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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mediterranean basin has traditionally played a strategic role in international relations. Throughout history, the sea has witnessed the creation of multiple links among the different neighbors. Over the past few years, a series of initiatives have been launched aiming to find solutions for the multiple problems that affect the region. There are multiple and wide-ranging initiatives that require close multilateral cooperation.

Despite the recent attention that the area has received, not only by the European Union, but also from other regions of the world, the expected goals have not been yet fulfilled. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the key organizations as well as the problems that they have encountered. The Barcelona Process and the new Barcelona Process, the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Neighborhood Policy, the NATO dialogues, and the Summit 5+5 will be analyzed, as well as some other projects that are currently in place in the region.

INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean basin has historically been a strategic enclave for Europe and Western societies. This small inland sea, surrounded by twenty States, is the place where tensions between North and South are reflected to a greater extent. However, the disagreements and tensions have opened the door to cooperation and political dialogue between the European Union (EU) and its neighbors.

Despite the strong commitment to dialogue, the differences between both sides of the Mediterranean are so conspicuous that finding a solution is neither fast nor easy. Moreover, these differences call for the adoption of mechanisms that address multiple areas.

Cooperation in the region is essential and, in this sense, Europe has carried out scores of projects that seek to create a prosperous and peaceful area. While these goals have not yet been achieved, some international organizations have implemented actions in the same direction, with the likely result of an overlap between initiatives.

The main objective of this paper is to identify the main reasons for the failures of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and other initiatives. We also seek to determine which system, or combination of systems, will be more effective in reaching the goals set by the EU. In so doing, we will take into account the history, specificities and idiosyncrasy of the region and the complex network woven by different international organizations.

The first part of the paper will introduce some relevant geopolitical and socio-economic aspects of the Mediterranean basin as well as the major concerns of both seashores. Due to the extension of the paper, we cannot cover in depth all the issues that affect the region. However, our analysis will provide the essential tools to understand the key role that this region plays and to assess the potential impact of the cooperation initiatives that have already been implemented. We will also analyze the international associations and projects that are currently in place. In the second part, we will identify and evaluate the partnerships that are essential to our analysis. We close this paper with the principal conclusions and recommendations.

I. MULTILATERALISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

Because of the large number of projects that have been tested in the region, any initiative runs the risk of criticism. One could argue that any new action undertaken by international organizations would just add more intricacy to the network that already exists.

Several countries are involved in an evident amalgam of projects, many of which address the same topic. For instance, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, collaborate in the Barcelona Process, the initiative 5+5 and the NATO. Some of the aspects addressed by these initiatives are exactly the same. As a consequence, efforts are multiplied and results are not as fruitful as expected.

1. SINGULARITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

The Mediterranean basin presents a series of problems that affect the relationships between the different actors engaged. From the European standpoint, the region is vital in four main issues: the EU energy policy, unrest in the Middle East and the Maghreb, pressing migration flows, and increasing militarization. The area currently faces severe challenges-including the

fact that Europe has a direct border in Africa through the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla- which requires the EU to engage in multilateral action conditioned by several geopolitical complex factors that calls for soft diplomacy. Despite these problems and the widespread tendency to treat the area as a problem rather than as an opportunity, the adoption of the proper cooperation tools could deliver vast benefits to both sides of the Mediterranean.

Within the series of challenges that the region currently faces, immigration is one that has received a lot of attention. Firstly, immigration is a global phenomenon that affects the home, the host, and the transition countries. The Maghreb countries act as corridor between sub Saharan Africa and Europe bringing in problems such as lack of resources and security. Europe cannot ignore the fact that a large percentage of the migration flows arrive from the Mediterranean countries and it is, therefore, necessary to create new mechanisms of control and security that rest on the cooperation with the home and transition countries and that follow international law. The simple argument that the differences in population growth between the north and the south shores of the Mediterranean lay on cultural differences endangers the stability of the region. Population growth is mainly determined by the economic, social and historical context, the policies implemented by the government, and by the education standards.

Regarding energy, Europe is a major importer of both oil and gas, and it is extremely dependent on external sources of energy. The oil crisis of the seventies pushed European countries to change their energy policies towards a diversification of both suppliers and primary energy sources (Becker, 2007:3). Nowadays, the EU faces an upward trend of increasing energy consumption and dependence on foreign sources that has increased by nine points (Eurostat 2007:23). The implementation of diversification tools requires that the European countries develop cooperation mechanisms with neighboring countries. In this sense, the Mediterranean partners play a key role.

On the security front, the European countries acknowledge that the new borders and the future enlargements will bring new sources of instability and renewed challenges. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is an issue that concerns not only the Europeans, but also the rest of the world. The geographical proximity of the Union to potential areas of conflict and its large bargaining power has transformed the European Union in one of the key players in this pressing matter. This is reflected in the several initiatives that some international

organizations and Europe itself are developing in the region. These initiatives include sections on security, conflict resolution and mediation.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that economic development as well as the democratization of the southern countries are two priorities for Europe. It is frequently argued that economic development through more investment from both public and private sectors will lead towards democratization. While this argument has been the subject of an intense debate, no one can deny that economic growth and development are needed in the region. Moreover, democratization and political transparency have yet to become a reality. These are tasks that require action from both sides of the Mediterranean.

Given the nature of these singularities, it is not surprising that the EU has sought to create and maintain strong ties with its southern neighbors, particularly following the entry of Greece, Portugal, and Spain. However, most of the issues analyzed also have an impact on the international arena. This explains the recent proliferation of international initiatives that involve the Mediterranean basin. This proliferation has highlighted the need to devote more resources to the region. However, it has also resulted in coordination deficiencies and in the imposition of Western standards.

2. COOPERATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: AN AMALGAM OF INITIATIVES

As we have already stated, we believe that soft diplomacy is the best tool to address the current situation in the Mediterranean region. One of the mechanisms inherent to soft diplomacy is the creation of new cooperation tools that we will describe below. It is commonly accepted that finding global solutions is a complex task that involves many social layers. During the last decades, policy makers have come to understand that a peaceful environment plays a key role in domestic security. Meanwhile, globalization has diluted borders and shortened distances and physical remoteness does no longer ensure domestic security. It is precisely in this context that several international initiatives that included multiple areas of action were launched in the region. While some of the initiatives are backed by experience, others are new and it is still early to develop an assessment of their outcomes.

In what follows, we will describe the most important initiatives that are currently taking place in the Mediterranean basin, paying special attention to those that are more relevant to the aforementioned goals of our analysis.

2.1 The Euro Mediterranean Association (EMP): It is also known as the “Barcelona Process”. It was launched in November 1995 in Barcelona under the Spanish presidency of the European Council. The EMP constitutes today the most important initiative of the region, and it has recently received a new impulse from the French Presidency under a new reformulation “The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”.

The EMP is currently composed of every member of the European Union and twelve Mediterranean countries. Recently, after the Lisbon meeting, Albania and Mauritania have joined the Process, thus increasing the number of participants. Libya is the only Mediterranean country that does not belong to the Association but it participates as a permanent observer.

2.2 The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP): It was designed for the countries on the EU’s southern and eastern borders that would not enter the EU in the foreseeable future. The essential idea behind the ENP is that the stability of neighboring countries is a necessary condition for stability in Europe itself. Although initially the ENP was adopted to deal with the Eastern European countries, it finally included the Mediterranean countries as well. This extension to the South was due to the pressure exerted by the Southern European countries. Currently, the beneficiaries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as well as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Russia is not included because it maintains special relations with the EU. Turkey is not included either because as a candidate for full membership it cannot be an ENP beneficiary.

2.3. SUMMIT 5+5: Despite the strong sub-regional component of this initiative, it has been particularly well received. It is the only partnership in which Libya participates in a formal and active way. The participating members are France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain on the one hand, and Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia on the other. The objective of the 5+5 is to launch a regional framework for dialogue and cooperation that includes issues of security and stability, economic integration and regional migration. In December 2004, an

agreement for security cooperation was signed in Paris under the umbrella of the 5+5 initiative giving new impetus to the role of this group.

2.4.NATO and the Mediterranean: The relationship between NATO and the Mediterranean countries rests on two main initiatives: the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which share many of their goals.

This initiative reflects the Alliance's view that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The countries that participate in these projects are the 26 members of NATO¹ plus seven Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

2.5.The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):

The OSCE, with its 56 members, is currently the largest security organization in the world. The fact that some OSCE States border the Mediterranean and that the countries of the Mediterranean region share historical, cultural, economic and political ties with the OSCE area, makes it evident that there is a Mediterranean dimension to European security.

Over the years, the OSCE has been able to share its experience with the Mediterranean Partners for cooperation on a considerable number of topics including: confidence-building, OSCE as a platform for dialogue and the fostering of norms of behavior; the security model for the twenty-first century and new threats to security and stability; OSCE human dimension commitments; OSCE economic and environmental dimension commitments; media and the new technologies; comprehensive approach to security, and migration and integration policies, among others. Despite some fruitful results, it is worth mentioning that the "forum" character of this initiative has weakened its ability to further its goals.

Nowadays, the regular contact between OSCE and the Mediterranean partners is guaranteed by the organization of yearly summits and ministerial meetings. In this sense, the involvement of the Mediterranean partners is threefold: (i) they participate as observers in the OSCE Ministerial Council Meetings; (ii) they are invited to attend relevant meetings, including the

¹ The 26 members currently are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

implementation meetings of all three dimensions of OSCE -the political-military, the economic and the human dimension, and (iii) they are invited to regular meetings with the OSCE Ministerial Troika² and the Secretary General (OSCE, 2007:104).

2.3 The Alliance of Civilizations: One of the most recent partnerships is the Alliance of Civilizations advanced by Spain and Turkey in 2005 and that has just recently begun to take its first steps. The United Nations itself has welcomed the initiative and even though the framework for this partnership is not exclusively located in the Mediterranean, the fact remains that it is designed as a response to Huntington's so-called "Clash of Civilizations", with a particular emphasis placed on the relations between Islamic and Western societies.

The organization is composed by a High Representative, Jorge Sampaio, appointed by the former UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan; a High Level Group, elected by Kofi Annan along with the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. There are twenty leaders who work and advise on actions to be followed by the Alliance. Finally, the last component is the Group of Friends, which is a network of collaborators from all around the world.

The first Forum of the Alliance took place in January of 2008. Attendance was very high and it showed the interest of the organization to involve both civil and academic actors as a tool to propel an improvement in the understanding between cultures. Despite the high level of attendance, media impact was scarce. Moreover, the broad objectives of the Alliance together with the vast number of initiatives already in place augur scant results.

Besides these initiatives, there are others such as the **Mediterranean Forum**, which has been diluted progressively into the Barcelona Process but maintains its independence and its consultative capacity; the **Euro-Arab dialogue**, a forum created by the oil-producing countries and the European Union, and the **bilateral agreements** that the EU maintains with each country on an individual basis. The few ties that are woven into the region have created large knots that will be difficult to disentangle.

² AS of 2008, the Troika is composed of Finland, Greece and Spain.

The vast number of initiatives and their informal features lead us to anticipate, even before analyzing them deeper, that they generate confusion and, in some cases, even contradictions.

II. MAIN REGIONAL INITIATIVES: AN ANALYSIS

The European Union, the United States of America and the countries that surround the Mediterranean have implemented a vast number of initiatives. While we do not seek to identify the optimum strategy, we do hunt for the system that could improve the cooperation with the Mediterranean basin. This system could function through the partnerships, associations, forums, and/or dialogues that are already in place or through a combination of some of them. What is clear is that understanding and analyzing the past and the present as well as the challenges that these organizations face should be the first step towards a more effective political framework in the region.

Among all the initiatives that are already in place, we have selected those that we consider as the most effective; the Barcelona Process, the European Neighborhood Policy, the NATO Dialogue, and the Summit 5+5. The Barcelona Process and ENP are both carried out by the European Union, NATO reflects the United States interests and the Summit 5+5 is an initiative launched by a number of different countries that involves the EU only as an observer.

1. THE BARCELONA PROCESS

The Euro-Mediterranean Association is the result of previous policy experiences that in 1995 gave final shape to what later would be considered as one of the great projects of the region. The Mediterranean Global Policy (MGP) launched by France in 1972 allowed Europe to expand towards the south. However, it was not as effective as Europe had wished (Gillespie, 1999:137). With the entry of Greece, Portugal and Spain, Europe changed its center of gravity and it moved further to south, relatively displacing the attention that had been placed in Central Europe (Pujol, 2005:2)

In a troubled era, marked by the conflicting interests in the Sahara conflict, the German reunification and the future enlargement towards the East, the dissolution of the former Soviet

Union called for European action. It was precisely at this moment when initiatives such as Phare and Tacis were adopted.³ The enactment of these tools was compensated with the allocation of aid to Southern Europe (Florensa, 2007:141). It was in this context that the EMP was formally initiated by the Barcelona Declaration, adopted in November 1995 by the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the Member States of the European Union and 12 Mediterranean countries.⁴

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership is based on three pillars or baskets: political and security cooperation, financial and economic cooperation and social, cultural and human cooperation. The objectives of each basket are independent and defined separately. Thus, the goals are: the promotion of democracy and human rights; regional and sub regional development; decreasing the gap between north and south, and the establishment of a free trade area by 2010. The novelty of including civil society into this initiative is a feature worth mentioning.

The hypothesis assumed was that economic modernization would lead to economic progress and economic progress would bring everything else. The mechanisms in place include the Ministerial Conferences of Foreign Affairs that usually meet once a year, the Barcelona Committee composed of representatives from each member country, and the Parliamentary Assembly. The Barcelona Process has delivered only partial results and the stagnation that has suffered from time to time has led to raise some voices against the project.

Regarding the first basket, the most relevant fact is that it was stagnant since the beginning. There are major disagreements regarding politics and security that have become obstacles to the development of the process. It is widely accepted that the reality of this basket is almost nonexistent. As a result of this deficiency, the vast majority of actions implemented focus on the economic aspects. In this sense, we need to evaluate the outcome of the economic realm.

Within the positive developments, we highlight the signing of the Treaty of Association. The fact that this Treaty was signed relatively late has had an impact on its outcome (Florensa, 2007:143). To be sure, countries such as Morocco and Tunisia that signed the Treaty

³ Phare and Tacis were designed as tools for Eastern and Central European countries. Phare targets countries that will enter the EU in the foreseeable future. Tacis's goal is to help Eastern European and Central Asian countries transit to market economies. These two instruments, together with the MEDA program, have become part of the ENP.

⁴ The Mediterranean countries are Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Albania and Mauritania have recently become members of the Association.

relatively early have enjoyed benefits vis-à-vis countries that signed in later. We believe that this fact is crucial to understand the development of the Barcelona Process as is often fiercely criticized without taking into account that certain agreements have been set up later than expected.

While it is true that some countries have experienced economic improvement, such as Morocco, the overall result has been less favorable than expected. The conflicts that have engulfed the area, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, the strained relations in the Western Sahara, and the tense relations between Algeria and Morocco, have had a negative impact on stability, a key variable for investment growth. In this sense, we agree with Luciani's assertion that "(i)t is possible that the result is such despite the Barcelona Process and due to the persistent negative circumstances that afflict the region. How could anyone hope for an increase in regional investment and trade (specially in horizontal trade among the Mediterranean members) that would point to a success of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership when conflicts persistently fragment the region and the Barcelona Process is only adopted

The structure of tariff liberalization has been widely criticized by Southern countries. The protectionist attitude towards agricultural products can jeopardize the economic development of the Maghreb countries (Abouyoub, 2005:66). The fact that a vast number of EU countries have relatively large agricultural sectors and interests creates a deadlock in the tariff liberalization negotiations

Despite the crucial role assigned by the Barcelona Process to cultural cooperation, the implementation of an institutional structure for the third pillar -civil society and cultural cooperation- has taken a long time. While many projects were launched at the beginning, there are only a few framework programs that have been implemented. Despite these obstacles, during the year 2003 we observed some progress based on the developments of the Naples Civil Forum, the "Wise Men' report and the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation (Chenal, 2005:86). The budget assigned by the European Commission to the Anna Lindh Foundation might not be extremely generous; however, it does reflect the commitment to cultural rapprochement.

In general, the process has been also criticized, especially by the southern countries, for a lack of public opinion mobilization that has created some sort of disaffection towards the initiative. An additional criticism rests on the lax position adopted by the European Union on issues

such as racism, visa issuing, and attitudes towards Islam. The fact that democratization advances at a very slow rate and the gap between north and south is increasingly widening has also created disappointment.

From the specific perspective of the Maghreb countries, their association process is progressing at a slow pace. Moreover, the access of civil society to their institutions is extremely weak. Both factors, together with the unresolved conflicts that afflict the region, have further encouraged the aforementioned sense of disappointment. These countries, and especially Libya, perceive the Barcelona Process as some sort of new colonialism that seeks to advance the interests of the European countries in the region. Moreover, they argue that the EMP suffers from a participatory deficiency that is delaying the process. In this regard, the new ENP is seeking to address this issue.

Finally, it should be noted that, from time to time, some governments of the EU have not devoted enough attention to the Process. France and Spain are good examples of variable degrees of involvement in the Process.

Among the achievements that the initiative has achieved, we should emphasize that it constitutes the only scenario where the EU meets with all the Mediterranean countries. It is also noteworthy that the Barcelona Process has collaborated in boosting the economies of Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (Florensa, 2005:143). In addition, in 2004 the new European Neighborhood Policy came into force. This policy has initiated a very timid approach to issues such as immigration and trade liberalization of agricultural products.

We usually overlook a crucial factor; the fact that the Barcelona Process has created institutional infrastructures, social networks, and constructive policies that could serve as a base to create new initiatives or to reinforce the ones that are already in place. In this sense, it is important to remember that the EU that we witness today is the outcome of a complex process of institutional destruction and creation.

We could conclude that here are three different assessments regarding the results: (i) the Barcelona Process is a new tool of Western countries to extend their power and influence, almost a new kind of colonialism; (ii) the Process is an historic opportunity to advance in the stability of the region and develop a more modern and dynamic economy and society, and (iii)

while the partnership is not perfect, it is essential to gradually change the societies and their politics. Thus, in the words of Bichara Khader, we could say that “While the Partnership does not arouse deep emotions, it is not questioned by any states nor is it abandoned. (...) The most surprising aspect of this process is that it is perpetuated by its own inertia” (Khader, 2005:100).

The election, in 2007, of Nicolas Sarkozy as the new French president gave a new impetus to the Process. President Sarkozy initially proposed to replace the Barcelona Process with a new instrument. However, the heads of States and Governments of the European Union agreed that Sarkozy’s initiative should not replace the Barcelona Process. As a result, the Barcelona Process-Union for the Mediterranean was created as a multilateral partnership that aims to increase the potential of regional integration and cohesion.

1.1 THE BARCELONA PROCESS: UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Union for the Mediterranean is still in its infancy and, therefore, it is not yet possible to issue an evaluation. While there are still many crucial aspects that are pending negotiations, we can begin to analyze the main aspects of this new initiative.

On February of 2007, Sarkozy first mentioned the need to replace the Barcelona Process. This proposal clashed with the interests of the European Southern countries such as Spain. It was argued that the French domestic interests were given priority on the project’s reformulation. The next few months were crucial and Sarkozy’s original idea evolved towards a new one that included the interests of the whole EU. It was finally accepted that the Union for the Mediterranean would be a continuation of the EMP under a new label “Process of Barcelona: Union for the Mediterranean” (EU, March 2008).

The goal of Sarkozy’s proposal is to: “devise a policy of selected immigration; address the environmental challenges of the Mediterranean; conceive a policy of co-development with common poles of competitiveness and creation of joint venture companies; negotiated and regulated free trade; joint management of water resources; an investment bank; and emphasis on education” (Escribano and Lorca, 2008). While the statement reflects the absence of references to democratic values and the participation of civil society, the proposal is, in fact, more pragmatic in fixing objectives.

From the institutional point of view, France seeks to shape regional cooperation on the basis of five institutional initiatives: a Mediterranean Investment Bank, an Environmental Agency, a Nuclear Energy Agency, an exchange program for university students and the creation of a common audiovisual sector.

Following Escribano and Lorca (2008), one could argue that all these initiatives represent the French interest to lead the region based on its historical and cultural ties. There is little doubt about who can lead the Nuclear Energy Agency or who will benefit more from an exchange program or a common audiovisual sector. However, the adoption of few and specific projects could give visibility to the project and propel its development, thereby providing a new opportunity for cooperation with the Mediterranean countries.

While preserving the main institutional features contained in the Barcelona Process, the European Commission has proposed the introduction of some modifications to the institutional structure contained in the French proposal (EU, 2008). These modifications include:

- a. **The Presidency:** The European Commission advocates for the creation of a co-presidency composed by one representative of the southern countries and one of the European Union. France will be in charge of the European co-presidency until December of 2008.
- b. **The Secretariat:** This organ will support the tasks of the Presidency and will be responsible for promoting and surveying the projects. It is not clear yet where the Secretariat will be located. The initial proposals were Barcelona, Marseille, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia.
- c. **The permanent Euro-Mediterranean Representatives Committee:** This Committee will guarantee the co-ownership of all the Mediterranean countries that are partners to this initiative. In addition, it will act as a mechanism of rapid reaction in case of a crisis that requires mutual consultation, such as an accident or a natural disaster.

The Declaration for the Mediterranean was signed by 43 States with the notable exception of Libya. The Union for the Mediterranean has included a wide range of countries that was not

initially considered. These countries include Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Monaco as well as the Arab League countries that will attend as permanent guests.

As a first stage, six projects have been launched. These projects focus on the following aspects: de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, alternative energies, higher education and research with the aim of creating an Euro-Mediterranean University and the Mediterranean business development initiative.

The Mediterranean Union has attracted media attention and coverage. This fact, together with the deep French involvement, and the commitment of the EU to the new initiative, constitute positive steps. However, it is important to highlight that the Union for the Mediterranean will still be required to address the same problems that the Barcelona Process encountered

2. THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

In March of 2003, the European Commission launched its “Wider Europe” Communication that laid the ground for the neighborhood policy framework. In May of 2004, the Commission presented its strategy paper on the ENP that develops the methodology and objectives in a more concrete and effective way. The Commission has also identified the 16 beneficiary countries, 6 Eastern European and 10 Southern European.

One of the main instruments of the ENP is the bilateral Action Plans that define an agenda of political and economic reform that set objectives in the short and medium term. This agenda takes into account the particularities of each country and the issues are jointly agreed by the European Commission and each partner. The Action Plans include strategic issues such as democracy and the rule of law, economic and social reform, movement of goods, the right of establishment, and cooperation in justice and home affairs among others. The European Commission issues periodic reports that cover both progress and shortcomings.

From the financial perspective and as part of the reform of EC assistance instruments, the MEDA program, together with other initiatives such as TACIS, was replaced by a single instrument; the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). This instrument seeks to target sustainable development, establishment of preferential relations, migration

issues, and convergence to EU policies and standards, supporting the agreed priorities of the ENP Action Plans.

Despite its relative infancy, the ENP is not free from criticism. First, it has been argued that the EU will not be able to conduct the trade liberalization that so strongly promotes. The reluctance of some of its Member States to the opening of certain sectors is well known. Secondly, the free movement of persons has not shown any significant progress. Moreover, the EU has announced tough measures to fight against illegal immigration following a trend that some have denounced as increasingly conservative.

Finally, the experience of the Barcelona Process has demonstrated that its development can be affected by regional conflicts. While the bilateral and differentiated approach inherent to the Action Plans may be beneficial for both the EU and the Mediterranean partners, there are specific conflicts that call for regional action. Likewise, the multilateral, bilateral and unilateral dimensions of the EMP/ENP architecture make cooperation relatively complex, especially since the ENP relatively undermines regional cooperation to promote bilateral relations. However, there are recent signs of convergence between both initiatives.

From the political point of view, it is clear that the ENP was originally designed to address the problems of Eastern European countries. While the fear of Islamic groups reaching power if democratization advances in the South has propelled the EU to maintain the status quo of the ruling elite, Eastern Europe has received vast support on their transitions towards democratic political systems.

Despite these flaws, the bilateral and differentiated approach of the ENP may be beneficial for both the EU and the Mediterranean partners. First, the ENP has reactivated the Barcelona Process by reinforcing its long-term objectives and providing new mechanisms. Secondly, the ENP covers a wider range of issues and provides for a larger number of instruments including financial and technical assistance. Finally, the experience that the ENP has already accumulated can prove very useful, especially in conflict resolution.

3. NATO AND THE MEDITERRANEAN PROJECTS

As we have already mentioned, the relationship between NATO and the Mediterranean countries is shaped by two main instruments of cooperation: the NATO-Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

The NATO – Mediterranean Dialogue was created as a forum for political dialogue in late 1994 as a result of a Spanish proposal to improve the security in the region (Roldán, 2007). The development of the NATO – Mediterranean Dialogue is characterized by the following key principles: (i) the dialogue is gradual and progressive; (ii) while the dialogue is mainly bilateral: NATO + 1, it is also possible to hold multilateral meetings on the bases of NATO + 7; (iii) all Mediterranean partners are offered the same cooperation incentives based on the non-discrimination principle but countries are free to choose the extension and intensity of the cooperation according to the self-differentiation rule, and (iv) activities take place on a self-funding basis, although Allies agreed to consider request for financial assistance in support of Mediterranean partners participation in the dialogue.

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was launched in 2004 at the Alliance's Summit in Istanbul with the goal of contributing to long-term global and regional security through enhanced cooperation. It offers practical cooperation in such areas as: counterterrorism; cooperation on border security to help prevent illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people; disaster preparedness and civil emergency planning, and participation in NATO exercises among others. This initiative is partially a response to the new geostrategic position of the Southern Mediterranean countries after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

While both initiatives share the same goals, to increase security and regional stability and to enhance mutual understanding, they differ in their approach. The ICI is bilateral in nature and it is opened to all interested countries in the region with a special emphasis on reaching out to the broader region of the Middle East. The Mediterranean Dialogue covers both bilateral and multilateral actions. Despite its common goals, NATO countries have sought to maintain these initiatives as two separate tools.

Besides the development of cooperation programs, these two initiatives have reinforced the key role that the Mediterranean countries play in the pursuing of the general NATO objectives. Moreover, they have both contributed to further the interests of the Southern Mediterranean countries that have become essential players in such strategic issues as energy security, control of illegal immigration, international trade, and of course, security and stability.

As with all the other initiatives that we have analyzed, these tools are not free from criticism. First, some partner members have voiced their concerns regarding their lack of decision-making participation. Discussions are held between NATO members and decisions are subsequently offered to members. This creates a sense of unilateralism that Southern countries reject. Secondly, non-Mediterranean countries fear that actions adopted towards the South will replace the efforts needed to address problems in Eastern Europe. Finally, it is worth highlighting that NATO initiatives may run into the same obstacles and problems that we have described for other multilateral initiatives that involve the Southern Mediterranean countries.

4. THE SUMMIT 5+5

The “five plus five” Group was set up in 1990. It brings together five Arab (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and five European (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain) countries bordering the Western Mediterranean basin. The objective of the 5+5 is to launch a regional framework for dialogue and cooperation that includes issues of security and stability, economic integration and regional migration. Despite the wide-ranging scope of this initiative, the areas of security and stability have been the most active and fruitful. Broadly speaking, we can distinguish three major periods regarding cooperation in security issues:

1. Establishment Period: This period covers from 1990 to 1991 and it includes two Conferences of Foreign Affairs Ministers in Rome and Algiers.
2. Relaunchment Period: This period covers from 2001 to 2003. It is preceded by the stagnation provoked by the crisis with Libya and the subsequent international embargo and

the Gulf War. This stage included four meetings in Lisbon, Tripoli, Sainte Maxime and Château d'Esclimont.

3. Consolidation Period: The 2003 Summit in Tunisia reinforced the goals and tools of the 5+5 Dialogue as a regional forum for consultation and cooperation.

It was precisely at the Tunisia Summit where the Heads of State and Government of the member countries met for the first time. The Summit resulted in the Tunis Declaration that adopted the principal areas of dialogue: stability and security in the Mediterranean; cooperation and integration of the Maghreb; cooperation on immigration; dialogue between cultures and civilizations, and dialogue in those issues that could affect the region. It is worth highlighting that this statement was endorsed by the Heads of the States and the President of the Commission of the European Union.

In December of 2004, an agreement for security cooperation was signed in Paris under the umbrella of the 5+5 initiative and backed by French support. This agreement that resulted from a meeting of Defense Ministers gave a new impetus to the role of the 5+5 Group in the areas of maritime surveillance, civil protection and aviation security. The participants agreed to organize yearly meetings in which they would evaluate the outcome of the activities carried out during the year and would adopt an action plan for the coming year. A Steering Committee with two representatives from the Ministries of Defense was created to monitor the implementation of the action plans.

Between 2005 and 2008, the five plus five initiative has enhanced its scope to include new multilateral activities such as environmental issues, maritime search and rescue, and educational projects. The improvement of bilateral relations has also been encouraged and, in this sense, the discussions on military cooperation between Algeria and Libya have taken place within the framework of the five plus five. Finally, the Group is negotiating a “six plus six” format based on the adhesion of Egypt and Greece.

Despite the informal dimension of this partnership, it has been more active than other similar initiatives and has delivered more productive results. The relatively small geographic dimension of the group together with the participants’ political high level has been paramount to the positive outcomes. While it could be argued that the informal nature of the Group sets

limits to its scope, it is also true that the Forum has provided an arena where the whole Maghreb, Western Europe, and the EU as a permanent guest can engage in a fruitful cooperation. This sharply contrasts with the results of other initiatives that enjoy a larger amount of resources. The small number of countries, the strong regional character, and its gradual approach to the covering of new issues, are factors that have shaped the relative success of the five plus five Group.

The initiative has, however, encountered the same problems that we have already identified in previous tools. The conflicts that characterize the region, the collusion of domestic interests vis-à-vis regional interests, and the fight for leadership have affected the development of this cooperation instrument.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most obvious conclusion of the current status of the collaboration framework between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries is the large number of mechanisms in place that seek to foster cooperation between both regions. The vast majority of these initiatives was launched before the Barcelona Process and may have, therefore, lost intensity since 1995. Moreover, the multiple layers of cooperation that characterize the process of rapprochement between the two regions has resulted in overlapping goals and instruments therefore jeopardizing the effectiveness of the initiatives.

The flaws of each instrument have resulted in a frenetic search for new alternatives that has complicated the process. In this sense, we recommend: (i) to redirect the efforts towards coordination between the already existing tools; (ii) to consider all the institutional structures in place in order not to launch new overlapping or unnecessary instruments; (iii) to encourage an improved coordination between agencies that takes advantage of the resources in place, and (iv) to create simple and efficient tools that enable information-sharing between the different institutional layers.

Secondly, the key issues that affect the multilateral and bilateral relations between the participants are included in the various initiatives and, therefore, new partnerships are not only unnecessary, but also unproductive. Moreover, establishing new goals would only add complexity to a project that is already endangered by the multiplicity of its objectives. To solve this conundrum we recommend: (i) to adopt fewer but more realistic and specific goals;

(ii) to urgently tackle the structural problems that affect the region; (iii) to keep in mind that the tools implemented to address one goal could have a negative impact on different but related objectives. Likewise, the effectiveness of specific measures, such as increased investment, depends on the satisfactory outcome of other measures, and (iv) to create a mechanism that enables the identification, and solution, of structural problems created by the wrong implementation of old measures.

Third, the relative complexity of the institutional setting has resulted in limited readability and visibility. We consider that the process could further advance if each initiative was split up in different levels. In so doing, each level could be initially tested at a specific local scenario and, depending on the outcome, extrapolated to the whole region with a bilateral or multilateral approach.

Fourth, the institutional framework created to address the relations between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries has been frequently criticized for its lack of transparency, lack of credibility, and the dominance of Western standards. To tackle these issues, we recommend adopting mechanisms that enhance the transparency of the decision making and negotiating processes. We also suggest the implementation of tools that facilitate the involvement of civil society in all the partner countries and that promote a sense of equal status among the Southern citizens. The disconnection between the Barcelona process and civil society has been acute. It is, therefore, necessary to raise public awareness while promoting the involvement of civil society. This obviously requires to further advance on the fulfillment of the goals included in the first basket-political and security cooperation.

In fifth place, we highlight the role that regionalization should play in the process of cooperation between the two regions. Regionalization has only advanced slowly in the last decade. However, we firmly believe that it should be promoted in order to facilitate the development of horizontal socio-economic and political relations between the Southern countries. Moreover, as other international association and cooperation processes have demonstrated, regionalization can strengthen the bargaining position of the Southern countries, therefore increasing their ability to participate as active members of the Partnership. Finally, it is necessary to boost the powers given to the Euro-Mediterranean institutions, enabling them to pursue actions if there is a breach in the objectives or activities agreed.

Despite all the flaws and weaknesses identified, the European Union policy towards the Mediterranean appears to be a relative success story, especially when compared with other cooperation initiatives. The EMP and the ENP have created a dense network of interlinks

which cannot be compared with any other political initiatives in the Mediterranean. The EU could therefore play a leading role in this area if it is capable of showing the benefits of its soft power approach to the rest of international actors.

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