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**France's New Mediterranean Initiative:
Lessons from Post-Cold War Regional Cooperation**

by

Stephen C. Calleya and Dimitris K. Xenakis

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France's New Mediterranean Initiative: Lessons from Post-Cold War Regional Cooperation

Stephen C. Calleya and Dimitris K. Xenakis

Introduction

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has recently proposed the idea of a Mediterranean Union - now termed 'Union for the Mediterranean' (UM)- and invited Heads of Mediterranean riparian states to a summit scheduled to take place on July 13th 2008 in Paris, France. However, since the end of the Cold War there have been several initiatives to promote regional cooperation in the Mediterranean. The Italian-Spanish proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), the West Mediterranean Forum also referred to as the 5 + 5 initiative that brought together five southern European states with their Maghreb counterparts, the Mediterranean Forum initiated by Egypt, the Maltese proposal to create a Council for the Mediterranean (CM), the US-driven Middle East Peace Process, and the European Union's (EU) Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are some of the numerous initiatives that have produced mixed results over the past two decades. Although these efforts have helped to improve relations across the Mediterranean, the lack of coordination between the different regional groupings and the heterogeneous nature of the grouping's membership have, however, not triggered any specific attention to the goal of building a more integrated Mediterranean region. The primary aim of this paper is to assess the relevance and the added value of launching France's new regional initiative, as well as, the prospects for such a regional Union in contemporary international relations.

It is a commonplace in contemporary international relations that the latter part of the twentieth century witnessed a resurgence of regional dynamics. The process of decolonization, coupled with the end of the Cold War, created an environment that was conducive to an increase in regional patterns of

interaction.¹ In emphasizing the significance of international regions as an intermediate level of analysis between the nation state and the global international system, there are several questions regarding the changes currently taking place in Euro-Mediterranean international relations and the potential for future cooperation in the Mediterranean basin. Are the obstacles blocking regionalism across the post-Cold War Mediterranean insurmountable? What can be done to trigger sub-regional cooperation? Above all, what are the necessary changes to cope with regional demands?

It has become a truism that since the fall of the Berlin Wall most of the international community's political and economic attention, including that of EU, has been concentrated on managing the swift transition of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to further integration in Europe in a short period of time. At the same time political differences and economic disparities between North and South of the Mediterranean have resulted in a situation where both perceptual and tangible gaps have continued to increase. While the countries across Europe are constantly increasing the intensity of political and economic interaction between themselves, on the other hand, the southern Mediterranean countries, having not succeeded in fostering similar patterns of interaction, are finding it more difficult to compete globally, and unless they enter into a process of sub-regional integration, they face the stark danger of falling further behind in the globalized international system.

In the post-bipolar era the four sub-regions encompassing the Mediterranean - southern Europe, the Balkans, the Maghreb and the Mashreq seem follow a different evolutionary pattern and there is little to indicate that any of them will integrate with their counterparts across the Mediterranean any time soon. Across southern Europe relations are largely cooperative-dominant, with this group of countries increasing their intergovernmental and transnational ties with the rest of Europe on a continuous basis. In contrast, conflictual relations have consistently hindered closer cooperation between countries in the Balkans, the Maghreb, and the Mashreq. Relations in these three sub-regions of the Mediterranean

¹ I. Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation, International Relations in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 16 - 32.

remain largely confined to the intergovernmental level, with the cross-border types of interaction across the southern shores of the Mediterranean limited to the energy sector and Islam.² It has therefore become very clear that if geo-strategic stability between Europe and the Mediterranean is to be achieved a more concerted effort must be implemented with a focus on institutionalizing regional relations. This last is probably an essential measure if regional working programmes are to be implemented in the foreseeable future.³

For a long time absent from political discourse, the issue of regional integration through Sarkozy's recent proposal has become a controversial topic of discussion. The new initiative offers Europe and the international community an opportunity to carry out a strategic reassessment that will allow for more political attention and economic resources to be directed towards upgrading stability and economic opportunities across the Mediterranean. However, for the new initiative to prove successful it has to avoid some of the strategic errors of previous regional initiatives. In this framework, this paper examines the development of the various initiatives that have taken place in the last twenty years in the Mediterranean and addresses questions such as, what has been achieved and where does more effort need to be directed to achieve a more satisfactory outcome? What are the next steps that should take place to enhance Euro-Mediterranean relations? How can a more dynamic north-south modality of cooperation be structured? These questions must be addressed by examining the key geopolitical factors influencing contemporary Euro-Mediterranean international relations.

For the UM to be successful it is critical to avoid some of the strategic errors of the EMP. The failure of the Barcelona Process to register significant advances since the founding conference in November 1995 is forcing Euro-Mediterranean strategists to reconsider what policy mechanisms might be introduced to stimulate progress toward the achievement of the objectives

² On sub-regional trends see more analytically in St. C. Calleya, *Navigating Regional Dynamics in the Post-Cold War World: Patterns of Relations in the Mediterranean Area*, Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1997, chapter 4.

³ See St. C. Calleya, 'Yes but surely it's the Mediterranean that risks being Europe's dark side', *Europe's World*, Autumn 2007; *Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations*, Routledge, 2005.

laid out in the founding Declaration. These mechanisms include greater attention to specific sub-regional trends that are currently manifesting themselves around the Mediterranean and greater attention to the domestic prerequisites of transnational cooperation. The decision taken in the last EMP Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon to include both Mauritania and Albania into the Barcelona Process widens the scope of possible opportunities at a South-South axis and also highlights the continued relevance of this multilateral confidence-building initiative more than twelve years after its launch.⁴ Therefore, this paper also aims to identify scope for synergy between the new French and the initiatives and processes currently operating in the region. In such an exercise one needs to guard against abstract grand designs. The focus needs to be on delivering practical modalities of cooperation with specific policy recommendations in order to ensure that Europe's southern dimension becomes a stable region of growth. This must include the transfer of skills and resources from the more developed countries of Europe to allow southern Mediterranean states to implement successful economic policies. Creating a more dynamic economic zone of growth will help to start reducing animosity and tension and prevent the alternative scenario of instability in the Mediterranean from increasing.⁵

France's New Mediterranean Initiative

French President Nicolas Sarkozy first mentioned his idea on 7th February during a speech he delivered as a presidential candidate. Since his electoral victory in May 2007, President Sarkozy reiterated his unwavering will to push forward the initiative as a main objective of France's foreign policy. In a speech in the Moroccan city of Tangier in October 2007, President Sarkozy started to spell out the nature of the Mediterranean Union, seen as a 'Union of Projects' and invited Heads of Mediterranean riparian states to a summit scheduled to take place on July 13th 2008 in Paris, France.

At this stage the concept of the Union is not yet fixed, however there is a certain objective: to create a 'Barcelona Plus' situation where Euro-

⁴ St. C. Calleya, 'Region-Building in the Mediterranean: Recent Developments in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership', EuroMeSCo Newsletter, No 21, IEEI, Lisbon, February 2008, p. 3.

⁵ St. C. Calleya, 'The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Sub-Regionalism: A Case of Region Building?', in E. Adler, F. Bicchì, B. Crawford and R. Del Sarto (eds.), *The Convergence of Civilisations, Constructing a Mediterranean Region*, 2006.

Mediterranean relations are truly re-launched on a more solid footing. The Union will thus start to an unknown destination. What is however very important is to be mapped in such a manner that it is actually taking into consideration input from future members, thus already implementing the principle of co-ownership from the very start.⁶

The UM contours are presently being defined in Paris by high officials at the Quai d'Orsay. Jean-Pierre Jouyet, French Minister for Europe, has confirmed in Malta on January 11th 2008 that very detailed plans have been drawn up. 'It is an initiative that will be founded on concrete projects calling for the mobilisation of states as well as civil societies, companies, associations, and NGOs'.⁷

It is planned to embrace essentially all riparian countries, including Portugal, Jordan, Croatia and Slovenia, altogether some 25 parties. Countries from both sides of the Mediterranean will have equal status. Ownership of the projects will be central to the success of this regional initiative. However, it will most probably be a loose Union, without legal personality, more like the G8 than the EU. But this is still controversial. Its focal point will be annual high-level meetings at the level of heads of government.⁸ France will host the first of these meetings in July 2008, in Paris.

A high level Group composed of high officials from each member country will meet in Paris at the beginning of 2008 to prepare the high level follow up meetings. To that end, the recently appointed special ambassador for the French initiative Alain Leroy is presently touring capitals to explain the rationale behind the initiative. The ongoing listening exercise by France at this preparatory stage must be regarded as a very positive strategy.

⁶ J. F. Daguzan, 'Why Sarkozy's Mediterranean plan looks worth a try', *Europe's World*, Autumn, 2007.

⁷ Times of Malta, "Med Union to be launched on July 13th 2008", January 9th 2008, p. 18.

⁸ The Franco-German document, distributed to governments ahead of the Council of the EU held on 13-14 March 2008, suggests that the new union have two co-presidents and a secretariat headed by two directors. In both cases, one shall be drawn from a non-European Mediterranean country and the other from one of the 27 member states. Although selection for these posts should show no preference for southern nations, the southern European countries will hold the first presidencies. The document also suggests that the Summit meetings should take place every two years.

One of the objectives of the new regional initiative is to develop more intensive relations between the riparian Mediterranean countries. Work will focus on 3-4 key areas: Energy, Culture, Economics, and Security. The Heads of State will define the work plan through 'projects', each of them working under the authority of a 'project manager'. The emphasis is thus very much on ensuring that the Union is a functional and pragmatic undertaking. The project driven working group approach that is being envisaged to be led by different ministers and experts will ensure an element of accountability that focuses on delivering tangible results.

The new initiative will therefore be a 'Project Partnership'. Member countries will be free to participate in the various projects, which means an *à la Carte* modality of cooperation. Participant countries will be responsible for implementation, including financing. Non-Mediterranean EU member states will also be entitled to participate in projects of their choice.

Among the projects being discussed very informally are:

- Completion of the trans-Mediterranean power grid;
- Development of nuclear and renewable power
- A Euro-Med Development Bank on the model of the EBRD, focused on financial support for small and medium enterprises;
- Fighting pollution in the Mediterranean;
- Strengthening the surveillance of maritime traffic and "civil security cooperation";
- Visa facilities for specific categories of citizens, e.g. research personnel, business people, and officials.
- University cooperation, student exchange (Erasmus-MED), partnerships.

The new initiative is seeking to boost the pace of implementation of the current EMP five year work programme by spelling out a plan of action that focuses on commencing a multitude of projects in specific sectors. It must be underlined that the French initiative was not meant to replace the EMP but to complement it. Involvement of the EU throughout is being sought and the eventual goal is for both to be two components of the same Euro-Med strategy that focuses on generating prosperity and stability. In view of

assuring a maximum of coherence between them, the President of the Commission, the Relex Commissioner and the High Representative will be invited to attend the high level meetings.

Last month, however, saw many developments in the proposed Union, as a result of diverging views on its legitimacy, usefulness, scope of action, and participating actors. Following negotiations on several fronts, it appears that consensus has finally been reached in the meeting in Hanover (3 March) between French President Sarkozy and German Chancellor Merkel on Mediterranean plans: 'We are in agreement in principle and in detail', said Merkel following talks.⁹ In the Council of the EU held on 13-14 March 2008 considered the revised French proposal – now termed 'Union for the Mediterranean', to dispel fears of any rivalry with the EU body. It was decided that rather than establish any new structures, the project will be incorporated into a revitalised version of the Barcelona Process, with all EU countries participating on an equal footing and thus becoming 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'.

French President, Nicolas Sarkozy has made it clear that he would like to play a unifying role in the Mediterranean region similar to the one that the US played in Europe after 1945. It is however worth noting that political will on its own will not be enough to influence geopolitical relations on such a large scale. Economic support must also be forthcoming. The Americans had spent the equivalent of 125 billion euros between 1947 and 1951 compared to the 20 billion that Brussels has devoted to EMP between 1995 and 2005.

Financing of 'projects' was planned to come from member countries' contributions, European Investment Bank loans, MEDA/ENP funds, Gulf funds, private capital, and future MED bank loans. But given the declared

⁹ Recent Franco-German tensions regarding the new initiative resulted from a German fear that France would merely be furthering its interests at the expense of the remaining EU countries, using this proposal to bolster its influence in European relations with the southern Mediterranean countries. Although in agreement that the Barcelona Process lacks efficiency and dynamism, Chancellor Merkel argues that all issues noted as central to cross-Mediterranean dialogue such as immigration, security, trade, energy, and the environment also concern the EU at-large. As such, any reforms in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue should be implemented within the current framework, with the participation of all EU member states. See EuroMeSCo 'Unifying the Mediterranean: An Overview', EuroMeSCo Newsletter, No 22, IEEI, Lisbon, March 2008, p. 2.

opposition from Britain, Turkey and Libya, the provision of any further funding beyond that already allocated to the Barcelona Process is unlikely.¹⁰

The West Mediterranean Forum

This initiative was launched by France in 1990 and is composed of five southern European countries – France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain – and the five Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) countries – Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The intention of this sub-regional initiative was to create a security forum in the Mediterranean based on a flexible structure of dialogue, consultation, and cooperation. Ministerial meetings were to be held once a year and working groups were set up to tackle issues of concern, such as desertification, migration flows, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

A year later, a ministerial meeting was held in Algiers to discuss the creation of a Mediterranean financial bank and a program for science and technology. The European side of the forum also placed great emphasis on an economic program, with the intention of encouraging a more efficient spread of resources. However, military issues were completely absent from the discussions and interaction at the political and social level was extremely limited and therefore, the third ministerial meeting, which was scheduled to take place in Tunisia, never materialized.

One could argue that the main reason for the failure of this initiative was that it attempted to place two completely different sub-groupings at the same level. The European side consisted of states engaged in the process European integration, while the Maghreb was (and is) still very much fragmented. Transnational and political interaction was also not encouraged because of migration issues. Finally, the countries of southern Europe did not possess the means to address the challenges of the entire Maghreb. The major constraint of the 5+5 initiative was that it did not succeed in attracting the attention of the rest of the EU members. A forum that could count on the support of all the member states of the EU might have been

¹⁰As such, President Sarkozy seeks additional 14 billion euros funding from the private sector. Ibit, p. 3.

better able to mobilize the political and economic resources necessary to start combating the problems of the western sector of the Mediterranean.

However, some positive lessons can be derived from the 5+5 initiative. First of all, it has increased a sense of urgency to develop a preventive security arrangement in the region. Secondly, it has stimulated an informal exchange of views, which has been a first step in consensus-building. The fact that the 5+5 group also established a number of working groups to tackle areas of concern, such as multilateral financial institutions, food sufficiency and desertification, communities and migration, cultural dialogue, transport and communications, environment, foreign debt, technological development and scientific research, also demonstrates this sub-regional forum's ability to address a wide-ranging strategic agenda despite differences in foreign policy positions.

The relaunching of the 5+5 initiative by Portugal in January 2001 offered the western sector of the Mediterranean an opportunity to try to find a common ground upon which transnational security issues could be addressed in a concerted manner. Meetings in Tripoli at the start of 2002 and again in Tunisia on the issue of immigration in October 2002 indicated that the initiative was set to experience a new lease on life after a decade in diplomatic limbo. Recent 5+5 meetings held in Malta and Tunisia have largely focused on addressing the increase of illegal migration from North Africa to Europe. The 5+5 is thus serving the important function of providing preliminary assessments on this major challenge that will be reviewed at the EMP Foreign Ministerial meeting and EU-African Summit in November 2007 during the Portuguese EU Presidency. Given this positive turn of events, the EU must urgently consider supporting more directly the 5+5 sub-regional forum in a manner similar to its pledge of support for the Agadir Process. The interaction that took place at the 5 + 5 foreign ministerial meeting in Morocco at the end of January 2008 is certainly a positive step in this direction.

The Mediterranean Forum

The Mediterranean Forum was launched in 1994 at the initiative of Egypt and France. It was created as an instrument for cooperation and was

intended to be flexible in its approach and all-encompassing. The Mediterranean Forum brings together eleven states: Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain Tunisia, and Turkey. It was agreed that future membership of the forum was to be decided on a consensus basis.

Initially, working groups were created around political, economic, social, and cultural themes. The first forum convened at ministerial level in Alexandria in July 1994, and foreign ministerial meetings have been held every year, as follows: Sainte-Maxime, France in April 1995; in May 1996; Algeria in July 1997; Palma de Mallorca in April 1998; Malta in March 1999; Funchal, Portugal, in March 2000; Tangier, Morocco in May 2001; an extraordinary meeting in Agadir, Morocco, in October 2001; and most recently, Delos, Greece, in May 2002. The extraordinary session in Agadir in 2001 took stock of the consequences of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and a meeting was scheduled to take place in Turkey in the second half of 2003. Besides ministerial meetings, the members of the forum also meet at a senior official level.

The fact that the Mediterranean Forum meets in an informal manner has allowed the member states to deliberate upon various issues at length. In fact, in recent years, the Forum has emerged as a type of think tank that provides the EMP with fully elaborated policy proposals. Its main weakness is that it lacks the institutional framework to ensure continuity in proceedings: there is no secretariat, and the forum is thus dependent on the rotating presidency to ensure implementation of any decisions. It also lacks a financial mechanism that would ensure implementation of any projects that are agreed upon. In an effort to become more flexible as a discussion group, the Mediterranean Forum decided, during the Portuguese presidency in 2000, to halt the working group proceedings and instead to mandate senior officials to focus on important issues as they emerged. This more flexible approach already started to pay dividends at the May 2002 meeting in Delos, when the Mediterranean Forum agreed on a Code of Conduct in combating terrorism.

Moreover, a Workshop on 'Measures for Conflict Prevention in the MedForum Framework' took place in Rome, in June 2002, presented a report setting out 'Proposals for a Mediterranean Forum conflict prevention agenda' with a view to provide suggestions and introduce the discussion. Participants overviewed the rationale and goals of the Mediterranean Forum grouping and appreciated its constructive role and positive achievements, in particular within the difficulties in the context of Mediterranean cooperation. There was an agreement on the special role the Forum countries can play as a precursor with respect to the wider Euro-Med relations in order to anticipate ideas and joint actions that might not be mature within the context of the latter. In this perspective, the participants took into consideration a set of proposals regarding possible Mediterranean Forum common guidelines and joint actions in the field of crisis response, in particular conflict prevention policies, with a view to come to a Mediterranean Forum conflict prevention agenda.¹¹ All participants regarded the strengthening of political dialogue as a pivotal measure with a view to reinforce conflict prevention capabilities of the Forum countries. It was also pointed out that such strengthening would be an important building block for an intergovernmental early warning capability. In this respect, several participants quoted the example of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Finally, also in a preventive diplomacy perspective participants looked at threats coming from unconventional sources such as, in particular, terrorism. They stressed the necessity for the MedForum countries to confront such a threat collectively by adopting the political, diplomatic and socio-economic responses that fit its multifaceted nature, thus avoiding pressures to provide premature or mistaken military responses only. In this sense, participants stressed the need for MedForum measures of cooperation to combat terrorism in its varying aspects.¹²

¹¹ The Workshop came to more specific conclusions essentially with regard to three clusters of topics: (a) peace-building regimes, relating to military as well as civilian factors; (b) measures related to economic and social cooperation; (c) policies for preventive diplomacy. Summary of Deliberations, Workshop on

¹² *Proposals for a MedForum Conflict Prevention Agenda*, Report by Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, June 2002.

The Council of the Mediterranean

The Council of the Mediterranean (CM) was initiated by Malta at a symposium held in Tunisia in November 1992. Guido de Marco, then Malta's minister of foreign affairs, proposed a forum that could follow the Council of Europe model. The participants in such a forum would include the EU, the AMU and the Arab League. The criteria for membership were to be adherence to the principles of the UN Charter, respect for the dignity of the human person and the rule of law, and respect for the establishment and development of representative institutions.¹³ The structure of the CM was to consist of a Committee of Ministers and a General Assembly with consultative powers, where the idea was for member states to form a Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. The work of this assembly would be supported by a secretariat, economic, social, environmental, and cultural sectors. There was a mixed reaction to this proposal, since several southern European states still viewed the establishment of a CSCM as a priority over the creation of a CM.

Such a Council has the advantage of being able to tackle issues of both a cooperative and a conflictual nature. At the same time, however, it would have to work at developing mechanisms to nurture a Mediterranean identity, which is currently lacking. For the Council to work, it would first have to concentrate on less sensitive matters, such as environment. In this connection, the 1976 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea provides an instructive precedent. But when such measures imbued the network with some measure of confidence and trust, the Council could then address more sensitive areas of intergovernmental and transnational economic and military cooperation.

The CM could also contribute to establishing networks linking professionals in the Maghreb with European counterparts, which could in turn motivate them to participate in the development of their countries. The introduction of the CM would also equip the UN, under article 53 of the Charter, with a regional arrangement to enforce action under its authority. The Council would then be able to assume missions such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-making, peace-enforcing, and peace-building

¹³ G. de Marco, *Malta's Foreign Policy in the Nineties*, Chapter Five.

throughout the Mediterranean. These, in turn, could aid the CM in achieving some of its objectives: disarmament, repatriating refugees, monitoring elections, and advancing efforts to promote human rights. At the very least, a CM could help the Mediterranean area avoid degenerating into an even more conflict-prone region.

A key lesson from the CM initiative that was proposed by former foreign minister of Malta Professor Guido de Marco in the 1990s is that the political dimension must be included in any effort seeking to institutionalise Mediterranean relations.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean

Already in 1975, the Helsinki Final Act contained a special section dedicated to 'Questions relating to Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean' and linked the process of security-building with the so-called 'non-participating Mediterranean States'. But the East-West divide proved impossible to incorporate south Mediterranean security in the scope of the largely north-European Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) project, although the region has long been regarded as an area where Western powers had vital security interests.¹⁴ As a result, the achievements recorded in pan-European security-building were not reflected in the Mediterranean space, despite the fact that periodic meetings of experts did take place within the CSCE framework in the fields of economics, science, culture, and the environment. The Helsinki tradition to tackle security problems in a more formal rather than substantive manner helped to transform the dialogue for security in the Mediterranean to an insubstantial one.¹⁵ However, Fenech is right to claim that [I]f the protagonists of the CSCE then objected to extend the scope of the Conference because their chief concern was to bridge the east-west division of Europe, the same reason cannot apply today [where] ... there are clear signs that Europe is

¹⁴ E. E. Agnoletti, 'The Difficult Construction of a Coherent Policy', *Politica Internazionale*, Vol. 5 No 1, 1986, p. 5.

¹⁵ V. Y. Ghebali, 'Toward a Mediterranean Helsinki-Type Process', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No 1, 1993, p. 92.

taking very seriously the implications to its own security of problems that could emanate from the Mediterranean'.¹⁶

Post-Cold War, the conception of a CSCE-like framework was born to cover the entire Mediterranean complex. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) finds its roots in the Italo-Spanish coordination at the Paris ministerial meeting of the Euro-Arab dialogue in December 1989 and the 'Open Skies' Conference in Ottawa in February 1990.¹⁷ In essence, the proponents of the CSCM advocated a debate on security issues. The arguments in favour of such a mechanism were threefold. First of all, it was stressed that Europe could not neglect its southern flank, the source of its own roots and identity. Secondly, it was argued that Europe could not be secure as long as the Mediterranean remained insecure. The third point, which was largely the result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, emphasized the urgent need for a crisis prevention mechanism in the Mediterranean.

The intention was that the CSCM would establish a Mediterranean international society by promoting and managing interdependence between Europe and the Middle East. These objectives were to be reached through a Mediterranean Act, which consisted of a security basket based on the CSCE-paradigm,¹⁸ an economic basket for a more balanced economic development in the Mediterranean, and a human dimension basket, which would be based on the conciliation of different value systems in the Mediterranean. Yet, as Ghebali notes '[w]hile the CSCE had to deal with problems essentially ideological in nature and had been created to overcome the artificial division

¹⁶ D. Fenech, 'A Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Whose Security?', paper presented at the Conference on *Prospects after Barcelona*, organised by MEDAC, Malta, March 1996.

¹⁷ During the Paris Ministerial Summit Meeting of the 'Euro-Arab Dialogue', Italian Foreign Minister de Michelis stated that the time had come to extend the spirit of Helsinki to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and thereby foster democracy and economic development in the region. On 12 February 1990, in Ottawa, at the Open Skies Conference, Spanish Foreign Minister Ordoñez, repeated that it would be advisable to extend the HP to the Mediterranean. On 20 February in Dublin, he suggested the idea at an EPC meeting. Madrid and Rome further discussed the possibility of formally launching the project at the next CSCE Conference in Mallorca in September 1990 and agreed to associate France and Portugal to it. Finally, in May 1990, Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy held their first quadripartite meeting. However, the project was officially launched at the CSCM's Palma de Majorca meeting in September 1990.

¹⁸ D. K. Xenakis, *The Politics of Order-Building in Europe and the Mediterranean*, Defence Analysis Institute, Athens, 2004, chapter 2.

of a culturally homogeneous continent, a CSCM would have to cope with economic and cultural disparities'.¹⁹

Thus far, the CSCM remains only a proposal. The lack of consensus at the Palma meeting resulted in a non-binding report, which declared that a meeting outside the CSCE process could discuss a set of generally accepted rules and principles for the Mediterranean. Since then, the popularity of the CSCM model has waned. France, in particular, but also Morocco and Algeria, contended that the widening of Mediterranean cooperation was premature. As was the case with the 5+5 initiative, it may be argued that the main reason why the CSM did not take off was because it to place two very different international regions on the same footing and to institutionalize them in a single framework. The CSCM proposal failed to realize that interaction between Europe and the Mediterranean is still too weak for it to be institutionalized. In this light, it can be described as a premature initiative.

In June 1992 another CSCM-type meeting took place at the Malaga Conference organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Only parliamentarians from littoral Mediterranean states were entitled to the status of full participants. As a result, countries such as Portugal, the US, Russia, and Britain were excluded. The conference adopted by consensus a final document, which was divided into three pillars. The first tackled security issues and suggested the elaboration of a charter for trans-Mediterranean relations. The second focused on the goals of co-development and partnership, including the promotion of food production, debt rescheduling, environmental security and migratory movements of refugees. The third pillar focused on human rights, based on the CSCE model.

The Malaga document also had a preamble, which proved to be the most difficult part to negotiate. This stated that although the conference was not mandated to provide solutions for specific conflicts in the area, its purpose was to 'launch a pragmatic process of cooperation which will gradually increase in strength and coverage, generate a positive and irrepressible momentum, and facilitate the settlement of outstanding conflicts'. In 2006

¹⁹ Ghebali, op.cit, p. 95.

The IPU decided to set up Secretariat to address issues pertaining to the Mediterranean area in Malta, thus taking a constructive step towards institutionalising its efforts in this region of the world.

‘Like in Europe we need a sort of CSCE process for the world [...] with three negotiation baskets: security in the region; human rights and religious tolerance; redistribution of wealth between states and within states’. This statement made by Sheik Ahmed S. Yamani in 1991 relates to the question initially raised in this paper regarding the systematisation of regional relations. Most important perhaps is the extent to which a sharing of experience on the development of an international cooperative culture (regime) can be accumulated from the long journey of the CSCE to act as a ‘learning process’ for the Mediterranean. Important lessons can be drawn from the Helsinki experience for large-scale regime-formation and maintenance, the pursuit of *détente* among distinct culturally defined and politico-economically organised units, as well as, institutional sophistication and effectiveness for the construction of a ‘cognitive region’ based on a viable multilateralism.²⁰

The Middle East Peace Process after Annapolis

After more than a six-year lull in peace overtures in the Middle East, the possible beginning of a different chapter in regional relations is emerging that could lead to a more stable pattern of relations being established between Israel and the Arab world. This will only happen if regional protagonists and the international community are prepared to stand up and be counted in this delicate moment of truth that will determine future Middle East relations.

Annapolis – was a major positive development – more than 50 countries and international institutions participated in the first international conference of its kind to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian in more than seven years. Madrid 1991, Camp David 2000, Road Map in 2003, many pundits comparing latest round of peace initiative to previous failed attempts. But it is clear that this time around there is a major difference when it comes to the geopolitical

²⁰ D. K. Xenakis, *Transforming Regional Orders: The Helsinki and the Barcelona Process Compared*, PhD Thesis, Department of Politics, University of Exeter, 2000.

context within which the current peace initiative is taking place. Middle East has been through a decade of endless strife and suffering – Iraq war that has helped enhance Iran’s position in the region, Lebanese war with the rise of Hezbollah, Israeli-Palestinian open conflict with the rise of Hamas

Of course not a foregone conclusion that the post-Annapolis peace drive will deliver a permanent settlement to the six decades of conflict between Israel and Palestine. Much will depend on the political will that the leaders concerned are ready to invest in the compromises that will have to be made – will really boil down to the Israelis and Palestinians desire for peace having experienced first hand the alternative lifestyle of suffering and fear.

The contours of any comprehensive and sustainable peace settlement will emerge during 2008 if the following issues are agreed upon:

- First, two states for two people: two democratic states Israel and Palestine side by side as stipulated by UN Resolutions 242 and 338.
- Second, Palestinian state on most of West Bank and all of Gaza.
- Third, 1967 boundaries in West Bank with only three concentrated settlements of Israeli settlers.
- Fourth, Palestinian refugees right of return to Palestinian state plus compensation.
- Fifth, Jerusalem to serve as one capital for two states, a united city with Arab east Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital.
- Sixth, Demilitarise borders between two states
- Seventh, comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict including resolution of the Golan Heights issue with Syria and recognition of Israel.

The role of the international community will also be decisive. The US must be prepared to invest more of its political and economic resources to continuously supporting the Israelis and Palestinians. The return of American shuttle diplomacy in the region is a very important first step. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has pledged to invest on an on-going basis political capital to nurture closer Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Tony Blair’s role as fundraiser and political facilitator of the Quartet already seems to be delivering positive results, but it must be complemented by the

appointment of a high profile EU envoy to also support Israel and Palestine through the difficult negotiations that are certain to follow. Having created the opportunity for peace talks to again commence all stakeholders with an interest in stability in the Middle East must stand up and be counted – in addition to the EU other actors include the League of Arab States that must seek to influence peace talks as envisaged in the 2002 Beirut Arab League peace plan and also NATO, that has been considering for a long time the possibility of playing a peace keeper type of role in the initial stages of a post settlement situation.

The Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia also added momentum to the search for peace in the Middle East by endorsing the 2002 Arab peace initiative. The Arab peace plan offers Israel full diplomatic relations if it fully withdraws from land occupied in 1967 and accepts the inclusion of Arab East Jerusalem in a Palestinian state and a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees who fled their homes in 1948.

If a permanent settlement is to stand any chance of surviving it will require an iron clad international community insurance policy so that forces against stability reigning across the Middle East are not allowed to hijack such an outcome. Having found a path back to the peace track all efforts must now concentrate on helping navigate a successful way forward.

The re-launch of a Middle East peace process is certain to be a long-term process as Israel and the Palestinians gradually seek to foster trust and build confidence in a relationship based on coexistence. But final status objectives that lead to the establishment of a viable Palestinian state and a secure Israeli state must be the focus throughout this process of diplomacy if a permanent peace is to be achieved. Otherwise the Middle East will continue to go down the slippery path of becoming an axis of instability in the post Cold War world.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The EMP is certainly the most important initiative that currently exists in the Mediterranean, since it brings together all current EU member states

and ten Mediterranean countries.²¹ The main objectives were to establish a common Euro-Mediterranean area of peace and stability and to create an area of shared prosperity through the progressive establishment of a free-trade area between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners and cooperation and policy dialogue in several areas. Its third basket in accordance with the Helsinki human dimension aims at helping improve mutual understanding and tolerance among peoples of different cultures and traditions. An important qualification here is that the human dimension of the Helsinki Process was seen by the Western coalition as a useful diplomatic weapon for the gradual erosion of the Soviet-dominating communist regimes, by introducing a system of international controls over human rights issues; on the other hand, the aim of the EMP is to establish concrete avenues of communication among distinct historically constituted, culturally defined, socially constructed, and politically organised states and societies based on mutually rewarding outcomes. Put differently, it is not based on a crude Westernisation project along the lines of a neo-colonialist policy aiming at the erosion, if not collapse, of existing South Mediterranean regimes although, the distribution of such benefits is not as equitable as Europeans would have us believe.²²

In addition to strengthening closer North-South relations, the EMP has as a high priority the nurturing of closer South-South relations than have hitherto been evident. Specific efforts are being made to assist Mediterranean countries to become more aware of the opportunities that exist in their neighbouring states and to offer the Mediterranean countries involved in the EMP incentive packages to pursue trans-Mediterranean ventures. Given that most EU external assistance has been dedicated to central and eastern Europe, the EMP can best be viewed as an EU attempt to extend its outreach program southward in an effort to spur cooperative relations in the Mediterranean area.

²¹ Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. Libya has been attending ministerial meetings since 1999 as an observer of the EU Council Presidency following the lifting of UN sanctions, which had been imposed over the Lockerbie affair. See further in A. Pargeter, 'Libya-Pariah No More', *The World Today*, Vol. 58 No.6, 2002, pp. 25-26.

²² See D. K. Xenakis 'The Barcelona Process: Some Lessons from Helsinki', *Jean Monnet Working Papers in Comparative and International Politics*, Special EuroMed Edition - No. 17, Department of Political Science, University of Catania, 1998.

It is fair to say that the EMP has been an ambitious and innovative initiative for advancing Europe's previous Mediterranean policies. The basket-based structure of the Partnership and the follow-up continuity in line with the Helsinki paradigm could have proved instrumental in fostering a new co-operative ethos among its members. Interest-convergence around economic tasks usually contributes to a relaxation of tensions in areas where controversy is more likely to arise - ie, military security and human rights.²³ The composite nature of such a regional macro-process offers a wide range of opportunities for the functionalist expectations of the countries involved to form the basis of a consensually pre-determined set of policies, which could prove beneficial to an overall systemic regime.²⁴ However, after ten years of function it has not yet fulfilled its high regional ambitions. Based on tremendous results achieved of the Helsinki Process and, later, to the multifaceted EU involvement in the transition of the ex-communist countries to pluralistic democracy and market economy, the Barcelona project was primarily meant to extend that assistance in the Mediterranean. However, it did not make the leap that was politically necessary, it did not respond clearly to the great regional problems, and was unable to adopt a position regarding the grave crises affecting the region.

Given the more indifferent patterns of regional relations that have dominated Mediterranean relations than those that existed in November 1995, it is no small feat that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has continued to evolve. As the Barcelona Process proceeds through its second decade of evolution, the participating Euro-Mediterranean countries are continuously taking stock of the progress or lack of achievements registered in each of the different co-operative sectors they are seeking to advance.

²³ The aim of the Barcelona Declaration was similar to that of the Helsinki: to commit its members to a set of basic principles for international co-operation and peaceful relations, including democratisation, liberalisation, pluralism, the rule of law, respect for human rights and minorities, and good neighbourly relations as operational principles for a meaningful Partnership. If the aim of CSCE regime-formation was to achieve a relaxation of tensions between East and West - i.e., *détente* - that of the EMP was to build a stable regional order to accommodate the diverse regional interests. *Ibit*.

²⁴ D. K. Xenakis, 'From Policy to Regime: Trends in Euro-Mediterranean Governance', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 13:1, 1999, σελ. 254-270, and D. K. Xenakis and D. N. Chrysochoou, *The emerging Euro-Mediterranean system*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2001.

The whole project has experienced significant constraints,²⁵ first of all, because the Barcelona Process has not helped in the resolution of any major security problem in the region, although perhaps that would be too much to ask from the Europeans at this stage of their integration process. The general ability and willingness of the EU to be an active and efficient party in the resolution of critical regional conflicts or, on the contrary, to choose to protect itself, to isolate itself from the overflow of violence related to these conflicts, explains very much why political and security dialogue is the most underdeveloped basket of the EMP. And it will continue to be so until the EU becomes more clearly involved in the Middle East peace process.

Moreover, the Barcelona project is still focusing on meetings rather than tangible projects – too politicised. While there is merit to being able to hold high level meetings on a regular basis despite the negative turn of relations in the Middle East since 1995, it is also clear that one has to avoid the process superseding the partnership dimension of relations.

In the financial domain, the instruments offered have fallen far short of expectations – socio-economic needs in southern Mediterranean states are not being met – and the EU continues to dedicate far less than what Eastern Europe has received to manage their transformation in the post-Cold War era. Hence, the new financial mechanism of the EMP, the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), appears too diluted when it comes to policy objectives, too little considering the number of countries being addressed and not coherent enough especially when it comes to follow up mechanisms. More of a short, medium and long-term oriented approach needs to be adopted. The EMP needs to become more future-oriented with tangible links to the grassroots it is seeking to assist. While the current five-year work programme dedicates much more attention to civil society more of an effort needs to be given to raising people to people interaction.

²⁵ For the overall picture see Calleya, *op.cit.*, 2005. See also Z. Sabic and A. Bojinovic, 'Mapping a Regional Institutional Architecture: The Case of the Mediterranean', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2007, pp.317-337.

It is also critical to reconsider the proposal to establish a Euro-Med Development Bank. While one can debate the pros and cons of establishing a Bank ad nauseam, there is no denying that the creation of such focal point would boost economic and financial attention in the Mediterranean.

The issue of co-ownership especially when it comes to joint decision and implementation making has also not been properly addressed. It requires however a reformulation of the Partnership's institutional plan, with the creation of an exclusive competence within the domain of the EMP. The establishment of a Mediterranean Secretariat would give the EMP a much higher profile. Institutionalising the EMP through such a mechanism would also contribute to giving visibility to decisions taken. This competency should not only contribute in the organisation of summit meetings, but should also allow watchful management of the application of the associative Accords and finally, assume a role as mediator in disputes between partners.²⁶

The ambitious objectives defined in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, the political and security partnership, the economic and financial partnership, and the social, cultural and human partnership, need support from wherever it may come; and the Mediterranean EU member countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Malta and Greece) should be the foremost interested in more security, prosperity and sustainability around their small sea. In an EU of 27 states that could soon include more than 30 member states that are most located in Eastern Europe, it is in the interest of the southern EU members to cooperate in the new French initiative that seeks to increase attention on the Mediterranean. Competition in this case can be beneficial in that it will stir the EU to improve the efficiency of its Mediterranean approach and to focus on those things that it can do best; e.g. trade and security policies that it can perform best.

The recent decision to include Mauritania and Albania in the EMP, the first enlargement of non-EU members since the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995, signals that the potential for future cooperation in the

²⁶ A. Driss, 'Union for the Mediterranean', EuroMeSCo Newsletter, No 22, IEEL, Lisbon, March 2008, p. 4.

Mediterranean basin among a wider group of states is a feasible undertaking. It sets the stage for other riparian states that are not yet members of the EMP to seriously consider joining the Euro-Med initiative and to contribute directly to the numerous political, economic and cultural programmes that are being implemented. Both Croatia and Libya are perfectly positioned to join the EMP as soon as possible. As an EU candidate state, Croatia's accession to the EMP would serve as a complementary step to eventual EU membership and also further the Balkan representation in the EMP, together with the members Slovenia, and now also Albania. The admission of Libya, that has been an observer since 1999, would further strengthen the Maghreb presence in the EMP following the inclusion of Mauritania.²⁷

The key issue is how to enhance political cooperation between EMP partners and how to boost political will with the aim of establishing a much more functional partnership. A better structured regional political dialogue must focus on building confidence and trust between the two Mediterranean shores. The time is ripe to focus more political energy on delivering practical cooperation in areas where such measures are urgently required. This includes cooperative measures in the field of management of migration control, environment control and also economic development. Such forms of cooperation are essential if the EMP is to be perceived as relevant to the peoples of the region.

Such modalities of cooperation would of course adopt all of the existing mechanisms of partnership (association agreements, action plans, trade provisions and financial cooperation) that already exist through the EMP and the ENP. The main goal of this initiative would be to create a more positive atmosphere between European and Arab partners in all sectors, including politics, education, culture and business. The success of this initiative will lie in the informality of regular interaction between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Building Confidence and Conflict Prevention

²⁷ Calleya, op.cit., 2008, p. 4.

When it comes to immediate practical forms of cooperation Arab states should be encouraged to play a direct role in the management of illegal migration across the Mediterranean. One modality that should be considered is that of cooperating more closely with FRONTEX or the EU Council of Interior Ministers for appropriate financial support for a Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard framework.

The Ministerial Summit that took place during the Portuguese Presidency in November 2007 focused on Legal and Illegal Migration and Migration and Development concentrated on identifying practical measures that can be introduced in the short-term to start addressing this phenomenon in a more concerted manner. Similar modalities of cooperation can be launched when it comes to surveillance of pollution, monitoring fishing activities and carrying out search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean.

Illegal immigration is the most pressing challenge in the Mediterranean area. Without effective action by the EU and support from the Mediterranean countries the numbers of illegal migrants are bound to swell progressively. From presently less than 100 000 they might easily reach one million and more annually before 2025. There is no lack of young volunteers eager to find a better life in 'Euro-paradise'. Such a flow of desperate economic refugees, coming with no means, from different cultural backgrounds, mostly without linguistic or professional skills, will put European societies to a gruesome test of solidarity and tolerance that may go beyond what citizens in Europe are willing to accept. Europe therefore needs a clear strategy for this challenge. Is a 'fortress' type of strategy the best option to adopt? If not, what number and which criteria should be adopted when vetting migrants?

If the EU wants to put an end to illegal immigration it needs to engage the active collaboration of its Mediterranean neighbours. It has to get their agreement to take illegal refugees back (readmission agreements). In return, it has to offer them technical/financial assistance and equipment for a more thorough control of its coasts and southern borders. It will have to train border police forces etc. In parallel, the EU will have to substantially strengthen FRONTEX, its border control agency set up in 2005. It will have to deploy a sufficient number of coast guard control boats along the

Mediterranean and Atlantic coast to intercept refugees on the high seas and return them to their ports of origin. This will require a friendly and active cooperation from its neighbour governments.

The global war on terror dominates post-2001 security discourse. In the new era, 'deliberate threat' has been disaggregated and rendered less specific by the major global actors. The formulations of threat currently used are ranging from major regional contingencies to lesser nationalist and fundamentalist war-prone regimes and terrorist groups to the eventual emergence of peer competitors, who are assumed to have conscious identity, even if they are not mentioned explicitly. Security properties as well as perceptions and misperceptions are therefore particularly important for the profile of the regions.²⁸ A co-ordinated effort must take place to enhance strategic cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Although the EMP first pillar (political and security partnership) has yet to achieve the high sounding goal of a Security Charter or Pact as the Barcelona Declaration indicated, there is no reason why partners should not focus on introducing a less ambitious security mechanism that can assist in addressing some of the practical security challenges that all riparian states are facing. The common bond that all Mediterranean states share is their maritime heritage and the security threats that result from such a common geographical reality. At the moment there are no elaborate mechanisms to contend with security crises as an accidental collision at sea between transport tankers crossing through the choke points of the Mediterranean basin, such as the Straits of Sicily. Very little practical measures are also being taken to tackle the alarming rate of degradation that is currently taking place in the marine environmental sector. As a result, marine biology and everything linked to maritime activities, including tourism, is suffering more and more.

Two other sources of instability that have benefited from the security vacuum that exists are traffickers in drugs and human beings. The ever

²⁸ D. K. Xenakis and K. Ifantis, 'Regional Security, NATO's Transformation and Transatlantic Relations', paper delivered at the Conference on *Security Concerns in the Wider Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions*, International Center for Black Sea Studies, Rhodes, June 2007.

increasing proliferation of drug consignments which are reaching ever deeper into the societies of the Mediterranean and the accentuation of illegal migratory flows from south to north risk have already negatively affected the lives of millions of people in the Euro-Mediterranean area and risk destabilising the legal structures of all EMP states. Therefore, a concerted effort should be made to immediately take incremental steps towards setting up an early warning mechanism that can assess the significance of such security issues and their likely impact on Euro-Mediterranean relations in future. Once this has been realised the cooperative maritime security network can be instructed to draw up optional policy positions on security issues that are regarded as the most serious. Such an exercise in itself will raise awareness of the vulnerable position Mediterranean states are currently in and the weak defence mechanism they have at their disposal to cope with such security threats.

Ideally, one should immediately investigate the feasibility of establishing the FRONTEX operation in the Mediterranean into a permanent Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard Agency (EMCA) that would be mandated to coordinate the cooperative security network with a mission statement and plan of action similar to those carried out by a coastguard. The EMCA should initially carry out stop and search exercises in two principal areas: maritime safety and maritime pollution. This phase could be enhanced at a later stage by monitoring other aspects of security that include narcotics trafficking and the transport of illegal migrants.

It is essential that this initiative should be introduced in as flexible a manner as is possible. Such an early warning mechanism should be open to any of the partners that wish to participate. Those with the most experience in the area of maritime cooperation, such as Italy and Spain, should share their expertise with other willing and able Mediterranean states. EMCA can also seek the maritime security technical expertise that has already been achieved by the EU and NATO through their respective experiences in EUROMARFOR and Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean.

If an early warning mechanism is to start functioning any two or more EMP members should start cooperating in specific sectors, such as that

pertaining to maritime safety without having to wait until all partners are ready. This will enable the EMCA to evolve along sub-regional lines. As the EMCA widens and deepens its activities attention can also be given to the feasibility of establish a fully-fledged Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard at a later date.

In addition to strengthening political and security channels of communication, the establishment of such a Euro-Mediterranean early warning network will assist in cultivating more intense crisis management mechanisms in an area where these are lacking. Practical confidence building measures will enhance the level of trust between Euro-Mediterranean states and therefore set the stage for a more intricate security strategy to follow.

Finally, areas where partnership-building measures can be introduced include conducting simulation exercises of oil spills, ensuring that international standards are observed during the cleaning of oil tankers, and monitoring the activities of non-Mediterranean fishing boats that are operating in the Mediterranean with a particular emphasis on over-fishing.

The European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), conceived and launched between 2002 and 2005, is the latest product in the long series of European foreign policy experiments. It is one of the most ambitious foreign policy concepts ever devised.

The period from 1990 to 2003 resembles the one from 1960 to 1972. It opened a new chapter of EU neighbourhood relations:

- For Central Europe, accession very rapidly became the preferred option. Only the duration and the final shape of that process were still uncertain.
- With its Mediterranean neighbours the EU reinforced its neighbourhood relations. In 1995 it launched the Barcelona Process with a view to transforming the Mediterranean into an area of peace, stability and prosperity. Again the EU relied on its familiar instruments: free trade, cooperation and some legal approximation.

With Central European enlargement completed, the EU finds itself confronted with similar challenges. First, it has to complete the unfinished business in the Western Balkans resulting from the implosion of Yugoslavia. Here the final goal is fixed: full-fledged membership for all successor states, plus Albania. The accession process will be staggered over some 10 years, starting with Croatia. But accession fatigue with the Union will not facilitate matters. Second, it has to pursue its neighbourhood policy towards the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. None of these countries is eligible for EU membership. They have no other option but to knit close economic and political links with the EU. Third, it has to shape its future relations with its new Eastern neighbours: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. It was essentially with these very diverse grouping of countries in mind that the EU has launched its neighbourhood policy. The ten EMP states were integrated into the ENP afterwards.

Procedurally, the EU negotiates with neighbouring governments a package of legislative and administrative acts that neighbour countries agree to implement in a period of three to five years. The EU and the neighbour country lay down the results of these negotiations in «Action Plans» whose implementation is subject to joint monitoring. These Action Plans are ambitious documents. The most recent one negotiated with Egypt contains no less than 18 priorities ranging from political dialogue to energy, poverty reduction, south-south trade, migration and organised crime. In order to tackle these priorities, it lists no less than 300 specific activities to be undertaken by Egypt and/or the EU.

The ENP's simple logic is that nature and intensity of relations with the EU depends on the progress the new neighbours would make in critical areas like rule of law, respect of fundamental human rights, multiparty systems, free elections and market economy. Through the ENP the EU is offering its neighbours a set of – mostly tailor-made - incentives in return for the modernisation programme in which they engage. Among these the most attractive seem to be:

a) Financial support: The EU has earmarked an amount of € 12 billion in its financial perspectives 2007-13 for all neighbour countries that engage in ENP programmes. In addition, the EIB has promised to set aside an amount of € 15 billion long-term loans. These are not a huge amount for a dozen countries, certainly not enough to induce a hesitant government to engage in reforms that it does not like.

b) Participation in the EU single market: The EU has expressed its willingness to open certain aspects of its single market to its neighbours, essentially through mutual free trade and alignment on EU technical standards. The EU offer does, of course, not include a free access to its labour market, which for most of its poorer neighbours would constitute by far the most attractive part of the single market.

c) Participation in EU programmes for science, student exchange etc, and policy dialogue: This constitutes probably the most attractive aspect for most neighbouring countries. It is non-committal, but allows them to widen their horizon by learning from EU experience how to handle sensitive policy issues and reforms.

The EU must therefore handle its relations with a great amount of sensitivity. If it takes a too ambitious line, it will rebuff its partners in the East and South. It therefore has no choice but to start cooperation and reforms where its neighbours are willing and able to implement them. It cannot impose anything. Ownership is the key to successful neighbourhood policy. As a result of its experience with the Barcelona Process the EU seems to have understood that basic message.²⁹

The ENP is therefore a long-term initiative. There are not quick fixes to sustainable reforms. The EU should therefore invest a lot of patience and comprehension for its neighbours in order to be able to reap results in 20 years from now. The ENP will be more successful in European countries that are eligible for membership and pursue a long-term reform and accession policy. They will more easily consent to thorough and sometimes-painful reforms than the majority of the Mediterranean countries that have no perspective of joining the Union.

²⁹ E. Rhein, 'European Regionalism - Where is the European Union Heading?' in St. C. Calleya, (ed.), *Regionalism in the Post-Cold War World*, Ashgate, 2000.

The EU will need to invest a lot more in terms of human resources if it wants to be successful with the ENP. Implementation of action plans requires a huge effort for every government, in terms of planning, logistics, persuasion, finance and legislation. The EU should stand ready to assist its neighbours, as it has successfully done with its new members from Central and Eastern Europe.

Tackling Immigration and Socio-Economic Disparities

The European Council started to debate in earnest the issue of illegal migration in June 2006. But it will have to deepen discussion with a view to tackling illegal immigration and define a long-term framework for legal immigration. Immigration can no longer be left to deal with by member states. The EU needs to adopt strategic guidelines as soon as possible and once decided upon it will be up to the member states to implement them in their respective jurisdiction.

Illegal immigration will only diminish if the south is able to employ its population and offer them a more decent living. The EU should therefore focus its ENP efforts on those reforms that stand the best chances of improving the employment situation. It has not sufficiently done so in the past. What can it do more and better?

First, help governments improve the legal framework in which business operates. The EU should give priority to economic over political reforms and focus on a functioning judiciary, transparency of regulations, fiscal regime, education and training. This may be hard to digest for European Social Democrats. Still, this is the only realistic path. Arab Governments will not – in any near future – implement radical political reforms that might undermine their power positions. The EU has to acknowledge this, without abandoning its constant appeal for democracy and, more urgent, the respect of basic human rights. It has to proceed incrementally starting with economic and also judicial reforms.

Second, help slow down the rural exodus. Mediterranean countries will be at pains to absorb the demographic growth of the labour force when it will be

exacerbated by massive inflows into urban centres from the countryside. The majority of countries along the southern shores of the Mediterranean therefore need to preserve their labour-intensive agriculture, which should focus on high-value products like olive oil, fruits and vegetables. In order to support Mediterranean agriculture the EU should open its market for these products. In return, the Mediterranean countries should open their markets for cereals, milk products and meat for which they will never be competitive because of recurrent droughts and lack of adequate land.

Third, help governments move their people out of the overcrowded coastal belt. By 2035 living conditions along the coasts will become increasingly unbearable. Cairo is the best example. It will therefore become imperative for almost all of them to develop their 'hinterland', the Sahara. Egypt and Algeria have started to move into that direction. This means creating jobs, schools, hospitals and above all housing for more than six million people every year, away from the present urban centres, but with more attractive living conditions. This will be a very huge challenge.

The EU should therefore discuss with its Mediterranean partners a long-term strategy for settling some 100 million people off the present urban centres, as Brazil, Nigeria and most recently China have done. Such a programme should become the biggest public-private investment and employment programme ever undertaken in the Mediterranean. It should provide for the most advanced technology of 'desert living', climate-adapted housing, solar energy, and road and rail connections. . It could give a tremendous boost to a modern Mediterranean culture of living and technology by drawing on experiences in the Southwest of the USA, Dubai, and Brazil. The EU would also learn from this experience. It would have to finance part of the blueprints and the advanced technology to be applied.

The success of coordinating Euro-Mediterranean relations will be determined by the extent to which interaction between these two adjacent regions of the Mediterranean contributes to an improvement in the standard of living of all peoples. In this framework, a more integrated engagement should focus on

immediately enhancing Euro-Arab Research and Development in the field of innovation, especially when it comes to renewable and alternative energy.³⁰

EuroMedITI (the Euro-Mediterranean Initiative for Technology and Innovation) is an initiative that has been launched by Malta in early 2007 and is already opening up partnerships between research, business and governmental sectors supporting innovation policies. Water and environment technologies, sustainable energy technologies, marine technologies and information and communication technologies in focus, EuroMedITI aims to develop and empower an outstanding technology and innovation platform in the Mediterranean markets for business-driven services in Training, Applied Research and Development, Testing and Prototyping, Incubation, and Dissemination in the region. This will appeal directly to industries searching for a location to execute applied research and development under favourable conditions, and a hub to access the emerging Mediterranean market of approximately 400 million people.

Fourth, the EU needs to give a boost to education. There will not be sustainable employment without improved training and technology. This is the weakest point of almost all Mediterranean states and their biggest handicap in the international markets. The EU should therefore commit the bulk of the ENP funding to education, training and technology. It should:

- help, in particular Egypt and Morocco, to provide 100% of the children with primary education with modern curricula;
- massively finance teacher training;
- encourage the Mediterranean countries to establish 'Arab Erasmus' and 'Bologna programmes' for student exchanges and quality improvements of their universities;
- encourage European public research institutions to twin with their Mediterranean counterparts and thereby help them raise their performance;

³⁰ Global warming, global climate and global environment protection have become a key issue for worldwide political and industrial actions. Europe – under the German Presidency of 2007 took appropriate actions through leadership in relevant key technologies. New innovation policies for Europe (e.g. FP7), for Germany (High Tech initiative, launched late 2006) are already being implemented.

- engage in a meaningful programme of research scholarships for Ph.D. students starting with IT technology, science and engineering;
- substantially increase the numbers of short-term VIP visitors (journalists, parliamentarians”, entrepreneurs, senior officials, writers, mayors, academics etc.) from the Mediterranean countries and enable them to get acquainted with European methods of addressing political issues. These visits are expected to have a long-term impact on governance.

Strengthening such practical policy dialogue mechanisms will add momentum to the EMP Five Year Work Programme (2006-2010) that is currently being implemented and which seeks to integrate our Mediterranean partners closer into the fabric of European society.³¹ However, the educational field is a sector where much more needs to be done. The European Commission together with its member states needs to trigger both public and private stakeholders to work hand in hand with a long-term perspective to attract a larger number of Arab students to their shores. This will of course require an updating of procedures for visas, making them more user friendly for such a category of professionals.

Future Euro-Med programmes need to ensure that people to people interaction is at the forefront, especially young people. It is essential that a much larger number of students from the Arab world are given the opportunity to study at EU universities. The Bologna process must be made functional to them. The same goes for joint EU Arab research projects. The EU must introduce a package of programmes that seeks to tap into the wealth of intelligence in the Euro-Med region via scholarships, seminars, and other initiatives. The Euro-Med Education Ministerial that took place in Cairo in June 2007 has started to serve as a catalyst in this regard.

When it comes to diplomatic training Malta has already established itself as a regional centre of excellence in the Mediterranean through its educational and training institution, the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies

³¹ The Five Year Euro-Med Work Programme also calls for the launching of a substantial scholarships scheme for university students from Euro-Mediterranean partner countries and increase mobility grants for higher education staff.

(MEDAC) where over 400 graduates have been trained in the last seventeen years.³² The time has come to emulate such success in other areas such as that of Justice and Home Affairs so that a future generation of professionals from other sectors also have the chance to share a similar experience. The MEDAC is very well positioned to play this type of confidence building role in future.

Fifth, give a boost to renewable energy. The Mediterranean lacks expertise in modern technology. There is one area in which the Mediterranean could become one of the world leaders: renewable energies. Few countries on earth offer so favourable opportunities for the major 3-4 most promising technologies for producing renewable energy at competitive costs. They dispose of ample sunshine through most of the year and 10.000 km of coastlines with good to excellent wind and wave conditions, especially on the Atlantic and Red Sea coasts.

Why not marry these natural advantages with the EU` s rich experience in the design and use of renewable energies and engage in a comprehensive and long-term EU-Mediterranean development effort? Both sides would immensely benefit from such a joint undertaking, which would have to involve public and private research institutions, solar companies, utilities, developers etc.

The EU would benefit in the following domains:

- It would open a new big market for large-scale application of its technologies in its immediate neighbourhood under ideal conditions.
- It would be able to diversify its energy supply from fossil to renewable by importing “clean” electricity from Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Morocco, all of which dispose of ample lands for installing large solar fields (both PV and solar-thermal) to be connected to the European-Mediterranean grid under construction.

³² Since 1996, MEDAC together with the European Commission and the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been responsible for coordinating the Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminars, or as they have become more commonly known, the Malta Seminars, which are an official confidence building mechanism of the Barcelona Process where more than 600 diplomats have had the opportunity to interact.

The Mediterranean would benefit in two ways:

- By making its energy supply sustainable beyond the times when fossil sources will reach depletion;
- By cooperating more closely with European research institutes in the development of more sophisticated research facilities;
- By getting involved in the manufacturing and installation of solar/wind/wave facilities, jointly with European partners;
- If Israel were to be involved, by creating peaceful research and commercial links with Israel partners.

What needs to be done to make this dream become a reality? First, the European renewable energy industry has to realise the long-term opportunities of lining up with Mediterranean partners. Second, the European Commission has to back such a cooperative approach by offering launch finance adequate political support. It should play the catalyst role in bringing the two sides together. This is a long-term venture; but the two sides should lose no time in taking the initiative.

Sixth, the EU should provide adequate long term financing. Higher employment and growth will only come forth with higher investment ratios in the Mediterranean. Twenty-five per cent of GDP should be the minimum investment ratio to be envisaged as the objective. Some part of this will have to be financed by external funding. The major part of external funding should come from long-term loans (from World Bank and EIB) and FDI.

The Mediterranean countries have been lobbying for the creation of a 'MED Development Bank'. While some critics argue that there is not enough demand for such finance to justify a brand-new institution there is no doubting that creating such an institution will help raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges facing Mediterranean countries.

Such a Bank should emulate the activities of a proven institution – the EBRD in London, which after having successfully complete its mission in the new EU member countries, it is now expanding its business further east up to Central Asia. Why not offer it a new avenue in the Mediterranean through an offshoot institution. With its emphasis on financing new businesses it

would ideally complement the EIB that is more focused on big infrastructure projects.

Final Remarks

The French proposal for establishing a new regional initiative must be welcomed first of all because it helped to focus international attention on a very important geo-strategic crossroads of different civilisations and a crucial post-Cold War theatre of operations. However, for the re-launching of regional cooperation to be successful it is essential that important geopolitical factors are addressed simultaneously to create a more conducive climate. A concerted international effort is needed to address the following issues:

- The Palestinian issue needs to be resolved – the post Annapolis phase of diplomacy must deliver some positive steps with a two state solution possible.
- The rise of terrorism and the global war against terrorism dominates contemporary security discourse. An effort must take place to enhance strategic cooperation in this sector.
- The growing call for political reform in the Arab world must be supported by the international community.
- The rise of political Islam must be better accommodated by both Europe and the US. The West has so far failed to engage Islamic political movements.
- The slowdown of EU political integration as a result of the Reform Treaty saga has stalled its engagement in the Mediterranean. After the Lisbon compromise, any future ratification of the Treaty must guarantee with a new focus on the Mediterranean.
- As a result of increase in global competition both China and India are superseding the Mediterranean when it comes to competitiveness. A Euro-Med strategy to address this reality is required.
- The increase in illegal immigration trends is a main issue of contention. The EU must adopt a comprehensive policy to address this major both humanitarian and security related issue.
- Future EU enlargements that may see the EU expand from 27 to 35 should not result in further marginalisation of the Mediterranean in the EU's agenda.

- The slowdown in EU economic growth, with the Lisbon Strategy having not yet deliver results, is preventing the EU from focusing more actively on its external agenda.
- The lack of regional integration in the Mediterranean is a major handicap preventing closer political and economic relations. To date no serious south-south Mediterranean regional forum has emerged that the EU can engage with – perhaps the Arab League could assume this role, with the initiative by Malta to promote EU/Arab League relations serving as a mechanism to spur such relations.³³

The proposed Union will not replace the EMP but will complement it by boosting regional and international attention in key infrastructural projects that will facilitate interaction of Mediterranean riparian states. In addition to securing the economic support of the EU, the Gulf, and private sources of capital, Sarkozy will also have to successfully articulate the political *raison d'être* of the proposed Union to riparian states if this is to be a sustainable regional initiative. Whether in parallel or within the Barcelona framework, it needs to avoid six critical problems that have affected the EMP:

- The Barcelona Process has been too politicised, focusing on meetings rather than tangible projects/results.
- The financial instruments offered have fallen far short of expectations – needs not being met – much less that what Eastern Europe has received to manage their transformation in the post-Cold War era.
- The partnership needs to become more future-oriented with tangible links to the grassroots it is seeking to assist.
- The new financial mechanism of the EMP, the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), appears too diluted when it comes to policy objectives, too little considering the number of countries being addressed and not coherent enough especially when it comes to follow up mechanisms.
- The issue of 'joint ownership' especially when it comes to joint decision and implementation making between Europe and the Mediterranean states has also not been properly addressed.

³³ Times of Malta, 'Enhancing Euro-Arab Relations', February 12th 2008, pp.1 and 17.

- Serious consideration of the proposal to establish a Euro-Med Development Bank that would boost economic and financial attention in the Mediterranean has also been lacking.

The main factor that should move all littoral states closer together in the future are their mutual security interests: political, economic and cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean must be strengthened if stability is to be secured in future. When it comes to addressing regional security challenges the list of threats and risks is a daunting one. The plethora of the security challenges associated with the North-South debate includes illegal migration, terrorism, religious intolerance and the lack of human rights. Across the region geopolitical and geoeconomic indicators are not positive. Foreign direct investment is lacking, intra-Mediterranean trade remains limited, north-south economic disparity is resulting in a permanent poverty curtain across the Mediterranean, the demographic time-bomb continues to escalate, unemployment continues to increase, illegal migration has reached alarming levels, illiteracy remains a very high levels, and an escalation of ongoing conflicts remains a serious concern. The indivisibility of security between Europe and the Mediterranean is the key reason for both the EU and the Mediterranean states to support the new initiative.

European and Mediterranean partners need a critical reassessment of their regional cooperation strategies, with clearly defined objectives and instruments to advance long-term objectives and a clear sense of priorities. Important questions arise here, including, what sort of regional cooperation makes sense? Where is there a chance of advancing? In the case of the Mediterranean, the task of overcoming the obstacles that are hampering regional cooperation must consist of better management of ongoing regional efforts and more effective monitoring of goals being sought. A road map that stipulates short, medium, and long-term phases of region-building is necessary if any progress is to be registered in establishing a Euro-Mediterranean community of values. All international institutions with a Mediterranean dimension should provide their think tank platform to map out such a strategy so that a Union of diverse Mediterranean states becomes a reality in the near future.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Mediterranean runs the risk of becoming a permanent fault-line between the prosperous North and an impoverished South. The key development to watch in the Mediterranean in the next decade will be to see whether the phase of cooperative competition that has dominated post-Cold War relations to date is eventually superseded by an era of conflictual competition. If this age of socio-economic indifference scenario does take hold, disorder will dominate Mediterranean relations and as resources are depleted, the region will become an economic wasteland. The only way this scenario can be avoided is if the Barcelona Process is overhauled, international institutions such as the World Bank, OECD, and the IMF become more altruistic in their dealings with the region, and the Mediterranean countries themselves adopt a self-help mentality. Rather than undermine or diminish the significance of the EMP, the growing socio-economic disparities across the Mediterranean underlines further the significance of the Barcelona Process, the only multilateral process of its kind in the area and any eventual Mediterranean Union.

If the EU wants to promote regional integration in the Mediterranean in the short term, it must seek to support more directly all sub-regional groupings that can have a positive impact on the conflictual patterns of regional relations. A sub-regional approach does not entail formal dissolution of the EMP. All current and prospective members could maintain their membership, whatever their status in sub-regional groups (whether defined by geography or by functionality). This could facilitate a more efficient operation of other sub-regional groupings by compartmentalizing the Israeli-Arab conflict resolution. Regardless of whether this has been a real impediment or merely a diversion; it has nevertheless complicated EMP proceedings, sometimes to the point of paralysis. Pending a resolution of the conflict, minimizing if not eliminating the number of EMP forums in which Israelis and Arabs participate together might facilitate more focused attention by all parties on the economic, social, and governance issues that are at the heart of the EU's post-Cold War Mediterranean experiment.

All extra-regional actors, with an interest in ensuring that future relations in the Mediterranean remain peaceful and more prosperous, including NATO and the US must act to ensure that the Middle East is not left to collapse as

a result of an attitude of indifference. International organizations must guard against adopting an attitude of indifference when it comes to securing a peaceful future for this region. The outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other regional conflicts across the Middle East will have a major bearing on the future of regional relations. Geographical proximity and stability in the Mediterranean dictates that the EU needs to try and influence dynamics in the Middle East more systematically than it has been in recent years. Failure to do so will continue to stifle attempts to strengthen regional relations through the EMP and also have a negative impact on the implementation of the ENP's agenda and therefore in the development of President Sarkozy's initiative.

The newly introduced UM initiative must aim at reviving and recalibrating the EMP by building on the pattern of relations that exists today. It offers an opportunity to spur the resurgence of sub regionalism – intensify sub regionalism and bilateral interplay. It also offers the chance to map out a more action oriented and more target focused agenda. However, the most important lesson from previous initiatives is that for the proposed Union to succeed it will be necessary engage both EUs' and Mediterranean states' leadership and political will.

All in all, the new initiative needs political focus and practical input from business and civil society, from both sides of the Mediterranean. All those who are in favour of a harmonious neighbourhood in the south should welcome the new re-launching of regional cooperation. The task however is huge. The success or failure of the new initiative will determine whether regional relations in 2020 will be cooperative or conflictual dominant.