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THE SUSTAINED RELEVANCE OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

by

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Abstract

The European Union has historically been unable to maintain an open channel of meaningful communication particularly with its southern Mediterranean neighbours. Contrary to the rest European initiatives in the region, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) scheme, best known as the Barcelona Process, has so far successfully attained the aforementioned objective. Over the past twenty years, the EMP initiative has successfully acclaimed the status of a multilateral negotiating table which brings together twenty seven delegates from the Middle East, North African and European world. In other words, the Barcelona framework holds out the most potential for keeping twenty seven and completely diverse countries tied together into a common aspiration: the dream of maintaining an everlasting peace and security dialogue in the Mediterranean Rim. The EMP's multilateral and dialectic approach can alleviate the extent of political turmoil in the region and delimit the unprecedented expansion of Islamist violence in the extended Mediterranean neighbourhood, especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring revolts. It is these issues that the present dissertation critically assesses through a historical evaluation of the European and international initiatives in the Mediterranean world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ever since the early antiquity, international trade was the driving force behind the economic, cultural and political development of the Mediterranean civilisations.[1] The development of maritime trade routes eventually transformed the coastal cities around the Mediterranean into booming marketplaces with major influence in the international political environment. The basin's uneven geological structure and scarcity of natural resources triggered the shift of focus towards international commerce, given that the Mediterranean binds three continents together: Africa, Asia and Europe.[2] Long-distance trade thus has diachronically been a sustainable option for the economic development of the basin's countries. Natural geography also favoured this option. The basin's trade routes are controlled by three 'checkpoints,' the straits of Bosporus, Gibraltar, and Suez. In other words, there is no commercial vessel that does not pass from any of these controlling outposts before entering or exiting the Mediterranean Sea.[3] Rodney Castleden hence concludes that the secret behind the unprecedented accumulation of wealth in the basin's trade centres rested on investments in 'commercial enterprise and human resources.'[4] Similarly, Francois Gipouloux contends that

> 'The Mediterranean may be viewed simultaneously as a maritime space, a trading crossroads and a link between different civilisations; but it may also be seen as a transnational space, within which several autonomous cities and urban regions, jointly controlling the flows of goods and money, make up together a matrix of economic supremacy.'[5]

The early 1990s demarked an era of intense cross-border trade in the rim. Several southern Mediterranean countries signed commercial agreements with the European Community. These agreements sought to constitute the Mediterranean a virtually tariff-free hub of international trade in the coming years.[6] Stephen Calleya endorses this ambition on the grounds that 'the majority of Mediterranean states have trade and investment links which already make them an integral part of the European trading

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[1] Howard (2012), 172
[2] Moustakis (2003), 11-12
[3] Boening (2014), 1-2
[4] Castleden (2005), 188
[5] Gipouloux (2011), 9
[6] Hoekman and Zarrouk (2009), 3

zone.'[7] These ambitions however have been proven so far futile, given that the southern part of the basin has yet to become a free trade area.

The Phenomenon of Suitcase Trade

Still, the majority of modern-day traders have found novel ways to circumvent the existing obstacles in cross-border commerce. These include the development of illicit networks for the distribution of imported and exported goods. These goods are sold at a later stage in local market stalls. Cross-border traders resort to these activities so they can bypass the existing customs limitations and heavy taxation of the imported and exported goods. This is the so-called phenomenon of suitcase trade.[8] Tourists spend millions of foreign exchange into purchasing luxurious and expensive merchandise. Suitcases transfer the purchased goods in conformity with local and international regulations around the Mediterranean world. Once these goods arrive at the desired locations, illicit networks disseminate them to informal market stalls, where they are sold at elevated prices.[9] Typically, suitcase traders prefer to buy products of value, so they can garner increased profits from the informal sale of legally imported, but not for commercial purposes, goods. Camille Schmoll provides an exceptional overview of the suitcase trade phenomenon in North Africa, where informal traders 'contribute to feeding the North African hunger for Western products, that has been encouraged both by the emergence of an expanding lower middle class in the Maghreb countries and the taxes and restrictions imposed on product importation.'[10]

The Diachronic Relevance of the Barcelona Process Framework

The immediate aftermath of the Jasmine and Lotus Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt ever since the early 2011 astonished the European Union's policymakers. Before the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolts, the MENA states made greater steps towards their eventual integration into a common market with the European Union. However, the competing interests of the EU member states posed multiple hindrances towards the realisation of this ambition. For instance, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003 offered the MENA countries bilateral association agreements with the European Union. The former were happy to accede to the terms of these agreements.[11] The rationale behind these agreements rested on the assumption that the European agencies would help the

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[7] Calleya (2000), 296
[8] Peraldi (2005), 51
[9] Sik and Wallace (1999), 698
[10] Schmoll (2012), 222
[11] Zoubir (2012), 88

Arab leaders improve the negative scores in the field of democratisation and human rights in the MENA world. In exchange for this partnership, the local leaders pledged to assist Europe in securing three main objectives in the region: constant supply of Arabian oil at competitive prices; delimit the presence of radical Islamist groups in the local societies; and prevent massive immigration waves from the southern to the northern Mediterranean shores.[12]

The European Union thus is currently entrapped into a geopolitical impasse in the Mediterranean Rim. The southern Mediterranean shores progressively succumb to political instability and religious violence. In this process, the European ambitions must espouse a crisis management approach: accommodate the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the war-torn societies; and ensure that the neighbouring states do not collapse into never-ending cycles of inter-communal and religious violence.[13] Nonetheless, the European Union severely lacks in the development of effective crisis management frameworks. The collapse of the rule of law in the eastern Ukrainian provinces by paramilitary groups provides the necessary justifications for this criticism. Moreover, two additional criteria predetermine the failure of European crisis management efforts: the unwillingness of its member states to espouse a uniform framework of responses; and the incapacity of European institutions to gather and mobilise hard-power resources (e.g., development and presence of European peacekeepers in war-torn environments).[14] Timo Behr thus accurately concludes that the European stance in the area of crisis management 'represents a befuddling mixture of short-term security concerns, national and regional ambitions of EU member states, and alliance politics, rather than a carefully thought out strategy, inevitably relegating the EU to the role of an ambitious stage extra.'[15]

The European policies towards the unearthed problems of the MENA region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring must thus retort back to the founding principles of the Barcelona Declaration of 27-28 November 1995. This was the founding document of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) initiative, the so-called Barcelona Process. Leila Talani sustains that despite its contradictions, 'the Barcelona Process seemed to have activated a crucial dialogue between the southern shores of the Mediterranean and the

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[12] Stein (2012), 25
[13] Youngs (2015), 121
[14] Tchakarova (2013), 48
[15] Behr (2014),76

European economic, political and cultural sphere.'[16] The greatest achievement of the EMP initiative therefore is the establishment of a regional cultural, economic and political forum which keeps all the signatories engaged into an everlasting peace and security dialogue. The present dissertation espouses this view. It argues that the Barcelona process remains the best framework in the Mediterranean basin for resolving the sensitive issues that were re-emerged by the tidal waves of the Arab Spring revolts.

Based on this central idea, the second chapter provides a historical overview of previous international initiatives in the MENA region before November 1995. The third chapter analyses the Euro-Mediterranean Policy initiative and pinpoints the policy's inherent strengths and weaknesses. The fourth chapter discusses the impact of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean initiatives which have complemented but also undermined the work of the Barcelona Process. The fifth chapter evaluates the overall performance of European initiatives in the MENA countries and investigates the root causes of their failure so far. These relate to the infusion of European values in the MENA region (e.g., democratisation, open market economy), which greatly diverge from the Middle Eastern and North African ones; and the presence of competing interests between EU member states and the lack of a cohesive European approach to the region. The concluding chapter briefly touches upon the problem of Islamic radicalism and explores ways through which the Barcelona framework may preclude its expansion, in the aftermath of Arab Spring revolts. It is upon these lines the present dissertation thoroughly examines the sustained impact of the Barcelona Process in the Mediterranean world today.

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[16] Talani (2014), 117

Chapter 2: Origins of the Barcelona Process

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of peace and development initiatives in the Mediterranean basin ever since the late 1960s. These ambitious forays sought to achieve four different objectives in the region: foster closer cooperation between the region's neighbouring countries; spur economic growth; consolidate the countries' socio-cultural development; and constitute the Mediterranean an exemplary area of free trade, relative peace, cultural and religious coexistence, as well as economic prosperity. To this end, ambitious schemes such as the Global Mediterranean Policy, the Euro-Arab Dialogue platform, the Madrid Peace initiative as well as the Oslo Peace Accords sought to attain, however failed, the aforementioned aspirations in the Mediterranean world.

The Global Mediterranean Policy

In September 1972 the European Commission put forward a proposal for the establishment of a Global Mediterranean Policy. The Commission argued that the region would enjoy greater development if all countries committed themselves to benchmark clauses for the improvement of their socio-economic and political indexes.[17] These clauses were included into the association agreements that each Mediterranean state signed with the European Community. In overall, the Commission alleged that economic growth and political stability are the structural preconditions for the protection of Europe's long-term interests in the region.[18] The Commission's proposal thus tackled with four issues. First and foremost, it proposed the development of a MENA tariff-free area (MEFTA) by the late 1977. Informal exchanges of industrial products could take place all over the Mediterranean without any legal barriers or trade tariffs. The inclusion of agricultural goods in this scheme was omitted at that time, mainly because of the presence of strict trade barriers for importing and exporting agricultural products. The second objective reshaped the mandate and workload of customs offices in the Mediterranean countries. Moreover, the Commission prepared aid packages to stir up growth in the less affluent countries and invited specialist teams to help improve their industrial and financial outputs. Finally, the Commission promised to explore ways for solving the cross-border problem of immigrant labour.[19] The proposal was endorsed by the Council of European Ministers in November 1972. Its implementation nonetheless took time, as the European Community had first to conclude association agreements with all the Mediterranean states. Hence it was not until the late 1978 when the European

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[17] Shlaim (1976), 80
[18] Dolan and Caporaso (1978), 154
[19] Tsoukalis (1977), 429-430

Community established trade relations with all the Mediterranean states except Albania and Libya.[20]

The Global Mediterranean Policy initiative however quickly became irrelevant. It was expected that the MENA countries would improve their industrial capacities and invite economic growth via investments in the less-developed commercial sectors. The incoming European aid nonetheless was invested in agricultural exports and left the underperforming sectors of the economy in stagnation.[21] Additionally, the MENA states underestimated the competition from the countries of the northern Mediterranean shores in agricultural imports and exports. The final blow to the Commission's initiative was dealt on 1 January 1981 (Greece) and 1 January 1986 (Portugal and Spain) when new members joined the ranks of the European Community. Whereas the MENA states had to pay tariffs to export their agricultural products in the European Community, Greece, Portugal and Spain, as the newest members of a tariff-free European Community, enjoyed preferential trade access. The cases of olive oil, wine and citrus fruits are the most indicative of the catastrophe the MENA states suffered from investments in the wrong sectors of their economies and added competition from newly-inserted countries in the European Community.[22]

The Euro-Arab Dialogue Platform

The Global Mediterranean Policy was soon replaced by another initiative the so-called Euro-Arab Dialogue process. In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War (Autumn 1973), the MENA states meddled with the oil industry. In the beginning, the Arab world declared the gradual decrease of its oil outputs. Then, it applied selective embargoes to European states (e.g., Netherlands), and finally quadrupled the oil's market price.[23] The French government vehemently reacted to these developments. On 6 November 1973, nine members of the European Community – Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and West Germany – signed a declaration on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The declaration called for the immediate return of the Arabs and Israelis to the table of negotiations under the U.N. Security Council's auspices and recognised for the first time the Palestinian peoples' legitimate right to statehood.[24]

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[20] Osswald and Wessels (1982), 286
[21] Lorca and Nunez (1993), 58
[22] Rosenthal (1982), 53
[23] Lieber (1976), 17
[24] Imperiali and Agate (1984), 4

Further, on 27 November, the French President Georges Pompidou met the West German counterpart Willy Brandt. In these talks, both leaders decided to introduce a unified European response against the recent developments in the Arab world.[25] They scheduled a meeting of all the European Community Leaders in Copenhagen in December to discuss their stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the meantime, the Libyan leader Abdul Jalloud delivered an influential speech in the Sixth Summit of the Arab Conference in Algiers. In his speech, Jalloud persuaded the Arab counterparts to send a diplomatic mission in Copenhagen. The mission would represent the Arab world and express the former's views and concerns over the European plans for the region. In December, the Copenhagen conference was successful concluded and the participants created a blueprint for the eventual development of the Euro-Arab Dialogue forum.[26]

The discussions between the two sides climaxed on 4 March 1974 when the Nine European Foreign Ministers formally announced from Brussels their plans to establish a cooperation scheme with the MENA states.[27] The Europeans designated the Euro-Arab forum to incite dialogue with the indignant parties of the MENA world – notwithstanding that the Netherlands were still boycotted from Arabian oil imports and international spectators criticised the European Community's affiliations with Israel. The nine ignored all these problems and set in motion the idea of a Euro-Arab Dialogue forum between the Europeans and the twenty one member-states of the Arab League. The Euro-Arab Dialogue platform assumed its mandate on 31 July 1974 in the aftermath of a meeting in Paris between representatives from the Arab League, the European Community and Commission.[28]

Interestingly, the Europeans viewed the forum mainly as a platform for economic discussions. Meanwhile, their Arab counterparts wanted to politicise the agendas of negotiations.[29] The Europeans however, also failed to project a coherent policy against the Arabs in the economic field. Each of the nine European states promoted their own economic interests, with overlapping and conflicting agendas often resulting in the breakdown of multilateral discussions. Hence, Roger Tomkys underscores that 'in commercial terms the European Community member states are competitors, not

[25] Ye'or (2005), 52-53
[26] Zakariah (2013), 96
[27] Gfeller (2012), 143
[28] Allen (1977), 328
[29] Ifestos (1987), 434

complementary in their interests, while in the wake of the first oil shock the oil producers were the world's commercial honey pot.'[30]

The presence of the Palestinian Authority in the table of negotiations was the second point of contention. Whereas the nine had already acknowledged the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to statehood, it remained to be seen who would represent them, if this was even possible, in the premises of the Euro-Arab forum.[31] In the October 1974 meeting, the twenty one Arab League states formally recognised the Palestine Liberal Organisation (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinians and called for the invitation of its representatives in the forum. This problem was partially resolved after the nine devised the so-called Dublin Compromise. This plan called for the presence of two separate delegations in the forum, a European and an Arab one. Hence, whereas the former did not invite the Palestinians at all in the forum, the latter party allowed representatives from the PLO to join their ranks and participate in the discussions with the European counterparts.[32]

The forum was disbanded in March 1979 when the Arab League left from the table of negotiations. This was triggered by Egypt's rapprochement with Israel in Camp David, where both sides signed a peace treaty. The Arab League never endorsed this treaty and asked the Europeans to criticise the clauses of the ceasefire. When the Europeans refused to do so, the Arab League representatives left from the table of negotiations.[33] The abrupt demise of the forum reveals that the dialogue never successfully touched upon any critical issues. Daniel Mockli synopsises that

> 'Yet with regard to Europe's presence in the Middle East, the dialogue failed to deliver noteworthy results. Its limited effectiveness and its purely economic dimension reflected the nine's continuing incapability, as well as their deflated ambition, to play a significant role in either the Arab-Israeli conflict or the region at large.'[34]

Transitional Period: 1980s – 1993

With the collapse of the Euro-Arab Dialogue initiative, the European Community focused on the internal front. It attempted to stop internal bickering and sought to develop a coherent approach towards the problems of the MENA world. However, each EC

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[30] Tomkys (1987), 428
[31] Dosenrode and Stubkjaer (2002), 91
[32] Allen and Hauri (2011), 95
[33] Pardo and Peters (2012), 76
[34] Mockli (2009), 342

member pursued its private interests in the region thus barring any concerted European intervention in the southern Mediterranean rim until the mid 1990s.[35] The EC initiatives though managed to establish a contact group of foreign ministers in December 1988. The contact group was created as a response to the popular uprising (intifada) that broke out in the Palestinian territories at that time. The European Community instructed the contact group to host a Middle East Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations and called for the participation of all sides to the conflict including the U.S. and the Soviet Union.[36]

Soon after the first Gulf War ended, the United States set in motion their institutional initiative in the region. This was the so-called Madrid Peace Process with the renowned Madrid Conference taking place on 30 October 1991 under the U.S. and Soviet-Russian auspices.[37] In Madrid it was decided that a long-drawn peace process would take place in two avenues: bilaterally and multilaterally. In the bilateral context, the first direct talks took place on 3 November between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the PLO in Washington. These talks finalised the terms of the ceasefires and envisaged the solution of five-year's self-administration for the Palestinian territories before any final status talks would commence. In the multilateral context, the first talks were hosted in Moscow in January 1992. The agenda concentrated on regional questions over economic growth, proper use of natural resources (e.g., oil and water), the accommodation of refugees and the political stability of the MENA states.[38] Interestingly, the European Community participated only in the multilateral part of negotiations. As Francois D'Alancon argues, 'the EC had only a side-seat at the inaugural conference in Madrid in October 1991, and in the multilateral negotiations to which Europe was admitted, the European countries were often represented in an individual capacity.'[39]

The Oslo Peace Process

The Madrid Peace discussions soon reached a diplomatic impasse. The Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Holst found a window of opportunity and invited non-participating officials from both sides, to open a new channel of covert negotiations. Fourteen rounds of secret talks were hosted in Oslo throughout 1993 under the auspices of the Norwegian government.[40] These discussions ran in parallel to the official ones in

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[35] Altunisik (2008), 107
[36] Aoun (2003), 292
[37] Golan (2015), 58
[38] Segell (1997), 5-6
[39] D'Alancon (1994), 44
[40] King (1994), 117

Washington. Initially, the covert discussions were limited to issues of economic and infrastructural development in the Palestinian territories. Soon however both sides reached a breakthrough.[41]

On 20 August 1993, both sides signed the renowned Oslo Accords, the 'Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements.' On 13 September 1993, the official representatives of Israel and the PLO ratified the clauses of the Oslo Accords in Washington.[42] The accords laid out the adoption of a phased approach for reconstructing the Palestinian territories, before any settlement comes into place. The first stage entailed the progressive removal of Israeli forces from the Jericho region and the Gaza Strip by the summer of 1994. The second precondition called for the development of an interim scheme for the Palestinian peoples to devise self-governing institutions by the end of 1998. The last phase would initiate by May 1996 and invite international consultation over the final status of the Palestinian territories. The rationale behind this phased approach was that the PLO and its Israeli counterparts need to spend some time on confidence-building measures before any sensitive issues were resolved.[43]

The European Community considered the Oslo Accords a positive step towards the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Above all, the Europeans were proud to see that the PLO representatives were acknowledged as legitimate negotiators. The PLO's presence in the table of negotiations had historically been promoted by the European Community as an important precondition towards any potential resolution of the Palestine problem. Additionally, the Europeans were relieved to see the Norwegian government's initiatives making a breakthrough into the stalled Arab-Israeli discussions.[44] Envious though that they did not possess an active role in the context of the Oslo Accords, the Europeans sought to attain greater participation in the process. This was achieved through Europe's immerse financial investment – the largest financial sponsor of the Oslo peace process – to projects related with the post-conflict rehabilitation of the Palestinian territories.[45] In the follow-up of the Oslo Accords, the U.S. government hosted a donor's meeting in Washington to garner financial resources for the eventual reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In October 1993 the donors' conference was concluded with success; international funds endowed approximately $2 billion for Palestine's financial and socio-cultural development. Outside the conference's premises, the

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[41] Shlaim (2003), 244
[42] Kaya (2012), 101
[43] Martin-Diaz (1999), 31-32
[44] Miller (2006), 643
[45] Salame (1994), 231-232

Europeans spent an additional €1 billion for modernisation projects in the Palestinian territories.[46]

Conclusion

This chapter evaluated the popular assumption that 'the Mediterranean has always been an area of interest for the EU.'[47] Under this view, European initiatives such as the Commission's Global Mediterranean Policy and the Euro-Arab Dialogue forum helped the European Community establish closer trade ties with the Mediterranean world; foster political cooperation; and inaugurated attempts to spur economic growth in the neighbourhood. These initiatives however largely failed as the MENA region gradually slid into religious violence and Europe was unable to find an effective remedy to the pressing problems. The limited participation of European negotiators in the drafting of the influential settlements in Madrid and Oslo gives further credence to this view.

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[46] Soetendrop (2002), 288
[47] Stavridis and Hutchence (2000), 37

Chapter 3: The Era of the European Mediterranean Policy

In the immediate aftermath of the Oslo Peace Process, several landmark events put the solid foundations upon which a more concerted European policy towards the MENA region was established.[48] The European Union's financial assistance towards the reconstruction of the Palestinian Territories facilitated the continuation of the Middle East Peace Process and consequently bolstered Europe's international negotiating power. Moreover, the Europeans ensured the uninhibited flow of oil and other natural resources from the southern Mediterranean shores to the northern ones via dragging the MENA world into greater political and trade interdependence.[49] Additionally, the E.U. had to devise new frameworks for the accommodation and introduction of eastern European and Balkan countries to the European family. European policymakers saw the eventual enlargement as the most effective remedy for healing the long-drawn political and ethnic divisions of the eastern periphery. Last but not least, the Europeans were concerned about Algeria's potential collapse into chaos and took measures to combat the spread of religious terrorism and political anarchy to Mediterranean Rim.[50]

The need to provide lasting solutions to all these issues was formally recognised in the European Council meeting at Lisbon in June 1992. In Lisbon, the European delegates decided to develop a framework of actions that would comprehensively resolve all the pressing issues in the Mediterranean basin. The idea behind this framework was first discussed at the European Council meeting in Corfu in June 1994.[51] The delegations pondered on the establishment of a new European-led initiative that would incite cycles of sustainable financial and socio-political development to the MENA world. The most crucial objective in this process was to prompt the MENA countries to embrace revolutionary reforms, aimed at institutional competence and financial competitiveness.[52]

The Development of a Euro-Mediterranean Project

On 24-25 June 1994, the European Council met in Corfu with the European Commission instructed to finalise a plan which would reshape Europe's Mediterranean policy.[53] In October 1994, the Commission proposed the institutionalisation of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scheme which sought to constitute the basin a free trade area. The Commission's proposal advised the European Council to work closely together with non-

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[48] Calabrese (1997), 98
[49] Edis (1998), 94
[50] Attina (2004), 150
[51] Hahn (2009), 3
[52] Marks (1996), 12
[53] Bernidaki (2006), 147

EU Mediterranean states in three fields: help the local institutions espouse greater economic reforms; work towards delimiting inter-ethnic and religious conflicts in multinational societies; and protect the northern Mediterranean shores from southward migration waves. Finally, the proposal called the European governments to direct more resources towards humanitarian aid; quicken negotiations for the snapping up of association agreements with the MENA states; and potentially integrate Turkey into a customs union scheme. A more detailed draft with the Commission's proposals was presented before the European Council at Essen in December 1994. The Council endorsed the terms of the proposal and instructed the Commission to bring into life the Euro-Med partnership initiative. In June 1995, the Cannes European Council meeting streamlined the remaining issues and called the European Ministers to meet with their MENA counterparts at Barcelona in autumn.[54]

The rationale behind the establishment of the Euro-Med Partnership initiative was to constitute the Mediterranean basin by 2010, 'the biggest free-market area in the world, covering 600-800 million people and some 30 to 40 countries.' In political terms, the objective was to elevate the basin to a 'zone of peace and stability.'[55] To attain these objectives, the EU initiated lengthy negotiations with each of the MENA countries to snap up new association agreements. These agreements would include a breadth of reforms in the financial, political and social sectors which would have to be completed by 2010, when the Euro-Med Free Trade Area (MEFTA) would be institutionalised.[56]

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative

On 26-27 June 1995, the European Council meeting in Cannes made the last configurations before the official enactment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scheme in Barcelona. The initiative was built upon three interconnected thematic areas or baskets: the political and security zone; issues of economic cooperation and development; and the human and social dimension.[57] On 25 November 1995, fifteen member states of the European Union as well as eleven non-EU Mediterranean countries and the Palestinian Authority ratified the renowned Barcelona Declaration. This declaration enacted the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Scheme (EMP), the so-called Barcelona Process. Because of its strategic contribution to the Middle East peace process, the U.S.

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[54] Calabrese (1997), 99
[55] Olson (1997), 82
[56] Attina (2004), 140
[57] Smith and Lahteenmaki (1998), 165

was invited as an observer in the Barcelona Summit.[58] According to the document's rationale, the Euro-Med initiative would 'create among the participants a comprehensive partnership, through strengthened political dialogue on a regular basis, the development of economic and financial cooperation, and the greater emphasis on the social, cultural and human dimension.'[59]

Above all, the Barcelona declaration stipulates the development of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area (MEFTA) by 2010. The EU would sign bilateral association agreements with the twelve Mediterranean Non-EU member states involved at that time in the Barcelona conference (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey).[60] According to the European Commission, these agreements would be based on three baskets of cooperation and supervision:

> 'The Declaration encompasses three main issues: (1) the political and security partnership aimed at defining a common area of peace and stability; (2) Economic and financial partnership, aimed at building a zone of shared prosperity, notably by progressively; (3) Social, cultural and human partnership, which is designed to foster exchanges between civil societies.'[61]

The EMP adopts a comprehensive three-basket approach coupled with an institutional setting which facilitates multilateral discussions between the European states and their MENA counterparts. The twenty-seven EU Foreign Ministers and the Commission meet twice per year for the evaluation and improvement of the scheme's aspirations and projects. A Committee of Ambassadors – consisted of representatives from the European Council, the Commission, EU member states and the Mediterranean Non-EU partners – prepares the agendas of the Barcelona meetings.[62] This institutional setting significantly decreases the workload and incessant travelling of foreign ministers. Therefore, Dimitris Xenakis argues that 'the EMP also has the advantage of elevating the status of the EU's Mediterranean policy to a genuinely common European policy, rather than one confined to its Southern European countries and their largely uncoordinated initiatives in the region.'[63] Contrary thus to previous initiatives, the EMP has espoused a holistic framework for discussing and solving regional issues. Yiannis Tirkides and Andreas

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[58] Lister (1997), 88
[59] European Commission (1995b), 3
[60] Apap (2002), 103
[61] European Commission (1995), 2
[62] Ginsberg (2001), 152
[63] Xenakis (2000), 86

Theophanous acknowledge this reality, contemplating that 'instead of the traditional approaches based on trade and aid, the Barcelona Process entailed a broad framework of cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean Non-Member Countries, underpinned by a rationale of linking together economic, social and political objectives.[64]' Similarly, Richard Edis concludes that 'despite some flaws the Barcelona document represented a highly fortuitous coming together of a number of positive factors and therefore a high watermark as regards the possibilities of co-operation between the EU and a highly heterogeneous group of countries.'[65]

The Euro-Med scheme was not a by-product of strategic considerations. It resulted from intense and long-standing intra-EU discussions and compromises about aligning the Mediterranean world's needs and concerns with the Central European ones. This antithesis is evident within the internal operation of the European institutional organs and the clash of interests between the two largest members of the Community, France and Germany.[66] Throughout the 1990s, France brought constantly to the European agendas Mediterranean issues, while Germany was more interested towards solving the problems of eastern neighbourhood. Roderick Pace synopsises this reality in the following excerpt: 'this ambivalence may be explained by the fact that with only five Mediterranean member states (if Portugal is considered as such) the European Union is essentially a northern-central European entity.'[67] Similarly, Timo Behr underscores that 'it is legitimate to focus on northern or southern European countries collectively when considering the prospects of the Barcelona process, for in the past at least there has been a clear north-south difference with regard to EU member-state preferences vis-à-vis European support for North Africa.'[68] Indeed, examples from Europe's attention to North African issues validate this view. Within the context of the Euro-Med Partnership, the antithetical views are spotted in the issue of Moroccan agricultural exports to Europe. Whereas the north Europeans wished to direct investments in the Moroccan economy towards exporting large quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables at low prices in the European zone, the southern EU member states were more protectionists; they thus argued in favour of investing the European aid to project that would ensure Morocco's self-sufficiency in food reserves, thus effectively sidelining the issue of agricultural exports. Interestingly, the Commission has yet to publish a mutually-acceptable

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[64] Tirkides and Theophanous (2011), 327
[65] Edis (1998), 98
[66] Calabrese (1997), 100
[67] Pace (1996), 110
[68] Behr (2015), 32

recommendation on this issue.[69] Richard Gillespie thus succinctly concludes that 'in the case of North Africa, south Europeans tend to stress the need for financial support, knowing this would come mainly from northern Europe, while north Europeans stress the importance of market access, knowing that it is south European farmers who would suffer most from north African competition.'[70]

The Euro-Med Scheme after the Barcelona Conference

The next meeting of heads after Barcelona took place in Malta's capital, Valetta in April 1997. The discussions were dominated by the collapse of the Middle East Process and the resurgence of hostilities in the Palestinian territories. Interestingly, the extent of disagreements between the Euro-Med members was such that the summative document of the Valetta's meeting was published a month later in Brussels.[71] Mutual concessions helped publish a communiqué which expressed the concerns of all Euro-Med members over the abolition of the peace process; and brief discussions over issues of Mediterranean migration, spread of terrorism and the status of human rights in the MENA region. The situation within the Euro-Med ranks deteriorated further towards the last months of 1997. A ministerial summit scheduled to be hosted in Marrakesh in October 1997 never took place. The Arab counterparts protested against Israel's participation in the Euro-Med meetings on the grounds that the latter had already resumed hostilities within the Palestinian territories.[72]

The third Euro-Med summit took place in Stuttgart in April 1999. Twenty-seven members ratified a proposal which entailed 'Guidelines for elaborating a Euro-Mediterranean Charter.' Fulvio Attina considers this proposal as 'a first step towards creating a political and security partnership worthy of such a name.'[73] The proposal proclaimed the establishment of a political dialogue forum which would fend off crises in the Mediterranean world and bolster cooperative security arrangements. Nonetheless, no practical considerations were put in this proposal, as the signatories wittingly omitted mentioning any arrangements over the political and military capital or delineating a future action plan.[74]

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[69] Barrio (1995), 49
[70] Gillespie (1997), 66
[71] Attina (2004), 151
[72] Peters (1998), 64
[73] Attina (2001), 261
[74] Ortega (2000),115

The fourth Euro-Med meeting took place at Marseilles in November 2000. For the first time in the scheme's history, the Lebanese and Syrian mission abstained in protest to the presence of Israeli delegates on the negotiating table.[75] In light of these events, the ratification of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter proposal was postponed indefinitely. As Muriel Asseburg concludes, ever since the Marseilles conference, 'it has become ever more evident that the objectives of confidence-building and regional stabilisation in the Mediterranean cannot be met in the absence of a genuine peace process or even a political solution to the core conflict in the Middle East.'[76] Progress however was recorded in the field of judicial and internal affairs. A framework proposal streamlined cooperation between the Euro-Med members on issues of justice, migration and illicit activities. This was the renowned 'Regional Cooperation Programme in the Field of Justice, Combating Drugs, Organised Crime and Terrorism as well as Cooperation in the Treatment of Issues Relating to the Social Integration of Migrants, Migration and Movement of People.' As Sarah Wolff concludes, this proposal was a glimmer of hope for the rapidly disintegrating Euro-Med institutional setting.[77]

The last important Euro-Med summit took place in April 2002 at Valencia. In Valencia, the delegates issued an Action Plan. It included proposals for reinvigorating the political dialogue between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean; established initiatives which would guarantee closer collaboration between the EU and MENA countries in financial and commercial projects; and underlined the importance of sustained cultural inter-exchanges and investments in humanitarian projects in the region.[78] The Marseilles cooperation programme was further elaborated and particular details for the extradition, trialling and inter-agency cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism were introduced. In the cultural frontier, the Valencia Action Plan proclaimed the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures which would promote a dialogue of peace between heterogeneous civilisations. This is the renowned Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria, named after the Swedish Foreign Minister, who worked closely with the Commission and the Euro-Med Partnership to create this institute.[79]

In the educational setting, the Euro-Med forum opened the Tempus programme to its MENA partners in an effort to encourage inter-university cooperation between the two

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[75] Philippart (2003), 203
[76] Asseburg (2003), 174
[77] Wolff (2012), 78
[78] Calleya (2005), 57
[79] Silvestri (2005), 391

Mediterranean shores. Last but not least, the forum promised to evaluate the prospect of developing a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and a Euro-Mediterranean Bank.[80] The former would be responsible for encouraging the political dialogue among the twenty-seven delegates of the forum whereas the latter would sponsor development projects in emerging Mediterranean economies. The main topic in Valencia was for once again the mounting violence in the Israeli-Palestinian context and not the ratification of the Euro-Med Charter for Peace. As Joel Peters argues, 'nearly half of the conclusions delivered at the end of the meeting addressed the issue of the crisis in the Middle East, with but a single sentence devoted to the Charter for Peace and Stability.'[81]

Conclusion

In overall, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scheme has brought about mixed results. There are clearly some important initiatives that need to be further elaborated and consolidated so that the region's countries deepen their relations as well as experience greater socio-political and economic growth. Typical examples are the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly, the Euro-Med Bank, the Anna Lindh foundation as well as the Tempus educational inter-exchange programme. Other aspirations seem more distant including the Euro-Med Charter of Peace and Security and the development of a MEFTA scheme in the foreseeable future. The harsh geopolitical realities in the region have halted or postponed several of these initiatives presently but there is hope that the Euro-Med scheme, as the most successful European initiative in the area, can still provide effective solutions to the majority of these problems in the long-run.

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[80] Gillespie (2003), 26, 30
[81] Peters (2006), 226

Chapter 4: The Evolution of the Barcelona Process

In its first decade of existence, the Barcelona Process greatly failed to deepen Europe's relations with the Mediterranean world.[82] It did not exert the necessary diplomatic pressure on the basin's non-EU leaderships to espouse the proposed agendas of reforms. The Euro-Med initiative did not touch upon any sensitive political and security issues in the MENA world; it fostered instead intra-Mediterranean cooperation via commercial and socio-cultural affiliation projects. The international political environment also intensified the framework's internal weaknesses. The MENA world underwent two traumatic experiences: the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process; and the resurgence of religious violence in the southern Mediterranean shores. The latter developments had a destabilising impact in the context of the Euro-Med agendas for the region. Said Haddadi thus concludes that external incidents directed the Euro-Med scheme's efforts from instilling a culture of democratic governance in the MENA states to projects geared towards securing the fragile peace in the region.[83]

Moreover, the eventual insertion of Cyprus and Malta in the European free trade area by 2004 transformed the nature of relations in the Mediterranean neighbourhood and changed the internal composition of the EMP scheme. All these developments therefore jeopardised the overall effectiveness of the EMP's initiatives in the Mediterranean world.[84] Raffaella Del Sartro and Tobias Schumacher recapped this reality in 2005 by arguing that 'when the EMP started in 1995, peace-talking characterised the Middle East, multilateralism was the sign of the times, 9/11 was a perfidious movie scenario at best, the EU had 15 Member States, and Saddam Hussein was still in power in Iraq. Almost ten years later, the Middle East peace process has collapsed, and violence characterises relations between Israel and the Palestinians.'[85]

The European Neighbourhood Policy

The idea of a comprehensive neighbourhood policy vis-à-vis the adjacent states of the European periphery was firstly conceived in the summer of 2002. Britain, Germany, Poland and Sweden proposed the establishment of a Wider Europe scheme. The initiative would help countries adjacent to Europe's eastern boundaries to eventually join the European institutions.[86] On 7 August 2002, Christopher Patten and Javier Solana, the

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[82] Schumacher (2004), 92
[83] Haddadi (2006), 178
[84] Missiroli (2004), 22
[85] Del Sartro and Schumacher (2005), 18
[86] Tulmets (2010), 315

EU's Commissioner and High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy respectively, issued a joint declaration in favour of the development of a Wider Europe scheme. The scheme's geographic orientation would look eastwards, with Ukraine and Moldova being the first two countries offered bilateral association agreements with the EU. This proposal was further refined by France which pushed for the eventual participation of the Mediterranean world in the scheme as well. Hence, on the 12th-13th of December the European Council Summit in Copenhagen decided to ratify this scheme both for Europe's eastern and southern' neighbours.[87]

On 11 March 2003, the European Commission presented an influential document on the issue, the so-called 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours.' The Commission proposed that fourteen countries were eligible to snap up association deals with Europe at that time: Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine on the eastern part; Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia on the southern flank.[88] The rationale behind the scheme rested on the assumption that 'the neighbouring countries are the EU's essential partners.' According to the Commission's view thus, the scheme had to develop ways 'to increase our mutual production, economic growth and external trade, to create an enlarged area of political stability and functioning rule of law, and to foster the mutual exchange of human capital, ideas, knowledge and culture.'[89]

The ulterior motive behind the Wider Europe – Neighbourhood scheme had been Europe's desire to further socio-political and economic participation of the Eastern and Mediterranean territories to Europe's free trade area (EFTA).[90] The European organs would develop bilateral action plans, for each potential candidate. These plans would embody the form of association agreements and include strict institutional preconditions to be attained before the latter countries can secure access to the EFTA's privileges without necessarily becoming members of the EU. Furthermore, these bilateral cooperation agreements would be constructed on the basis of a positive conditionality clause. Positive conditionality infers that countries which are more willing to espouse the suggested reforms can accede to the European institutions earlier than the more hesitant ones. The latter however, would have to come to terms with an exclusive penalty for their failure to achieve the states objectives – that is their slower integration to the EFTA

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[87] Van Vooren (2011), 151
[88] Kolotouchkina (2008), 404
[89] European Commission (2003), 3
[90] Gstohl (2014), 92

privileges and suspension of financial aid tranches.[91] In other words, the European institutions would provide all the necessary resources to help the cooperating countries eventually join the EFTA without necessarily becoming part of the European Union scheme.[92] The European Commission's document synopsises this view. In line with its rationale,

> 'The aim of the new Neighbourhood Policy is […] a framework for the development of a new relationship which would not, in the medium term, include a perspective of membership or a role in the Union's institutions. A response to the practical issues posed by proximity and neighbourhood should be seen as separate from the question of EU accession.'[93]

The Commission's proposal was ratified by the European Foreign Ministers in the Thessaloniki Council of June 2003. The Council endorsed the principles of Commission's proposal but sought to further clarify the terms under which the bilateral cooperation agreements would take place.[94] To this end, the Council instructed the Commission to develop a specialist team, the so-called Wider Europe Task Force. The task force would benchmark the targeted states in a series of institutional sectors and designate the necessary requirements to be attained before the targeted countries join the EFTA. These requirements would form the basis of action plans and the task force would help the targeted countries reach their objectives.[95]

The Commission further elaborated its proposal in May 2004 with the final draft of its recommendation, the so-called 'European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy Paper.' This document officially established the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and laid out the steps for the establishment of privileged relationships between Europe and its near-abroad: the eastern periphery and the Mediterranean basin.[96] The ENP underwent further institutional modernisation in November 2005, with another document entitled 'Implementing and Promoting the European Neighbourhood Policy' – this was the Commissions' first progress report on the whole scheme. Last but not least, the so-called 'Communication on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy to the Council and the European Parliament' was published by the Commission in December 2006. The new document assessed the progress of individual countries' action plans and adopted

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[91] Emerson (2004), 15
[92] Carr and Flenley (2007), 39
[93] European Commission (2003), 5
[94] Weidenfield (2006), 88
[95] Van Vooren (2012), 192
[96] Nowak (2012), 439

new measures for the seamless cooperation of the three European institutional organs – Commission, Council and Parliament – in their interactions with the 'associate' countries.[97]

In overall, the ENP is a concerted European approach to address the growing insecurity and economic growth concerns in Europe's Eastern and Mediterranean periphery.[98] In other words, the ENP is Europe's best guarantee to respond to the problems of a volatile geopolitical environment and to secure that its immediate neighbourhood remains stable and does not succumb to ethnic and religious turmoil in the foreseeable future. Rafaella Del Sartro and Tobias Schumacher thus conclude that the benchmarking approach of the ENP is an invaluable asset in this process, as Europe's immediate neighbours have the dim, albeit clear-cut, opportunity to enjoy free access to the EU's internal market.[99]

In broad terms, the ENP was introduced as a complementary organ and not a direct substitute of the EMP. Constanza Musu recaps this development by underlining that 'with the introduction of the ENP the Barcelona Process essentially became the multilateral forum of dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, while complementary bilateral relations were managed mainly under the ENP and through association agreements signed with each partner country.'[100] Nonetheless, Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters contend that the ENP ultimately overshadowed the EMP's framework given that

> 'The ENP abandoned the principle of regionality that was inherent in the Barcelona Process and replaced it with an explicitly differentiated and bilateral approach … Now, the regional aspects of the Barcelona Process would serve solely as a complementary role, one that would be limited to the promotion of intraregional trade and sub-regional cooperation in the southern periphery at best.'[101]

Interestingly, the ENP's bilateral approach also reversed the European institution's attention from the commercial to the political dimension. In the Barcelona Declaration context, free trade is the spearhead of Europe's approach in interacting with its near-abroad partners.[102] The promise of participation in the EFTA provides the necessary

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[97] Mahncke (2008), 26
[98] Smith (2005), 758
[99] Del Sarto and Schumacher (2005), 19
[100] Musu (2013), 173
[101] Pardo and Peters (2010), 58
[102] Zemni and Bogaert (2010), 92

regionalist incentive to Europe's neighbours for changing their *mondus operandi* in their internal political environment and modernising their financial market. With the introduction of the ENP however, a drastic change took place. Europe understood for the first time that 'trade openness is not, in itself, a sufficient generator of reform and that a deeper overhaul of practices is required.[103]' On the contrary, the ENP looks back in the history of the European Union's enlargement process, where the joining members showed relentless dedication to upholding the values of democratisation and human rights first and then invested in the deepening of commercial relations. Jeff Bridoux and Milja Kurki thus conclude that in the years of the ENP, democratisation and respect for human rights have become the most important preconditions upon which the deepening of commercial relations with the European institutions can take place.[104] However, Richard Youngs sustains that Europe's rewards policy does not work, and evokes the paradigm of Tunisia to support his argument. In line with his rationale, 'states such as Tunisia that are most desirous of economic integration with Europe show few signs of being willing to trade this against improvements in democratic rights.'[105] Youngs' argument therefore best recaps the underlying reason behind the ENP's eventual failure in correcting the wrongs of the MENA region.

The Union for the Mediterranean Scheme

On 7 February 2007, the French presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy from the city of Toulon proclaimed his aspiration to unify the whole of the Mediterranean world with the European family. In line with his inaugural speech, the conditions were ripe for 'the Mediterranean and Europe to realise that their destinies are tied together.'[106] His initial proposal entailed the assumption that the basin's coastal states would form their unique union, independent of the existing European frameworks. For President Sarkozy, the Barcelona Process did not manage to successfully revamp the financial and political sectors of Europe's Mediterranean neighbours and thus it had to be replaced by a purely Mediterranean union. The new union would adopt the paradigm of a founding father of the European Community, Jean Monnet, who in the early 1950s depoliticised the agenda of negotiations. Monnet neglected the political dimension of the newly-found European Community and directed his efforts instead on the completion of practical infrastructural projects, which would eventually create greater interdependence among the participating states. Sarkozy sought to emulate his forerunner's actions in an attempt to soothe the

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[103] Dannreuther (2009), 145
[104] Bridoux and Kurki (2014), 27
[105] Youngs (2005), 5
[106] Balfour and Schmid (2008), 1

aggravating disparities between the two shores of the Mediterranean world through the completion of infrastructural projects that would spur regional growth.[107]

Sarkozy's proposal nonetheless was not welcomed by the European family. In particular Germany and the Commission raised their own concerns over the exclusion of the European institutions from such a sensitive process and considered the initiative another substitute to the existing Euro-Med Policy.[108] Rosa Balfour and Dorothee Schmid succinctly portray the surmounting criticism on Sarkozy's proposal in the following excerpt:

> 'German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in particular, openly accused France of excluding non-Mediterranean countries in an attempt to sideline existing EU policies and hijack European funds to support French foreign policy initiatives. London announced that it would not spend an extra penny on the project, and Ankara denounced the plan as a ploy to bar Turkey from EU membership.'[109]

The Germans eventually stepped in and forced their French counterparts to diminish their ambitions on the Mediterranean Union project.[110] On 3 March 2008, the German Chancellor met President Sarkozy in Hannover to discuss the modification of the latter's proposal. In the Hannover meeting, both leaders agreed that any potential initiative should come under the umbrella of the Barcelona Process and be eligible to all EU member states. The non-Mediterranean EU members however, could only participate as observers in the forum, except in cases they put forward interesting propositions on regional issues.[111] The revamped proposal was presented at the Council's meeting in Brussels on 13-14 March 2008. The new proposal was the so-called 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' (UfM). It sought to modernise the multilateralism of EMP with a new institutional edifice and worked in parallel with the bilateral dimension of the ENP, but this time with a more specific focus on Mediterranean issues. The eventual Paris declaration of 13 July 2008 demarcated the institutionalisation of the Union for the Mediterranean scheme.[112]

The Franco-German declaration over the EMP-UfM merging entailed three interesting sections. First and foremost, the UfM would adopt an institutional structure similar to the

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[107] Delgado (2012), 46
[108] Cottey (2013), 105
[109] Balfour and Schmid (2008), 1
[110] Schumacher (2012), 92
[111] Feldman (2012), 116
[112] Tirkides and Theophanous (2011), 336

G-8 model.[113] Thus, it would appoint two co-presidents annually, one from an EU member state and one from the MENA region. Both would designate the issues under discussion in the biennial summits and provide insightful recommendations on upcoming issues. In addition, the Council announced that the UfM would inherit the EMP's headquarters in Barcelona and proclaimed the development of a representative secretariat from all the members of the UfM. Finally, the UfM's agenda would be focused on depoliticised infrastructural projects in the following sectors of public life: civil protection, education, solar energy, business growth, accommodation of refugees as well as the development of cross-border transportation networks.[114]

The underlying principle behind the UfM's institutional structure was to provide the necessary guarantees to the MENA leaderships that the present Union was not related to the European institutional structure in any way.[115] It is a depoliticised project which seeks to improve the quality of daily life of the affected populations in the basin by successfully materialising key infrastructural projects. This is the crucial difference between the Barcelona Framework and the new initiative. Whereas the EMP 'is based on a long-term objective of integration across the Mediterranean,' the UfM is a crisis-management forum, 'with a technocratic and business-oriented agenda.'[116] Hence, the Mediterranean members of the twenty eight EU states and the sixteen partners from the MENA world assume exclusive responsibility over the new scheme's institutional viability and operational effectiveness.

Postscript: The Decline of the UfM Initiative

The successful establishment of a multilateral forum, the UfM, after the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process and the resurgence of Islamic radicalism in the MENA region, could be contextually acknowledged as a political feat.[117] However, the new scheme also succumbed to the longstanding political cleavages of the southern Mediterranean shores. In overall, the problems of the MENA world are recapped into the absence of a single feat – the presence of a genuine Middle East Peace Process which would effectively conclude the Israeli-Palestinian conflict indefinitely.[118] Hence, Alun Jones rightly acknowledges that 'for the EU, the Union for the Mediterranean presents the latest in a series of artificial constructions of Mediterranean space; a macro-regional project that

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[113] Aliboni (2008), 9
[114] Falalieieva (2014), 66
[115] Whitman and Juncos (2009), 202
[116] Aliboni (2008), 10
[117] Holden (2015), 255
[118] Pardo and Peters (2010), 45

tends to gloss over the geopolitical and cultural – historical complexity of this space.'[119] Additionally, the UfM has also to accommodate diverse opinions from several participating countries. In other words, the greater the number of participants in a multilateral forum, the more difficult is to reach to a mutually acceptable framework for resolving the region's emerging challenges. Richard Gillespie thus concludes that:

> 'Growth from twenty-seven (EMP) to forty-three (UfM) states has made it harder to build consensus, not only because of numbers, but also two additional factors: the existence now of three sub-groups and the effects of increased division over Mediterranean issues within the European and Arab components, which has prevented either of them from providing impetus or direction.'[120]

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[119] Jones (2011), 55
[120] Gillespie (2013), 186

Chapter 5: Assessing the Failures of EU policies in the Mediterranean World

In overall, the European policies towards the Mediterranean basin have diachronically failed for a number of reasons. The source of evil in this regard is found on Europe's frequent change in its policies towards the Mediterranean region. The EMP was a multilateral forum geared towards providing economic incentives to the MENA leaderships for inducing democratic change.[121] With the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process however, Europe adopted the ENP, which operated in parallel with the EMP, and through bilateral association agreements promoted a stick and carrot approach for inducing democratisation. The MENA states had thus to espouse democratic changes and then gain partial access to the EFTA scheme.[122] Last but not least, when the Europeans discerned that both multilateralism and bilateralism greatly failed in delivering the expected outcomes in southern Mediterranean shores, they devised the UfM framework. The non-politicised agenda of the UfM however did not achieve its stated purpose: to deepen socio-cultural integration via multilateral projects geared towards buttressing regional peace and economic growth.[123]

Richard Youngs thus accurately concludes that the misshapen EU policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean world stems from a distorted view of European policymakers in that 'they see the southern Mediterranean as presenting soft rather than hard security challenges, with threats to stability deriving more from socio-economic tensions and weaknesses than the region's military strength or any innate, aggressive hostility on the part of the Mediterranean societies.'[124] Based on Youngs' criticism, this chapter focuses on five important developments which have effectively precluded any prospects of designating a concerted and effective European policy towards the Mediterranean world. These entail the problems of democratisation and the liberalisation of economy; Europe's protectionist policies in the south and the unrealistic objective of a Middle Eastern Free Trade Area (MEFTA); as well as the preferential treatment of Europe's eastern periphery against the southern one.

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[121] Zemni and Bogaert (2010), 92
[122] Bridoux and Kurki (2014), 27
[123] Falalieieva (2014), 66
[124] Youngs (2003), 415

Problems of Economic Liberalisation and Democratisation in the MENA world

Europe diachronically prioritised the factor of political stability in the Mediterranean above any other consideration. However, all the European initiatives in the region have greatly failed to incite the necessary requirement of political stability: an interactive political dialogue with the MENA world's representatives – the so-called linchpin of the political dimension.[125] Back in the early 1990s, intense political dialogues were the key elements that characterised the successful legacy of all the previous non-European peace and development initiatives in the area. The Oslo Peace Process for instance was heralded as pioneering in the field of political dialogue, as the Norwegian government facilitated direct interactions between the belligerent parties. Europe gradually moved away from this model, and adopted instead a type of political dialogue which is rather elliptical, paternalistic and unidirectional, given that only the European counterparts have a voice within the premises of the Euro-Med Partnership.[126]

Europe therefore, being hesitant to touch upon any sensitive issues, prioritised ever since the EMP initiative the financial dimension in its interactions with the MENA representatives.[127] Through an economic liberalisation approach, the Europeans believed that meaningful political change would occur in countries which have espoused the values of a liberal, market-oriented approach to their national economies. The economic liberalisation and free trade approach thus was promoted by the Europeans as the optimum solution for improving the MENA states' living standards via inviting foreign direct investment. The European rationale behind the adherence to this economic model rests on the assumption that it is easier for liberalised economies to attract foreign direct investment.[128] Greater influx of foreign money in turn would contribute to the creation of new jobs and business development opportunities for the local populations of the southern Mediterranean Rim. Foreign investments therefore would bring about a positive impact on the slowly developing societies of the south and increase the overall living standards. In the long-run, this economic adjustment would also facilitate political changes as liberal market economies are presumed to operate at their best on democratic

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[125] Kienle (1998), 2-3
[126] Salama (2005), 66
[127] Hollis (2000), 113
[128] Hahn (2009), 29

environments.[129] Brynjar Lia however provides an influential criticism against the European rationale in the Mediterranean world in the following excerpt:

> 'Against the background of predominantly autocratic and repressive regimes in the southern Mediterranean, it is all the more surprising that European thinking on Mediterranean security challenges has been focused on the economic aspects of underdevelopment, rather than the authoritarianism of the regimes. Curiously, there seems to be a certain degree of Marxist historicism underlying European thinking on Mediterranean security challenges in the sense that one presupposes political liberalisation to take place only when the economic basis has been put in order.'[130]

For his part, Roderick Pace sustains that economic liberalisation and democratic are intertwined phenomena.[131] Change in one field necessitates the presence of simultaneous progress in the other field. Hence, the successful liberalisation of commercial services presupposes that improvements on human rights and rule of law scores are recorded as well. Nonetheless, the failures of European frameworks in the MENA countries have proven what can happen when the economic dimension supersedes the political one. In the majority of south Mediterranean states, the ruling elites and their associates, with Europe's and U.S.' eulogies, reasserted their authority on their local political environments and eliminated almost all their political rivals. This was attained generally via the use of security forces and patronage networks and particularly with the monopolised control of natural resources and the uninhibited access to foreign sources capital and aid tranches.[132]

Hence, the problems of democratisation in the MENA region need to be addressed on a spherical manner. The present dissertation focuses on two important explanations of the phenomenon. The first concerns the sidestepping of democratisation in cases where the preservation of local, regional and international security comes first.[133] The most prevalent assumption behind security concerns towards instilling the spirit of democracy in the southern Mediterranean countries touches upon the problem of who is going to replace the authoritarian regimes. David Pervin for instance predicted that in the aftermath of a democratisation process in the Arab World 'forces opposed to peace' have

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[129] Schumacher (2004), 1
[130] Lia (1999), 33
[131] Pace (2007), 102
[132] Dillman (2002), 67
[133] Junemann (2004), 7

greater impetus and thus have more chances to ascend in the leadership of their states.[134] The fear of Islamist threat therefore withholds k the western world from enforcing radical democratisation agendas in such a geopolitically sensitive area. In other words, a purely democratic process cannot take place in the MENA region insofar as radical Islamists have already exploited this opportunity in multiple cases throughout the southern Mediterranean Rim in the past decades. Because of the growing irrelevance of political parties in autarchic environments, grassroots movements and civil society initiatives are often overshadowed by the presence of radical Islamists on their ranks. These hardliners are the major opposition centres against ruthless autocrats in the region and view democratisation as a meaningful process through which they could eventually ascend into power.[135] In line with Bernard Lewis standpoint, this is the paradox of democracy in the MENA world since 'the pressure for democratisation can fatally weaken existing regimes, with all their flaws, and lead to their overthrow, not by democratic opposition, but by other forces that then proceed to establish a more ferocious and determined dictatorship.'[136]

The second issue relates to the private sector's potential resistance towards economic liberalisation and democratisation initiatives.[137] When the ruling autocrats consolidate their primacy in the domestic affairs they immediately create a network of patrons. These patrons persuade the major and medium stakeholders of the country's private economy that democratisation is a futile process and that their interests are best served by the existing situation. The ruling elites thus often employ financial incentives (e.g., bank loans, a share from aid tranches), political threats (e.g., fear of the Islamists) or even existing value systems (e.g. beliefs in protectionism, clientelism) to purchase the private sector's loyalty. Eva Bellin thus argues that 'beyond the logic of collaborative profitability, the second variable that hinders private sector enthusiasm for democracy is fear. Private sector capital everywhere is concerned, first and foremost, with protecting property rights and securing the long-term profitability of its investments through the guarantee of order.'[138] Based on this argument therefore, Bradford Dillman concludes that so long as the banking system in North Africa remains to the hands of the state, the private sector would despise adopting meaningful political reforms.[139]

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[134] Pervin (1997), 295
[135] Cavatorta (2006), 208
[136] Lia (1999), 49
[137] Callaghy (1994), 243
[138] Bellin (2000), 181
[139] Dillman (2002), 71

Trade Imbalances and the Unrealistic Aspiration of MEFTA

Ever since the late 1970s, the geographical proximity of the Mediterranean countries helped them secure uninhibited access to the European common market through the conclusion of preferential cooperation agreements.[140] Hence, barring the agricultural products, no quota and tariff restrictions were in place for the southern Mediterranean industrial exports in the European space. However, the presence of preferential trade measures vis-à-vis the Non-EU Mediterranean countries did more harm than good in the end. The flip side of preferential trade agreements was that the southern Mediterranean countries eventually surrendered their total sum of tariff revenues from the shipment of industrial products to EU countries. Given that approximately the 48% of total industrial imports in the Mediterranean Rim is destined towards European member states, the revenue loss for the non-EU members in the region is at least substantial.[141]

The imbalanced liberalisation of the commercial markets in the southern Mediterranean shores therefore hurt the local economies. The asymmetric nature of trade in this environment mainly stems from the distorted reciprocity of trade.[142] Whereas Europe retains the lion's share of imports in the region, the Barcelona framework did little to boost the trading capabilities of the south Mediterranean neighbours. The strongest commercial sectors in the south Mediterranean basin are agriculture, the textile industry, and cheap industrial products. These industries however also characterise the national economies of the northern Mediterranean countries (e.g., Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Portugal). These countries have an additional advantage in their competition with the southern Mediterranean counterparts. This is the presence of tariff and quota-free exports of agricultural products within the EFTA region.[143] Europe's protectionist policies in the agricultural sector thus give further credence to the argument that Europe conspired against the southern Mediterranean economies in that the latter experienced uneven liberalisation of trade. As Robert Landis argues, EU protectionism in the region deprives approximately 'nearly $700 billion in export income a year. That is almost fourteen times more than poor countries receive in foreign aid.'[144]

The subsequent EU enlargement eastwards unveiled this problem, with the insertion of the Eastern countries in the EFTA posing insurmountable pressures to the trading

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[140] Tovias (1998), 77
[141] Hoekman (1998), 90
[142] Escribano (2000), 32
[143] Tank (1998), 179-180
[144] Landis (2010), 1

capabilities of the southern Mediterranean states.[145] The latter thus sought to renegotiate the terms of their commercial cooperation with Europe. The renewed association agreements in the Mediterranean world, contrary to the ones concluded with the Eastern European states, mainly because of the volatile security situation, did not however press for the liberalisation of national economies and the further democratisation of the MENA leaderships. Hence the non-EU Mediterranean countries eventually found themselves entrapped into a situation where revenues from trade exports were virtually absent and the local economies were heavily regulated from autocratic circles and patronised networks.[146]

In light of these developments, the south Mediterranean countries have started establishing bilateral free trade agreements with the United States. The only precondition laid out by the U.S. in the new free-trade agreements entails the promise for the progressive liberalisation of their national economies.[147] In other words, the U.S. offers lucrative free trade deals with countries which espouse an open-market economy, and thus indirectly, conform to the principles of democratisation. Through this policy, the U.S. hopes to create a domino effect of democratisation in the region via the presence of cumulation clauses.[148] These clauses are present in bilateral agreements of the U.S. with the MENA counterparts and stipulate that the neighbouring states of U.S. trading partners could eventually export their products in designated U.S. Free Trade Area with tariff and quota exemptions. Therefore, ever since July 2006 when Oman joined the club of Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Morocoo, the U.S. has successfully created an idiotypic model of a virtual Free Trade Area (FTA) in the MENA region.[149]

These problems thus indicate that the potential for a creation of a Euro-Med Free Trade Area (MEFTA) in the future seems to be a distant aspiration. The major problem in this process is related to the sustainability of the initiative given that several commercial, political and cultural issues come up to the surface. First and foremost, even before the deposition of the autarchic governments in the region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring revolts, the international spectators could not envisage the less rough pathways through which trade liberalisation would take place in the MENA economies.[150] As trade is a state-protected sector in most of these countries, economic liberalisation is a strenuous

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[145] Kienle (1998), 5
[146] Sapir (1998), 726
[147] White (2005), 600
[148] Momani (2007), 1687-1688
[149] Ehteshami and Wright (2007), 915
[150] Knowles (2005), 163

process which often disturbs the existing status quo and undermines the cohesion of the affected societies. Hence in line with Gonzalo Escribano and Alejandro Lorca

> 'Governments should keep a balance between the winners and the losers of the process, while preserving social stability. This is a difficult exercise, as far as the elites will be threatened by the tax reform, foreign competition for import substituting industries and, dealing with public sector officials, processes like privatisation and reform of the administration.'[151]

Similarly, in the open-market systems, competition is a vital component. However, because of the long-standing socio-economic stagnation of the peoples in the southern Mediterranean world, it is difficult to envisage ways through which southern products, especially in the agricultural sector, would gain a competitive advantage within the European market.[152] Jamal Bouoiyour raises this issue in relation to Morocco's exports. In line with his frame of thought, 'the creation of the Europe-Mediterranean Free Trade Area is an opportunity in order to establish the basic option on the axes of business co-operation, but is not sufficient to make the products exported by Morocco competitive in the EU market against a background of growing competition.'[153]

Another dimension of the MEFTA's sustainability problems is spotted in the cultural elements of the liberalisation and democratisation process. Before any effective intervention, Europe has at first to pick a side in the internal political environment of the MENA countries and then establish a common line of communication.[154] This line of communication would either follow the pathway of cooperating with totalitarian and unpopular leaders and their surrounding elites; or striving towards a more grassroots approach and bolstering opposition movements and civil society initiatives, which are however, led by radical Islamists. Francois Burgat thus contemplates that 'the EU has been unable to identify, among the organised opposition parties, civil society or religious actors – the partners that might be in a position to offset the unpopularity of its official contacts.'[155]

Inextricably linked to this development is the growing mistrust of the Arab societies to the western world's meddling with the regional and local actors. The breadth of dissent from the local publics towards the western policies in the MENA world can be easily

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[151] Escribano and Lorca (2001), 61
[152] Josling (2011), 154
[153] Bouoiyour (2007), 104
[154] Tsinisizelis and Xenakis (2006), 93
[155] Burgat (2009), 622

divulged from the polemic rhetoric of the Arab leaders vis-à-vis the western world. The paradigm of the former Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad's infuriating speeches; the resurgence of transnational terrorist movements based on the world vision of Islamist extremism (e.g., Al-Qaeda); and the immerse impact of the Prophet Muhammad cartoon illustrations are indicative paradigms for this allegation.[156] Hence, as Gonzalo Escribano and Alejandro Lorca argue, 'for many people from the Maghreb, the Euro-Mediterranean FTA is a European diktat backed by the local westernised elites.'[157] Based on this viewpoint therefore, the prospect of the MEFTA initiative in the long-run seems to counteract with the local publics' predisposition that the present initiative would be another indication of western colonialism towards the MENA world.

The last dimension that undermines the viability of the MEFTA initiative touches upon the horizontal cooperation and integration prospects of the MENA world to the European-led process. In the MENA region, several countries retain hostile relations and this undeniably hinders seamless integration and cooperation into a single Free Trade Area scheme.[158] Each south Mediterranean country cannot alone gain the necessary competitiveness to contend against commercial hubs such as Brazil, China or even Indonesia. For this reason, each small market in the region must accept to be merged into a larger marketplace so that it can direct its products on a global basis. Based on this realisation, the Arab states must be prepared to engage themselves into commercial relations not only with the European counterparts but also their immediate neighbours. Post-revolutionary Egypt for instance is severely isolated from its eastern neighbours as any potential trade routes have to pass through Israeli soil, and the remaining ones which lead to markets in Jordan and the Saudi Arabia necessitate modernisation.[159] Eberhard Rhein thus underscores that

> 'This requires that goods produced in Egypt, for example, can move without trade obstacles, not only to the European Union but also to the Maghreb and other neighbouring countries. The whole region must be perceived as one big market place where it is possible to invest and to trade without restrictions.'[160]

These are in sum the most important issues which hinder the effective development of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (MEFTA) scheme in the upper future. Cultural

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[156] Saunders (2008), 308
[157] Escribano and Lorca (2001), 61
[158] Chatelus (1996), 100
[159] Wilson (2013), 149
[160] Rhein (1998), 12

predispositions, socio-economic and political realignments as well as problems in the inter-state relations in the MENA region preclude prospects for the eventual materialisation of such an ambitious scheme.

The Discrepancies of Europe's Enlargement Policies in the East and South

The European idea to incite simultaneous enlargement both eastwards and southwards has been a positive development. However, this enlargement was attained after a series of mutual compromises have taken place between France and Germany, the EU's two leading countries.[161] The former has consistently pressed for the greater inclusion of the Mediterranean world to the European family whereas the latter has diachronically focused on Europe's eastern periphery. For its part, Germany accepted to provide the Mediterranean countries with free trade arrangements via the institutionalisation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scheme. This initiative was an equivalent substitute for the Mediterranean to German plans for Europe's eventual eastwards and northwards enlargement. This orientation nonetheless created a two-speed enlargement process in the European space with a detrimental impact on the Mediterranean world.[162]

Incentivised thus by the prospect of EU membership, the Eastern European republics were more willing to adopt radical reforms in their socio-economic and political environment as compared to the Mediterranean counterparts. As Stephen Calleya argues, 'the prospect of EU membership constitutes a far more powerful leverage for economic and political reforms than the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The EU's financial support per capita for the accession countries is about six times higher than for the Mediterranean partner countries.'[163] This phenomenon is best illustrated in the crucial distinction between the notions of membership and partnership in the European space. The EU member states enjoy the privilege of the so-called 'four freedoms': movement of capital, people, products and services. On the contrary, the Euro-Med partners do not have similar access to those privileges despite having secured their entrance to the EFTA.[164] Trade barriers and tariff schemes bar imports of agricultural products in the European space; visa schemes surveil the free movement of non-EU people in the EFTA; and banking restrictions are in place for capital exchanges and the diffusion of services from the southern Mediterranean states to the European space.

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[161] Tatham (2009), 88
[162] Charfi and Zouari (2012), 78
[163] Calleya (2005), 6-7
[164] Muller-Jentsch (2005), 15

The European Council therefore may have promoted dissimilar integration strategies in the Mediterranean and its Eastern periphery, partly because it had different expectations from each case. As the European policymakers have openly admitted it in the later years, the strategic vision for the Mediterranean was to induce the MENA leaders into a cooperative security and development arrangement and not press for socio-economic and political reforms.[165] The instillation of democratic values and a system based on liberal economy were thus agents of maintaining local and regional peace and security in the southern Mediterranean Rim. On the contrary, the Europe's Eastern periphery was a critical geopolitical space. The positive conditionality clauses, which were not fully enforced to the Mediterranean partners, were strict benchmarking criteria for the countries opting out for EU membership. Hence, the different application of the conditionality system in Europe's eastern periphery reveals that the EU wanted to secure adherence to the accession prerequisites at all costs, before the latter republics joined the ranks of European institutions.[166] Stefania Panebianco succinctly recaps this development in the following excerpt:

> 'The EU policy of positive support of democracy in Eastern Europe is designed to prepare the Eastern European Republics for membership, but this form of positive conditionality to bring about democracy by convergence cannot be used in the Mediterranean, since no country on the southern shore can ever expect to become a member of the EU.'[167]

Chourou's viewpoint can be easily evaluated from a quick comparison of the relative success of the aid programmes directed towards Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean world. The MEDA (accompanying measures) programme was initiated by the European Commission to help the partner countries in the Mediterranean world espouse political and financial liberalisation and widen the range of their inter-exchanges.[168] The inception behind this initiative differentiated from the traditional notions of development: the MEDA was the financial mechanism of the EMP framework and thus was solely entrusted with sponsoring EMP projects. MEDA's *mondus operandi* rested on the positive conditionality clause and the sponsoring of projects was adjudicated on the basis of recorded progress by the MENA counterparts in the three basket areas of the Barcelona framework. The MEDA initiative was an adaptation of the already existing

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[165] Youngs (2003), 417
[166] Schmid (2004), 405
[167] Chourou (2004), 33
[168] Schlumberger (2000), 255

PHARE programme which was geared towards the integration of the candidate states to the European family.[169]

As the name reveals its original purpose, the PHARE (Poland and Hungary Aid for the Reconstruction of the Economy) programme was devised in January 1990 by the Commission to establish cooperation with Poland and Hungary for meeting the pre-accession criteria and eventually joining the ranks of the European institutions.[170] The programme's scope was quickly expanded to cover the majority of Central and Eastern European candidate countries and helped them undertake liberal economy and democratic reforms. By the early 1995 and onwards the PHARE programme became synonymous with Europe's association agreements as it was the responsible body for setting the positive conditionality clauses in each candidate state's bilateral action plan. Unlike its MEDA counterpart nonetheless, serious penalties of financial and political nature complemented the non-adherence to these preconditions as all the EU candidates had to show firm commitment towards serving the stated purposes before even accession talks took place.[171] On the contrary, the EU adopted a more reserved stance vis-à-vis the Mediterranean partners, as the leverage of EU accession was absent from their own commercial agreements. Hence as Bradford Dillman concludes,

> 'Europe has yet to operationalise the political conditionality associated with its MEDA credits. In effect, partial economic liberalisation and market reforms backed by EU MEDA grants and associated loans from the European Investment Bank had illiberal effects on southern Mediterranean economies, leading to a re-concentration of economic power.'[172]

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[169] Holden (2004), 544-545
[170] Niemann (2006), 67
[171] Smith (1998), 253
[172] Dillman (2002), 73

Chapter 6: Conclusion - Mitigating the Rise of Islamist Radicalism in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring Revolts

In the beginning of 2011, the majority of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries were shaken by an intense wave of popular uprisings. Young protesters revolted in an attempt to press the autarchic regimes in the region for eventually embracing democratic change. This is the phenomenon of the Arab Spring, which brought about unprecedented upheaval in the Mediterranean world.[173] Interestingly however, the international pressure for the greater democratisation of the MENA leaders ushered the return of radical Islamist parties to the local political setting. Khalil Al-Anani recaps this phenomenon in the following excerpt:

> 'The rise of Islamist parties is one of the main features of the political landscape in the new Middle East. After decades of brutal repression and exclusion, the Arab Spring opened the doors of power for Islamists. From Morocco to Egypt, Islamist parties have fared well in elections held since the eruption of revolts in early 2011.'[174]

Furthermore, the rise of radical Islamism in the MENA countries undermined international efforts for the consolidation of peace and prosperity in a sensitive region and drastically reshaped the regional political dynamics.[175] Longstanding alliances or political rivalries were reconsidered; the transitions of authority from the autarchic leaders to the democratic rulers were marred by violence; and new proxy wars were came to the surface, with Syria and Libya being the most severe ones. The spill-over effect of these conflicts to the Mediterranean neighbourhood exerted insurmountable pressures to the local governments for issues well beyond their organisational and operational capabilities. These mainly concern the accommodation of incoming refugees and the dispersion of conflict to neighbouring countries. The two countries mostly affected by these two developments are currently Syria's immediate neighbours, Jordan and Lebanon.[176] Rick Gladstone thus concludes that 'the refugees streaming out of Syria have put severe stress on neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, which have absorbed

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[173] Byman (2012), 25-26
[174] Al-Anani (2012), 466
[175] Asseburg (2013), 47-48
[176] Bitar (2013), 3-4

more than two million of them since the Syrian conflict began 30 months ago. Now, Europe is beginning to feel the effects of the refugee crisis.'[177]

The Barcelona Framework Can Neutralise the Spread of Islamist Radicalism in the Mediterranean World

Ever since the September 11 attacks in the U.S., the Europeans adopted a crisis management approach towards the MENA region. Based on this approach, they cut off any lines of communication with civil society and grassroots representatives of the Islamist world – focusing instead on the securitisation of the MENA region.[178] Interestingly however, whereas the Europeans effectively isolated the Islamists from the table of discussions, the MENA states exploited the incidents of 9/11 as a point of leverage. The thus frequently raised the issue of terrorism in the multilateral panels and managed to extract additional funding for developing counter-terrorist and insurgency projects on a local level.[179] The presence of these two phenomena however disenchanted the Islamist world. Richard Youngs recaps this reality in the following excerpt:

> 'Most Islamists are not even aware of EU policy initiatives in the sphere of de-radicalisation. Few know about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), and even less the ENP. They blame the EU for this, in conniving with Arab governments to exclude Islamists from these initiatives. With no place for Islamists in either the EMP or the ENP, these policies are criticised as initiatives designed to contain rather than engage with Islam.'[180]

However, the absence of a multilateral approach to fostering inter-cultural dialogue in Europe does not preclude the presence of bilateral attempts at more informal levels. Investigative journalist Martin Bright for instance revealed that the British government had developed informal channels of communication, via the Muslim Council of Britain, with members of the Muslim Brotherhood party in Egypt and Hezbollah in Lebanon.[181] Hezbollah also welcomed channels of covert discussions with French, Italian and Spanish delegates. This was a sign of gratitude towards the former countries' contribution to the drafting of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 of 11 August 2006, which effectively ended the thirty three-days' war between Israel and Hezbollah and update the

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[177] Gladstone (2013), 1
[178] Kausch and Youngs (2009), 968
[179] Boubekeur (2009), 6
[180] Youngs (2010), 53
[181] Bright (2006), 26

U.N. peacekeeping mission in Lebanon.[182] Therefore, there are successful precedents upon which the Europeans can built on effective channels of communication with the seemingly more radicalised parts of the MENA societies and thus initiate a meaningful reconciliation process based on an ceaseless dialogue.

In the Barcelona framework, the most influential legacy in this context comes from the April 2002 summit in Valencia. The renowned Action Plan of the Valencia Summit included among others an initiative undertaken by the Swedish foreign minister Anna Lindh together with the Commission and Euro-Med officials.[183] This was the establishment of the renowned Anna Lindh Foundation (for the Dialogue between Cultures) in the city of Alexandria in Egypt. The foundation is focused towards enlightening the younger generations on shared understanding and respect for each others' cultural upbringings. Its areas of operation include among others: cultural communication events, educational initiatives, environmental financing projects, human rights campaigns, scientific discourses, as well as the development of grassroots networks for the empowerment of women in the MENA world and elsewhere.[184]

In conclusion, and as Johannes Maerk succinctly mentions, at the height of the Arab Spring revolts, and despite increasing calls for the closure of the foundation, this 'sponsored various academic, cultural, and artistic projects linking Euro-Mediterranean NGOs and held a number of conferences and meetings on intercultural and civilisational dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region.'[185] Similarly, Rafaella Del Sarto indicates that 'inter-cultural dialogue as conceptualised by the Anna Lindh Foundation in the framework of the EMP notably differs from the practice of inter-cultural dialogue that has characterised recent years.'[186] The solution therefore is present for the eventual re-integration of the Islamist element into the stalled cultural dialogue in the MENA region and perhaps the resumption of the frozen Middle East Peace Process. The Anna Lindh Foundation can assume the role of Europe's official and unbiased interlocutor, where it can establish a meaningful and interactive discussion with the moderate elements of the revolted societies in the southern Mediterranean rim. The Barcelona framework thus has still things to offer in the modern context, provided that the appropriate mechanisms take over the leadership in discussing and settling such sensitive issues, as the Arab Spring revolts.

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[182] Filiu (2010), 122
[183] Behr (2015), 39
[184] Bouris (2011), 97
[185] Maerk (2012), 58-59
[186] Del Sarto (2015), 46

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