categories: a) Mediterranean international governmental and non-governmental organizations; b) other Mediterranean institutions; and c) external international institutions. A *Mediterranean international (non-) governmental organization* is defined as follows: i) at least two or more states (or institutions from two or more different states from the Mediterranean) are its founders and/or members; ii) the organization has its seat in the Mediterranean; and iii) its focus (in terms of declared purposes of the organization) is on Mediterranean affairs. *Other Mediterranean institutions* bring together all those institutions that cannot be classified as i) or ii).¹⁴

Related to the choice of delimitation is the challenge of determining the most useful conception of the Mediterranean for facilitating cooperation in the region: a global view that includes both Maghreb and Mashreq (à la American: Middle East and North Africa, MENA), but also northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean? Or a limited one that divides it into East and Western Mediterranean (the Middle East and the 5+5 approach). The decision made here involves also the kind of parliamentary cooperation that may be useful to promote harmony and prevent tensions and conflicts. But there is also a second conceptual challenge that needs to be addressed: the very nature of the interplay of IPIs in the Mediterranean, as well as the causes and consequences of such interplay.

Recognizing that interplay and overlap may take place on at least two levels, *membership* and *policy*, scholars of IOs are generally guided by a basic research question: Is there overlap in membership and policy, and does interplay lead to a more integrated coordination between IOs – or does it foster competition?

The answer to this basic question may depend first on the causes behind the proliferation of IOs (or, as in this case, IPIs). In some cases, indeed, scholars argue that organizational overlap is intentionally created by states, in order to exploit the range of choice to gain more influence over IOs as they can forum-shop to suit their best interest.¹⁵ In other cases, overlap is viewed as accidental and a consequence of international organizations expanding their field of action.¹⁶ Thus, overlap can be considered a strategic inconsistency created by states to obtain a maximum of

¹⁴ Zlatko Šabič and Ana Bojinović, "Mapping a Regional Institutional Architecture", cit., p. 322-323, note omitted.

¹⁵ Malte Brosig, "Overlap and Interplay between International Organisations: Theories and Approaches", in *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (August 2011), p. 149.

¹⁶ Ibid.

leeway, or it can be simply unintended.¹⁷ We need to examine which of the two possible explanations best suits the case of the Mediterranean parliamentary field.

Similarly, analysis of the consequences of IOs' interplay and overlap may pave the way to two different (but not necessarily contradictory) perspectives. The first approach is based on ecological organization theory¹⁸: scholars assume that actor density in situations of scarce resources naturally leads to competition – which in turn triggers a process of niche specialization or division of labour thus increasing variation between IOs.¹⁹ Other scholars instead highlight the isomorphic effect of organizational interplay: i.e., an interplay based on common interests and the performance of similar tasks would tend to trigger emulation rather than niche specializations – with the consequence that IOs become more similar over time.²⁰ Here again, we need to determine which is the main path followed by Mediterranean IPIs.

However, when it comes to assessing whether IOs' interplay and overlap improve cooperation or lead to unnecessary replication and inefficiency, the literature is highly divided and appraisals vary according to different policy fields. With regard to regional economic integration, which has attracted most of scholars' attention so far, the mainstream conclusion is that IO overlap tends to lead to a high level of potential conflicts in norms and policies, due to the very nature of economic and trade agreements, normally involving a very detailed set of rules. In turn, this would facilitate opportunistic behaviours and competition between states, thus eroding regional cohesion and rendering regional cooperation less effective.²¹

By contrast, fewer studies exist on the consequences of IOs' overlap for cooperation in other policy fields, such as security, human rights or conflict resolution. In terms of security cooperation, for instance, it was recognized that overlap appears to be unproblematic as long as norms and rules do not contradict each other.²² However, when looking at overlap "in action", i.e., the implementation and actual usage of these normative provisions, the picture becomes fuzzier, and cooperation may be either facilitated or hindered as a consequence of multiple factors.²³

¹⁷ Karen J. Alter and Sophie Meunier, "The Politics of International Regime Complexity", in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 13-24, https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/altermeunierperspectives_0.pdf.

¹⁸ Kal Raustiala and David G. Victor, "The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources", in *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 2004), p. 277-309.

¹⁹ Malte Brosig, "Overlap and Interplay between International Organisations", cit., p. 159.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Andrés Malamud and Gian Luca Gardini, "Has Regionalism Peaked? The Latin American Quagmire and its Lessons", in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (March 2012), p. 116-133; Laura Gómez Mera, "International Regime Complexity and Regional Governance: Evidence from the Americas", in *Global Governance*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January-March 2015), p. 19-42.

²² Brigitte Weiffen, *Institutional Overlap and Responses to Political Crises in South America*, paper presented at the 24th IPSA World Congress, Poznan, 23-28 July 2016, http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_51114.pdf.

²³ Brigitte Weiffen, Leslie Wehner and Detlef Nolte, "Overlapping Regional Security Institutions

This preliminary study is not intended to cover the whole array of this vast debate. It is focused on exploring first and foremost the phenomenon of *membership* overlap among Mediterranean IPIs, with a view of setting the ground for more in-depth studies in the near future. Out of the above, the following mapping of the complex parliamentary field in the Mediterranean is proposed.

3. Mapping the Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary field

As an illustration of the complexity of the Euro-Mediterranean space, including from a parliamentary perspective, what follows will offer a preliminary catalogue of those actors. It will start with only formal arrangements, without downplaying the importance of less formal arrangements. Such an approach does not claim to be fully exhaustive but it will try to be as comprehensive as possible. By doing so, this piece will pave the ground for further research on the subject in the future, including of a comparative nature. Its objective is to *find out how many parliamentary actors there are*, or at least to give a general indication of their overall numbers.

There are many other ways to catalogue parliamentary actors: the most typical one is to differentiate between levels of governance starting from the most “local” to the more “global”, without ignoring the interconnectedness of all levels involved in a globalized or globalizing world (“glocalization”²⁴). In that respect, a key delimitation is that of the territory these institutions cover. Another approach is more topic-centred, again from the more general subject matters to the more specific. Yet another perspective is to list separately the national (and sub-state) parliaments and the existing IPIs, or at least most of them. This is the approach taken here, but it is important to note that what follows does not claim to be totally exhaustive but rather indicative.

3.1 Parliamentary assemblies of States

To start with there are national parliaments, some of them bicameral. Just to take the current 28 EU members, there are 13 bicameral and 15 unicameral parliaments. This is mainly due to the decentralized, quasi-federal or federal nature of those states.

- bicameral: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, UK;
- unicameral: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden.

in South America: The Case of OAS and UNASUR”, in *International Area Studies Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (December 2013), p. 370-389; Detlef Nolte, “Latin America’s New Regional Architecture: A Cooperative or Segmented Regional Governance Complex?”, in *EUI Working Papers RSCAS*, No. 2014/89 (2014), <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/32595>.

²⁴ See Habibul Haque Khondker, “Glocalization as Globalization: Evolution of a Sociological Concept”, in *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 2004), p. 12-20, https://mukto-mona.com/Articles/habibul_haque/Globalization.pdf.

On the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, as there is still little democratic practice, the distinction between different levels of parliamentary input is less important, in spite of the recent hopes that the so-called “Arab Spring” raised initially. Six years later, those hopes have not materialized, except perhaps in part in the case of Tunisia. In terms of bicameral systems, these exist/existed in the parliaments of Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Egypt (the Council of the Nation of Algeria; the Senate of Jordan; the House of Counsellors of Morocco; the Senate of Mauritania; the Shoora Council of Egypt).

Table 1 | Number of parliamentary chambers of EU and Mediterranean riparian states

EU and riparian Northern shore				Riparian Southern and Eastern shore	
EU		Non EU			
Monocameral	Bicameral	Monocameral	Bicameral	Monocameral	Bicameral
Bulgaria	Austria	Albania	Bosnia-Herzeg.	Israel	Algeria
Croatia*	Belgium	Andorra		Lebanon	Egypt
Cyprus*	Czech Republic	FYROM		Libya**	Jordan
Denmark	France*	Monaco		Palestine	Mauritania
Estonia	Germany	Montenegro		Syria	Morocco
Finland	Ireland	Serbia		Tunisia	
Greece*	Italy*			Turkey	
Hungary	The Netherlands				
Latvia	Poland				
Lithuania	Romania				
Luxembourg	Slovenia*				
Malta*	Spain*				
Portugal*	UK				
Slovakia					
Sweden					
15	26	6	2	7	10
Total (28 states): 41 chambers		Total (7 states): 8 chambers		Total (12 states): 17 chambers	
66 chambers (state level parliamentary bodies)					

Note: * denotes EU Med; ** the current situation in Libya (where there are at least two competing authorities including parliaments) is not discussed here.

Considering all of this, Table 1 lists not only the national parliaments for all Mediterranean riparian states²⁵ but is extended to include all EU states. The

²⁵ But including Jordan, Mauritania and Portugal as they are considered as “Mediterranean” in the academic literature but also in the practice of formal and informal international cooperation structures. See for instance the “5+5” that includes both Mauritania and Portugal; the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) represents its parliamentary dimension (of

numbers therefore go beyond the 43 states that are members of the Union for the Mediterranean (with 18 bicameral chambers), to include a total of 66 parliamentary chambers.

In addition, we should also consider – though not included in this study – *all sub-state parliaments* as additional actors in the Mediterranean, thus confirming the proliferation of such actors in world politics. In the case of Spain, as just one such example, this would mean including another 17 parliaments.²⁶ Moreover, the Committee of the Regions is also a kind of “EU Senate” as it represents the sub-state regions in the EU – although the Council of Ministers is traditionally seen as a Senate-in-waiting from a strictly federalist approach. Therefore, there are plenty of parliamentary *para*-diplomatic actors, some of them belonging to an IPI but others not (see below).

3.2 International parliamentary entities including IPIs

We provide a number of tables and diagrams that sum up the plethora of overlapping international parliamentary bodies in the Mediterranean.

To begin with, it is possible to identify five different groupings of parliamentary entities dealing with the Mediterranean, on the basis of geographical membership criteria. In Table 2, the first row on the left reports those parliamentary entities with a universal or non-geographically defined membership. This category includes both fully fledged parliamentary institutions (such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the *Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie*, APF), or the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CPA) and more informal parliamentary networks (such as the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, or the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy). Next, rows 2 and 4 display regional parliamentary entities established, respectively, north and south of the Mediterranean – for these bodies, then, the Mediterranean represents a *border* rather than the *core* of their political activities. By contrast, row 3 in the middle displays the only two existing Northern-Southern Mediterranean parliamentary bodies: in a sense, these are the only truly *intra-regional* IPIs,²⁷ where parliamentarians

sorts). The 5+5 Dialogue was officially launched in Rome in 1990 between five EU member states (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain) and the five members of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). It is an informal sub-regional forum where member states discuss subjects of topical interest for the region and identify specific areas for practical cooperation.

²⁶ For the example of the Catalan Parliament, see Laura Feliu and Francesc Serra, “Catalan Parliamentary Diplomacy toward the Mediterranean”, in Stelios Stavridis and Maria Gianniou (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy in the Mediterranean*, Special issue of *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December 2016), p. 119-148.

²⁷ Strictly speaking the EU-Mediterranean is a “hybrid interregional” relationship; see Alan Hardacre and Michael Smith, “The EU and the Diplomacy of Complex Interregionalism”, in *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2009), p. 167-188. This paper does not enter the debate on complex interregionalism although, as stressed above, the very definition of what constitutes the Mediterranean complicates any intent to catalogue parliamentary actors in that particular area.

from both shores of the Mediterranean sit together. Finally, the last row displays non-specifically Mediterranean-centred IPIs that still have a relatively strong Mediterranean dimension.

Table 2 | Summary table of international parliamentary entities dealing with the Mediterranean²⁸

Universal	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 1889 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) 1911, 1948 Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) 1967, 1998 Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States 1999 Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund 2000 Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy 2001 Parliamentary Forum for Democracy 2010
Northern	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) 1949 European Parliament (EP) 1952 NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) 1955 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) 1990 Inter-parliamentary Conferences [CFSP/CSDP, euro] 2012/2013
Northern-Southern	Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) 1998, 2010 Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) 2005
Southern	Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (Arab IPU) 1974 Consultative Council of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) 1989 Association of Senates, Shoora and equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) 2002 Pan-African Parliament (PAP) 2004
Mediterranean-related	Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) 1993 World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association 1996 Parliamentary Dimension of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) 2001 Parliamentary Association of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) 2002, 2014 African Parliamentary Knowledge Network 2010

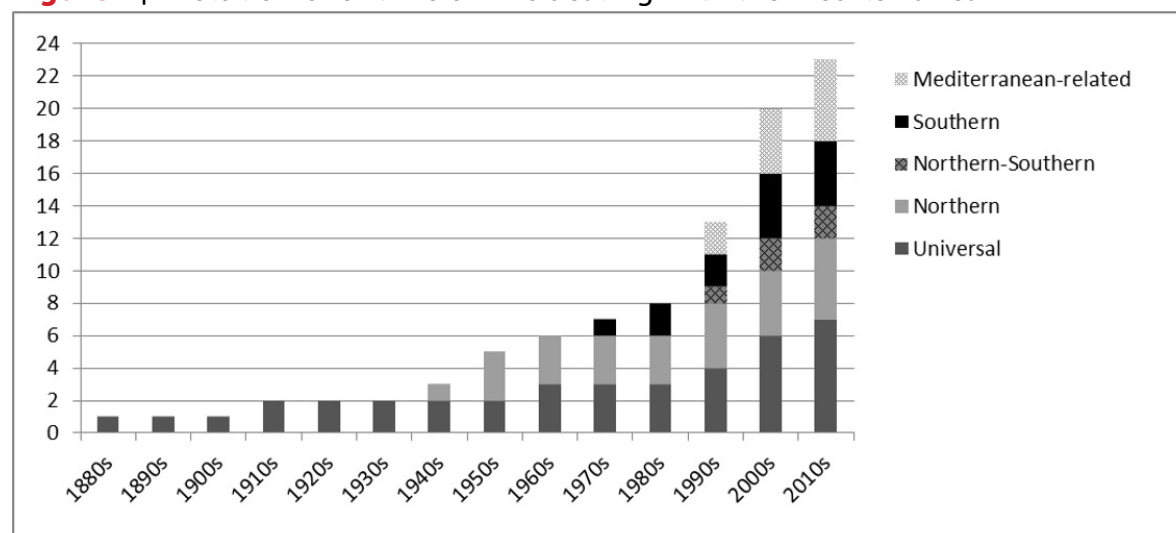
Note: Dates refer to the founding of those institutions; more than one date refers to a change of name.

Additional information can be generated by analysing the evolution over time of IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean. Figure 1 shows that their evolution reflects some broader patterns relating to the setting-up and growth of IPIs in general,

²⁸ To clarify, parliaments are members of these IPIs but there are some exceptions like the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy, which have individual memberships.

that have already been observed by the literature.²⁹ Indeed, prior to 1945, two out of the three IPIs existing in the world had a Mediterranean dimension, namely the IPU (established in 1889) and the CPA (1911):³⁰ both of them have a universal/non-geographically defined membership. The growth of Mediterranean IPIs then started after the Second World War, initially with the establishment of Northern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities, i.e., PACE (set up in 1949), the EP (1952) and the NATO PA (1954). The first Southern Mediterranean parliamentary bodies, on the other hand, were established only during the 1970s (Arab IPU, 1974) and 1980s (UMA Consultative Council, 1989). But the real boom has occurred post-1991 and the collapse of bipolarity: over the last two decades, the number of Mediterranean IPIs has *de facto* tripled, from 8 in 1992 to 23 in 2013. In this period, along with the growth of the above-mentioned categories of IPIs, two Northern-Southern Mediterranean assemblies (PA-UfM, set up, under previous names, in 1998; PAM, set up in 2005)³¹ and the Mediterranean-related IPIs have also been created.

Figure 1 | Evolution over time of IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean



As a result of this evolutionary process, as of today the Mediterranean is populated by no less than 23 IPIs, about one third of which have a universal/non-geographically defined membership, 5 are Mediterranean-related, 5 gather exclusively Northern members, 4 gather Southern members and only 2 can be defined as truly intra-regional Northern-Southern Mediterranean parliamentary bodies.

²⁹ See, in particular, Andrea Cofelice and Stelios Stavridis, "The European Parliament as an International Parliamentary Institution (IPI)", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May 2014), p. 145-178; Zlatko Šabič, "Building Democratic and Responsible Global Governance", cit.

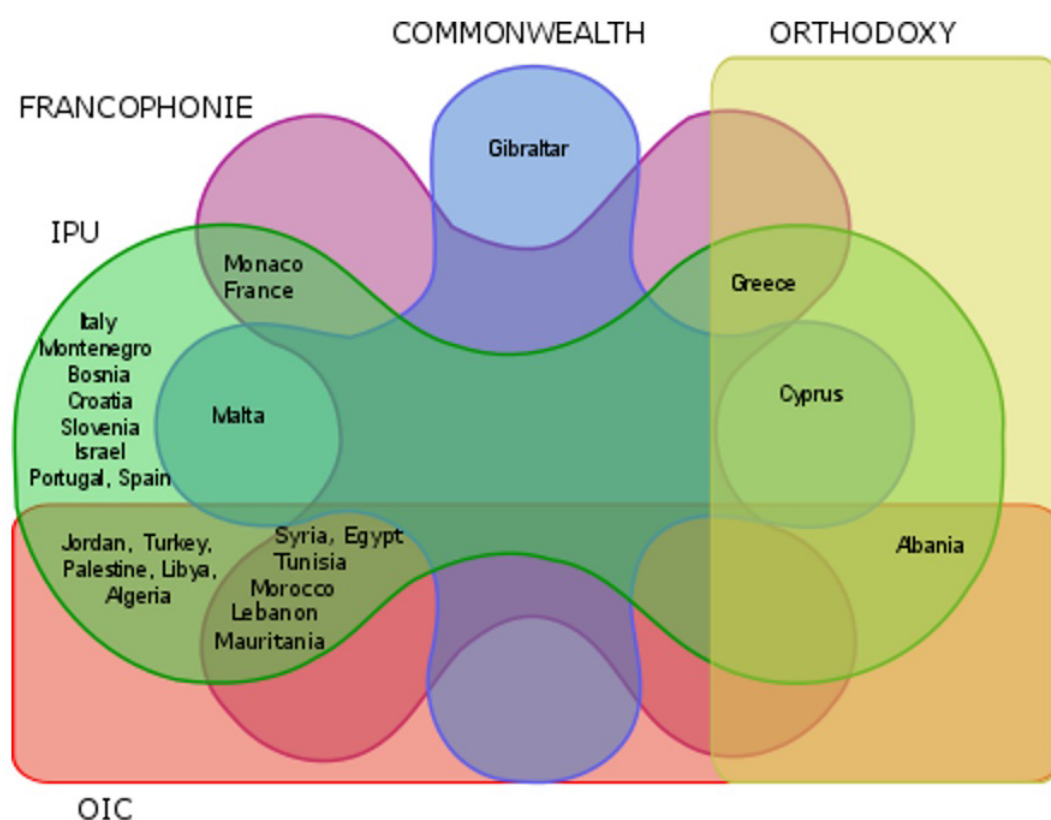
³⁰ The third existing IPI was the Nordic Council, set up in 1907.

³¹ On the PAM, see Andrea Cofelice, "The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and its Contribution to Democracy Promotion and Crisis Management", in Stelios Stavridis and Davor Jančić (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy Uncovered: European and Global Perspectives*, Special issue of *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 11, No. 2-3 (Spring 2016), p. 292-310.

To offer more detail, further tables and figures are also included, highlighting the current Mediterranean members for each of the 23 IPIs considered above.

To begin with, Table 3 shows that the percentage of Mediterranean states out of the total members of universal (or non-geographically defined) parliamentary entities is rather low, ranging between 15 percent (IPU and Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy) and 22 percent (Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States). None of the Mediterranean states is a member of all five universal parliamentary entities. A handful of states, however, are a member of up to three entities, namely Greece (IPU, APF, Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy); Cyprus (IPU, CPA, Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy); and Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Mauritania (IPU, APF, Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States). Figure 2 presents this information visually.

Figure 2 | Venn diagram showing the relationships between Mediterranean full members of universal or non-geographically defined entities



Mapping the Proliferation of Parliamentary Actors in the Mediterranean

Table 3 | Mediterranean parliamentary members of universal or non-geographically defined entities (sectorial, religious or language)

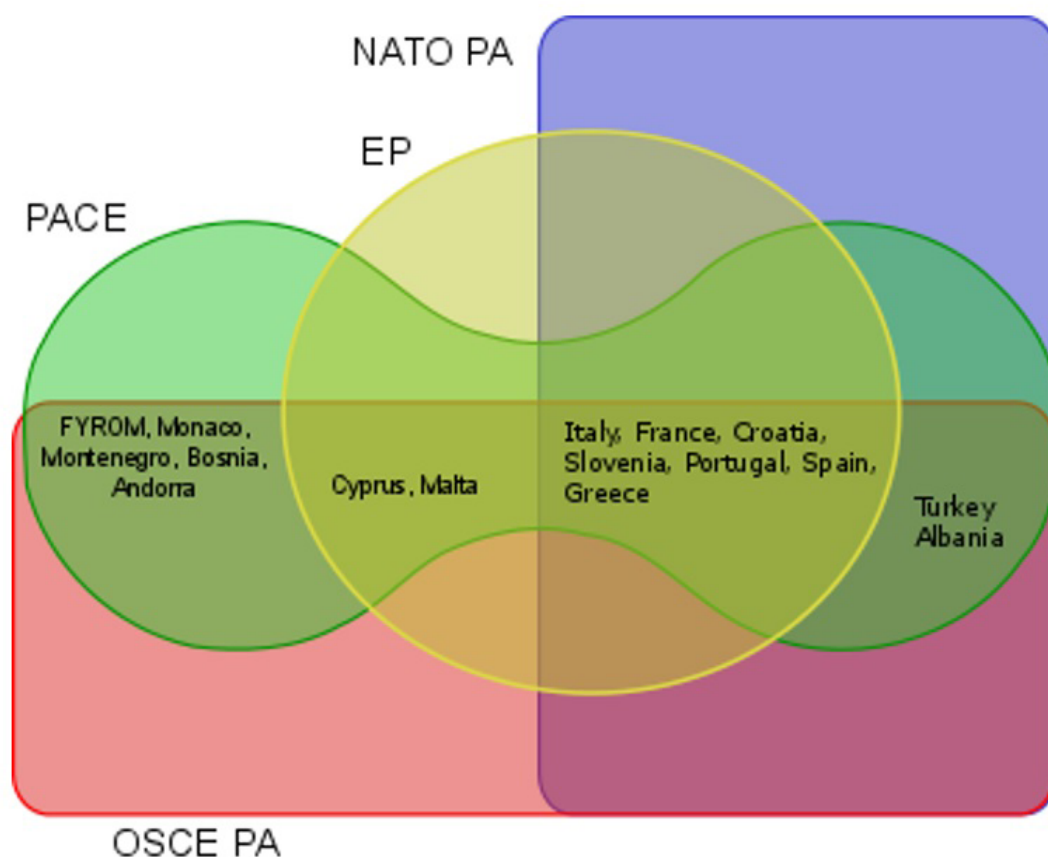
	IPU (170 members)	APF (52 members)	CPA (Branch British Islands and the Mediterranean (13 members)	Inter- parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (20 members)	Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (55 members)
Full members	Albania, Algeria, Bosnia Herzeg. Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey	Egypt, France, Greece, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia	Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta	Albania, Cyprus, Greece	Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey
TOT (% of members)	25 (14.7%)	9 (17.3%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	12 (21.8%)
Associate members/ observers	Arab Parliament*, EP*, PACE*	Albania, APF***, Bosnia Herzeg., Catalonia**, Croatia, PAP*			Arab IPU*, Arab Parliament*, IPU*, IPA CIS*, PABSEC*, PAM*, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, TÜRKPA*, UMA Consultative Council*
TOT	3	6	-	-	9
TOT	28	15	3	3	21

Note: * denotes IPIs; ** denote regions or cities; *** denote other entities.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not recognized as an independent state except by Turkey.

The percentage of Mediterranean states in Northern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities is slightly higher, ranging between 29 percent (OSCE PA) and 34 percent (PACE), however confirming that the Mediterranean does not represent the geographic “core” of their activities (Table 4). Members from seven countries (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) sit in all these entities (Figure 3).

Figure 3 | Venn diagram showing the relationships between Mediterranean full members of Northern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities



Mapping the Proliferation of Parliamentary Actors in the Mediterranean

Table 4 | Mediterranean members of Northern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities

	PACE (47 members)	EP (28 members)	NATO PA (28 members)	OSCE PA (56 members)
Full members	Albania, Andorra, Bosnia Herzeg., Croatia, Cyprus, France, FYROM, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey	Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain	Albania, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey	Albania, Andorra, Bosnia Herzeg., Croatia, Cyprus, France, FYROM, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey
TOT (% of members)	16 (34%)	9 (32.1%)	9 (32.1%)	16 (28.6%)
Associate members/observers	Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine		Algeria, Bosnia Herzeg., Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Montenegro, Morocco OSCE PA*, PACE*, Palestine	
TOT	4	-	10	-
TOT	20	9	19	16

Note: * denotes IPIs.

The situation in Southern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities is patchier. On the one hand, PAP and ASSECAA include few Mediterranean members, that is only 13 percent and 21 percent of the respective member states; on the other hand, almost half of the 22 members of the Arab IPU have a Mediterranean dimension; finally the UMA Consultative Council can be labelled as a fully fledged Mediterranean body, since all its members are riparian countries (Table 5).

Table 5 | Mediterranean members of Southern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities

	Arab IPU (22 members)	UMA Consultative Council (5 members)	PAP (46 members)	ASSECAA (24 members)
Full members	Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia	Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Sahrawi Rep.*, Tunisia	Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco
TOT (% of members)	10 (45.5%)	5 (100%)	6 (13%)	5 (20.8%)

There are no associate members/observers

Note: * denotes other entities.

Figure 4 | Venn diagram showing the relationships between Mediterranean members of Southern Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities

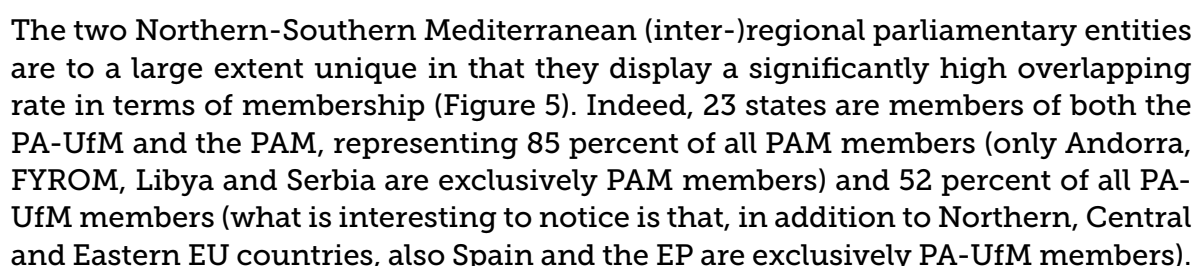
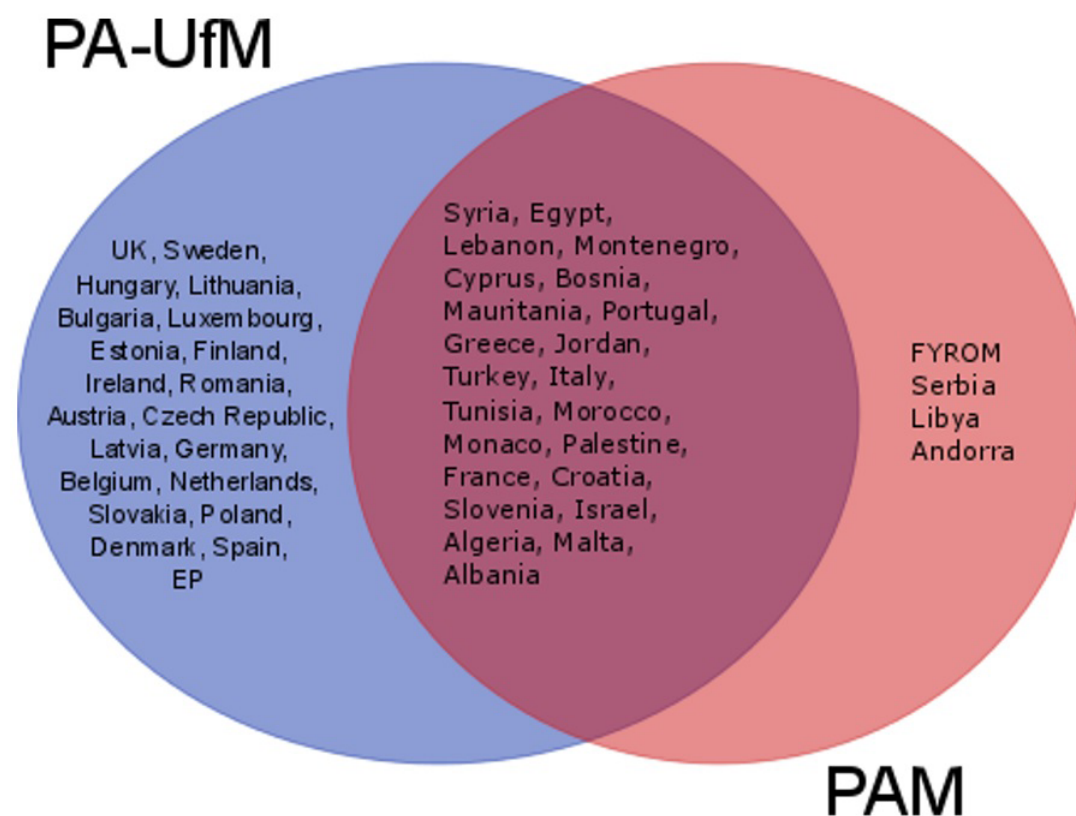


Figure 5 | Venn diagram showing the relationships between members of Northern-Southern Mediterranean (inter-)regional parliamentary entities



Finally, the Mediterranean-related IPIs generally have a strong Mediterranean focus, even though they are not specifically centred in the Mediterranean, but have been established in the framework of sub-regional cooperation processes in South-East Europe (Table 6). Indeed, with the only exception of PABSEC, more than half of their members represent riparian countries, i.e., 54 percent of the South East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly (SEECPPA) members, 61 percent of the Parliamentary Association of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) members, and 7 out of the 8 members of the AII Parliamentary Dimension (excluding Serbia). Albania and Greece are members of all Mediterranean-related IPIs (Figure 6). Figure 7 visually illustrates the overlapping memberships detailed in the preceding information.

Table 6 | Mediterranean members of IPIs that are not specifically Mediterranean-centred but have a Mediterranean dimension (Mediterranean-related)

	PABSEC (12 members)	Parliamentary Association of SECI (13 members)	SEECF PA (13 members)	AII Parliamentary Dimension (8 members)
Full members	Albania, Greece, Turkey	Albania, Bosnia Herzeg., Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Montenegro, Slovenia, Turkey	Albania, Bosnia Herzeg., Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Slovenia, Turkey	Albania, Bosnia Herzeg., Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia
TOT (% of members)	3 (25%)	8 (61.5%)	7 (53.8%)	7 (87.5%)
There are no associate members/observers				

Figure 6 | Venn diagram showing the relationships between Mediterranean full members of Mediterranean-related IPIs

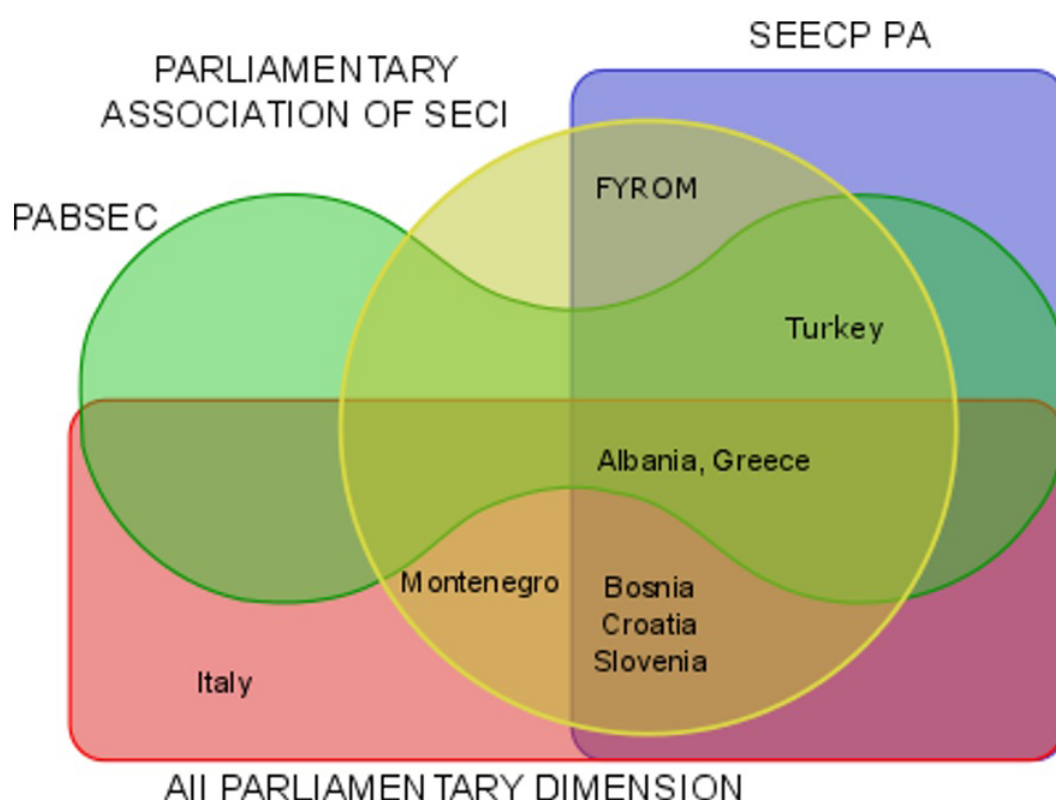
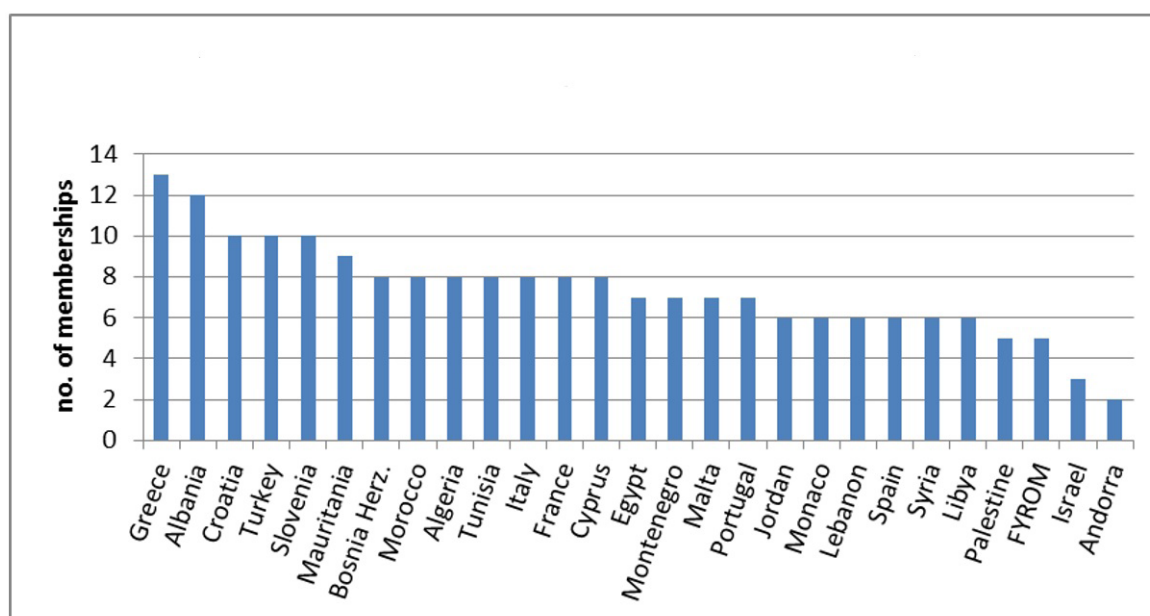


Figure 7 | Riparian states' multiple memberships in IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean



Conclusions

What emerges from the above analysis is that the Mediterranean is an overcrowded area in terms of IPIs, a circumstance that necessarily leads to multiple and overlapping memberships. Indeed, Figure 7 shows that 27 riparian states (in practice, all of them) are members of at least two IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean, and 23 are members of at least six such IPIs.

This phenomenon of multiple memberships, however, appears to be fostered mainly by smaller countries from South-East Europe, an area that is recently experiencing several (and mostly uncoordinated) sub-regional cooperation efforts. Thus, Greece and Albania are members, respectively, of 13 and 12 IPIs dealing with the Mediterranean, out of the 23 considered in this preliminary survey (in practice almost all of the universal, Northern, Northern-Southern, and Mediterranean-related IPIs), followed by Croatia and Slovenia with 10 memberships each; the only exception in this leading group of countries with at least 10 multiple memberships is Turkey, which is generally regarded as a middle-sized regional power.

Northern riparian middle-sized countries such as France, Italy and Spain are represented in a number of IPIs ranging between 6 and 8: indeed, these are prominent Mediterranean actors both in universal and Northern IPIs, as well as among the main sponsors of the two Northern-Southern Mediterranean IPIs.

Southern riparian countries are also fully involved in such a nested web of parliamentary interactions, particularly Mauritania (9 memberships), Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (8 memberships each).

Even though this preliminary study does not claim to provide conclusive answers to the research questions on causes and consequences of Mediterranean IPIs' membership and policy interplay, as set out in sections 1 and 2, some trends can be still observed.

First, the proliferation and overlap of IPIs in the Mediterranean can be seen as the consequence of two parallel trends. On the one hand, it is the result of international organizations gradually expanding over time their field of action toward the Mediterranean: this is the case, for instance, with the universal, Northern and Southern IPIs. On the other hand, it is also fostered by states in an attempt to "forum-shop" – to use a common term in the IO literature (i.e., to select one of several relevant institutional frameworks in which to operate, in order to suit their best interests). This is particularly evident in the case of Northern-Southern IPIs, where, for instance, Spain was initially a member of the PAM but later decided to drop out as it considered that the PAM was overshadowing the (then) PA of the EMP (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) that Spain actively helped to initiate in 1995 (the so-called "Barcelona Process").

As to the debate on isomorphism vs. niche specialization, it can be observed that isomorphic effects are mainly limited to IPIs' internal organization: with few exceptions, indeed, Mediterranean IPIs consist of a plenary, a bureau and a certain number of standing committees. Instead, specialization and a de facto division of labour appear to be the prevailing patterns characterizing parliamentary diplomacy activities in the Mediterranean. In particular, this process of specialization may assume a geographic character (i.e., some IPIs are focused on sub-regional areas, such as South-East Europe or Western Mediterranean), or it can involve functions and policies. As already shown, this second dimension is rather evident: for instance, in the relations between the EP and the PAM in the context of the Arab Spring. While the EP, mainly acting as a moral tribunal, influenced the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EU financial assistance to southern Mediterranean countries, and established a system of regular consultations with the Mediterranean civil society, the PAM served as a transmission line between international standards and national policies, supported and facilitated initiatives launched by third parties (in particular the UN and the IPU), and carried out diplomatic field missions to crisis areas.³² It is possible to conclude that, in principle, the fact that Mediterranean IPIs overlap in terms of membership and mandate does not appear to generate positive or negative effects per se. On the one

³² For details see Andrea Cofelice, "Parliamentary Diplomacy and the Arab Spring: Evidence from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the European Parliament", in Stelios Stavridis and Maria Gianniou (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy in the Mediterranean*, Special issue of *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December 2016), p. 100-118.

hand, indeed, many Mediterranean IPIs have exclusively a deliberative nature, thus the fact that their broad mandates (ranging from security to economic and social issues) overlap does not imply immediate practical consequences; on the other hand, many Mediterranean IPIs simply coexist, with no significant interaction, let alone cooperation, competition or division of labour.

However, when looking at practical consequences of overlap “in action”, at least three negative consequences can be identified, representing serious obstacles for a better cooperation in the Mediterranean.

First of all, in an area faced with many problematic issues and conflicts, the proliferation of parliamentary actors brings about redundancy with regard to the financial and human resources of the involved institutions, ultimately leading to overspreading the few means available. Many IPIs have relatively modest budgets, almost entirely used for the maintenance of their administrative structures rather than for developing projects on the ground, thus affecting their visibility effectiveness and undermining the success of any cooperative initiative.

Secondly, the overlap in IPIs provides national actors with opportunities to potentially behave opportunistically, in order to circumvent costly commitments, or to avoid cooperation with a specific state or coalition of states that dominate other organizations, allowing member states to pursue strategies of forum shopping, regime shifting and hostage taking.³³

Thirdly, it is widely recognized by the literature that intra-regional international institutions are particularly important for the development of a region, because “they facilitate its coherence and the build-up of common values, the sense of ‘belonging’ and other important identity markers”.³⁴ This aspect is particularly critical for the Mediterranean. Indeed, the above analysis revealed that only 2 out of the 23 IPIs considered in this survey are truly intra-regional (i.e., the Northern-Southern Mediterranean IPIs). In all the other cases, either the political and cultural centres of the Mediterranean are elsewhere (such as in the cases of universal, Northern or Southern IPIs), or IPIs tend to reflect fragmented sub-regional units (such as the Maghreb or South-East Europe). As a consequence, the Mediterranean basin still remains largely a (fragmented) “border” and not a “centre” in itself.³⁵

However, the two existing Northern-Southern Mediterranean IPIs, i.e., the PAM and the PA-UfM, have the greatest potential to alter this situation and provide a sort of hub for a much-needed coordination of the numerous multilateral initiatives on the Mediterranean. After all, this demand appears to be increasingly perceived by

³³ Brigitte Weiffen, *Institutional Overlap and Responses to Political Crises in South America*, cit.

³⁴ Zlatko Šabić and Ana Bojinović, “Mapping a Regional Institutional Architecture”, cit., p. 317-318.

³⁵ See, in this sense, Roberto Aliboni, “The Role of International Organisations in the Mediterranean”, in *ELIAMEP Working Papers*, No. 01/002 (2001), <http://www.eliamap.gr/en/?p=8125>.

practitioners themselves, as well as by the political actors involved in the decision-making process. A prominent example is represented by a letter where Martin Schulz, then President of the EP and head of the EP delegation to the PA-UfM, addressing Sergio Piazzi, Secretary General of PAM, explicitly suggests to “find ways to coordinate better” the activities of the two Mediterranean IPIs, especially in some of the priority (and overlapping) policy areas, such as “migration and security issues, energy co-operation, the preservation of the cultural heritage threatened with destruction”.³⁶

Updated 3 April 2017

³⁶ Letter sent by Martin Schulz to Sergio Piazzi, 14 September 2016, EP Document No. D 202320.

List of acronyms

AII	Adriatic-Ionian Initiative
APF	Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie
Arab IPU	Arab Inter-parliamentary Union
ASSECAA	Association of Senates, Shoora and equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World
CEI PA	Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IO	International organization
IPA CIS	Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States
IPI	International parliamentary institution
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
NATO PA	NATO Parliamentary Assembly
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE PA	OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
PA	Parliamentary Assembly
PABSEC	Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PAM	Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PA-UfM	Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean
SECI	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
SEECF PA	South East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly
TÜRKPA	Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union (UMA from its name in French, <i>Union du Maghreb Arabe</i>)

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