The EU’s Mediterranean Policy: Competing Frameworks, Actors and Dynamics from Above

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Abstract

The EU is a postmodern actor in international relations. The example of the EU’s Mediterranean policy allows the analysis of the EU’s common foreign policy towards a third region, with a special attention to the competing institutional frameworks and the interaction between the above and the below, between governmental and non-governmental actors. A European Mediterranean policy officially exists since the Global Concept of 1972, replaced by the Renovated Mediterranean Policy in 1990. Only in 1995, with the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), was a comprehensive regional concept for the EU’s external relations to the southern and eastern Mediterranean developed for the first time. One of the new elements of the EMP was to involve civil societies in this process of intensified Euro-Mediterranean intergovernmental cooperation. Complemented by the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003, the EMP underwent various crises in its implementation and was finally renamed and upgraded into the “Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM) in 2008, by means of new institutional structures. This contribution gives an overview of the existing multilateral and bilateral policy frameworks, their objectives and interrelations. We argue that, in a globalised world, non-governmental actors are gaining more influence on the formulation processes of foreign policy. But is this observation also valid for the case of the EU’s Mediterranean policy? The Mediterranean region remains a priority region for the EU for political, economic, cultural and social reasons. That is why the EU needs to invest in viable and innovative scenarios for the Euro-Mediterranean space and to keep alive Mediterranean dynamics from above.

Introduction

One of the initial intentions of Europe’s Mediterranean Policy, especially in the framework of the Barcelona Process, was to involve civil societies in the process of an intensified Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and to contribute to processes of democratisation and reform in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) went through different crises, despite numerous efforts to reformulate it. Major causes for these crises consisted in the changes of the international and regional context, such as the deterioration of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the consequences of the Iraq and Lebanon Wars, the EU enlargements and the recognition of Turkey as a candidate for full membership, and
the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy, but also in the shuffled implementa-
tion of the EMP and the growing gap between the official discourses and the aspirations and needs of civil societies, questioning the legitimisation of the EU’s Mediterranean policy from below.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched in 1995, renamed and upgraded into “Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM) in 2008, offers a special framework for a common foreign policy of the European Union towards a third region. This framework was complemented and overlapped by the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003. Within both frameworks (EMP and ENP), we can observe, on the one hand, concrete examples of a certain Europeanisation of the foreign policies of the EU Member States, in the sense of a strengthened deliberation and enhanced cooperation, acting together towards third countries. In some cases, the European logic wins over the intergovernmental or national logic of the EU Member States and the slow but constant enlargement of the EU’s competences in foreign policy matters becomes visible. On the other hand, and at the same time, bilateralism between singular European and singular southern and eastern Mediterranean states has been reinforced, especially since the disappointing results of the EMP, the last EU enlargement rounds in 2004 and 2007, and the upcoming enlargement to South East European countries. The EU Member States prefer now to re-privilege their bilateral relations with third Mediterranean countries, instead of investing into a common European policy. This development is due to the difficulties of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), in general, and of the EMP, in particular. The same observation is true for the EU, itself, that shifted away from the initial regional approach to the Mediterranean to a more bilateral logic, by introducing the framework of the ENP. Through the ENP, the EU pursues its interests towards singular southern and eastern Mediterranean states. Finally, a third driving force in the context of current Euro-Mediterranean relations is transnationalism, in the sense that the emerging and existing transnational networks (political, economic and cultural) and non-governmental actors in the Mediterranean progressively become a stronger factor that needs to be born in mind within the EU’s decision-making process. The EMP and ENP offer institutional frameworks that can be appropriated by different non-

1 In the following, we will use the term EMP/UfM in those points where we consider that large parts of the EMP remain and the new elements, mechanisms and institutional structures of the UfM are still in the phase of testing, or where they exist in parallel to the EMP structures. In English-language EU documents and scientific literature on the Mediterranean different terms are applied: the French abbreviation UPM (Union pour la Méditerranée), UMed (Union for the Mediterranean) or UfM (Union for the Mediterranean). In this contribution we will use the last of these.

2 In 2004, Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia became full EU Members. In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania acceded to the EU. Current candidate countries are Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia. Applications under consideration are Montenegro, Iceland and Albania. Potential candidates are Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.
governmental actors, in order to develop their own strategies and Mediterranean policies and to scrutinise the Euro-Mediterranean project from below. The civil society approach of the EMP was an innovative element in the 1990s. From an institutional perspective, this approach now even serves as a model for cooperation with other third regions, as in the case of the “Eastern Partnership”, where a civil forum took place, following the model of the EMP. The ENP puts an emphasis on the harmonisation and standardisation of the EU’s external relations to third countries and neglects the specific needs and local differences of the different neighbour countries. Civil society programmes are part of the ENP’s Action Plans, too. But in the larger context of the international “debate on reform” in the Arab world, it has become a consensus that the contribution of the EMP and the ENP to democratic transition processes in the Mediterranean region remained under the expected results.

We argue that in a globalised world, non-governmental actors gain more influence on the formulation processes of foreign policy. This contribution analyses whether this observation is also valid for the case of the EU’s Mediterranean policy. Hence, the focus is less on the intergovernmental character of the EU’s Mediterranean policy, meaning the influence of different EU Member States on the formulation of the EMP and ENP, but rather on the objectives, strategies and results of the EU’s Mediterranean policy, as it was conceived and implemented by Brussels since 1995. Within the European institutions, different logics coexist and sometimes contradict each other. We argue that, despite national approaches from the EU Member States, from a constructivist perspective, Europeanisation of the Mediterranean policies is progressing and that, despite dominant realist thinking in Brussels, the impact of non-governmental actors on the Mediterranean policies is increasing.

Theoretical Background

There is a high degree of heterogeneity of theoretical works on the international relations of the European Union and especially on the foreign policy of the EU. The European Union is not a state and not a traditional alliance. Therefore, it represents a unique case of analysis. Reflexive approaches propose to analyse the point of view of decision-makers and to reconstruct the objective and the subjective milieu in which they operate. The objective here is to understand the actor’s motives and thus how agents and structure, or norms, values and institutions constitute themselves mutually. Constructivism underlines the importance of the social origins of behav-

From this perspective, the EU is a postmodern global actor and conflict is replaced by cooperation and suspicion by mutual trust. According to other analysts, the European Union is a mature political system, without being a state. The EU’s political system has four characteristics: (1) It has an institutional framework, allowing the decision-making process. (2) Citizens and social groups can bring in their interests via intermediary groups or via political parties. The input channels are open and permeable towards the above. (3) Collective decisions determine the redistribution of economic resources and the attribution of political and social values across the entire system. (4) Between the results (Output) and the demands (Input) there exist feedback processes or, in other words, a differentiated system of checks and balances. A network of permanent interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors determines this circuit. However, the policy towards citizens (citizens rights, asylum policy, migration policy, Justice and Home Affairs), as well as the foreign policy (CFSP, foreign trade policy), remain largely intergovernmental and depend on the Council of Ministers. Organisations of the decision-making process (political parties, federations, syndicates, unions etc.) are still developing on the European level. If the existence of a European public opinion is still questionable, a slow but constant Europeanisation process, with regard to the EU’s foreign policy, is taking place and the degree of organisation of political parties, unions or associations on a European level is increasing. The Europeanisation process is, however, a top-down process.

What matters in the context of the present issue is the question of what place the different Mediterranean frameworks of the EU accord to the role of the civil societies and how the interaction process between governmental and non-governmental actors functions within these frameworks.

By civil society we understand, in this context, all non-governmental, voluntary, collective, civic and social organisations, institutions and practices that form the basis of a functioning society, as opposed to the structures of the state (independently of the nature of the state) and commercial structures of the market. The institutional forms of civil society are different from those of the state, family and market but, in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often unclear, complex and negotiated.

Different forms of organisations can be part of civil society, such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women’s organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups. Global civil society is defined as “a sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks, and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market, and operating beyond the confines of national societies, politics, and economies”. Transnational civil society activism has grown impressively in recent decades. Thanks to the new media, worldwide mobilisation became easier. However, contemporary global civil society contains undemocratic features, itself. The majority of the world population has no access to the resources necessary for transnational activism (lack of funds, language skills, internet access, etc.), which means that the majority of influential NGOs are based in Europe and North America and remain the preserve of a narrow, disproportionately white and overwhelmingly middle-class population. What matters, in the context of the present contribution, is the social interaction between (voluntary) associations, social movements and governmental actors and institutions. The analysis of the interaction between the EU’s Mediterranean policy and civil society needs to take into account the nature of the EU as a postmodern global actor, its political system and policies, and the relationship between governmental actors, on the one hand, and social groups, on the other.

1. What place for the Mediterranean in the EU’s foreign policy?

The Mediterranean, as a region, is part of Europe’s history and its constructed collective identity. On the one hand, the Mediterranean is seen as a common space with the southern and eastern countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, underlining common cultural references (such as the shared history or “common destiny”); on the other hand, the Mediterranean is seen as a borderline between Europe and the South or between Europe and Africa and the Middle East. Within the foreign policy circles of the EU, the Mediterranean is amongst the fifteen regions in the world that are objects of the EU’s external relations: “Africa, Caribbean/Pacific, Andean Community, Asia, Australasia, Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries, Central America, Central Asia, Gulf Cooperation Council Countries/Iran/Iraq/Yemen, Latin America, Mediterranean/Middle East, North America, The Northern Dimension, Western Balkans, Western Europe”. Apart from this, the EU is committed to

13 Scholte, Jan Aart op. cit.
numerous institutional frameworks, most of all to international organisations like the UN, WTO, OECD, UNESCO, Council of Europe or regional organisations like the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Mercosur. The NATO membership of almost all EU Member States and the close EU-US relations show the importance of the transatlantic circle. At the same time, hand in hand with the progressing competences of the EU in foreign policy matters – from the intergovernmental cooperation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970 to the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1993 by the Treaty of Maastricht, establishing supra-national decision-making procedures – Europe’s role as a global player in world politics has grown.  

A European “Mediterranean Policy” officially exists since the “Global Concept” of 1972. In 1990, the “Renovated Mediterranean Policy”, also called the “New Mediterranean Policy”, replaced the Global Concept. In 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was launched and renamed to the “Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM) in 2008. The Mediterranean, as a politically-invented region, is only present in the EU’s political agenda since the end of the 80s/beginning of the 90s. This regionalism approach was part of the global developments after the end of the bi-polar system and the political (re-)construction process of world regions. Before, the relations between the European Community (EC) and its southern and eastern Mediterranean neighbours consisted of bilateral relations, with the exception of the Euro-Arab Dialogue in the seventies that can be defined as a first attempt to create an inter-regional dialogue between the EC and the Member States of the Arab League. The concept of the Mediterranean as a political entity reached its peak with the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995. Since then, on the one hand, the concept has lost its driving force, closely related to the disappointing results of the EMP. On the other hand, the Mediterranean region started to become a certain reality for numerous individuals, political and societal actors living around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea (decision-makers, diplomats, tourists, migrants, students, researchers, artists etc.). From the EU’s perspective, the EMP was an attempt to organise its relations with the southern and eastern Mediterranean, to intensify the relations between the two regions and to encourage positive synergies, by creating a common third regional entity, the Euro-Mediterranean region.  

The introduction of the ENP in 2003 meant a shift from this regional approach to a more Eurocentric approach, where Europe concentrates on its internal problems related to enlargement and lacking depth. The former “partner” countries became “neighbour” countries, on the same level as Azerbaijan, Moldavia or Ukraine. From the perspective of the southern Mediterranean partner countries, the vicinity concept was partly taken with suspicion and disappointment, partly accepted voluntarily. Morocco, for instance, used this opportunity to negotiate an “advanced status”, ac-

15 With each new Treaty, the EU’s competences in foreign policy matters have slowly but constantly increased (Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, Treaty of Nice in 2003, Treaty of Lisbon – not yet ratified).
corded in 2008. The debate on the vicinity concept was very much related to the enlargement debate. There is no real consensus amongst the Member States about the future steps concerning the European project, as such, or about the accession perspectives of certain countries. Apart from the EU’s playing on words with regard to the different scales of being a “neighbour”, “advanced partner”, “accession candidate” or “full member”, not all concerned countries are interested in a full membership. While, for instance, Croatia and Albania consider the EMP/UfM as a first step to sought-after full EU membership, Algeria is not interested in a closer partnership or membership. Since the upgrading of the relations to the South, by the renaming of the EMP into the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the EU has tried to adapt its relations to the East. In May 2009, the “Eastern Partnership” was launched in Prague, with the objective to “stabilise” the region east of Poland and southern Europe and to normalise the relations with these new neighbouring countries, meaning Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldavia and Belarus. The concept of the Eastern Partnership is, however, even less concrete than the first proposals for the Mediterranean Union. A clear vision for this region, located between the Black Sea and Caucasus, is still missing. But what the Eastern Partnership shows is that the EU is re-centring its external relations, via the ENP, and trying to realise the so-called “Ring of Friends” around the borders of the EU.\(^{17}\)

Despite the ongoing debates about the concepts (EMP, UfM, etc.), the Mediterranean region remains a priority region for the EU. Strategically, the Mediterranean means the bridge to the Middle East and to the Black Sea region. The existing and emerging challenges emanating from the Mediterranean region, such as regional conflicts (Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lebanon crises, Cyprus, Western Sahara), international terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, environmental issues or migration issues, require regional responses. Economically seen, the Mediterranean region is of importance to the EU, especially with regard to energy supplies. The Free Trade Zone planned for 2010 in the Mediterranean region will be one of the largest in the world, with more than 40 states and 600-800 million consumers.\(^{18}\)

European documents distinguish between “the Mediterranean”, “North Africa” and the “Middle East”. The relations are generally defined as “the EU and the Mediterranean, Middle East and the Gulf”.\(^{19}\) However, depending on the policy framework and the political actor, the geographic and political definition of the Mediterranean region changes.

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18 Including the EFTA States, Island, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Today, the Mediterranean Policy of the European Union includes different policy frameworks or institutional layers, at the same time: programmes, mechanisms and institutional settings established during the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the first drafts of new programmes, mechanisms and settings of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).\textsuperscript{20} The EU’s policy towards the Middle East conflict, in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), as well as other policies conducted under other umbrellas, such as the development, trade or fishery policies of the EU, will not be analysed in this contribution. Besides the Mediterranean policy conducted by the EU, there exists, in parallel, a network of numerous specific and complex bilateral relations between singular EU Member States and singular southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, such as the French-Algerian relations, the Spanish-Moroccan relations, the German-Israeli relations or the Italian-Libyan relations (cf. different contributions in this volume). These relations have their own specific historical pasts, challenges and achievements. Above this network, or in parallel, exist the bilateral external relations between the EU and single southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, which can also look back on a specific bilateral past, such as the relations between the EU and Turkey or the EU’s relations with Morocco. In the following, we will analyse the UfM, the EMP and the ENP as policies from above, with regard to their objectives, strategies and interactivity with the below.

2.1. The Union for the Mediterranean

2.1.1. Objectives and concept

The Union for the Mediterranean, launched in July 2008 in Paris, is an intergovernmental policy from above.\textsuperscript{21} During the first Summit of the Heads of States, the progressive establishment of a new institutional structure was agreed upon and the ac-


cession of new Mediterranean Partners was decided. The declared objectives of the UfM are the upgrading of the political relations between the EU and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, the encouragement of the co-ownership of these multilateral relations, and an increased visibility and concretisation of additional regional and sub-regional projects for the citizens (“Union for projects”). Further objectives are the intensified involvement of private investors in the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process, the development of co-financing by public and private actors, and the improvement of South-South cooperation. The new institutional structures and mechanisms provide more parity between North and South, more reciprocity, more equal governance, and more room for an active co-ownership. The mobilisation of the governmental actors was a diplomatic success; 43 Heads of State and Government participated in the Paris Summit, amongst them Bashar Al Assad and Ehud Olmert. However, some governmental actors were and still are more difficult to convince of the advantages of an intensified Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, especially the Libyan leader Muammar Al Gaddafi, even though most of the projects touch Libyan Mediterranean interests, as well as all the other countries bordering the Mediterranean coast and beyond. Six concrete priority region-wide projects were identified: the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, the establishment of maritime and land highways, civil protection initiatives to combat natural and man-made disasters, a Mediterranean solar energy plan, the inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia, and the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, focusing on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

From a southern perspective, the initial Sarkozy idea of a “Mediterranean Union” was politically and ideologically oriented, in contrast to the EMP that was more driven by an economic and social logic, according to this view. Many southern voices expressed a certain disappointment when the initial project was transformed into the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”. Germany is considered being a leading player in the eastern enlargement, France as a leading player in the UfM. At the same time, some Arab diplomats recognise that there is a need for consensus amongst all EU Member States because the UfM is a European project now. Some Arab decision-makers would, however, prefer that certain countries, like France or Spain, play a leading role. The Arab states do not agree upon the long-term objective of the UfM and there are different opinions about its inclusion.

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22 In the UfM participate the 27 EU Member States, the former EMP Partner countries, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Mauritania, as well as the EU accession candidates, Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia, and the potential candidates, Albania, Monaco, Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina. Libya and the Arab League have an observer status. The Arab League can assist all meetings or conferences on all diplomatic levels.

23 It is intended to mobilise funding from the private sector, the EU Member States on a bilateral level, contributions from southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, international financial institutions and regional banks, and EU funds, most of all from the ENPI programme.

or exclusion of certain states. From a southern perspective, there was a certain (almost traditional) idea that the UfM would be a possibility for Europe to play a greater role in the mediation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as a counterweight to the US. Arab diplomats proposed that the UfM should organise an international conference of the Middle East conflict. But, most of all, the Arab states welcome the fact that the Arab League is now a full Member of the UfM and that, through the Co-Presidency, more parity has been formed, at least on the institutional level. Despite the diplomatic efforts by the French EU Presidency in the second half of 2008, so far there is no real consensus and no common vision about the long-term objective of the UfM. Should the UfM have the character of a loose intergovernmental gathering, be a simple continuation of the EMP, a sort of European Union, a Euro-Mediterranean Community, or a purely economic organisation? Independently of the clarification of the UfM’s intrinsic objective, new institutional structures have been created, having the merit, indeed, of establishing more parity between the North and South of the Mediterranean and providing more visibility.

2.1.2. New institutions and mechanisms

The new institutional structures mainly include the introduction of Summits of Heads of State and Government and the establishing of a Co-Presidency, the Secretariat, and the Joint Permanent Committee. The Summits of Heads of State and Government are held every two years and are intended to increase the visibility of the UfM and to provide more high-level political support. Foreign Ministers meet between the summits, monitor and prepare the next summit. The idea of the Co-Presidency is to give more parity and continuity to the whole process. One President comes from the EU, one from a Mediterranean partner country, holding office for two years. The Co-Presidency also applies to the annual Foreign Ministers conferences, ministerial sectoral meetings, Senior Officials meetings, and meetings of the Joint Permanent Committee. France and Egypt shared the first Co-Presidency (in the second half of 2008). However the question of the external representation of the EU remains unsolved. The European Commission and the Heads of States decided that an external representative of the EU should represent the EU within the Co-Presidency. This would have meant, concretely, that the rotating EU Presidencies would have been responsible and that the European Co-President would have changed every six months. That is why France negotiated with the following Czech EU Presidency (first half of 2009) that France could remain Co-President, at least for external representation, while the Czech Presidency would have the internal, inner-European representation concerning the UfM. The Swedish EU Presidency (second half 2009) did not agree on this point but holds the Presidency jointly with France. How this question will be solved in the future is still very much open and

very much dependent on the future of the Lisbon Treaty, in matters of the EU’s competences in foreign policy affairs.26

Concerning the Secretariat, there was a debate about the location of this new entity, then about the statute, the competences, the financing and the staff. During the Foreign Ministers Conference in Marseille, in November 2008, it was decided that the location would be Barcelona (even though numerous European and Arab voices asked for a city in the southern or eastern Mediterranean, in order to increase the co-ownership).27 The task of the Secretariat is to gather project initiatives from civil society, the private sector, national and regional authorities, and then to make proposals for joint initiatives to be approved by the Summits, after examination by the Senior Officials. The Secretariat is also responsible for the implementation and the follow-up of the projects. Here is a clear overlapping with the competences of EuropeAid. Even before the statute of the Secretariat was constructed, candidate names for the Secretary General and his five Deputy Secretary Generals, both from the EU and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, were discussed; they have to be approved by the Foreign Ministers.28 The first round of Deputy Secretary Generals is to be sent by Israel, the Palestinians, Greece, Malta and Turkey and will be appointed for three years.

The Senior Officials Meetings, a former EMP institution, will continue to take place every four to six weeks in Brussels and will be attended by high-ranking diplomats from the European, southern and eastern Mediterranean capitals and representatives of the European Commission. They continue to represent the core instrument of the process. The Senior Officials also prepare the Ministers Meetings, including projects to be endorsed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, monitor the evolution and implementation of the UfM and submit the annual work programme to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. They can also provide incentives for new initiatives; they are assisted by the Joint Permanent Committee. After the interruption of the whole process because of the Gaza Crisis at the end of 2008, the first Meeting of the Senior Officials only took place in April 2009 in Brussels. The High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, also attended this meeting because the regional political dialogue was on the agenda and the Palestinian and Israeli representatives

26 The external representation of the EU remains a controversial issue in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In this case, from a southern Mediterranean perspective, it is astonishing to see how many difficulties Europeans have in agreeing upon one EU representative within the Co-Presidency. Traditionally, it is Europe which criticises the Arab states for having difficulties in speaking with one voice and in finding consensual positions towards Europe.
27 French EU Presidency: “Final Statement Marseille”, 3-4 November, 2008, see: http://ue2008.fr (last accessed on 15/7/2009). The candidature of Tunis was hindered by Syria and Lebanon, refusing the location in any Arab country because this would have meant an indirect recognition of the state of Israel.
28 For the position of the Secretary General, the Permanent Representative of Jordan in Brussels and the former EuroMed Ambassador of Tunisia were mentioned.
were present, too. However, after this meeting, where a vivid political debate took place, the whole process was, again, more or less on ice for several months. In the new Representations or Missions Joint Permanent Committee participate mostly the diplomats of the Permanent in Brussels, representing the EU Member States and the southern and eastern Mediterranean states participating in the UfM. This Committee is more or less the same as the former “Euromed Committee” of the EMP. It assists the Co-Presidencies in their duties and functions and ensures increased co-ownership of the decision-making process, by intensification of dialogue. The members are specifically appointed representatives, who are supposed to serve as a standing committee. They also prepare the ministerial meetings and summits and can serve as a rapid reaction mechanism, in case of a crisis situation when the UfM states need to be consulted.

The European Commission is reluctant, with regard to the UfM, even though the official message is: “The European Commission fully supports the UpM”. There is an uncertainty within the European Commission about the future of the whole project. Some European diplomats say that France has taken the Barcelona Process away from the Commission, so now it is up to France to deal with it. Some are sceptical about the future institutional development. For instance, it is still open to debate how the system of the Co-Presidencies and co-ownership can be implemented in the other domains and in the lower parts of the institutional settings (besides the Co-Presidency and the Secretariat). Here, the European institutions and the new UfM institutions are in contradiction. Besides the introduction of the Co-Presidency, the Secretariat and the Joint Permanent Committee, preparations for the implementation of the six priority projects began. The “Euro-Mediterranean University” (EMUNI) was founded in Piran, Slovenia, in 2008, a project largely supported by the Czech EU Presidency. An initiative for a “Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly” (EMRLA) has been established because the success of the UfM largely depends on the involvement of regions, too. However, the institutional set-up process of the UfM was soon blocked because of severe Israeli military attacks in the Gaza strip during December 2008 and January 2009. The crisis in Gaza resulted in a suspension of UfM meetings during some months by the Arab states. In April and June 2009, however, Senior Officials Meetings took place in Brussels and Marseille; a Ministers Meeting took place in June 2009 in Paris on sustainable development issues; and the Ministers of Finance and Economy met in Brussels in July 2009.

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29 There was a certain dynamic in the run-up to the meeting; the Arab states agreed upon a common position, in the sense that they decided to participate in the meeting and that they formed a common position by saying that they would not participate as long as they could not be sure that the new Israeli government would respect the Barcelona Acquis and the concluded agreements. Israel also participated in the meeting.


2.1.3. Interaction between above and below

In the run-up to the UfM, during the launching process and in the first documents of the UfM, the issue of political reforms and the role of civil society in and for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation were hardly mentioned at all. The focus of Nicolas Sarkozy’s Mediterranean team, while preparing the first Summit in Paris, was clearly an intergovernmental and neo-liberal policy, meaning to gather all Heads of States and to win the private economy over to the UfM project. Experts and non-governmental actors were consulted by the Mediterranean Unit of the Elysée and by the European Commission but only on the issue of how to institutionally conciliate private financing and EU funding or how to combine the existing EMP institutions with the UfM. In contrast, the question of how civil society actors of both shores of the Mediterranean could be more intensively integrated into the cooperation process between Europe and the southern and eastern Mediterranean states was not debated at all, although it had become a consensus amongst the political decision-makers that one of the central reasons for the weak results of the EMP was the missing participation of these societies in the Barcelona Process. Only few voices asked, after the launching of the UfM, for an intensification of civil society’s participation and supported the idea that the UfM needs to concentrate on legitimacy within mainstream societies. But, besides the repeated reference to the activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation, so far there are no concrete measures foreseen to encourage more initiatives from below.

2.2. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)

2.2.1. Objectives and results

The Union for the Mediterranean builds on the Acquis of the Barcelona Process and the objectives and cooperation baskets (Political and Security Partnership, Economic and Financial Partnership, Cultural and Social Partnership) remain valid. The fields of the six priority projects of the UfM were already part of the cooperation fields of the EMP. Now, they receive more dynamics, funds and visibility but they can build upon a certain base developed during the EMP period. Still, in many points, it remains unclear what is left of the EMP, what is really new with the UfM and how these frameworks will work out together. The objectives of the EMP, defined in the Barcelona Declaration, were peace and political stability, the establishment of a Free Trade Area by 2010 and the rapprochement of civil societies in the Mediterranean. Free Trade Agreements have been signed with all EMP Partner countries (except Syria) and the MEDA programme financed the implementation of

33 In 2005, during the 10th Anniversary of the EMP, a fourth basket on cooperation on migration was added.
Besides problems of bilateral negotiations or missing regional economic integration, the economic crisis in 2008 has not helped progress in the Free Trade Area. During the next Summit of the UfM, planned for the first half of 2010 in Barcelona, the agenda for the coming years will be defined. While the expectations with regard to the EMP were certainly too high, its achievements were modest. The growing gap between the hopes and results was no longer compatible with the political context.

In 1995, most of the southern states hoped for stabilisation of their political systems, economic advantages and a counterbalancing role of Europe in the Middle East conflict, while their civil societies hoped for more political liberalisation, improvement of their living standards and free movement of people. The results until today are modest, most of all when it comes to democratisation efforts and filling the social gap between the North and the South of the Mediterranean. One of the results of the EMP was the comprehension that there is a need for a broad consensus, including civil society, if one wants to implement reform programmes. This is also true for economic transition programmes. The economic transition includes, for instance, reforms in the regulatory and administrative environment, entrepreneurial culture and taxation systems. The Free Trade Area includes the idea of a harmonisation of customs cooperation, free movement of goods, public procurement, harmonisation and certification of standards, intellectual property rights, taxation, data protection, competition rules, accounting and auditing. From the beginning on, the EMP intended to create a positive climate for investment in the Mediterranean region. The importance of increasing private investment, including foreign direct investment, was underlined in numerous European documents of the EMP since 1995. This is to say that the idea of the UfM to attract more private investors is nothing really new. The Five-Year Work Programme, approved during the Barcelona Summit in November 2005, updated and re-defined the approach followed by the Barcelona 1995 Work Programme, but did not succeed in mobilising more political input by the EMP countries. The real impact of the EMP remains limited to the creation of new networks, a raising of consciousness about the Mediterranean as region, and the creation of several new institutions, structures and mechanisms, such as the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) in 2002, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) in 2003, and the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF) in 2005.

34 MEDA I accorded 3.4 billion euros for the period 1995-1999. For the same time period, the European Investment Bank (EIB) lent 4.8 billion euros. MEDA II covered the period 2000-2006 and comprised 5.3 billion euros, plus 6.4 billion from the EIB.

2.2.2. Interaction between governmental actors and civil society

The EMP was, above all, an intergovernmental and multilateral exercise but the encouragement of the participation of civil societies of both shores was one of the innovative elements of the EMP when it was launched, at least from a theoretical point of view. The governmental actors, themselves, including Ministers, European Commission members, or decision-makers, agreed that, in order to broaden the basis of the EMP, the involvement of a wide circle of actors outside central governments should be encouraged. From the beginning of the EMP, the European Parliament was engaged in the Process, controlling and critically following the implementation of projects such as the MED programmes or MEDA democracy, and supporting civil society initiatives and a dialogue with civil society representatives from both shores. The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) has the objective to accompany intergovernmental cooperation in the Mediterranean, on a parliamentary level. This cooperation was already initiated with the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 but has undergone a certain revival and new developments since 2008, with the founding of the Union of the Mediterranean. In the framework of the EMP, the Euro-Mediterranean Committee was the central forum for providing monitoring, follow-up and evaluation of actions and initiatives in the EMP, as a whole. But the exchange between the Euromed Committee and civil society actors was almost non-existent. The European Commission was, on the one hand, a driving force in the establishment of room for dialogue with non-governmental actors, by creating programmes and encouraging and financially supporting networks, fora, conferences, meetings, activities etc. On the other hand, there was a certain reluctance to respond to civil society demands and proposals and hesitant contacts. Non-governmental actors were sometimes perceived as a necessary evil.

The Euromed Civil Forums watched the EMP closely and asked repeatedly for a strengthening of the dialogue between governments and civil society. However their influence on the governmental decision-making process remained very limited. One of the central activities was the elaboration of a common Declaration, presented to the Foreign Ministers; but sometimes the Civil Forum took place after the Foreign Ministers Conference and, finally, there was no follow-up or interactive process between the two groups or even between the different organisers of the different civil fora. The creation of the Non-Governmental Platform in 2005 was an attempt to institutionalise the Civil Forum, to find a more democratic internal organisation, and to render the activities of the Platform more transparent. Besides the Non-Governmental Platform, numerous Euro-Mediterranean networks and fora are active in different sectors of civil society and financially supported by the EU; they indi-

36 During the first years of the EMP, there was a consensus amongst the Ministers that one should give an impetus to “decentralised cooperation”. However, the European Parliament insisted especially on the need for careful and prudent implementation of civil society programmes, after negative experiences with the so-called MED programmes and problems of mismanagement of European funds.
rectly influence the decision-making process of the European Commission, especially via their expertise and via awareness-raising of deficits in such and such sectors. In the economic field, for instance, businessmen, entrepreneurs, agencies, and private investors are organised in the INVEST in Med programme, ANIMA network, Euro-Med Quality, Euro-Med Market, FEMISE network, FEMIP programme, MED-ADR programme, Medibitikar Innovation and Technology programme, or MED-STAT programme for statistical cooperation. Energy experts, environmental experts and transport experts meet and work together in special programmes on, for instance, water resource management, civil protection and information technologies. Media actors, creative experts, journalists, artists, cultural managers, and researchers are active in different programmes, such as Euromed Heritage, the Anna Lindh Foundation, audiovisual cooperation, MEDA-ETE, TEMPUS III, Erasmus Mundus and programmes on the Role of Women in Economic Life or Euromed Youth III. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) gathers human rights activists from the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils meets once a year since 1995, has established consultative structures representing large majorities of civil societies and acts as an adviser for the Commission and the Council. Via programmes such as TRESMED, the establishment of links between the Economic and Social Council and similar institutions in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries was supported, while the MED-PACT programme (since 2009 renamed CIUDAD and absorbed by the ENP framework) supports cooperation between cities or local authorities and civil societies. Independently of the EMP and these different programmes and projects, the North and the South of the Mediterranean became closer, not only because of growing possibilities of interconnectedness via the new media but also through growing human exchanges via mixed marriages, tourism, business travels, migration and scientific exchange. Transnational movements also cross the Mediterranean and leave their traces. Global civil society is getting more active and more present in the Mediterranean, too, and despite persisting attempts from state actors to limit civil society action.

With regard to the interrelationship between the different policy frameworks, the EU is putting forward the advantages of the ENP as being qualitatively better than the EMP, in particular the Actions Plans and the related established sub-committees; they permit going into more detail than was the case in the context of the Association Agreements. In official documents, the EU underlines the complementarity of the EMP and the ENP but on the operational level, the ENP replaced the EMP in many fields. European officials defined the EMP as the EU’s only and central Mediterranean policy because it was the only policy concept with a visionary approach. According to this interpretation, the ENP reinforces the EMP but does not replace it. The Security Strategy of 2003 defined the Mediterranean region as a priority region
and the ENP in the southern neighbourhood as a framework subordinate to the EMP.\textsuperscript{37}

2.3. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

2.3.1. Objectives and results

The objective of the ENP, developed in 2003, is to harmonise the EU’s external relations with its direct neighbour countries and to construct a belt of democracies around Europe.\textsuperscript{38} The EU seeks to avoid the development of a new dividing line between the EU and its neighbours but clearly distinguishes from any accession perspectives (“all but institutions”). The ENP builds upon the European Security Strategy and upon the existing Association Agreements between the EU and the southern and eastern Mediterranean states. Privileged relations build upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). Concretely, the ENP means an intensification of political relations and economic integration. The speed of reforms depends on the willingness of the respective countries. The ENP was launched in the international context of the “reform debate” in the Arab world. The ENP intends to promote political reforms in the southern and eastern neighbour countries. The ENP introduced the principle of “positive conditionality” (in contrast to the “negative conditionality” of the EMP that was never applied), meaning those southern and eastern Mediterranean countries interested in a faster rhythm of social, political and economic reforms receive more (mostly financial) support by the EU than those neighbours not willing to go further. The ENP includes all direct neighbours of the EU, except Russia, with whom a “Strategic Partnership” exists. Amongst the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are concerned Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Tunisia. Action Plans were adopted with Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia in 2005 and with Egypt and Lebanon in 2007. The Action Plans build upon previous Association Agreements. Libya and Syria are an exception because they did not sign an Association Agreement and thus the ENP is not valid for them. When the European Neighbourhood Policy was launched in 2003, the policy measures towards the southern Neighbours continued to be financed by the EMP’s MEDA programme. In January 2007, the European Neighbourhood and


Partnership Instrument (ENPI) replaced the MEDA Programme. Today, the ENPI includes different community budget financing possibilities, in order to implement or co-finance the projects of the Union for the Mediterranean, such as the “ENP South” regional programmes, the “Neighbourhood Investment Facility” and the “Cross-Border Cooperation Instrument”.

During the bilateral negotiations between the EU and the respective countries on the Action Plans, it was foreseen that civil society actors should be involved in the negotiation process. But, in practice, this consultative and interactive process did not really take place. The implementation of the Action Plans is supported and monitored via themed sub-committees. In these sub-committees, civil society representatives can be involved, for instance, as experts or consultative actors. But, here again, the factual presence of civil society individuals or groups remains rather limited and intransparent.

2.4. Special bilateral relations

Amongst the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, the EU maintains closer bilateral relations with some states, especially with Turkey, Morocco, Israel, the Palestinians Territories and Egypt. Negotiations are ongoing to establish special bilateral relations with other Mediterranean third countries. The case of Turkey is special, insofar as it is, on the one hand, part of the eastern Mediterranean countries participating in the EMP/UfM and, on the other hand, it is a candidate for full EU membership since 1999. Accession negotiations started in 2005. In February 2008, the Council adopted a revised “Accession Partnership” with Turkey. Turkey already applied for full European Economic Community (EEC) membership in 1987 and has one of the longest and most difficult histories of an accession process to the EU. It is the case of Turkey that brings up repeatedly – besides different unfulfilled political and economic criteria – the cultural debate about a Muslim state becoming an EU Member State. In June 2005, the Commission adopted a Communication on the role of civil society dialogue between the EU and candidate countries. This framework for the creation and reinforcement of links between the civil societies is valid for Turkey and Croatia.

39 Under ENPI 12 billion euros are available for the ENP countries in the East and in the South, and the Russian Federation, for the period 2007-2013. In this framework the regional cooperation activities in the Southern Neighbour countries are supported with 343.3 million euros for the period 2007-2010. In addition to ENPI, the European Investment Bank (EIB) provides a total of 12.4 billion euros grant funding for the period 2007-2013.

40 See www.ec.europa.eu/world/enp/funding_en.htm (last accessed on 15/72009).

41 European Commission (2005): “Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Countries”, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions, COM(2005)290 final, Brussels: European Commission.
The case of Morocco is interesting, insofar as Morocco received “Advanced Status” in October 2008, which is more than the neighbour status but less than the accession candidate status. Concretely, this means a deepening of the political relations, more integration into the Single European Market and an intensification of cultural and educational exchanges, including more communication between the civil societies. As with most other southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, the EU concluded an Association Agreement with Morocco in 1996 (in force since 2000) under the EMP and adopted an Action Plan in 2005 under the ENP.

Bilateral relations with Israel are close, especially in the economic, technological and scientific sectors, even though they also undergo turbulences from time to time (e.g. the anti-Semitism debate in 2003). Israel signed an Association Agreement in 1995 (in force since 2000), adopted an Action Plan in 2005, and is interested in closer cooperation with the EU. Israel participates in different European programmes, such as the Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development (FP).

Concerning the Palestinian Territories, the relations are very particular because of the non-existent state structure, the strong financial and diplomatic support for the Palestinians, the marginalisation policy towards Hamas, and the extensive and continuous efforts for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The relations are organised via the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation (1997) and the Action Plan (2005).

Bilateral relations with Egypt are of great importance for the EU because of Egypt’s regional role but also due to historical, cultural and scientific ties, with diplomatic relations existing since 1966. The Association Agreement was signed in 2001 and entered into force in 2004; the Action Plan was adopted in 2007.

Bilateral relations with other countries participating in the EMP/UfM are somewhat diplomatically difficult, such as those with Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Syria or Lebanon, for very different reasons. In contrast, Tunisia applied in June 2009 for the “Advanced Status” but the European Commission sees this critically and the chances are not very high, at least for the moment, because of deficits in the political domain (democracy, human rights). But the economic relations are very close. Tunisia is the first country in the southern Mediterranean that has abolished the customs duties on industrial goods, in the framework of the Association Agreement, and negotiations on the liberalisation of trade, with regard to agrarian products and services, have started. Finally, the relations with Jordan are appreciated for their moderate character.

42 Nathanson, Roby/Stetter, Stephan (2006): The Monitor of the EU-Israel Action Plan, Tel Aviv/Vienna: FES.
3. Competing actors, different logics and strategies

Within the European institutions, different logics coexist and sometimes contradict each other, even within the European Commission. While the Foreign Relations department, under Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner (2004-2009), pushed forward the bilateral approach of the ENP, the Mediterranean department of the Directorate-General External Relations (DG RELEX) pursued a more multilateral and regional approach, in the framework of the EMP. During the preparation phase of the UfM, there were internal divergences on the EU’s reaction to Nicolas Sarkozy’s project of a “Mediterranean Union”. However, all in all, the European Commission seeks to push forward the Europeanisation of the EU’s Mediterranean policies and to preserve the Barcelona Acquis. When EU Member States praise the establishment of a new programme, mechanism, institution or instrument, or when they claim the success of some EMP or ENP measure, it is generally the European Commission that is behind the conceptual finalisation and implementation. For instance, the FEMIP and the Anna Lindh Foundation were concretely realised by the European Commission. EuropeAid is the Directorate-General of the European Commission responsible for the implementation of the guidelines, projects and programmes determined by the Directorate-General External Relations and for the follow-up of the EMP’s regional and bilateral programmes. Therefore, EuropeAid is in closer contact with civil society actors involved in concrete Euro-Mediterranean cooperation projects. EuropeAid recognises the role of civil society organisations as vital partners for decision-makers, as they know better the population’s needs, in terms of development. The implementation of the new UfM projects is now supposed to be followed up by the UfM Secretariat in Barcelona, in cooperation with EuropeAid and DG RELEX.

The Council of the EU follows, above all, an intergovernmental logic, harmonising the different interests of the EU Member States in the Mediterranean region, neglecting civil society interests. The EU Member States, themselves, pursue intergovernmental strategies and are mostly engaged in the Mediterranean via their bilateral relations with specific countries. They act in favour of a verticalisation of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation rather than in favour of a strengthening of regional or transnational dynamics. However, at least in their official discourses, they traditionally defend a European approach. The importance accorded to the interaction with civil society actors varies in relation to different factors, such as the political orientation of the governments in place, the importance of migrant communities living in the respective EU Member State or the political culture of the political system. When it comes to the European Parliament, it traditionally supports a stronger involvement of civil society and tries to develop the democratic legitimacy of the

EU’s Mediterranean Policy. The different initiatives and platforms of inter-regional cooperation, such as between the EU and the Arab League (AL) or between the EU and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) or the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), are reduced to intergovernmental exchange. Interaction with non-governmental actors is not expressly foreseen. A European public opinion is still developing and it would be exaggerated to say that European public opinion could influence the EU’s Mediterranean policy. European public opinion is not yet organised enough. Private economic actors, rather, follow individual and financial interests and lobby, depending on their field, either in the European capitals or in Brussels or both. The economic advantages or incentives for private investment in the southern and eastern Mediterranean provided by the EMP/UfM are most of all interesting for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), while bigger firms might profit from a general improvement of the EU-third country relations and the EU’s liberalisation policy but continue their affairs anyhow, independently of the UfM. The example of the “Desertec” Initiative illustrates this: here, a consortium of large enterprises is undertaking a large long-term project of renewable energies in the southern Mediterranean. It indirectly profits from the existence of the UfM but does not really need the UfM framework to realise the project.

3.1 New modes of articulation, interaction, and political participation

In Brussels, numerous non-governmental actors, associations and organisations defend civil society interests, be it on a European, a Euro-Mediterranean, sub-regional or transnational level. These agents and networks watch and question the EU’s Mediterranean policies from below but they also take advantage of the different policy frameworks, EMP/ENP/UfM, in order to pursue their interests or agendas. Central civil society groups and organisations include, e.g. public opinion, human rights NGOs, syndicates, media, business groups, political foundations, churches, environmental activists and anti-globalisation movements. They can partially influence the political agenda of the EU’s foreign policy, when it comes to the EMP/UfM or ENP, by setting themes like cultural heritage (e.g. Museums Without Frontiers), by pressuring for the EU’s political positioning and application of international law in the Middle East conflict (e.g. Mattin Group), or by turning attention to human rights situations (e.g. EMHRN). These kinds of NGOs attempt, on the one hand, to organise civil society actors on a regional level and, on the other hand, they try to link the transnational dimension to the intergovernmental politics of the EMP/UfM and to show how these two aspects are interrelated in transnational politics. For instance, while the respect for human rights, such as freedom of association, is fundamental for a strong civil society to develop, a strong civil society can carry forward the demand for respect of human rights.

45 For more information on the European Parliament’s Mediterranean policy, see the contributions of Isabelle Montoya and Djamila Chikhi in this volume.

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The political participation of citizens in Europe is part of Europe’s political culture. The European Commission consults civil society actors, before it adopts new directives because many of these directives demand a participation of the citizens in the implementation process afterwards.\textsuperscript{46} Local communities also have to encourage the participation of public opinion and civil society within their planning process. Participation has become an instrument of decision-making. New forms and tools of political consultation and participation are being developed. For instance, European institutions increasingly make use of internet public opinion surveys or simplify bureaucratic procedures for civil society organisations (CSO). The improvement of dialogue with civil society organisations is on the agenda of EuropeAid, for instance. In the meantime, they are considered as “implementing partners”.\textsuperscript{47} This is especially valid for development policies, since the developing countries ask for more ownership of their own development and the EU’s Mediterranean policy is also a development policy. Besides the financing of civil society projects, EuropeAid also promotes the creation of new tools, in order to improve the coordination amongst development experts and the EU. For instance, the Potential Applicant Date Online Registration (PADOR) or the establishment of the Civil Society Helpdesk (CISOCH) encourage the participation of civil society organisations in specific geographic and thematic programmes, facilitate access to information about EU programmes and provide exchange platforms on procedures, work methods and experiences. But, of course there are also limits to civil society participation. These are related, for instance, to the lack of visibility of the concerned policies, lack of transparency or to the growing necessary technical or scientific expertise for political decisions. At the same time, citizens often feel isolated from the EU institutions in Brussels and criticise the fact that there are not enough possibilities for an open political competition.

Finally, in terms of interaction between the governmental and non-governmental actors, the UfM faces similar problems as the EMP: lack of legitimisation, credibility and visibility. In order to increase legitimisation and recognition by civil societies in the North and in the South of the Mediterranean, it first needs more visibility. More visibility needs a stronger interest by the media. But Euro-Mediterranean cooperation does not sell as a news issue for the media as well as images of conflict and reciprocal prejudices. Western and Arab media continue to deepen the reciprocal enemy images by biased reporting, instead of interconnecting civil society actors of all countries participating in the UfM.


\textsuperscript{47} www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/index_en.htm (last accessed on 15/7/2009).
Conclusion

The UfM is still in its making. The constant rethinking process of the EMP/UfM and of the relationship between the UfM and the ENP has to continue. Compared to the EU’s external relations with other regions in the world, it seems to be harder to find a satisfying framework for both partner regions than it is with, say, ASEAN or Mercosur. The reasons for these difficulties are numerous but, most of all, can be attributed to the heterogeneity of the Mediterranean region, the absence of a regional consciousness and the existence of persisting internal conflicts and rivalries. The French initiative has the merit of having brought forward and reanimated the debate about the EU’s future relations with the southern and eastern Mediterranean. However, in terms of Europeanisation of the EU’s foreign policy, it meant, at least in the beginning, a step backward. Politically blocked right after the launching, there are less tangible results than during the EMP. And now the number of voices asserting that the EMP was not a failure and not so bad, after all, is even growing.

From the EU’s perspective, the strong point of the EMP/UfM remains the intergovernmental exercise. The integration of civil societies lags far behind, not being a priority. But the governmental actors need to take into account more intensively the transnational and civil society dynamics in the Mediterranean region. This is particularly true for domains such as migration, Islamism and environment. These domains had been neglected within the EMP, even though in 2005 a basket on migration was added. These issues concern the entire Mediterranean region and require regional answers and a reinforced inter-regional dialogue. If the UfM does not want to go through the same negative experiences as the EMP, it needs to increase its acceptance within civil societies. In this context, the ALF could play the role of a catalyst (about 2000 NGOs are members today). The modes of articulation and interaction between the governmental and non-governmental actors and between the different layers of Mediterranean policies show that, on the one hand, there is democratic control and transparency but, on the other hand, the UfM is, above all, an intergovernmental policy. The cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors in Euro-Mediterranean relations illustrates that non-governmental and transnational actors are gaining in importance, in comparison to traditional actors of foreign policy.

The role of the EU as a “global player” in the Mediterranean has clearly increased since 1995. The EMP was a positive example for European foreign policy and European multilateralism, at least when it came to inner-European cooperation and the growing autonomy of Brussels and the EU delegation, less so when it came to concrete results. With regard to the heterogeneity of the Mediterranean region, intensified bilateral relations, in the framework of the ENP, make sense. However, regional cooperation within the UfM should not be given up or neglected. With regard to the future of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, different scenarios are being debated. Numerous international cooperation frameworks already exist in the Mediterranean, such as the Alliance of Civilisations, the revival of the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD), the OECE, the Mediterranean Forum, the “5+5”, the “6+6”, or NATO’s Mediterra-
There is a process of confusion and a losing of energy. The fragmentation of the Mediterranean space explains the return to more bilateral and sub-regional-oriented policies.

The regional integration of Israel remains a central task. The EU continues to intensify its bilateral relations with Israel in the framework of the ENP and, at the same time, the EU seeks to encourage the regional integration of Israel via frameworks like the EMP or the UfM, Israel participating in both, or via the support of the Middle East Peace Process. But, despite all these mediation efforts, Israel remains, so far, rather isolated in the region (except close relations with Turkey) and looks, in the long term, toward EU membership rather than toward the role of a regional motor. This specific EU-Israel bilateral relationship renders more difficult the EU’s regional policies. At the same time, numerous challenges in the Mediterranean (migration, energy supplies, climate change, etc.) demand regional answers. The political and institutional future of the Mediterranean will depend on the question of how far the civil societies can be involved in democratisation processes and how the interrelation between the different frameworks (UfM, EMP, ENP, sub-regional, bilateral) will develop.

The various debated scenarios include: a Euro-Mediterranean Union, a Euro-Mediterranean Community, a new international institution like the Council of Europe, meaning a “Council of the Mediterranean”, following the model of the OCDE, an enlargement of the Council of Europe toward the southern and eastern Mediterranean, a reinforcement of sub-regional frameworks like the “5+5” or the “6+6”, or an “alternative integration”. This last option would be a space without fixed frontiers, rather, united by common interests and solidarities, a sort of virtual Union, based on a decentralised, non-Eurocentric approach, looking to decentralise the integration structures from Brussels.

With the launch of the “Eastern Partnership” in May 2009, the EU tried to counterbalance its activities towards the East. The political dialogue with the partner countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldavia, and Armenia) will not be easier than with the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, when it comes to democratisation and civil society issues. However, it is clear that the EMP/UfM has served as a model for the construction of this Eastern Partnership, even though the means and instruments are less developed (no Secretariat or Co-Presidency). The opening event was less spectacular and diplomatically less successful than Sakorzy’s Paris Summit in July 2008 but a constructive regional dialogue with these countries will be, in the long term, as important for Europe’s future as the relations with the South. The UfM is an example of “flexible multilateralism”, meaning that one does not try to find a common European position amongst 27 Member States any longer;

rather, one follows the logic of “variable geometry” and builds punctual, temporary, limited alliances, in order to claim a guidance role within the EU, with regard to foreign policy questions. The intergovernmental logic seems to wins against the communautaire logic. Besides the evolving forms of intergovernmental cooperation and the political conviction of the added value of deepened Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, what matters most for a successful future of the Union for the Mediterranean is the concentration on the UfM’s legitimacy and acceptance within mainstream societies and the consciousness of the shared responsibility, be it governmental or non-governmental actors or individual citizens, for the future of the Mediterranean region.

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