



Putting the Mediterranean Union in Perspective

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General Introduction

French President Sarkozy's agenda to promote a Mediterranean Union has triggered a lively debate in the European Union and among the Southern Mediterranean EU partners. This debate suggests that France's initial proposal will still see change and evolution.

In fact, since the end of the Cold War, the initiatives for the Mediterranean have been numerous but none has reached its objectives so far. It is worth assessing the value of the Mediterranean Union proposal and examining the reactions it provoked in key countries. We have selected several of them. On the European side, Southern European countries (other than France) and Germany seem particularly concerned. Of the non-members, we have decided, on the one hand, to concentrate on Tunisia and its North African neighbors, and on the other, on Israel. The various EC, and later on, EU initiatives, such as the Global Mediterranean Policy of 1972, the Renovated Mediterranean Policy of 1990, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership within the framework of the Barcelona Process in 1995, and the New European Neighborhood Policy of 2003, have sought to make the Mediterranean region an area of peace, stability and prosperity. All these policies were supposed to promote the stabilization of the region through the virtues of free trade. More recently, Europe requested its Mediterranean partners to adhere to its system of values, particularly to democracy and the rule of law; in exchange for which Europe proposed to share the prosperity of its liberal economy. It also promised to those countries that most rapidly implemented the new Neighborhood policy that they could benefit, at least partly, from the "four liberties". However, these diverse propositions have convinced neither the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, which were reluctant to undertake rapid political and social change (except the singular case of Israel), nor the European countries that did not tend to boost direct investments and technological transfers. Furthermore, the on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict has complicated attempts at cooperation, finally leading the process of partnership towards a political deadlock.

Can the project of a "Mediterranean Union", as initially proposed by the then candidate to the Presidency of France, Nicolas Sarkozy (later to become actual President), during his electoral campaign in early 2007, resolve these problems or overcome these obstacles? This was in fact the question initially raised by EuroMeSCo and non-EuroMeSCo experts alike in the spring of 2007 when the project was first publicized.

It quickly emerged that many agreed that the Barcelona Process had not been a big success, although by far not the total failure that those in charge of the project in France were boldly stating. The EMP had indeed failed to diminish the economic gap between the North and the South of the Mediterranean. However, it also appeared that there was no consensus whatsoever about the reasons for these results. The French involved in the Mediterranean Union blamed the failure by and large on the lack of "ownership" felt amongst the Mediterranean Partners of the Barcelona Process and on the exclusive focus directed towards trade and adjustment. This in turn, so the argument went, had the result of fostering "cold" rivalry and competition, rather than the sense of community easily achievable if there had been highly visible and specific cooperative ventures and projects. Indirectly, and without much fanfare, the French also intimated that within the EU only Southern European countries had shown interest in advancing the Mediterranean agenda, and therefore that there was a lack of motivation on the EU's side. For those Arab countries involved in the EMP, it was the aggravation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the failure of the Oslo Process that was the main culprit¹. This was of course rejected by Israeli experts, who stressed that the EMP was not created to establish peace in the Middle East, nor to resolve open conflicts in the Mediterranean (be they between Algeria and Morocco, or between Cyprus and Turkey). Together with British, German and Scandinavian scholars, they stressed that the EMP was a North-South development-through-trade program and that it had failed for two main reasons. First and foremost because the EU had excluded agricultural goods and labour-intensive services from the association agreements and because the cumulation of origin rules had taken a long time to be introduced; and secondly, because the Arab members of the EMP had failed to reform economically and politically².

On the other hand, there was a strong consensus among experts that the timing chosen by France to launch this pet project was an appropriate one. It was high time for some serious stock-taking of a Process that was now 12 years old and languishing – all this when new centers of economic power are emerging elsewhere on the international scene, such as in Eastern (China) and South Asia (India), the Southern Cone (Brazil), and with the return of Russia as an energy power after 15 years of absence. There was also a consensus that the new President of France wanted to restore the latter's position of "*primus inter pares*" in the Mediterranean, and by the same token, balance this with his initial image of a Presi-

¹ Denis Bauchard, *L'Union Méditerranéenne : un défi européen*, Politique étrangère, No.1, 2008, pp.51-64.

² Michael Emerson, Making Sense of Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean, CEPS Policy Brief, No.155, March 7 2008.

dent too sympathetic to the foreign policy and security views of the United States in the wider Middle East. In other words, it was an initiative around which all the political forces in France could be rallied.

In sum, it is extensively agreed that the idea behind the Mediterranean Union project is based on a triple diagnosis made by President Sarkozy: the marginalization of the Mediterranean in the world economy; the inadequacies of the EU's Mediterranean policy, and the erosion of France's role as a geopolitical actor in the Mediterranean.⁵ And all seem to agree that the main value of Sarkozy's proposal is that it has contributed towards renewing debate about the geopolitical importance of the Mediterranean region.

How did the idea evolve over the last 15 months? In fact, it started out as a Union of the Mediterranean, or Mediterranean Union, only including the riparian countries and excluding the non-Mediterranean EU members. Then, in Rome, on December 20, 2007, the mini-summit between the heads of state and governments of France, Italy and Spain adopted the "Appel de Rome",³ in which the initiative was turned into a Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), excluding the possibility of their membership, but making room for some form of participation of the Commission and, eventually, of non-Mediterranean EU countries eager to play a role in the area. Thereafter, at the March 3, 2008 meeting in Hanover between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Sarkozy, it was decided that the EU members would not be divided into Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean, nor given different roles with respect to the Union for the Mediterranean. "It will be", in the words of Chancellor Merkel, "a project of the 27 member states of the [European] Union".⁴

Finally, in the European Council of March 13-14, 2008 held in Brussels, the initiative (which the "Appel de Rome" had apparently construed as a Franco-Spanish-Italian demarche) was brought to the attention of the other EU members as a common Franco-German endeavour, in view of the final decisions on content and shape that are to be taken in the Euro-Med summit that France will hold in Paris on July 13-14, 2008. Although the EU members took good note of the Franco-German initiative, it has not been officially approved.⁵ The Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels Council are very general and refer to the issue in extremely broad terms in a very brief annex, inviting "the Commission to present to the Council the necessary proposals for defining the modalities of what will be called 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'".⁶

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

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

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

(c) The EMP and the UfM will remain two distinctive endeavours, each with its own internal organisation. The majority of the same countries will most probably participate in the UfM, as well as the EMP, albeit in different capacities and roles. At the time of writing (mid-May 2008), it appears that on the Mediterranean side, it is not only the usual 10 countries that have been invited to participate in the UfM (i.e. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey), but now also Albania, Libya, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Mauritania and Monaco – i.e. a total of 17 that do not belong to the EU, bringing the total of prospective members up to 44. But membership in the EMP and UfM might become increasingly overlapped, seeing as there are now emerging some parallel proposals to enlarge the current membership of the EMP.

In the Brussels Council, the Commission was mandated by EU members to provide suggestions on the "modalities" whereby the UfM can remain under the umbrella of the Barcelona

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

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

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

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

Process, in addition to the EMP; in other words, how the two entities can govern their reciprocal relations by implementing two different agendas with respect to the same objective (and how the EU will re-organise itself within the EMP framework);

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

(e) New flexibilities in external relations between member states and the Commission have developed in the past years: ways and means of sharing responsibilities have emerged, as well as greater flexibility in members states’ options to participate in sub-regional cooperation schemes stretching across EU borders, as in the case of the Nordic Dimension and, to some extent, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation-BSEC. In its follow-up of the Brussels Council’s request to set out proposals, with a view to including the UfM in the Barcelona Process, the Commission could make use of such flexibilities.⁷ This perspective of flexibility may however end up severely limited by the inherently rigid nature of an inter-state union such as President Sarkozy wishes the UfM to be. The talks, which will take place between now and the July Paris summit, will obviously seek to strike a balance between flexibility and rigidity. As pointed out, the French UfM proposal shows an inclination towards evolution. It may well continue evolving.

(f) There still remain many unknowns at the time of writing. In particular, and notwithstanding points (b) and (c) above, it is not yet clear whether the idea is to create a sort of “G-8 of the Mediterranean”, as those French officials involved in negotiating a joint Declaration in July 2008 seem to have in mind and support; or whether the project will be organically related to the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. On the one hand, the agreements reached at the Brussels European Council seem to privilege the latter view. But on the other, the membership of the two processes is different, since 44 countries will be involved in the new UfM, more than the 39 involved in the EMP. It is also clear that this is not an EU-driven project as are the ENP and the EMP. The right of exclusive initiative given to the EU Commission, which is so typical both of the ENP and the EMP, is no longer there. Moreover, it is the new Council of the UfM (representing all the members of the Union, potentially numbering 44) that must decide every two years which projects are to be selected. Quite interestingly, the EU’s Council of Ministers seems to take a backseat here.

(g) If one is guided by the record of the ECJ and the EP in similar ventures, it is not at all clear what their view might be about such a decision-making structure. Suffice here to highlight the *pandemonium* raised by the ECJ in the early 1990s, when suggestions were made by EFTA countries towards creating the European Economic Area to have a joint EFTA-EC Court of Justice. A way out of the *conundrum* is to confine projects to areas that are not of the exclusive competence of the EU (first pillar). But then this would exclude any project dealing with trade and competition. Even for fields where there is at present shared competence between the EU and its Member States (e.g. in the domain of migration, trade in services, and agriculture), huge legal difficulties could be raised by the ECJ to the EU’s Council of Ministers before any project in these domains are to be adopted by the UfM.

(h) At present, the new slogan being used by French negotiators to sell the project to the other 43 potential members of the UfM is to present it as “A projects’ Union for a Union project” (“*une union de projets pour un projet d’Union*”). Nicolas Sarkozy has stressed that the private sector would (or should) take the lead in financing the projects, but that of course some financial public institutions would be called on to provide financial support and expertise (e.g. FEMIP). In passing, the project approach is nothing but new. This approach was tried during the Oslo Process when the so-called US-inspired MENA Business Conferences were organized in parallel in Casablanca, Amman and Doha. As we know, the idea amounted to nothing when the Oslo Process failed. Contrary to what President Sarkozy states, this is not the ECSC approach he so keenly mentions in his Press conferences. The latter, privileged by Jean Monnet, was anything but business-oriented. Jean Monnet believed in using strong supranational structures to bind sovereign countries together, thus preventing their bid for escape the moment they are confronted with a crisis. In turn,

⁷ Michael Emerson, “Making Sense of Sarkozy’s Union for the Mediterranean”, CEPS Policy Brief No. 155, March 2008.

this would preclude that private firms fear for their investments. Nothing of the sort is present in Sarkozy's approach, nor in the MENA Conferences' approach.

(i) There is then also the myth whereby the ECSC, which was a sectorial organization, preserved peace between France and Germany through a process of irrevocable interdependence and habit-creating socialization. But this took place after Germany had been totally defeated by the Allies and had no possibility of returning to an independent path. What is more, NATO is known to have been created not only to keep the Soviets out, but also to keep the Germans down. Finally, as indicated above, supranational institutions such as the High Authority were set up to control the re-industrialization of Germany from above. This is not to say that the economic interdependence and socialization brought about by the ECSC did not play a role in maintaining peace and stability, but all those elements just mentioned were also crucial. And it is these sorts of conditions that do not prevail in the Mediterranean, nor in Middle East.

(j) Prospective organizational and logistical hitches may revolve around the following questions: How will Mediterranean non-EU member countries choose their co-president? If no automatic rotation is instituted, will this not mean that the same countries (i.e. the least controversial) will always be chosen? Who will financially support a Secretariat of between 20 to 30 persons? Even if the Secretariat is composed of seconded officials from the Member States or from the Commission, as Commission experts expect, various other expenditures would remain to be covered. Furthermore, if a sense of "ownership" is so important, how is this possible without financial contributions from those Mediterranean countries involved in projects? If the Secretariat is to be based in an Arab country, such as Tunisia (as has been rumoured), with no peace agreement having been signed with Israel, how can the former guarantee the well-being and security of the Israeli members in the Secretariat? Finally, if the financial envelope devoted to the different EU Mediterranean agendas is not expected to be dramatically increased, what kind of reaction can be expected from those Mediterranean countries that have regularly benefited from MEDA, EMPI and FEMIP funds and are now being told that part of these sources of finance will be decreased in order to make room for possible regional projects, which on top of this, might not involve the country in question?

After this short introduction, which has tried to explain the options made available and the problems still unresolved, this Report will now try to provide an overview of the different views existing in the main zones of the Euro-Med area. We will start with the views of some European countries, to then be followed by the perspectives developing in the Southern Rim of the Mediterranean.

Because the observer's origin and the location from which he writes very much colours his views, we have opted to first have each author draw his own conclusions and recommendations. Then, in a short section that includes some final remarks, we have summed up some policy suggestions around which emerged broad consensus regarding their soundness.

But let us now get started...

Southern European Perspectives

by Roberto Aliboni

The Background

This section of the report is devoted to Southern European EU countries: their views on the Euro-Med perspective and their reactions to France's proposal. The French proposal has raised special interest in these countries, given that they feel themselves directly implicated as Mediterranean countries and potential members of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The debate on both the future of the Euro-Med framework and the UfM initiative has been most intense in Spain and Italy. The UfM initiative has managed to raise interest in Slovenia, even if only because this country holds the EU Presidency in the first semester of 2008. It has also been debated in Greece and Malta, and much less so in Portugal. This report is essentially based on reactions from Spain and Italy.

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

The Mediterranean Perspective

The Marseille ministerial conference of 2000 should still be seen as a turning point in the Barcelona Process. After four years of negotiations, the Partners admitted at this conference that they had been unable to establish a common ground. The Northern Partners had called upon the Southern countries, in particular the Arab Partners, to promote political reforms on the assumption that such reforms would strengthen long-term security in the area. This demand was, however, perceived by the Southern Partners as a threat to their domestic stability. Furthermore, the EMP, despite its declaratory policy in favour of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, was unable to do anything substantial to address a conflict that the Southern Partners regard as a major threat to their security. In the Arab view, the EMP was intended to meet the EU's security requirements, while neglecting their own. This is why the Arabs considered the EMP unsuited for security cooperation and requested an EMP essentially aimed at co-development within the context of a broad diplomatic dialogue. In Marseille, the Partners proved unable to reconcile these opposing views, but nonetheless decided to retain the EMP as a broad framework for diplomatic dialogue and cooperation and to continue to work together in this partnership.

Since the turn of the century, the EMP has been affected by three strategic changes, namely: (a) the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the ensuing global war on terrorism launched by the US administration; (b) the enlargement of the EU into Eastern Europe in 2004; (c) the increase in immigration towards the EU from the Mediterranean shores and of migrants travelling across the Mediterranean from more distant areas.

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

Then again, terrorism and immigration have brought about a shift in the EU's broad security vision with respect to the Mediterranean. The EU response has been a strong securitization of these two issues and, more broadly speaking, of other soft security factors.⁸ Despite the progress made in the implementation of the common EU space of freedom, justice and security, terrorism and immigration remain mostly in the hands of European governments, which have quite different visions and policies with respect to the two issues, especially immigration and related questions (citizenship, asylum, etc.). The only orientation they share is the need to keep issues as domestically sensitive as immigration and terrorism under their sovereignty. As a result, while governments take terrorism and immigration into

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

consideration as part of the EMP agenda, it is definitely not within the EMP framework that they make or implement their decisions. As such, with respect to issues of vital interest to the Mediterranean, such as terrorism and immigration, the EMP hardly plays a significant role today. All in all, the ENP touches upon a number of varied and important questions, but not the key ones. This is particularly embarrassing with respect to immigration, which at the end of the day is the most serious issue in current Euro-Med relations.

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

The first, widespread response is that the conditions to establish a common ground in the Euro-Med space are objectively weak and that this reality can hardly be changed for the time being. In this perspective, the initial expectations for the EMP will have to be downgraded: the political and security dimension cannot go beyond the present results of good socialization. Thanks to this socialization, the EMP – so the argument goes – is in any case a valuable asset. Fruitful cooperation is possible on a case-by-case basis. For this school of thought, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the institution of the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly are good achievements, attesting to the value and capabilities of the EMP as a conduit for EU cooperation with its Southern neighbours. In this view, it is worth trying to improve and reinvent the EMP without seeking any qualitative changes.

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

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

The third response identified is the UfM. Like the EMU, the major concern of the UfM is to assure Southern Mediterranean ownership. For this purpose, it proposes a G-8 summit-like structure headed by an EU/non-EU co-presidency. This would involve a biennial meeting of heads of state, alongside government and ministerial meetings that would be prepared and followed-up by a light secretariat formed by EU/non-EU personnel.¹¹ The UfM would not implement policies, a role performed by the EU, or get involved in too many fields, like the "holistic" EMP attempts to, but would instead pursue specific projects in key areas, such as energy, education, training for immigrants, etc.¹² While the UfM was initially in-

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

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

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

tended as a structure quite apart from the EU and its EMP, in its most recent configuration, it seems that this initiative will be integrated into the EU alongside the EMP.

Whether integrated or not in the Barcelona Process and the EU, the UfM stems from a substantively different perspective than the EMP. Apparently, there is some convergence between the UfM and the EMU, seeing as both aim to institutionally upgrade Euro-Med relations and thus supersede the ENP experience. But they are also quite different, in that they are based on distinct strategic visions. The EMU is based on a long-term objective of integration across the Mediterranean. In this sense, as was aptly noted by Jean-Robert Henry,¹³ its pivotal feature is the upholding of people's freedom to move within the Union's space, as of tomorrow, starting with a policy of openness towards immigration, as of today. The UfM, on the other hand, reflects President Sarkozy's political platform and in this sense, is inspired, among other factors, by a broad sense of confrontation with the Muslim world, beginning with Turkey. Apart from the rhetoric of Mediterranean solidarity and common heritage associated with the UfM, it has a technocratic and business-oriented agenda. According to this agenda, immigration is anything but a crisis to manage. Here the final aim is control, rather than freedom of movement¹⁴. Furthermore, while the EMU proposal is clearly founded in EU values and its experience of freedom, international integration and social cohesion, and while it tries to expand the area of communitarian power with respect to national power, both the UfM and today's intergovernmental EMP are outcomes of the ongoing process of European re-nationalization.¹⁵ In this process of re-nationalization, President Sarkozy plays a role that goes well beyond Euro-Med relations. As for other EU governments, they could be more "European" as far as the EU is concerned, but when it comes to immigration and terrorism in the EMP, they advocate an approach that is as re-nationalized as that of France.

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

- (a) A conservative project aimed at preserving the EMP as a collective diplomatic framework, although subsidiary to increasingly national policies, especially as regards securitized issues such as immigration and terrorism – as they have developed in the last decade;
- (b) An innovative (though ideologically conservative) project to establish a strongly inter-governmental UfM, in which the Commission, while not excluded, is offered only a limited role, and where participating governments would be allowed greater freedom when negotiating key projects and issues, without the burden of EU principles (or values);
- (c) A third, also innovative, project that is institutionally similar to the second (two parallel Unions), but politically and ideologically very different: the EMU would adopt the EMP agenda and effectively advance it, by taking advantage of its platform of strongly reinforced ownership. In the long term, the EMU aims at integrating the EU with the Southern Mediterranean. In his article, Spain's Foreign Minister says "The moment has come to put a stop to this process and build up an effective geopolitical space by establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Union".

The European Perspective

All these approaches are now in competition within the Euro-Med arena. After the European Council's recent decisions in Brussels, it seems as though the approach based on a "continuation cum improvements" of the EMP is now the weakest of the possible options. The competition is thus between the UfM and the EMU proposals. Although the former would appear to be the winning approach, it may well be that the UfM will in further negotiations become imbued by elements of the EMU.

As was just outlined, there are significant differences between the UfM and the EMU from the Mediterranean perspective, but differences are also in evidence from the European perspective. Let us now look at the latter.

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

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

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

Against this backdrop, in France itself,¹⁹ as well as elsewhere in Southern Europe, the French initiative has been appreciated from the beginning for its call in favour of the Mediterranean. Yet it also immediately generated a feeling that it had to be “tamed”, in other words “Europeanized”. As pointed out, European diplomatic efforts have actually worked in this direction – in particular, that achieved by Italy and Spain with the Declaration of Rome, as well as the German-France agreement reached in Hanover – resulting in a compromise whereby the UfM will be put under the umbrella of the Barcelona Process as a common EU endeavour. How this will be precisely developed depends on the talks that will take place in the coming months and the work carried out by the Commission. One point is already clear, however: independent of any other features, the new initiative will be a Union with the Mediterranean countries, in which all the EU members or at least a part of them will participate. Yet although the UfM may look like the winning approach, the project may well become hybridised by elements of the EMU during future negotiations. In any case, we will hereinafter speak of a UfM/EMU initiative. While awaiting further developments, we will now very briefly speculate on ways in which the UfM/EMU can be related to the EU in its Euro-Mediterranean sphere.

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

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

Furthermore, if, thanks to its upgraded political and institutional format, the UfM/EMU were actually capable of increasing the sense of ownership of the Southern partners and, ultimately, provide the coalition with the common ground that the EMP so hopelessly sought in the past, the UfM/EMU might eventually offer solutions to the crucial question of immigration and the freedom of movement in the Euro-Med area. This would introduce a most significant and decisive dynamic factor into the picture. As we know, the spirit and the objectives of the UfM and the EMU are quite different. Any hybridisation would most probably pick up more from the latter than the former.

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

It is very likely that the Commission will be a member of the UfM/EMU. This would facilitate the overall governance of the “greater” Barcelona Process, yet one should keep in mind that the UfM/EMU will have its own secretariat. As such, the Commission’s role in the UfM/EMU will hardly be the same as the role it currently plays in the EMP. The presence of the Commission is important as regards financing. In this respect, the UfM/EMU is expected to raise funds for its own projects. However, the UfM/EMU could prove eligible for ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) and other EU funds presently devoted to “regional cooperation”. No doubt, the Commission will make up its own mind about whether or not to finance the UfM/EMU projects and to what extent this will occur. Whether the UfM/EMU is eligible for EU funding for its projects is a political problem, seeing as it

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

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

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

17 “Les relations euro-méditerranéennes aujourd’hui”, interview with François Gouyette, Ambassador in charge of the Euro-Mediterranean process, conducted by Catherine Véglio, *Confrontations Europe*, January-March 2008, pp. 15-17.

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

19 The Rapport Reiffers was a pioneer in declaring the need to make the UfM complementary to the EU. Had President Sarkozy followed the Rapport Reiffers’ suggestions, European diplomacy would have avoided wasting so much time and the political shocks suffered by the EU. See: Institut de la Méditerranée, *Rapport du Groupe d’experts réuni par l’Institut de la Méditerranée sur le projet d’Union Méditerranéenne*, Marseilles, October 2007 (Rapport Reiffers).

may throw the present financial equilibrium within the EU into question. In fact, Eastern and Northern countries will have to be assured that this new Mediterranean undertaking is not detracting funds from them or their interests. While the decision to make the UfM a common EU project has put an end to concerns about EU cohesion, misperceptions about financing could reintroduce such concerns. In this sense, defined and balanced rules on this point will be very important.

Conclusions and Recommendations

With the Europeanization of the French UfM initiative, most of the concerns originally raised have been eliminated. Nevertheless, the need to set out a clear pattern of governance in relations between the UfM/EMU, as well as those between the EU/EMP (and ENP), remains vital, especially if any resurfacing of these concerns is to be prevented. This is particularly true as regards financing issues.

Things appear even more uncertain and complex from the Mediterranean perspective. Here, EU members' opinions seem to diverge. Some, such as Northern EU countries, are happy with the EMP as it is. Others, such as Spain and France, believe that the EMP project has been exhausted and, for this reason, want to undertake an institutional upgrade. Clearly, Northern and Southern EU countries have different views on the relevance of the Mediterranean: the former are happy with Euro-Med taking a back-seat on the agenda, whereas the latter seek a higher profile.

Both the UfM and the EMU aim at upgrading EU-Mediterranean relations and capacities, however, the substance and finalities of their respective agendas are quite different: the EMU is committed to the long-term integration of the two shores and focuses on the freedom of movement of people within a progressively unified Euro-Med space; the UfM, on the other hand, is business-oriented and considers immigration as functional to this orientation. It calls for a well-regulated but not necessarily integrated area of mobility.

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

The fact that the new inter-governmental framework could work better than the EMP may stem more from the lack of intention to promote political reforms, than from the framework's upgraded institutional content (ownership). This because, at the end of the day, the struggle to promote reform and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean has been the real stumbling block of the Barcelona Process. The EMP has abandoned this struggle (which was then partly taken up by ENP Action Plans); the EMU does not contemplate abandoning it, however, it deceives itself in believing that an inter-governmental Union will be more active in pursuing reforms than the EMP has been (especially when there seems to be a negative correlation between fostering Southern Mediterranean ownership and implementing reforms in the region); the UfM, realistically or cynically, has simply removed reform from the picture. It may be that it proves the winning approach for this very reason, and that governments, having overcome their problems with EU cohesion, will begin to look upon it favourably.

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

1. From the angle of EU cohesion, as well as the effectiveness of the UfM/EMU agenda, a project involving all 27 EU member states would be better than any reinforced cooperation;
2. A well balanced and clear governance pattern to manage relations between the various entities of the "greater" Barcelona Process constellation, in particular the UfM/EMU and the EMP, is essential both to foster the Euro-Mediterranean agenda and to avoid discontinuities in / risks for EU cohesion – financing of respective projects looms as an especially vulnerable point;
3. The overwhelmingly inter-governmental character being adopted by the Barcelona Process constellation should be attenuated and corrected by promoting

greater involvement of the Commission and civil societies, including the Parliamentary Assembly;

4. The reshuffling of the “greater” Barcelona Process should not fail to take immigration into due consideration. As previously mentioned, the UfM is considering projects devoted to improving the quality of immigrants (training, education) and the social conditions of immigration. Yet while these projects are welcome, in the UfM they will be inserted into a policy framework of control and limitation of immigration. This tendency to exclude has to be attenuated, if not altogether altered, keeping in step with the broad trend towards openness that is instead promoted by the EMU scheme. In any case, whether working with a UfM- or an EMU-like framework, one should not forget that EU immigration policy will always reflect each EU members’ will and ability to make significant progress in the space of justice, freedom and security and to become more cohesive. All in all, whatever the future shape of the “greater” Barcelona Process constellation, immigration will remain the most important issue, and the ability to deal with this matter will depend less on the Barcelona Process itself than on EU policy integration in immigration and related fields (asylum, citizenship, etc.);
5. Lastly, the EU should recover its interest in reforms and respect for human rights. Regardless of past failures and exaggerations, the EU cannot renounce this dimension lest it regress to a mere inter-state undertaking no longer able to reflect EU values. The UfM does not encompass political reform or human rights within its target issues, and, in a sense, is the offspring of an era of disappointment with the concrete possibility of promoting reform. Consequently, efforts to establish new and more effective policy fostering political reform should not be undertaken in the UfM framework, but elsewhere in the emerging wider Barcelona Process: either in the EMP or ENP. In any case, neither of these policies should be neglected in favour of the intergovernmental and business-oriented mood that seems to be prevailing in the broad context of Euro-Med relations.

German Perspectives

by Tobias Schumacher

The Background

“Barcelona is dead; long live Barcelona”. In a way, it seems as if this motto has been guiding Germany’s position as regards the current debate on the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations, which emerged after French President Sarkozy first announced his idea of creating a Mediterranean Union, back in February 2007, in Toulon. Ever since the inception of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in November 1995, there has been a broad consensus among the political elite in Germany of the importance of the EMP, and thus the need to conduct Euro-Mediterranean relations through this body. Already in the run-up to the Barcelona Conference that led to the adoption of the EMP, Germany played an active and influential role. During the Essen summit of the EU heads of states and governments, held on 9./10. December 1994, the Mediterranean was declared an area of strategic importance to the EU (as was noted in the Essen declaration) and the short-lived EU-Maghreb Partnership of the early Nineties was channelled into what became, and is now known as the Barcelona Process.

Informally, however, a growing number of voices, mainly from the Foreign Ministry and the Chancellery, and in recent years also from the *Bundestag*, have criticised the Barcelona Process, deeming it the playing ground of a few southern EU member states and/or of being ineffective and too bureaucratic. Furthermore, seeing as any issue of greater political relevance, particularly as regards Israel, is usually dealt with on a bilateral level, and given that the Barcelona Process has been held hostage by the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict almost right from its inception, many in Berlin started to question the relevance of the EMP. In this light, it did not come as a surprise that Chancellière Angela Merkel, during her presentation in the European Parliament on the work programme of the German EU Presidency, on 17 February 2007, stressed the need to strengthen the European Neighbourhood Policy, highlighting the policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe, without any mention of the Mediterranean.²⁰

Clearly, this dualism of repeated support on the one hand, and silent criticism on the other, forms the backdrop against which the current German government’s reactions vis-à-vis French President Sarkozy’s proposal must be interpreted. Throughout the last thirteen years, German governments have walked on a tight rope, trying to balance the demands of Germany’s membership in the EMP with those emerging from mainly Spain, France and Italy, requesting that more attention be given to, and resources set aside for, the southern Mediterranean and its *Ostpolitik*, and thus its engagement vis-à-vis its direct neighbours. At times, this has caused friction, most notably at the Cannes summit of the EU heads of states and government on 26-27. June 1995, when then Chancellor Helmut Kohl, with the support of the British and Dutch governments, unsuccessfully attempted to block an EU decision to increase financial assistance to southern Mediterranean partners. Yet since then, and with the exception of a very few cases, such as the dispute in the mid-Nineties over the level of Moroccan exports of cut flowers,²¹ the internal EU bargaining, which mainly targets financial resources and trade preferences earmarked for the southern Mediterranean partners, was from a German perspective relatively uncontroversial, which to a certain extent at least, displayed an attitude of benign neglect towards Euro-Mediterranean politics. Every time principle decisions were taken with respect to MEDA I, MEDA II and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, German governments found recourse in informal agreements of sorts that had already emerged in the late Eighties. The Olive Group, comprised of more or less all the Southern European EU member states bordering the Mediterranean, acted as mentors for Europe’s southern periphery, while Germany was the quasi-defender of the EU’s Eastern neighbours interests.

The opposition to the Mediterranean Union (UM) so vehemently displayed by Angela Merkel in the last months is not only due to this balancing act that somewhat underpins parts of the German foreign policy thinking.²² An equally, if not more important explanation, is the fact that French President Sarkozy’s efforts to gather support among southern Mediterranean partners,²³ and also from the governments of some EU member states, were widely perceived as potentially undermining the long-standing Franco-German alliance. Forty-five years into the Elysée Treaty, this alliance depends on the support of the entire German political spectrum and has very broad and solid societal foundations. It was worrying to find that the otherwise rather divided grand coalition of the CDU and the SPD agreed that the way the UM had been presented, and eventually advertised, was not in line with commonly set standards and thus threatened to jeopardize the mutually accepted – and agreed – practice of joint consultations and problem-solving. The fact that Sarkozy cancelled the so-called Blaenheim meeting, which usually takes place every six to eight weeks in Bavaria at the beginning of March 2008, due to alleged time constraints, certainly added to the controversy in Berlin and was interpreted by the German media as a sign that the German-Franco alliance is in a state of disarray.²⁴

Members of the Parliamentary Committee for EU Affairs repeatedly raised concerns over the impact that this unilateral move made by the French President may have with respect

²⁰ See Tobias Schumacher “The German EU Presidency and the Southern Mediterranean”, in EuroMeSCo e-news 11, January 2007, www.euromesco.net/media/enews11_en.pdf

²¹ See Tobias Schumacher, Die Europäische Union als internationaler Akteur im südlichen Mittelmeerraum. „Actor Capability“ und EU-Mittelmeerpolitik, Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 2005, p. 230.

²² “Merkel Slams Sarkozy’s Club Med Plans”, in Spiegel Online International, 6 December 2007.

²³ www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,521585,00.html

²⁴ See for example „Napoleon steht vor Brüssel“, in: taz, 02.03.2008.

to the cohesion, and effectiveness, of the tandem within the EU's Council of Ministers as regards potentially more important and controversial issues, such as, for example the future of the EU itself. Although Foreign Minister Steinmeier, in a recent interview, tried to downplay the degree of controversy over the UM,²⁵ he admitted on other occasions prior to the EU's March summit in Brussels that the EU would be confronted with a serious rift in foreign policy matters if blueprints for the UM continued to envisage a membership exclusively limited to Mediterranean riparians.²⁶ In the same vein, and implicitly referring to the German-Franco alliance, Merkel stated that the creation of a new and exclusive institution with access to the EU budget has the potential to lead to a "corrosion of the EU in its core area" and to unleash "explosive forces in the EU that I would not like to see." Moreover, and somewhat in contrast to past practices, she said, "one thing has to be clear [...] Northern Europeans also share responsibility for the Mediterranean, just as the future of the borders with Russia and Ukraine is an issue that concerns those living on the Mediterranean."²⁷

Apart from the fact that the debate in Germany originally focused more on style than on substance, Sarkozy's implicit notion that the UM could serve the purpose of a Turkey gambit did not feature very highly in the relevant debates in Germany.²⁸ This is all the more surprising given that the positions of the German and French political leaders are rather identical on this matter, in so far as both oppose a Turkish EU membership and, as is the case of Merkel, advocate alternative forms of closer association, such as the idea of creating a privileged partnership. Interestingly, one of the very few relevant statements that were made in this regard came from a leading conservative MEP, who considered any UM as inadequate and, most of all, unattractive for Turkey.²⁹ This in itself is highly noteworthy given the CDU's somewhat unified rejection of Turkey's membership bid and reflects the degree of irritation towards Nicolas Sarkozy that, at least until 14 March 2008, was discernible within German foreign policy circles.

In contrast to the EU's Southern European member states, which due to their geographic proximity have a strong interest in a revitalized and more effective Euro-Mediterranean framework, throughout the contemporary history of Euro-Mediterranean relations, Northern and Eastern EU member states have showed some reluctance towards greater EU engagement, and the associated burden sharing, vis-à-vis the Southern Mediterranean. Given that the events of 9/11, and especially the Madrid and London bombings of 11 March 2004 and 7 July 2005 respectively, contributed to a change in perception concerning the strategic importance of Europe's southern neighbourhood, the following sections will consider their response to President Sarkozy's initiative and, more broadly, the problems that have been hampering the Barcelona Process. This will be followed-up by some reflections with respect to the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

As members of the EU, and particularly due to their presence in the Schengen space, Northern EU member states have become more aware of (Euro-) Mediterranean issues in the last years, as they have increasingly become a functional precept for the governments of these countries. This is all the more so in view of mounting governmental and societal fears about the intra- and inter-state problems of the Southern Mediterranean partners and the potential export of these same problems to Europe. Particularly in countries with significant Muslim communities of Mediterranean origin, such as Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden and to a certain extent Denmark, political Islam in general and radical Islamic fundamentalism in particular are increasingly seen as being at the core of the current mix of regional problems. As such, and especially following the infamous cartoons row, perceptions of the Southern Mediterranean are now predominantly characterised by notions of risk and threats. This enhanced awareness and sensitivity did not however stimulate, with the exception of in Germany, a broad and critical media debate on the substance of a UM/ Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), nor the development of a domestic political discourse on the matter in any of the Northern European countries.

Perceptions were somewhat different up until the early 2000s, seeing as the southern Mediterranean had been considered an area characterised by authoritarianism, socio-economic challenges, alarming demographic trends, civil strife and marine pollution, to name just a few problems, but the degree to which Northern EU governments – in contrast to Southern European governments – perceived these phenomena as potential security threats was less accentuated. Hence, from a Northern perspective, broadly speaking, the EMP was predominantly regarded as an expression of proactive development cooperation, which aimed to bring about stability and prosperity, and this view was even supported by many of the Arab EMP partners at the Marseille Euro-Mediterranean foreign minister's meeting in 2000, mainly due to the divergent opinions that were expressed with respect to political and se-

The EU's North and Euro-Mediterranean Dynamics³⁰

25 "Ohne falsche Scheu und Ängstlichkeit", in: Luxemburger Wort, 18.03.2008.

26 www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2008/080131-SteinmeierEFE.html

27 "Merkel Slams Sarkozy's Club Med Plans", in Spiegel Online International, 6 December 2007.

28 See also Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci „Sarkozy's Mediterranean Dream", in European Voice Vol. 13, No. 22, 7 June 2007.

29 "Brok lehnt Sarkozy Vorstoss zur Türkei ab", in Deutschlandradio Kultur, 8 June 2007.

30 Parts of this section draw from Tobias Schumacher, From Barcelona to Valencia: The Limits of the EU's Political and Security Partnership with the Southern Mediterranean Countries, in: Bo Huldt, Mats Engman, Elisabeth Davidson (eds.): Strategic Yearbook 2003. Euro-Mediterranean Security and the Barcelona Process, Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm 2002, pp. 215-236.

curity cooperation. As is rightly noted in this study's section on Southern Europe, Marseille nonetheless proved to be a turning point in Euro-Mediterranean relations, in so far as the EMP was there de facto downgraded to a broad framework for diplomatic dialogue. The ministerial conference held in Malta in 1997 had already showed that it was unrealistic to envisage a political and security partnership that emphasised confidence-building and the stabilisation of existing regional conditions as long as strategic imbalance and territorial occupation remained prevalent. Consequently, it was decided at the ministerial meeting in Palermo, in the summer of 1998, that the security-related contents of 'Barcelona' would be even further diluted by abandoning the concept of confidence-building and replacing it with one of partnership-building, which, as a matter of fact, focuses primarily on economic and ecological dimensions and supposedly impacts mainly on the societal, rather than the security level.³¹ The Malta and Palermo ministerials therefore demonstrated that agreement and clarity, as regards the notion of security perhaps forming the basis of the first basket, did not exist among EU member states' governments, or among the Southern partners.

Although the Barcelona Declaration evokes that the three baskets, as they were introduced by the EMP, are complementary, the document does not contain any relevant reference to security. The same applies to the bilaterally concluded Euro-Mediterranean association agreements. In fact, none of the relevant Euro-Med documents adopted in the last thirteen years indicate that the putative security partnership is, as was originally stated, inseparably linked to the second and third basket. Moreover, these documents do not provide any definition of security to which any of the current 39 partners could refer and relate to. Throughout the last thirteen years this omission was used as an exit option, particularly by the Southern Mediterranean partners, given that it provided them with sufficient room for manoeuvre to interpret the first basket according to their own interests.

Especially since the Marseille ministerial conference, it also became obvious for Northern EU member states that Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the fields of politics and security was suffering from a conceptual imbalance that, in addition to the above-mentioned pitfalls, was marked by at least four other dimensions, all of which have contributed to the first basket's failure. Firstly, 'Barcelona' and the relevant post-Palermo documents refer to confidence-building and partnership-building respectively, without having ever taken into account that the southern partners did not, and still do not, conduct their bi- and multilateral relations on the basis of either concept. Secondly, Euro-Mediterranean relations have always been marked by an asymmetry with respect to the pooling of military and security resources, in view of the fact that security policy in Europe has become increasingly multilateral in the last fifty years, with most of the EU member states being members of NATO and the OSCE and participating in the build-up of the ESDP, which stands in contrast to the unilateral character of the Southern partners' security policies. Thirdly, while the Cold War was based on a strategic balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, providing the relevant parties with an action corridor for tension reduction, such a balance does not underpin Euro-Mediterranean relations. Neither the EU and its member states nor the Southern partners consider the relevant other a hard security threat, and given Israel's military superiority, such a balance, and the potentially positive side-effects that may accompany it, do not exist in the Southern Mediterranean either. Fourthly, due to the experience of European colonial rule in North Africa and the Mashreq, non-negligible segments of society and the political elite still harbour resentments about a stronger European engagement in national security matters. This is usually the case, unless such an engagement is deemed beneficial by the incumbent regimes and adds momentum to the general trend towards the securitization of their policies. Judging from the recent Brussels compromise achieved in mid-March 2008, however, it is unlikely that this trend will be affected by either the UfM or a Spanish-promoted Euro-Mediterranean Union (EMU).

Since 9/11 that securitization has become a common feature within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean politics, in particular as regards immigration. It is however noteworthy that this trend, supported by the governments of Northern EU member states, was already set in motion in June 2000, if not earlier, in the wake of the Common Mediterranean Strategy, adopted by the European Council in Santa Maria da Feira. While the issue of migration was originally supposed to be addressed in the third basket of the EMP, i.e. within the framework of cultural and social cooperation, it was eventually included under the chapter of justice and home affairs of the Common Strategy and has since then always been dealt with in this realm. For Scandinavian countries in particular, long known for their rather liberal immigration policies, this shift was seen as acceptable, given that the provision itself explicitly acknowledged that any effort addressing the question of migration must consider the economic, social and cultural situation in the Southern Mediterranean and also ensure respect for human rights and political liberalisation, thus establishing a link between flows of migration on the one hand, and the absence of democracy, as well as widespread hu-

³¹ See Hans-Günther Brauch, *From Confidence to Partnership-Building Measures in Europe and the Mediterranean: Conceptual and Political Efforts Revisited*, in: Hans-Günther Brauch, Antonio Marquina, Abdelwahab Biad (eds.), *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the 21st Century*, Houndmills: Macmillan 2000, p. 52.

man rights violations on the other.³² In practice, however, an informal consensus emerged among governments of EU member states (and Arab partners), yet this link has consistently been ignored. All too often, when dealing with issues such as migration, asylum and citizenship within the EU's third pillar arrangements, these were subordinated to unjustified security concerns, regularly leading to a curbing of civil rights. With this in view, the prospect of a UM adopting a rather restrictive approach to migration and citizenship issues, was in line with already established practices and, at least with respect to this specific policy area, did not create any headlines. To what extent the UfM will follow this stance depends on the final compromise reached and the sophistication of the European Commission, tasked to elaborate a proposal; but past trends seem to indicate a continued existence of this informal consensus.

This assessment could also apply to Euro-Mediterranean trade cooperation, seeing as it is rather unthinkable, and politically and legally almost impossible, that trade relations in an emerging UfM be conducted beyond the Commission's sphere of influence, and thus that of the EU. Sarkozy's original ideas and business-oriented mind-set undeniably seemed to suggest such a possibility; and in fact this rather naïve notion strongly contributed to the general show of support from all EU member states' governments for Angela Merkel's efforts to Europeanize the project. This development should also be understood with regards to the entering-into-force of most of the Euro-Med association agreements (EMAA), which for the first time in Euro-Mediterranean trade relations stipulated reciprocity and thus improved access to local Southern Mediterranean markets – a move beneficial for Germany and other Northern EU member states in that as a result many countries were able to increase their exports, which, in turn, often led to major increases of already existing trade surpluses.³³ With thirteen years into the EMP, the second basket, or at least its bilateral dimension, turned out to be somewhat more resistant to the overall climate of disagreement and is still considered by Northern governments as an important pillar of current Euro-Mediterranean dynamics. With the adoption of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, initiated by Poland and Sweden among others, with its strong focus on positive conditionality and economic reforms, the framework of reference has, however, become more complex, and the relationship between the economic and trade-relevant stipulations in the EMAA and the provisions in the ENP Action Plans quite difficult to grasp.

Another reason why Angela Merkel's opposition to the UM was positively received, and eventually supported, by leaders of Northern EU member states is the general reluctance, prevalent throughout the non-Southern European EU member states, to shoulder a greater share of financial responsibility for Europe's Southern neighbourhood. Intra-EU bargaining and decision-making, with respect to the amounts of financial assistance to be set aside and distributed among the Southern partners in the last fourteen years, were all too often characterised by disputes that could only be resolved through recourse to horse-trading and package deals.³⁴ Considered by Paris as tight, at a very early stage of the UM-related discussions London and Stockholm had already indicated their refusal to contribute further financial support towards a project from which they were supposed to be excluded and that targeted a geographical area for which they share only a relative interest.³⁵ This soon generated a domino effect of sorts, leading to the creation of a rather unified front in which EU member states, regardless of their geographical location in Eastern, Western or Northern Europe, were informally bound together.

In this light, it is surprising that the recent Brussels compromise foresees changes in the institutional structure of the Euro-Mediterranean process, as this will not be cost-neutral, nor will the expenses needed to establish and maintain a permanent UfM/EMU secretariat in Barcelona – the most likely of the four locations currently under discussion – be carried by France alone. Clearly, the final decision to establish a secretariat must be interpreted as a compromise that allows the French President to save face in view of the opposition he encountered, rather than as a deliberate and strategic response to long-standing demands from Arab partners to induce greater ownership and true co-management. Furthermore, it is somewhat paradoxical that it was Germany that suggested the creation of a secretariat, whose legal personality and links with the European Commission are still to be carefully crafted, seeing as it has been an outspoken opponent of additional institutions for many years – a view that found support amongst the governments of Northern EU member states, which are in favour of light structures. Depending on whether such a secretariat will eventually be autonomously in charge of carefully designed areas of reinforced cooperation under a UfM/EMU banner or, as a consequence of sophisticated legal arrangements, be instead organically linked to the European Commission, will determine the degree of support/opposition Northern and also, for that matter, Eastern European member states are likely to display throughout the coming months. As the UfM proposal does not (yet) envisage addressing human rights and democratization – two of the most controversial

³² See www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/newsletter/issue21.pdf

³³ See Eurostat/European Commission, Euro-Mediterranean Statistics, Luxembourg: Office for the Publications of the EC, 2006. As regards a more detailed analysis of German trade developments, see Statistisches Bundesamt, Statistisches Jahrbuch, diverse Ausgaben, Wiesbaden.

³⁴ See for example Esther Barbé, The Barcelona Conference: Launching Pad of a Process, in: Mediterranean Politics Vol. 1, pp. 25-42.

³⁵ See "Medelhavsunionen à la Merkel" in: www.europanytt.se/default.asp?id=1670. Interview with a British Official from the Foreign Office in Paris on 11 September 2007.

issues in Euro-Mediterranean relations – such a secretariat, not least due to its putative dual leadership, has the potential to make the Euro-Med institutional machinery less EU-centric, to increase the sense of partnership and, most of all, give a push to North-South cohesion. At the same time, however, it is likely to aggravate the already complex and confusing institutional structure that at present underpins Euro-Mediterranean relations and may even reveal detrimental to certain foreign policy-related stipulations and objectives of the Lisbon Treaty.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although the debate on the UfM/EMU was, broadly speaking, more prominent in scope and depth in Southern European and Southern Mediterranean countries than in Northern Europe, the underlying German-Franco controversy, and thus Ms. Merkel's firm opposition to any unilateral French endeavours, has (accidentally) helped to bring Euro-Mediterranean issues back into both the European and international spotlight. Interestingly, this opposition did not widen the long-standing internal EU division as regards finding a balance in EU member states' foreign policy priorities and interests vis-à-vis the Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. Yet, this fragile and temporary cohesion may change rather soon if Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk intends to act on what so far still remains in the drawer, namely to propose and push for a Union for Eastern Europe, as a response to the newly celebrated UfM.³⁶

For the time being, however, the Hanover meeting between Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy proved decisive in ensuring that future Euro-Mediterranean relations will remain a domain of all 27 EU member states. Yet, while the governments of Northern EU member states seem to be pleased with the achieved compromise, as it does not envisage additional financial burden-sharing or greater political engagement on their part, it failed to address past shortcomings and conceptual imbalances of the EMP. Instead, the alleged upgrading of Euro-Mediterranean relations once again turned out to be a continuation of past practices of muddling through. In order to ensure damage control and to prevent Europe's relations with Mediterranean partners from becoming further fragmented, the Commission should make good use of this unique window of opportunity to work towards reconciling the concept of integration, as was enshrined in the ENP, and seemingly the EMU, and towards a further accentuation of an intergovernmental and purely case- and project-oriented UM. It goes without saying that this implies a serious and long-overdue collective debate on proposals destined to overcome the strained relationship between EU efforts to stabilize current political structures in the Arab Southern Mediterranean and measures directed at political liberalisation and the effective protection of human rights. Furthermore, the following four recommendations should be taken into account:

1. In order to avoid a repetition of what can be coined incomplete contracting,³⁷ that was evident in past Euro-Mediterranean policies, the European Commission, in the context of its current deliberations towards drafting a communication to the EU Council of Ministers, should use its mandate to carefully and explicitly define the action scope of the secretariat-in-the-making, determining the policy areas of its responsibility. This demands that the Commission anticipates, and suggests solutions for, the potential legal, as well as political frictions, that are likely to arise in the future day-to-day communication and coordination with the European Commission and also as concerns the secretariat's degree of responsibility for the Barcelona and the ENP acquis.
2. Designing the UfM/EMU secretariat requires an even-handed approach with respect to the representation of all Southern partners, and thus the rejection of efforts destined to discriminate any particular party.
3. The EU, and the European Commission in particular, are well advised to refrain from utilizing the failed US-led Greater Middle East initiative, with its predominant focus on bilateralism and project-orientation, as an implicit framework of reference when designing the future contours of the UfM/EMU. This would only further undermine the existing Barcelona acquis, neutralise, once and for all, the objective of region-building, and also further minimize the EU's already limited ability to promote sub-regional cooperation.
4. If the EU-27 agree to enhance, and thus expand, the scope of reinforced cooperation in the wake of establishing a UfM/EMU, it is essential that this be preceded by a clarification of the legal implications this would entail, especially with respect to the Lisbon Treaty, the EMAA and the ENP Action Plans.

³⁶ Private conversation with an official from the Polish Foreign Ministry in Warsaw on 1 April 2008.

³⁷ See Giandomenico Majone, *Nonmajoritarian Institutions and the Limits of Democratic Governance: A Political Transaction-Cost Approach*, in: *JITE-Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, No. 157, 2001, pp. 57-78, see also O. Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism*, New York: Free Press, 1985.

Does the idea of a union of the Mediterranean countries – proposed by French President Sarkozy, or more accurately, by the then candidate to the Presidency, Sarkozy, during his speech in Toulon on 7 February 2007, and which would then be confirmed in his inaugural speech of 16 May 2007 – have a true chance of success? This question has continually been considered in official, informal and academic circles, on both sides of the Mediterranean, for over a year now, particularly in the countries of the Maghreb. The contours of this Union were for a long time blurry and ambiguous, and still remain very loosely defined, yet this project has already sparked much debate, including amongst experts from the Maghreb³⁸, whose analyses suffered several readjustments as the project developed. The idea evolved from the original Mediterranean Union, into the subsequent Union for the Mediterranean³⁹, before then becoming the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”⁴⁰ following the meeting in Brussels of European Commission representatives on 13 March 2008.

The prudence and / or enthusiasm shown by the countries of the Maghreb can be explained to a large extent through a comparison between the approach now proposed and that already in operation within the Euro-Mediterranean framework. The global approach pursued within this latter framework was often deemed a handicap, given that the partners did not enjoy an equal footing and were thus not managing to progress at a similar pace. Adding to this situation is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has prevented any advancement in political dialogue. The differentiation approach adopted by the neighbourhood policy, although pragmatic, has not been sufficiently convincing in the view of the southern Mediterraneans. These same partners also believe that both the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are marred by too great a level of conditionality.

Based on this premise, it was unavoidable that the EU’s North-African partners would be tempted, faced with France’s announcement of a new project for the Mediterranean, to draw a negative balance of the Barcelona Process, as well as express a certain reticence concerning the ENP. As regards the first, leaders from the South have for many years voiced their criticism of the Process’ incapacity to achieve its objectives, with the resulting exasperation having reached its climax during the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, noted for the absence of many Arab-Mediterranean leaders, when the majority of the southern Mediterranean experts present argued that the Process has not managed to reduce the existing asymmetries between the two shores of the Mediterranean. If anything, these differences persist and have continued to widen since the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Several aspects reflect this asymmetry: the economic aspect remains the most significant, with various authors having shown that throughout the last three decades the gap between the two shores has become ever larger and that the southern Mediterranean has become increasingly distanced from the international economy. This asymmetry cannot continue without serious consequences on the stability and security of the region. The number of those migrating in pursuit of an allusive better life in the North does not cease to increase, at a time when immigration is feared as a source of insecurity in Europe, so much so that the issue is causing turbulence and important political changes, such as the growth seen in the extreme-right and in the number of its supporters. The solution, according to many experts, is to create opportunities for employment on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, which would mean investing and backing development in the region. A further, though no less important aspect, and which is closely aligned to the first, is the socio-cultural aspect. The illiteracy prevalent in the southern Mediterranean society makes these populations very vulnerable, ambivalent and easily influenced, and thus prey to instability and unpredictability, finding themselves torn between a traditionalist and modern discourse, and often showing greater sensibility for the first. A third aspect relates to the political and judicial framework. In this regard, and ever since the term “governance” first appeared in reports and analyses, the implementation of good governance by southern Mediterranean countries, which usually leaves much to be desired, has attracted negative attention due to a lack of transparency in the management of public affairs, a lack of responsibility, an over-dependency on the judicial power, a denial of the primacy of law, and a media that is either marginalised or in the pocket of power. More progressive currents indeed exist, but often fail to achieve an impact.

This situation cannot but have negative effects, instilling a malaise amongst the populations of the countries concerned.

An additional element meriting attention concerns the environment of peace and stability that should be enjoyed by all residents of the Mediterranean – an environment that unfortunately is far from assured, with the southern shores inevitably being a space of conflict.

North-African Perspectives

by Ahmed Driss

The Background

Maghreb Countries’ Evaluations of the General Objectives

³⁸ See, for example: Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, “A little clarification, please, on the Union of the Mediterranean”, CEPS, 8 June 2007.

- “Quelle Union Méditerranéenne” (contributions by: Jean-François Daguzan, Pierre Beckouche, Grigori Lazarev, Jean-Louis Guigou, Juan Prat, Jean Dufourcq), *Géoéconomie*, n°42, Summer 2007, Choiseul : Paris.

-Jean-Robert Henry, “Union méditerranéenne et Union euro-méditerranéenne”, in: www.fundaciocampalans.com

-Bichara Khader, “L’Union Méditerranéenne : Une Union des projets ou un projet d’Union”, in *Confluences Méditerranée*, 23 November 2007. www.confluences-mediterranee.com

³⁹ Rome call for the “Union for the Mediterranean” of 21 December 2007, adopted following the Franco-Italian-Spanish summit.

⁴⁰ Final declaration of the European summit, Brussels, 13-14 March 2008.

Although not the only conflict in the region, the Middle East crisis remains the greatest source of violence, and also of discord, affecting not only the countries of the South, but all partners of the Mediterranean. The definition of the nature of this violence is surrounded by much controversy, with some seeing it as justified, while others consider it illegitimate and reprehensible.

By adhering to the Barcelona Process, the southern Mediterranean members hoped to catch up with their European partners and resolve all their conflicts. Unfortunately, these expectations were distanced from reality – a deception that explains the enthusiasm with which the project for the Mediterranean was then received by the southern Mediterranean countries, which saw in it a new perspective responding to their will for change. The southern Mediterraneans, and especially the North-Africans, decided to embark in this ambitious journey in a bid to transform, as they expressed it, this Mediterranean Sea into a basin of “dialogue, exchange and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and a shared prosperity”, as would then be translated into the terms of the Barcelona Declaration, adopted in November 1995.

Despite the criticisms outlined above, the southern Mediterranean leaders of the Maghreb region, following the lead of the Tunisian President, insisted on the importance of not detaching the new Union for the Mediterranean project from the EMP⁴¹, believing that this union “will be called on to contribute towards a re-launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, by working to assure a synergy with the existing Euro-Mediterranean instruments”. The evolution of this project, and its adoption during the European summit of 13 March 2008 as a continuity to the Barcelona Process, finally lends reason to those from the South who expected this development and who were reassured by the participation of all the EU members thanks to the Franco-German compromise, achieved during the 3 March 2008 meeting in Hanover. The diplomatic tour of the Maghreb conducted by Mr. Alain Le Roy, the French ambassador directing the project for the Mediterranean, revealed that many of the region’s leaders insisted on the importance of Germany’s participation, in one form or another, given its key role in the Mediterranean area, particularly as a privileged economic partner in the Maghreb. This having been guaranteed, consensus rallied around the suggestion that this Union for the Mediterranean act instead as a new and improved version of the EMP. But will this vision translate into reality? A question difficult to confirm at this stage, especially since the EMP does not solely operate on a multilateral basis, but primarily based on multi-bilateral (EU/Third-party) association agreements that, at least for now, are not scheduled to be revised.

Evaluations of the Proposed Structures

Certain elements of this “improved model” of the Barcelona Process have been given greater attention within the context of the Union for the Mediterranean, in response to demands from the southern Mediterranean. The goal is to establish a level playing field that would allow all partners to contribute equally towards the elaboration of common projects. This form of equality was lacking within the Barcelona framework – a situation that did not aid in promoting a sense of appropriation amongst the southern Mediterranean partners. These countries demand to be more included in the decision-making process, in the very least during the consultation phase, seeing as these are deemed issues of shared interest.

In 1995, during the initial follow-up to the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona conference and the adoption of the Declaration establishing the Partnership, no concrete institutionalisation of the Process was envisioned. Planning amounted to only a few meetings at different structural levels. These included periodic meetings of Foreign Affairs ministers “with a view to assuring the implementation of the Declaration and to defining the most appropriate plan of action to achieve the Partnership goals”, ministerial sector meetings to oversee the application of the work programme, as well as meetings of senior officials and experts to monitor progress of the Partnership’s various activities.

The sole structure directly associated to the EMP, and created within the framework of the Barcelona Declaration, is the Euro-Mediterranean Committee of the Barcelona Process; yet this committee was given no decision-making competency, remaining destined to merely organise the meetings of the Foreign Affairs ministers and oversee the evaluation of the process. Within this context, the work programme adopted after the Barcelona Conference, and annexed to the Declaration, attributed this committee the additional role of endorsing the assessments issued by the European Commission on the basis of the reports that resulted from the different sectorial meetings.

The Euro-Mediterranean Committee of the Barcelona Process is thus considered a link between the various partners, which despite not having a coordinative role, may act as a

platform for any eventual consultations. It should also be mentioned that the composition of this committee shows an imbalance in favour of the European members. Initially, the Barcelona Declaration foresaw a committee composed of the European Union Troika along with one representative from each of the Mediterranean partner countries. Following the recommendations of a conference in Malta, a “reform” was introduced to also include a representative of each member state of the European Union – a reform that made this committee a principal source of propulsion and monitoring of EMP initiatives, working to have the Mediterranean policy endorsed by Europe as a whole through close and permanent alignment with all its members. Although a positive idea in theory, the committee’s efficiency might find itself constrained by the double representation of the European partners and the privileged role attributed to the EU Troika, which generally directs the body. Moreover, due to the committee’s restructuring, after the Amsterdam Treaty, to include the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and given the greater level of influence this addition entails, notably in the realm of political dialogue, the southern Mediterranean countries were left with the perhaps false impression that Europe was more preoccupied with security matters than other issues.

The southern Mediterranean countries are no better placed when it comes to the higher echelons engaged in directing the Partnership, notably the Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers. After Barcelona, it was expected that the next meeting would be held in one of the Mediterranean states partner of the European Union. Although Tunisia and Morocco were candidates for the organisation of this event, it ended up taking place in Malta. Malta did in fact belong to the external group of “partner” countries at this time; however, its accession to the EU had already been proposed and thus Malta enjoyed a status different to that of other southern partners, particularly the Arab states. Since then, political conditions have never allowed the hosting of such meetings in one of the Arab countries, with all of the past Conferences having followed in line with the rotating Presidency of the European Union.

What should also be highlighted is the absence of a structure exclusively linked to the EMP – instead, it operates a member-composed structure whose functioning is entirely devoted to the Partnership, with a secretariat led by the European Commission, lending the European Union an added say in the fate of the Process.

This situation, of an almost imposed European leadership in practice, has instilled a sense of malaise amongst the Mediterranean partners – in practice, because the Barcelona Declaration in fact attributes no pre-eminence to Europe in the management of the Process. Its leadership stems from a mere presumption, which mainly results from Europe’s stronger power of initiative. This project, found materialised in the model of the Barcelona Process, is but a stage in the European policy for the Mediterranean. Circumstances led Europe towards a progressive development of its former neighbourhood policy, transforming it into a partnership. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is thus really a European project, with Europe claiming a dominance against which no counter-project has been advanced by its southern neighbours. Europe has always known how to play a frontline role at this level, forcing the southern countries into a waiting game where they can do no more than simply contemplate the project’s evolution from the sidelines. The succession of events has only served to confirm this state of affairs. The recommendation emitted during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Valencia, which led to the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, was originally a European proposal, later rectified by the European Parliament. Even though the idea to create a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly was contained in the chapter on “Institutional Dispositions”, it offered no added stimulus and failed to revolutionise the Partnership’s institutional framework beyond triggering some debate and subsequent consultations, which once again revealed the lack of initiative amongst the Mediterranean partners. Later, the enlargement of the EU led to a review of certain aspects of the Union’s links with its neighbours, resulting in new proposals for the neighbourhood policy that the southern partners could not help but accept.

Do these same countries not risk finding themselves once again relegated to the position of mere spectators in the context of this new project for the Mediterranean, French at the start and now European at-large?

Many of the southern Mediterranean countries had for a long time been proposing a model of co-presidency, which they saw as a means to stimulate a rebalancing between the two partner groups. They argued that this solution would “make aware each state of its responsibility, actively engaging it in the process, or in the very least promoting a more global vision of affairs”⁴². The European Union, for its part, declared its acceptance of the principle. The Action Plan drafted in Valencia, for example, states that this principle “is coherent with the essence of the Partnership and should be implemented as soon as pos-

⁴² For French original see: Nicole Grimaud, *Etudes Internationales* n. 67, p. 42.

sible”, nonetheless advancing in other documents, and through associated statements, that this solution would not be efficient as long as the present situation, of differentiated relations between the various partners, remained in effect. The European Union disposes of internal mechanisms that permit it to coordinate the positions of its various member states and thus speak in a unified voice, while the divergences that characterise the southern Mediterranean partners have prevented them from developing a similar device. Even the coordination mechanism of the group of Arab states does not function appropriately, according to a Senior Official who regularly participates in the works of the Euro-Mediterranean Committee. In this case, coordination operates on a purely informal basis and once the member states’ representatives find themselves outside the scope of the Committee, they never conform to the positions adopted within it.

The principle of co-presidency appears to be a *fait accompli* within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean, or at least this is what emerged from the Franco-German compromise reached on the subject of this project, which also intends to establish a small-scale secretariat consisting of around 20 people that will be co-managed by a Director from the North and one from the South⁴³. The secretariat will assist the co-presidency, yet its main mission will be to define the practical framework in consultation with all the partner countries, without forgetting, however, that the final declaration emitted following the last European summit, invited the European Commission to present its concrete proposals for this project. This has not prevented the expression of criticism and of reticence amongst some European actors, notably from the Commission, which questions whether the new structures are compatible with those already in existence, arguing that these will enter into conflict, as well as from certain southern Mediterranean countries, mainly Arab, which do not welcome the prospect of an Israeli presidency, having already expressed their firm rejection of this eventuality.

An additional question to be considered is: if the principle of co-presidency is accepted, what will the selected entities be co-presiding over?

It is opportune to once again highlight that:

- The Partnership has no structure or institution of its own.
- The EMP’s only two associated bodies, namely the Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers and the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process, do not have any decision-making power – the first can only advance recommendations, while the latter is primarily responsible for the follow-up of proposals and actions.
- The Barcelona Process is essentially founded on a financing mechanism exclusively managed by the European party, without which this partnership would not have appealed to the southern Mediterranean countries.

The sole entity enjoying any decision-making power in this process is thus the European Union, acting as the sponsor of funds, financial manager, and guardian of the proper implementation of the Association Agreements.

As such, insistence on a co-presidency un-backed by any power of decision or conduct would be useless, senseless and would affect no influence over the contents of the Partnership.

If the principle of co-direction is definitely retained, it will require a reformulation of the EMP’s institutional structure, with a view to creating a competent organ exclusive to the domain of the Partnership. This capacity should allow it to contribute to, and even direct, the elaboration and implementation of the Partnership’s policy, rather than merely organise meetings. It should also permit this organ to manage and monitor the Association Agreements, hopefully leading it to become a mediator in cases of conflict between partners.

Evaluations of the Project’s Content

The attitude of the third-party Mediterranean countries as regards the contents of the Union for the Mediterranean project has also entered a state of suspense, fuelled by competing national-specific ambitions. Morocco aspires to establish a new bilateral contract with the European Union, which would replace its current association agreement and hopefully assure it a privileged partner status. By developing its dialogue with the EU in the field of energy, Algeria aims to become a direct supplier to European consumers. Finally, Tunisia, as the first third-party country to have introduced its zone of free exchange with the EU, hopes to profit from this development to enhance cooperation and improve its standing as a partner. A Union for the Mediterranean rooted in the idea of a union of projects, focused on the domains

43 See Le Monde, 14 March 2008. Apparently the co-presidency will only be responsible for organizing a summit gathering all the UfM members, every two years.

where advances have already been achieved, seems to respond to some southern Mediterranean expectations. It nonetheless discards the aspirations vested in the model of integration as it was presented in the project's original version, where the aim was political integration, and which was greeted with strong enthusiasm. This initial orientation, structured around the ideal of integration, stalled at the reticence shown by certain European states and their desire for re-equilibrium – a response that resulted in a reframing of the project, explicitly adopting a cooperation logic that from then on prevailed over the prior rationale of integration. It was what some designated as a transformation from a “unifying project” into a “union of projects” – a change that emerged when the Mediterranean Union became the Union for the Mediterranean. The adoption of this project, during the last European summit, as a continuity of the Barcelona Process, somewhat confirms this distancing from the logic of cooperation.

It appears that the southern Mediterranean countries are interested in the prospect of working on concrete projects, according to President Sarkozy's formula of “concrete projects in domains where agreement is rapidly established, such as sustainable development or energy integration”⁴⁴, and the list of potential projects is far from sparse, with priority being given to strategic issues linked to water management and environmental protection, as well as to the exchange of knowledge within the region and the fight against pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. Nonetheless, these same countries reveal differences in approach, as a result of the lessons learnt from the failings of the Barcelona Process, namely a lack of means and of structures, deficiencies in the area of governance, shortcomings in the trans-Mediterranean market integration, and weaknesses in the network of small and medium enterprises. These problems, confronted more intensely in the South, require, according to a Tunisian expert, that this idea of a union of projects be closely guided⁴⁵, which would imply a greater involvement on the part of participating states. Even if priority would have to be given to the economic and financial spheres, projects should be, as was demanded by the Tunisians, ambitious and structuring, and not simply operate as a multitude of small-scale initiatives. This would, however, require a far more significant financial engagement than that attainable through the financial instruments currently available. As such, and again according to Tunisia, the creation of an associated bank is indispensable – not merely a regular commercial bank, but rather a bank of construction and development that would act as a solidarity tool capable of promoting and steering the desired projects. In addition, a Moroccan ambassador, who is also an expert in the Euro-Mediterranean field, highlights the objective difficulties that in his opinion would be dangerous to deny, doubting the efficiency of the Monnet project methodology as regards countries whose stability is threatened by terrorist, migratory or climactic challenges⁴⁶. Other problems (with Sahara at the fore) persist between certain southern partners. These weigh heavily on public opinion and on the respective national governments, preventing the process of integration that is necessary before companies and private investments can be offered the push desired and expected for their subsequent involvement in projects within the scope of the Union for the Mediterranean.

It is clear that the Union for the Mediterranean project will for some time remain a work in progress. The organic link established during the European Summit in Brussels on 13 March 2008 between the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the “project of the Union”, paves new paths for both this initiative, as well as the Barcelona Process itself. But is it important to consider in which direction these paths lead? Experts from the North and the South share doubts and fears that the pragmatism displayed in the initial Union for the Mediterranean project will not translate into the spirit of the Barcelona Process. At this stage, it is thus hard to define which will incorporate the other. Will the Barcelona Process become infused in the Union to the point of weakening its entire architecture? Will Barcelona's successes be respected without depriving the Union for the Mediterranean of its substance, more specifically its privileging of concrete projects? Will this new initiative achieve the level of political dialogue to respond to the objectives originally outlined in the Barcelona Declaration, but that have since then been sidelined?

The fears expressed are legitimate and will persist until the leaders of the European Union and of the southern Mediterranean countries affirm, clearly and without hesitation, in the upcoming July summit, their adherence to the Barcelona principles, their will to cooperate on the basis of common values, and to work together in resolving the region's conflicts. Only then will the people of this region be assured co-development on an equitable level. Such guidelines are absolutely crucial if we are to prevent the establishment of a framework based solely on financial and security cooperation, to the neglect of numerous other key elements. In this context, the role of the European Commission, charged during the last European summit to prepare proposals for the Mediterranean project, will prove extremely important in safe-guarding the “gains of Barcelona”.

Conclusions and Recommendations

⁴⁴ Interview with President Sarkozy during his visit to Tunisia, *La Presse*, 10 July 2007.

⁴⁵ Chékib Nouira, President of the Arab Institute of Company Directors, Tunis. Intervention at the conference organised by IFRI, Paris, on 11 March 2008.

⁴⁶ Hassan Abouyoub, Ambassador-at-large for Morocco. Intervention at the conference organised by IFRI, Paris, on 11 March 2008. Also see: Hassan Abouyoub, “Union pour la Méditerranée : le mythe de Sisyphe ?” <http://www.eurosduvillage.com/Hassan-ABOUYOUB-Union-pour-la.1370>

Israeli Perspectives by Alfred Tovias

The Background

The purpose of this section is to sum up the various dimensions of this unfinished project that seem relevant to the Israeli stakes in the project at the time of writing.

President Sarkozy's 2007 proposal to create a Mediterranean Union left Israeli observers as bewildered as many others, as it has been mulled over it in the last year throughout the wider Euro-Mediterranean space.

Although less concerned than other Mediterranean partners with higher stakes in their relations with the EU (such as Turkey and Morocco), there emerged from early on a couple of contentious issues that raised Israeli anxieties.

To begin with, would the ENP be jeopardized by the new project? In the spring of 2007, there were reasons to fear that this might be the case, given comments made by some of the advisers to the French President. One year later, we now know that the future of the ENP in the South is no longer being questioned and that countries like Israel are willing to deepen their relations with the EU far beyond what is even envisioned by the "Barcelona Process: UfM".

An associated question remains on the radar: Do some in the EU intend to profit from the whole restructuring of the EU's Mediterranean agenda in order to make a distinction between Southern and Eastern within the ENP? This would most probably not be to Israeli liking, because it would imply that Israel be formally designated as the only EU Southern neighbour that is non-Arab. As is well known, Turkey, Croatia and other Western Balkan countries are not handled by the EU under the ENP umbrella. Inclusion of the Ukraine and Moldova in the ENP is paradoxically seen by Israel as a minor upgrade, and one which it would like to cling to.

A further cloud that was left lingering even after the "Appel de Rome" in December 2007, but which has since disappeared, was the possible exclusion of the non-Mediterranean EU member states from the Mediterranean Union. Israel's most important European economic partners and political allies are non-Mediterranean: first and foremost Germany, but also the UK, the Netherlands and all the new CEEC member states. French representatives were stating, until very recently, that only Mediterranean EU member states would be eligible to hold the European co-presidential seat at the Council of the UfM. This stance was rejected in March 2008 by Germany, which however accepted, as a goodwill gesture, that France would co-preside the Council for the first two years. Yet in the future, Germany, for instance, also has the right to hold the co-presidency.

Finally, another initial cloud is slowly dissipating. During most of 2007, certain experts in the South were suggesting that Arab Heads of State or Prime Ministers might not attend the July 2008 Summit in Paris if President Peres or the Israeli Prime Minister were to show up. It was also said that Libya would not become a member of the Mediterranean Union, should Israel be included in the membership. It now seems that these were merely hollow threats.

The "New Mediterranean" Dimension in the Initial Project

As one will recall, President Sarkozy's Union was initially to "only" be composed of countries bordering the Mediterranean. At that time, a few Israeli experts, such as Eran Lerman, Israel Elad and Uri Savir, clearly expressed their interest in the "net" Mediterranean dimension of the project, because it introduced a new vision and would allow Israel to redefine its relevant geo-strategic environment (i.e. namely, the Mediterranean, and not the Arab world where Israel is deemed a foreign insert and thus always a target of hostility). Lerman, for example, stated that Israel had an interest in destroying the concept of the "Middle East". The creation, from scratch, of a new Mediterranean identity common to all riparian countries, including Israel, could change the way Arab neighbours think about Israel. It would also be of great importance for Israel's diplomatic standing. In what concerns the legitimacy of the Zionist project, according to Lerman's argument, Israel must face the claim that a Jewish state has no place in the Middle East, which is in essence Muslim. Israel, he affirms, must therefore be "re-located" to a new environment constituting a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-religious mosaic. On the other hand, this new identity cannot be constructed by the EU, or by NATO. Most observers consulted by the author of this section deem unrealistic the creation of a Mediterranean identity, independently of the fact that for many it is also considered potentially counter-productive. Both the EU and the Arab world would oppose it. If so, a project including only Mediterranean countries, if adopted, would create unrealistic expectations, as did the idea of the "New Middle East" when it was launched in the early 1990s from Israel, followed by boo-

merang effects. And in truth, there is also reluctance in Israel to adopt a Mediterranean identity. Many Israelis would prefer to be considered as Europeans rather than Mediterranean (See Tovias 2003, p.219). In any event, now that the project has been transformed into a Euro-Mediterranean one, this discussion is no longer relevant. Not only this, but there are no longer any ambitions of breeding a Mediterranean sort of identity, seeing as the project is now to be a Union *for* the Mediterranean, which literally-speaking refers to efforts undertaken by many actors (whether Mediterranean or not) for the greater benefit of Mediterranean countries. Yet there is no visible intention of changing the identity of those very same actors.

The Israelis abandoned the idea of (creating) a New Middle East over a decade ago. As such, are they likely to be charmed by the idea of a “New Mediterranean”? South-South economic cooperation has proved to be a pipedream, especially after Oslo. Is not the project of President Sarkozy a distraction as far as Israel is concerned?

To be sure, there is still a minority of Israeli intellectuals and businessmen, some of whom very influential (such as industrialist and Israel Prize winner Steff Wertheimer), who still dream of integrating Israel in the Middle East. They have been rejoined once again by President Peres, who has often lauded the ideas of President Sarkozy, as if they were a continuation of the theories of Jean Monnet. In a speech delivered at the headquarters of the French business association MEDEF (Mouvement des entreprises de France), while on an official visit to France in the spring of 2008, Peres said that Jean Monnet was more important than Karl Marx because the former’s influence was more enduring. Then, in the State dinner with president Sarkozy, Peres said: “The idea that the European Union should serve as a model for the Mediterranean region is daring and interesting. Following 1,000 years of war and bloodshed, an economic merger came along that succeeded in overcoming Europe’s political wounds. Sarkozy is a groundbreaking leader. He operates like a whirlwind: he doesn’t dally, he leaps. The fact that he is unpopular should not affect his mode of behavior, because if leaders acted according to the polls, they would all have to be conservative and do nothing.”⁴⁷ He added that he is convinced that Sarkozy will overcome opposition to his plan within the EU.

President Peres has even tried to convince President Sarkozy to include one of his own pet projects in the President’s priority list, namely the so-called „Peace Valley“ project (which envisions the construction of a Dead Sea canal), involving Israel and at least two of its neighbours. This being said, President Peres also extracted from President Sarkozy a pledge to make the issue of upgrading Israel’s relationship with the European Union one of his priorities during France’s term as the EU’s rotating president. In this, President Peres reflects Israel’s real priorities.

Basically, the Israeli government is interested in pursuing the bilateral track favored by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) back in 2003 because it more adequately takes into account Israel’s higher level of development than did the old Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) launched in 1995. Among the ENP countries, Israel is also the one with least to fear from the positive conditionality present in the ENP, and which so greatly worries countries such as Algeria or Egypt. The reason is that Israel, a Western democracy and a developed country, shares, by and large, the norms, standards and values that prevail in the EU. The EU does not intend to transform the political system of Israel.

Thus, if Israel always considered the EMP a mere side-show, how can it now consider Sarkozy’s project any more than that? Moreover, Israeli observers are aware that trade policy is dealt with by Brussels, and increasingly, also immigration policies. The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and Common Competition Policy are also decided in Brussels, not in Paris, which practically only leaves energy, education and environmental issues for the UfM. The creation of a common audiovisual space sounds attractive but hollow, when one considers that Israel has never been accepted as part of the *Francophonie*, due to the opposition of Arab countries. The establishment of a Mediterranean Investment Bank was another pet initiative Israel promoted alongside Egypt within the context of the multilateral track of negotiations of the Madrid Peace Process in the mid-1990s. Unfortunately for Israel, Germany and other powerful OECD countries have since then been consistently against the idea, alleging that there already exist enough multilateral banking institutions (e.g. the EIB and the World Bank) and thus that there is no apparent need to create yet another. There is lingering skepticism about whether Israel will be included by other prospective partners in new projects for non-relevant reasons.

The Geo-Economic Dimension

⁴⁷ Haaretz, *The Two presidents’ Vision*, March 16 2008

The “Essen” Dimension

Some Israelis question whether President Sarkozy's project is not a French overreaction against the ENP that is very much favored by Germany, a country that was already in favor of differentiating Israel from other Mediterranean Non Member countries way back in 1994 (i.e. the so-called “Essen Declaration”)? These days, and after some initial hesitations, Israel is really delighted to be integrated in the Research and Development space of the EU. And the EU is now willing to consider Israel's membership in select EU-created agencies in other domains. This interaction with a gigantic economic bloc of 27 developed countries is an example of “deep integration”, rather than the sort of “shallow integration” that the Barcelona Process was striving at. And, of course, it goes far beyond sheer cooperation among 44 countries, including middle-income developing countries, which is what President Sarkozy anticipates when pushing for the UfM.

The Project Dimension

In terms of content for the Union, the idea of launching micro-projects on a regional basis really suits Israel. As indicated above, Peres has requested that any such union be linked to his own vision focused on “the two seas canal” and the “valley of peace”, and apparently President Sarkozy responded to this by announcing his intention to transform the Med-Dead canal into a flagship project of France and Europe, and has since then instructed his aides to study the subject.

Israel has acquired over several years a great deal of experience in micro-regional transnational projects, after creating two QIZ, i.e. Qualified Industrial Zones, with Jordan and Egypt. Basically, it has negotiated with the United States an amendment to the US-Israel FTA agreement of 1985, whereby duty-free access into the US market is extended to goods produced in these QIZs, located in Jordanian and Egyptian territory, provided there are sufficient Israeli inputs and added value in the goods exported from these QIZs to the US. This initiative has enormously promoted trade between these three ancient belligerents, something Jean Monnet would certainly have found very positive.

Israel can only be positive when France proposes to create an ERASMUS student-exchange facility for the benefit of Mediterranean students, including Israelis. Of course, this is only so provided the new exchange programme goes beyond the present ERASMUS-Mundus scheme monitored by the EU Commission and in which Israel is already an enthusiastic participant.

A clear advantage for Israel of this project's approach is that it is technocratic rather than ideological, even more so, paradoxically, than the 1995 EU-Israel association agreement. In the case of the latter, issues like rules of origin were sufficiently “macro” to make the press headlines. On the other hand, there has not been any politicization around the QIZs because of their “micro” character. In passing, it so happens that many of the projects mentioned do not until now involve agents of civil society deemed problematic from an Israeli viewpoint (such as women associations; intellectuals, artists or the media). On the other hand, the involvement of businessmen is seen as positive.

The Institutional Dimension

At present, the profile of this particular dimension has become more marked in the local debate. Firstly, the idea of locating the Secretariat in a country with no diplomatic relations with Israel, which has already been mentioned above, is a problem. Secondly, the Arab League is slated to become, if not a full member of the UfM, at least included with an observer status.

For the moment, the only legal instrument mentioned in the context of the project is a joint Declaration. This might be the minimum common denominator for the 44 potential signatories. But is it realistic to think that an Agreement or international Treaty, for example, could be signed both by Israel and Syria? And there remain several other hypothetical scenarios, which must nevertheless be addressed. For instance, would Arab countries ever accept an Israeli co-president in the Council of the UfM? That said, would Israel ever be able to accept a Syrian, Lebanese or Libyan citizen being named co-president? Could the Secretariat be based in Israel?

Several Arab countries initially stated that they could never accept the new initiative if France did not become more actively engaged in the Peace process, expecting that this would motivate President Sarkozy to pressurise Israel⁴⁸. This was notably the case with Algeria⁴⁹. Not only that, but some Algerian commentators stated that they did not see how Israel could be included at all in the new project if Maghreb countries were expected to also participate⁵⁰. This of course is not at all the view prevalent in Israel.

On the contrary, what most worries Israel is that apparently President Sarkozy has no intention to discuss issues related to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the context of his pet project. This is quite a departure in relation to the Barcelona Process, which is also multilateral in nature, but which, despite its original intentions not to interfere with the Oslo Process, at the time treaded in murky waters. At the 2nd EMP Ministerial Meeting, for instance, held in Malta in 1996, under the Dutch Presidency, the latter kidnapped it by pushing obsessively for a meeting between Chairman Arafat of the PLO and Mr. David Levy, Israel's Foreign Minister at the time. In any case, whatever President Sarkozy's real political intentions, Israel will most certainly not accept strong external interference or, even worse, an imposed political settlement only to assure a seat at the table of any new organization.

President Sarkozy and his Foreign Minister Kouchner are known to be friends of Israel and of the Jews. Since the mid-1950s that Israel has not encountered so friendly a French government as the one at the country's helm nowadays. This is also the opinion prevalent among French Jews. The Israeli Foreign Ministry shares this opinion, although there is some apprehension regarding French plans to support the development of nuclear reactors for pacific use in Arab countries, as well as the French President's blatant promotion of potential French exports of nuclear plants and technology to these countries during his visits. The memory of the Irak Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq, sold by France at a time when former President Chirac was a junior Minister of Trade and later destroyed by Israel, remains present in the minds of all. The ideas of President Sarkozy in this respect are quite baffling to say the least. As the philosopher Bernard Henri Levy has said, the sale of nuclear reactors to countries that do not recognize Israel, such as Gadhafi's Libya, constitutes something that "even Mitterrand and Chirac would not have done today"⁵¹.

This being said, it is obvious that whatever Israel might think about the new project, it also realises that it is worthwhile preserving the good relations it now has with France. This in itself is reason enough to, at best, openly support the project or, at worst, follow the crowd and assume a low profile.

The *International Herald Tribune* reported already in May 2007 that Israel had given a cautious approval to the project, in contrast with the outrage that aroused in Turkey, an Israeli ally with views on the Mediterranean that are not too distant from those held in Israel. The article in question said that

"...In Israel, where Sarkozy's Toulon speech was circulated in diplomatic circles, the reaction was also positive. When Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres called Sarkozy on Monday to congratulate him on his election victory, he said that the idea of a Mediterranean Union was "very important" and that he was interested in discussing it further, diplomatic sources said..."

It is clear to Israeli observers that despite the criticisms leveled at the project from EU member countries, Turkey and the Arab world, President Sarkozy is considered a political bulldozer and will not easily be stopped. In the very least, a G-8 type summit – which is already scheduled for July 2008 and to which Israel has been invited – will be held. Only after this event, will the themes summed up in this section re-surface and demand consideration by Israel's diplomacy.

Israel has an interest in actively promoting the success of the new UfM, even if only once it has become clear that the ENP is here to stay and that President Sarkozy has no intention whatsoever to stand in the way of Israel should it decide, as at present, to press for a deepening of its relations with the European Union. Germany and other Northern and Central European countries, traditional allies of Israel, are firmly on board. There is thus no risk of the project being kidnapped by other countries and transformed into an arena that is politically hostile to Israel. This is remarkable given that, with potentially 44 participating countries, the UfM could be likened to a mini-United Nations.

In term of recommendations, it appears that:

- 1) The Sarkozy approach should be pursued in terms of privileging many, rather

The Israeli-Palestinian Dimension

The Personalities' Dimension

Conclusions and Recommendations

⁴⁸ See Denis Bauchard's article, mentioned in the list of references.
⁴⁹ www.numedya.com, January 18 2008.
⁵⁰ www.forum-algerie.com, January 18 2008.
⁵¹ Haaretz, March 14, 2008.

than only a few projects. The more “micro” the projects, the less likely that they become politicized.

- 2) Related to the previous point, and contrary to what has been suggested elsewhere, it is not necessary that each individual project be highly visible. This because visibility attracts the media, which has a tendency to embarrass moderate leaders in the Arab world that are willing to cooperate with Israel before peace is signed.
- 3) If Arab countries consider that Israel is too developed a country to be classified as “Southern Mediterranean”, and that it should therefore be placed alongside the Northern “owners” of the UfM, together with the EU, Israel should certainly go along with such a proposal. This would be a way of ensuring that Israel holds one of the two future Co-Presidencies (e.g. together with Morocco or Egypt).
- 4) The Secretariat should include at least one Israeli official; this not for reasons of politics or image, but because of the expertise that Israel stands to contribute towards the success of this project.

Final Remarks: A Couple of Policy Suggestions by Non-Appointed Advisors

That the Mediterranean Union project is backed by a French imprint and flavour is quite easily detected by any seasoned observer of the Mediterranean scene, even in the event that he is not aware that the project was initially proposed by a candidate for the Presidency of the *Vème République*. Even the initial reasons put forward to justify the project are in this sense revealing. It is for instance doubtful that the frontal and open criticisms directed towards the Barcelona Process by the initiators of the Union project would have been so virulent, had the EMP not been launched from the beautiful capital of Catalonia, but rather from somewhere in the Hexagone. Add to this the reason presented to justify the initial exclusion of non-Mediterranean riparian states from the suggested Union. The authors of the project seemed to be suggesting that only riparian countries are interested in the Mediterranean and are actually aware of what is needed to create in the wider region “a zone of peace, stability and prosperity”. After all, they would say, it is the *Mare Nostrum*, and not the *Mare Vostrum*.

The authors of this report openly disagree with the above judgment. They all realize that the Barcelona Process has failed in some key aspects but is by no means a total failure. There is no reason “to throw out the baby with the bath water”. There are even some achievements of which all EMP members can be proud of, such as the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the vitality and resourcefulness of networks such as FEMISE and EuroMeSCo. It is also unbecoming and totally inappropriate to blame any failings on the lack of motivation of non-Mediterranean members of the EMP, as compared to Mediterranean members, when it is patently clear that at least two key and notorious non-Mediterranean states, namely Germany and Sweden, have nurtured the Barcelona Process from the very beginning. This then contrasts with the relative aloofness demonstrated regarding the need for the EMP to be a success by some Mediterranean countries, which for courtesy sake we will not mention here.

Once these irritating matters have been left aside, one can only acknowledge that timing is of the essence in politics. The new initiative presented by the President of France comes at the right time and stands to breathe new life into the Barcelona Process, assuming, as we do, that the Mediterranean will be put to top of the EU agenda in the second semester of 2008. It is worthwhile reminding here that this sort of thing has only happened once since the Treaty of Rome, and only after 36 years since the adoption of the first Global Mediterranean Policy of the EC in November 1972 (!). That was in 1995, under the Spanish presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Although the final shape of the new project is not yet known, the main *contours* are now apparent to all. We want to stress only one key aspect here. The new project shall and will be included in the Barcelona Process. It should operate as an aspect of the Process. The UfM and the EMP will remain distinct endeavours, albeit working under a common umbrella. They will most probably differ in terms of their membership, and there is nothing shocking about this. After all, the amorphous structure of another famous process, namely the Helsinki Process, has proven its worth in the past.

In terms of contents, the UfM overlaps with the second basket of the EMP. But whereas the latter focused on trade *integration*, the focus of the UfM is on trade *facilitation*: infrastructure projects and the improvement of production factors (e.g. educational and environmental projects). The involvement of civil society, a feature of the third basket of the EMP, appears minimal, but is not totally absent and could thus be re-incorporated through the back door.

This leads us to the following policy suggestions:

- Involve, as far as possible, civil society actors in the projects to be devised; do not allow the UfM to become a technocratic project.
- The effectiveness of the UfM agenda will be improved if all EU member states, and not only some, are involved in its elaboration; for the EU, this depends on internal cohesion; for the Mediterranean partners, it is essential: this issue will have to be taken more seriously in the future, but there will also be more financial support at this stage.
- The design of the UfM secretariat requires an even-handed approach with respect to ensuring the representation of all Southern partners, and should thus reject any efforts destined to discriminate any party. There should however be enough room for flexibility to permit the consideration of individual national cases based on the country's degree of development (e.g. Israel) or on its status as a potential EU member (e.g. Croatia and Turkey).
- If one of the keys of the UfM's potential success is, as alleged, its pragmatism and business-like approach, then it would seem inappropriate to develop projects deemed highly visible, large-scale and unmanageable projects. Beware of “white elephants” is our final word of advice....

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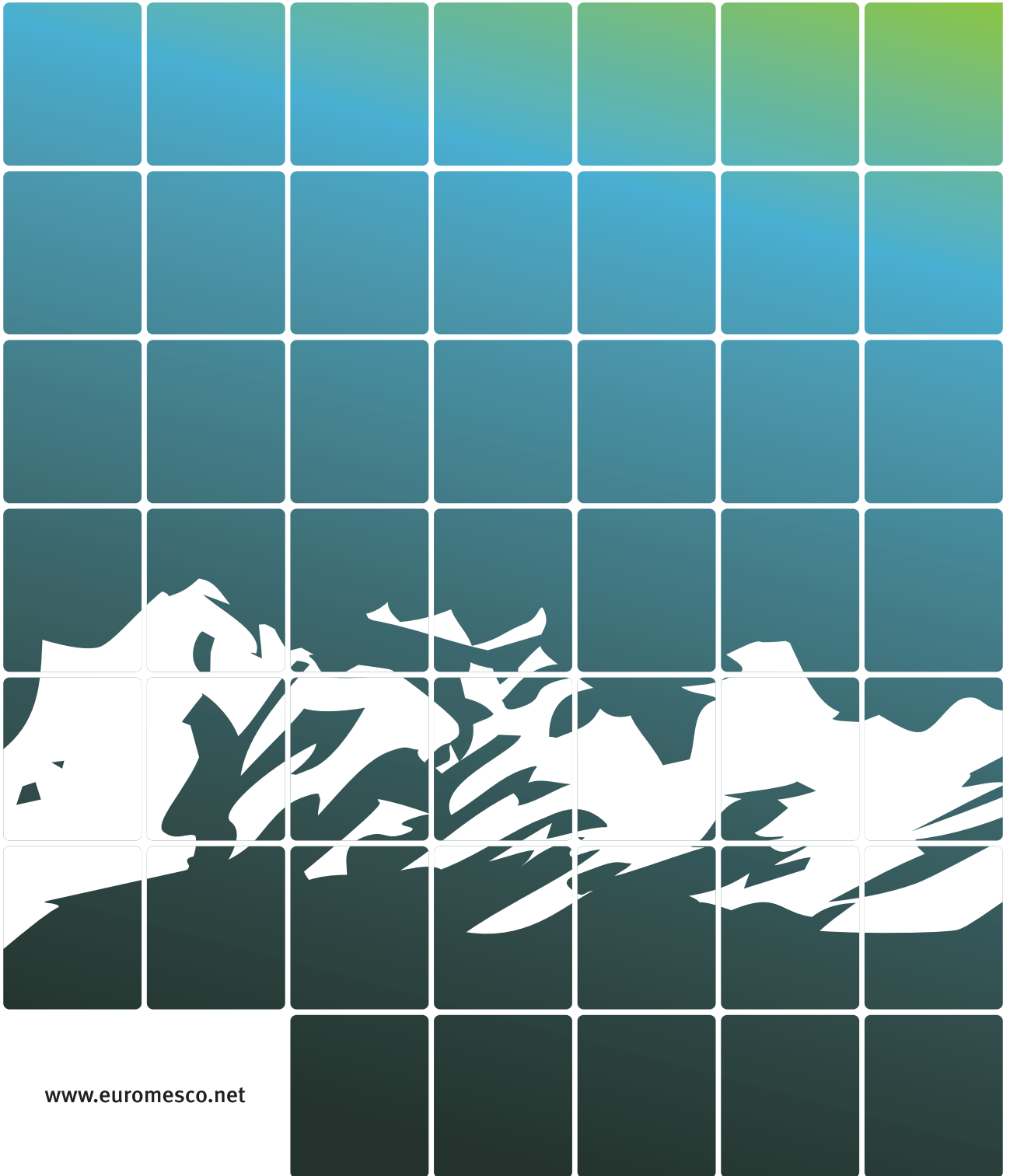
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