



## The Political Economy of Governance in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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## **The Cultural Component of Security within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Perceptions and Misperceptions**

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Saleem Haddad  
Centre for Strategic Studies,  
University of Jordan  
Amman, Jordan

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## **1. Introduction: The Failure of the Dialogue Between Cultures and Civilizations**

The goal of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for a Dialogue of Culture and Civilizations is “to promote a culture of peace and to achieve mutual understanding, bringing peoples closer, remove the threats to peace and strengthen exchanges among civilizations.”<sup>1</sup> However, if anything is clear from the religious and cultural controversies that plagued the Euromed in 2006, it is that the crisis between Europe and the Arab world is deeper than ever. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’s (EMP) “Dialogue Between Cultures and Civilizations” has failed its first critical test, and the implications of this perceptual divide have gone far beyond a short-term political crisis and into the realm of a critical long-term security threat for both sides.

To take the Danish cartoon controversy as an initial example, there can be no denying that the boycotting of an entire people should signal alarm bells that a problem exists in Arab perceptions of the EU, yet European political leaders did not help to alleviate the situation. The crisis witnessed a number of shortsighted statements made by European governments defending “freedom of expression” as a “Western value”. Such statements are detrimental for two reasons; (i) these statements co-opt the right to freedom of expression as solely belonging to Western culture; and, (ii) such statements pave the way for the creation of potential conflicts on the grounds of Huntington’s problematic concept of a ‘Clash of Civilizations’. Nonetheless, past EMP efforts at ‘cultural dialogue’ have conformed to Huntington’s logic. Any successful dialogue on culture should not rest on a superficial discussion about the

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<sup>1</sup> EuroMed report no. 59, EC, May 2003.

similarities between regions and religions, but should examine the differences that exist, as well as the overlapping, multiple and dynamic identities that reside along both sides of the Mediterranean. Ironically, however, the very notion of ‘intercultural dialogue’ ignores the heterogeneous nature of identities, cultures and perceptions within regions, which are relevant to the discourse of security; instead, ‘dialogue among cultures’ presupposes bounded and self-contained affiliations, which, as will be illustrated, is a far cry from the nature of cultural identity within the EuroMed region. For instance, the imagined notion of two civilizations falls flat when one considers the 15 million members of the EU’s Islamic community. Thus, effective cultural dialogue must be undertaken both within regions as well as between them.

The fundamental reason behind this lack of cohesion in creating a collective regional identity among the EMP countries is the definitional and perceptual differences underlying security policies and perspectives. This paper will use the more recent ‘cultural controversies’ as stepping-stones to examine the perceptions and misperceptions of the role of culture in security within the EMP framework. The cultural crises of this past year are indicative of an accumulated frustration felt on both sides, which the EMP must begin to address if it is build a region of long-lasting peace and stability. The failure of dialogue will be extremely difficult to overcome, since it is linked to historical perceptions, resentments, feelings of superiority and inferiority, and unwillingness on both sides to engage in honest communication. If these feelings are not addressed, they will create resistance to new information, which will halt the process of creating a collective identity for the EuroMed region.

The creation of a region of peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean will only be achieved through an understanding of all security perceptions within the region, and the EMP must use an approach that combines cross-cultural security aspects to provide protection in a more coordinated way. This requires a number of theoretical approaches to security promotion; firstly, all actors should be involved in the dialogue on security, since it is the individual element of cooperation that becomes a part of the collective effort to secure the overall goal; secondly, dialogue on security should take a post-colonial approach that would address the issue of economic, political, and social inequalities, and act upon those issues to make the ‘Partnership’ more of a partnership; thirdly, eliminate the double standards prevalent in immigration policies, education systems, and immigration laws that are prevalent on both sides of the Mediterranean.

The structure of the working paper will be as follows: Section I will tackle the general concept of security within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, while Section II will examine the differences in the cultural and historical perceptions of security between the EU and the

Arab world. Section III will look at where and how the security pillar of the Partnership has been weakened due to cultural differences. Section IV will offer policy recommendations for enhancing future dialogue between the EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs).

## **2. Security within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership**

### **2.1. Understanding Barcelona**

Prior to any discussion on security within the EMP, it is important to examine the Partnership within a historical context. Discussion about the creation of the EMP surfaced at the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the triumph of Western notions of democracy and liberalism. After having defeated its greatest security threat to the East, the EU shifted its gaze south towards the Mediterranean, a region characterized by a large gap in military capabilities as well as asymmetrical relations in terms of wealth, resources, population, and relationships with external actors. Thus, “the EMP came into existence at the time when the old bipolar world had just expired,” giving Europe “a new dynamic that propelled it to first seek rapprochement with its East, and to subsequently launch its strategic initiative towards the South.”<sup>2</sup>

It is within this context that the Partnership was launched. Established in 1995, the Barcelona Process (or EMP) is a wide multilateral framework of political, economic, and social relations that involves 700 million people in 27 countries or territories around the Mediterranean. In addition to the EU states, the EMP includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority.<sup>3</sup>

The attacks of September 11, 2001, the resulting US-led ‘War on Terror’, as well as the intensification of the Middle East conflict and the Iraqi occupation in 2003 have enhanced the importance of security within the Barcelona Initiative, particularly with regards to developing cooperation in the Mediterranean basin at all levels: social, political, and economic. In that vein, the Barcelona Process consists of three main baskets; the first contains principles for enhancing political and security co-operation between member states in order to

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<sup>2</sup> Martin, Ivan (eds). *Bringing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Closer to the People: 35 Proposals to Engage Civil Society in the Barcelona Process*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Maroc), 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Adler, Emanuel and Beverly Crawford. *Constructing a Mediterranean Region: A Cultural Approach*. Presented at the Conference on “The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region,” Arrabida Monastery, Fundacao Oriente, Lison, Portugal, June 2002. [<http://ies.berkeley.edu/research/MeditAdlerCrawford.pdf>]

build a region of peace and stability, which is a reflection of the vision of the post-Cold War world as a safer, more prosperous, and more peaceful arena. The second basket tackles aspects of economic and financial cooperation, such as the creation of a Free Trade Area by 2010. Finally, the third basket addresses socio-cultural cooperation in social and human affairs, with a special emphasis on the important role played by civil society in the EuroMed region.

The EMP has often been criticized for putting too much emphasis on the first two “hard” baskets, while ignoring the socio-cultural pillar of the Declaration. In fact, the dominant approach to the study of culture has often been taken as an independent variable. This has changed since September 11<sup>th</sup>, an event “which has greatly politicized ‘culture’ by making it an appendix of the class—or indeed dialogue—of civilization.”<sup>4</sup> The events have triggered a dramatic surge of interest in the connection between security and culture, and have re-introduced the importance of cultural perceptions of security as a fundamental reason for the lack of security in the region. It is thus imperative to define what is meant by ‘security’.

## **2.2. Understanding the Concept of Security**

The conception of security tends to be a fluid and ever-changing concept that shifts with perceptions, cultures, and contexts. The end of the Cold War saw a change in the world’s understanding of security; the concept was widened and the interconnectedness of the global economy has meant that both national and international security have become increasingly important for many governments and non-state actors. Although states continue to be the central players in security issues, non-state actors more and more shape the mechanisms and structures through which security is provided. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, new questions have been raised regarding global security: who or what needs to be secured, and who is responsible for the provision of global security? It was no longer adequate to think in terms of conventional security discourse that focused on the state as the primary object of security: the concept of security came to include the protection of people, ideologies, and systems of beliefs.

At its most basic level, the concept of security can be understood as protection from violence and the maintenance of a society’s long-term political, social, and economic development. Therefore, the re-construction and maintenance of security is one of the central aspects in the field of development cooperation and crisis prevention. The EU recognized the link between socio-economic conditions and security, and has thus focused its efforts on

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<sup>4</sup> Nicolaidis, K. and D. Nicolaidis. *The EuroMed beyond Civilizational Paradigms*. Institute of European Studies, University of California, Paper 040618, 2004.

solving issues of 'soft' or 'human' security in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

With regards to human security, the concept has often been understood through the prism of the nation state. In the Mediterranean region however, the concept of human security needs to be reassessed, with emphasis shifted to actors and issues such as ethnic conflict, economic disparities, political and social repression, as well as the spread of fundamentalism throughout the region. The concept of human security may even require protecting people from their states in situations where ruling groups do not serve their people but serve undemocratic interests that perpetuate their power.<sup>5</sup> However, human security should not be seen as an imposition on national security; rather, both concepts are complementary in that long-term national security is unachievable without human security. If these issues of human security are not handled wisely they could potentially explode into hard security issues such as civil unrest, arms races, and terrorist acts, such as those experienced in various Partner Countries in the EU and Middle East over the past five years<sup>6</sup>.

### **Political Sector**

In certain aspects, all security is political<sup>7</sup>, and threats stem from a diverse range of ideas and traditions. Legitimacy crises, problems in democratic systems and human rights, secessionist movements, pressure on government for change, as well as ideological and identity problems can be lumped into the sector of political threats. In many Arab countries, it is the political sector of security that is often threatened: most states in the region suffer from a legitimacy crisis, lack democratic systems, and do not uphold many human rights laws. Moreover, in this sector it is particularly important to emphasize the difference between the political security of the state and the political security of the people within the state. At times, particularly in the Middle East, state security is seen as a legitimate reason to withhold the human rights and political participation of society. Thus, a line must be drawn between the security of the state from violent or external attacks, and the security of the state from internal anger and hopelessness due to the absence of political freedoms and democracy in a corrupt or failed regime. The EU has generally faced a conundrum in this regard: on the one hand it seeks long-term stability through the introduction of democracy and political liberalization;

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<sup>5</sup> Heinbecker, Paul. "Peace Theme: Human Security". Presented at the Lysoen Conference, hosted and chaired by the Norwegian Foreign Minister. 19-20 May 1999. [www.peacemagazine.org/9907/humsecur.htm](http://www.peacemagazine.org/9907/humsecur.htm)

<sup>6</sup> A.A. Ounaies. Perceptions and Concepts of Security in the EMP Countries: A South Mediterranean Model of Security. Paper presented at \_\_\_\_\_ conference in Amman, Jordan. 2000.

[<http://www.id.gov.jo/Seminars/4%20Ambassador%20A%20A%20Ounaies.rtf>]

<sup>7</sup> Buzan, Barry and Ole Waever, with Jaap de Wilde (1998). *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*. Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner.

on the other hand it holds a fear that any radical change within the domestic politics of these regimes among MPCs would create instability in the region and could potentially have a spillover effect into the EU. This has produced a double standard in policy that was witnessed during EU negotiations with the democratically elected government of Hamas in Palestine, and EU's initial unwillingness to deal with Hamas was perceived by the Arab street as a continuation of this hypocritical bias against the Arab people.

### **Social Sector**

The social aspect of security relates to internal clashes of identities, sub-identities and ethnic tensions in general. For the EU, this would have a spillover effect due to migration and societal violence, but recent tensions within the EU (such as the riots in France in 2006) are also considered within the context of the social sector of security. Demographic factors are also important: population growth and the aging of the European population, as well as the relatively young population in the Middle East; the latter puts a heavy strain on employment and worsens socio-economic conditions in the region. Furthermore, the unregulated role of religion in Arab countries will continue to pose a threat to human security; as long as religious matters are not separated from political and social life, they will come in the way of universal human rights, which may lead to a major threat to the human security of Arab citizens<sup>8</sup>.

### **Economic Sector**

Economic security is often understood as self-reliance of a state in its ability to generate economic growth, provide a healthy standard of living for its population, as well as its capabilities in the global economy. Freedom from want plays a major role in strengthening an individual's sense of security. "Freedom from want starts with the implementation of sound economic policies and strategies that establish social justice as their goal."<sup>9</sup> Economic security is addressed through regional and global interaction between states, and particularly with improving South-South economic relations. Some problems have risen here, particularly as they relate to the economic basket of the Barcelona Process. Critics have claimed that the economic pillar has ignored investment and growth in favor of unequal trade relations, particularly in agriculture. The EU—even within the EMP—has followed a protectionist policy towards labour-intensive products from the MENA region, especially in agricultural

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<sup>8</sup> Ziad Abdel Samad, "The Linkages Between International, National and Human Security", Arab NGO Network for Development, 2004. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN018182.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Ziad Abdel Samad, "The Linkages Between International, National and Human Security", Arab NGO Network for Development, 2004. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN018182.pdf>

goods. Since much MENA exports are in agriculture, these protectionist policies promote and exacerbate economic insecurity, as well as lead to a deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Arab world, which would in turn spill-over to other security sectors through illegal trade, migration, and an increase in violence.

### 3. Arab and European Security Cultures

When examining the ‘culture’ of security, it is often too easy to fall prey to a simplistic understanding of culture by defining it against ‘the Other’. An understanding of security culture in a region should encompass a thorough analysis of perceptions of security that are shaped by history, religion, and previous interactions with ‘the other’. Security cultures of states and regions interact and change over time under the influence of institutions and agents and of new ideas, practices and experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Perception of security problems and management of external security relations depend on the views of political leaders and the culture of the country. In the case of the Euro-Mediterranean region, “the sense of vulnerability and insecurity...is very much linked to cognitive questions such as perceptions, images, and identities.”<sup>11</sup> These vulnerabilities and insecurities have their roots in previous interactions between Europe and the Arab world, such as the legacy of colonialism as well as recent Western interventionist policies in the region. Thus, a solution to the crisis of cultures cannot be found without developing a cross-cultural understanding of the concept of security that encompasses the perceived threats to all the actors involved within the EMP.

The first step to developing a cross-cultural understanding of security is to develop a shared understanding of threat perceptions. Without this shared understanding, building a common security partnership is an impossible task. The unbalanced, conflicting, and often incomprehensive nature of the EMP in the field of security could potentially cause a lot of disruption for the whole process, as witnessed by the events of the cartoon crisis earlier this year. This paper will attempt to examine the security culture(s) of the EMP while taking into account the above two points. While there exists many different perceptions of security within both the EU and the Arab world, this paper will initially divide the Euro-Mediterranean region into two broad ‘cultures’, and then attempt to narrow the definition further to include the various actors involved within these two regions.

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<sup>10</sup> Attina, 2002

<sup>11</sup> Tanner, Fred. *Concepts and Models of Security in the EMP Area*. Geneva Center for Security Policy, 2000.



## **Arab Security Culture**

It is quite difficult to lump up security perceptions of all Arab nations, as each one has its own unique security culture. Nonetheless, there does exist a degree of similarity between the Arab states, as they are linked to each other by cultural, historical, religious and linguistic factors. In general, Attina (2002) has summarized perceptions of threats by the MENA region as: threats to domestic stability, policy-makers' perceptions of threat, inter-Arab state conflicts, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>12</sup> However, since the EMP has tended to focus on issues of 'soft' security, the aforementioned security threats will not be considered in great detail in this paper.

With regards to softer security perceptions, Abdel Samad (2004) differentiates between three types of threats to human security in the MENA region. Firstly, the indirect threats deriving from occupation and war that affect the region as a whole. Second, the threats stemming from unbalanced Free Trade Agreements (such as the economic pillar of the EMP), that negatively affect development in general and human development indicators in particular. Finally, internal threats specific to each Arab country, the roots of which are entrenched in the undemocratic practices of governing regimes, violations of human rights, and the deterioration in living conditions.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it is important to first examine the culture of security vis-à-vis the state structure, and then complement that with the current threats perceived by society within the Arab state, as the threat perceptions of state and society in the MENA region are not only different, but also often contradictory in nature.

When examining state structure in the MENA region, it can be said that state security culture in the Arab world is geared more towards traditional and realist views of security, which place high importance on national military power. The national security culture in many Arab states has developed over decades where military forces are respected and feared. They are seen as symbols of independence, and thus help to create a culture that can be used by political elites to maintain the military apparatus. The historical background of the creation of most modern Arab states follows the logic of "an army with a state"; thus, military and other security agencies in the Middle East view themselves as the guardians of Arab nationalism. This makes it difficult to examine issues of hard security, as it requires a deep analysis of the core of Arab society itself, which includes the institutions of nationhood that are so complex and entwined in the region.

Another feature of most Arab states is that a major part of national budget is allocated towards militarization and arms purchases. This has worsened in the past decade, as changing

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<sup>12</sup> Attina, 2002

<sup>13</sup> Abdel Samad, 2004

social patterns have led to an increase in state insecurity in the region, which has in turn fuelled the militarization of Arab society. “Many Mediterranean states betray a bloated and an unregulated military sector that thrives on the detriment of basic societal needs, such as education, health, clean water and infrastructural developments.”<sup>14</sup> Marginalizing the socio-economic needs of the people at the expense of the military sector has worsened the economic conditions of Arab people, which has created a lot of domestic instability, and in some cases, has led to a reaction of the people against their regimes. People accuse governments of failing to meet the socio-economic needs of society, thereby allowing external intervention from Western forces.

What is perhaps interesting is that the security sector in many Arab countries is not only used to protect the state from external threats, but is also used to protect the state from internal instabilities that come about due to low socio-economic conditions and the lack of democracy and freedoms. Internal stability, or rather regime survival, is a major security concern for Arab governments, and this is reinforced by two main conditions: a) the absence of democratic polities, and b) the tension between the rival types of collective identities prevalent in the region, on the one hand, and the state system present in it, on the other hand. “A great deal of the security concerns and decisions made by governments in the South, including perceptions and decisions toward the EMP, is derived from their domestic political concerns.”<sup>15</sup>

Arab states continue to be predominantly ruled by autocratic regimes that are backed by powerful state security structures. On the one hand, these regimes are challenged by demands for reform from groups with a democratic agenda, while on the other hand they are threatened by challenges from violent and radical groups seeking the overthrow of all existing structures. The Arab state thus sees itself as needing protection from its own society, and the root cause of this problem has to do with the frustrations associated with the lack of freedoms, the poor living conditions, and the perceptions of Western intervention in the region. It is for this reason that issues of military security often override the consideration of legal and political reform in these countries.

Unless there is an internal dialogue on security that takes place with all sectors of civil society, then long-term security will not be achieved. Current EMP security policy does not engage Arab societies—who are not represented by their own governments—and thus their security concerns are ignored within the EMP framework. By dealing with the Arab regimes

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<sup>14</sup> Tanner, Fred. *Concepts and Models of Security in the EMP Area*. Geneva Center for Security Policy, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Gawad Soltan, Gamal A. *Perceptions of Security in the Euro-Med North-South Dimension: The Southern Perspective*. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000.

as the sole representative of the Arab peoples, the EMP contributes to the strong suspicions held in most Arab countries about the possibility of Western and Israeli intervention. This perception has its roots in the historical legacy of colonialism as well as recent Western policies in the region. Recent US intervention in Iraq has led to a rise in Arab perception of 'the West' as a security threat in and of itself.

This suspicion is further fuelled by Islamists, and is helped along by the lack of transparency within the security sectors of most Arab regimes. Security discussions are not dealt with frankly, both internally (government) as well as in the public sphere. Thus, there is a confused public perception due to the lack of transparent and honest dialogue. This environment is perfect for radical Islamists to fuel the flames about the weakness of Arab security. Initiatives such as the EMP that address Arab society through unrepresentative Arab regimes only fuel the flames of mistrust, and strict EU refusal to engage in a dialogue with Islamists only helps prove their point: that the EU—and the West in general—is not interested in an honest dialogue, but is only interested in enhancing their interventionist capacity.

The issue of Arab perceptions of the West will be dealt with in greater detail in the next section, particularly within the context of the EMP. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a large part of the frustrations that lead to terrorism have at their root socio-economic problems rather than strong ideological clashes. Population growth, rapid urbanization, poverty, unemployment, brain drain, the role of women, and the increasing inequality in Arab states create the perfect condition for terrorism to grow and flourish. The need to improve economic and social conditions in the region is thus recognized as a security threat by Arab peoples and governments alike. Improving socio-economic conditions is essential to the maintenance of domestic stability and peace within each country. This enhances the legitimacy of the government and compensates for the slow progress achieved in political reform.

Most of the discussion within the EMP focuses on the perceptions adopted by the legitimate government, and other perceptions have often been discarded. This is particularly important since “a great deal of government policies and perceptions are formulated, a) to minimize the influence of the counter visions and perceptions, and b) to accommodate these visions and perceptions.”<sup>16</sup> It can thus be said that Arab perceptions of security must consider the following points:

- The differentiation between regime threats and people's threats;
- Socio-economic risks: population growth, inequality, role of women, unemployment, urbanization and poverty;

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<sup>16</sup> Gawad Soltan, Gamal A. *Perceptions of Security in the Euro-Med North-South Dimension: The Southern Perspective*. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000.

- Long-term risks: unresponsive governments, corruption, human rights violations, radicalism, misunderstanding of Islam as terrorism, double standards, exploitation, wars;
- Short-term risks: engaging in a dialogue with non-representative regimes, unfair free trade agreements, EU paying lip service to human rights and democracy at the expense of short-term stability.

## **European Security Culture**

European perception of threat has undergone a deep change since the Cold War. The North Atlantic Council described this change very aptly in the strategic concept it approved in Rome in 1991: “Risks to Alliance security are less likely to result from calculated aggression against the territory of the Allies, but rather from the adverse consequences of instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes...the tensions that may result...could lead to crises inimical to European stability and even to armed conflicts.”<sup>17</sup>

The threat to the national security of Europe does not stem from a military point of view or from armed conflicts; rather, “the North perceives a set of risks and challenges emanating from Southern political, social, and economic conditions of instability both in the domestic and inter-state arenas.”<sup>18</sup> The security of EU concerns are clearly illustrated in the various drafts of the EuroMed Charter for Peace and Stability, which emphasized the so-called “new transnational risks” such as “terrorism”, “organized crime and any kind of trafficking, especially regarding...drugs...and illegal migration.”<sup>19</sup>

European perceptions of security threats can be divided into three main arenas: instability, immigration, and fundamentalism. The first arena accounts for internal and intra-regional conflicts that have the potential to create instability not only in the form of immigration and crime, but also through the EU’s dependency on oil and gas supplies. The second arena concerns immigration, which is of growing concern to European countries, since demographic growth, inequality and unemployment in the Middle East prompts a large number of the Mediterranean population to seek employment in Europe. This has led to concerns that a large influx of immigrants from the South would create unemployment and

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<sup>17</sup> See part I, point 10 of “The Alliance’s Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rome on 7-8 November 1991”, in *NATO Handbook*, Brussels 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Aliboni, Roberto. *Perceptions of Security in the Euro-Med North-South Dimension: The Northern Perspective*. Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome. 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Alessandro Politi, *European Security: the New Transnational Risks*, Institute for Security Studies, WEU, Chaillot Papers No. 29, October 1997.

political instability in Europe, and would lead to a reduction in social, health and education benefits.

The third arena of security perception concerns ‘religious fundamentalism’, an issue that has become more prominent in Western perceptions of threats emanating from the MENA region. September 11<sup>th</sup> turned the ‘war on terror’ into the central issue of international security, which in turn has pushed aside previous definitions of security that related to human rights and cooperative security practices. In that sense, the ‘war on terror’ has shifted the concept of security away from the individual and towards a renewed focus on the state. “In the name of individual freedoms and human rights, and thus in the name of human security, the war on terrorism has directed global efforts to counter the negative impacts of Arab societies’ weak and undemocratic structures, manifested in the rise of religious fundamentalism.”<sup>20</sup>

Europeans fear that anti-Western Muslim fundamentalists may gain power in Mediterranean countries—democratically or by force—and would establish regimes that would be hostile to EU interests. While this fear is a justifiable one, EU and US efforts to respond to this threat do not address the causes of these extremist trends, “which lie in the loss of individuals’ sense of worth in Arab societies and the spread of undemocratic regimes that centralize state power.”<sup>21</sup>

The expansion and strength of political Islam that has emerged over the past decade is a major concern to EU countries for a number of reasons: i) it falls within the logic of Huntington’s Clash theory, which would only lead to future confrontations between ‘North’ and ‘South’; ii) it is a threat to Arab governments currently engaged in the Middle East peace process; iii) it may potentially create even more limitations to Arab people’s human rights, which would lead to further migration and crime; and iv) it has the strong potential to travel through to the Muslim population in Europe. These perceptions of an international Islamist projection are high on the priority list of European countries.

Decreased state influence has widened the concept of security, and national as well as international security issues have become increasingly important for many governments and societies. Soft security has taken center stage (fundamentalism, instability, immigration) and replaced hard security (nuclear wars, armed conflict) as the pressing security threat facing Europe in the twenty-first century. The question now is whether the EU has taken positive steps to solve their perceived security threats, or whether their policies have been translated to create an even further divide between Europe and the MPCs.

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<sup>20</sup> Abdel Samad, 2004

<sup>21</sup> Abdel Samad, 2004

It can be seen that the political and security concerns of the Arab states are not specifically related to the EU; this is in contrast to the EU, which conceives its major security threats as stemming from the Southern Mediterranean. The above analysis of security indicates that culture lies at the heart of many security problems facing the actors involved in the EMP. The next section will discuss the ways in which culture and identity may have hindered the EMP's efforts to build a region of peace and stability in the region. The final section will discuss how culture can be used as a solution to these security problems, rather than continue to be an impediment to progress.

#### **4. Perceptions and Misperceptions of Security in the Barcelona Process**

Since its inception in 1995, the EMP has largely been an inter-governmental initiative, and its main achievements lie in the field of institutionalization.<sup>22</sup> The Partnership's goal to create a region of peace and stability is not easy to achieve: it requires "the social engineering of a regional identity that rests, neither on blood, nor religion, but on civil society, voluntary networks and civic beliefs."<sup>23</sup> While this goal has yet to be realized, the EMP has begun to lay the foundations for its development. Over time, as concepts are accepted as part of a collective identity, the spread of this identity will come about if it is actively persuaded and socialized.<sup>24</sup> Peaceful change will not come about without the development of mutual trust and shared identities between the EU and the Arab world; the security dilemma is a direct result of the lack of trust and alienation felt on both sides, which produces a sense of vulnerability. The process of integration must therefore be developed through transactions, socialization processes, and common institutional developments.<sup>25</sup>

The Barcelona Process has failed to follow through on its goal for two fundamental reasons; firstly, the EMP approach to security has been more concerned with short-term developments rather than long-term structural trends. For instance, the security problem defined as 'terrorism' has its roots in political and socio-economic discontent, both of which have not been truthfully addressed by the EMP. Similarly, the issue of migration has its roots

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<sup>22</sup> Martin, Ivan (eds). *Bringing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Closer to the People: 35 Proposals to Engage Civil Society in the Barcelona Process*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Maroc), 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Adler, Emanuel and Beverly Crawford. *Constructing a Mediterranean Region: A Cultural Approach*. Presented at the Conference on "The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region," Arrabida Monastery, Fundacao Oriente, Lison, Portugal, June 2002. [<http://ies.berkeley.edu/research/MeditAdlerCrawford.pdf>]

<sup>24</sup> Deutsch et al., 1957; Habermas, 1984, Risse, 2000

<sup>25</sup> Adler and Barnett, 1998

in poverty and social dissatisfaction: any attempt to solve the problem by tightening immigration laws will only lead to even further alienation and potentially larger security problems in the future.

Secondly, the EMP has not properly addressed the lack of trust between both sides that has its history in the legacy of colonialism, and the more recent US military intervention in the region. Thus, for the Euro-Med to succeed, there needs to be an honest discussion on the colonial history and the perceptions and misperceptions that this shared history still carries today. Unless such an honest discussion takes place, long-held apprehensions and mist-trust will continue to exist on both sides.

#### **4.1. Culture, Religion, and Inequality in the Barcelona Process**

One of the fundamental reasons for the failure of the dialogue between cultures is exactly that: cultural differences. However, these differences are less of an ideological clash so much as due to the high level of socio-economic inequality between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean. These differences are so explosive that any attempt at regional integration will be much more difficult than the process of European integration was. The dialogue within the Partnership has so far silenced fundamental issues of inequality, be it economic, social, political, or even cultural (*vis-à-vis* mobility, freedoms, production, etc). Another reason is, due to perceptual gap in security issues, the Barcelona Process does not make clear dialogue or definition on key issues like the terrorism, immigration, democracy, and human rights.

The perceptual gap has increased in the past ten years due to the irresponsibility of the media in both regions. As Hafez Kai (2000) explains that there is a strong tendency in Western mass media to characterize Islam as a fanatic and violent religion; similarly, in the mass media of the Arab world it has become widespread to depict Western societies as dehumanized, commercial, sexist, and violent. During the controversy of the Danish cartoons, the role of the media in portraying these erroneous images was illustrated very well: media in the Western world centered on the calls to jihad against the West, while discounting the voices in the Arab world that called for freedom of expression. Similarly, Arab media portrayed the West as mocking the Muslim reaction without any coverage on those in Europe who called for respect for the cultures and religions of others. These images create deep-rooted stereotypes that make both sides unwilling to engage in dialogue, finding it easier to explain their differences in grandiose terms such as a clash of cultures or civilizations; such

ideologies of religious and cultural conflict present a serious threat to security in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The reproduction and distribution of stereotypes will only reinforce nationalist, ethnocentric, and xenophobic public perceptions of 'the other', and will also continue to promote the idea of an inborn contradiction between human rights and Islam.

The effects of the media on European policy can be clearly seen with regards to the issue of immigration from the Middle East and North Africa. The automatic association of immigration with other security problems such as drug trafficking, terrorism and fundamentalism stem more from internal European misperceptions, conservative movements within the EU, as well as xenophobia and racism towards the MENA population. The declaration of migration as a security threat, and the heavy leverage the issue possesses in EMP dialogue, only deepens the gap between communities. Europe thus needs to tone down on its immigration rhetoric, both in EU policy as well as within the structure of the Partnership.<sup>26</sup> The rhetoric on migration creates a lot of alienation amongst the immigrant groups in receiving countries. Europe's failure to integrate immigrants, as witnessed by tensions in Germany, France, among other countries, as well as the increase in racial attacks in Europe, has been leading to even greater security problems. There is evidence of greater hostility between European-Christians and Muslims/Arabs within Europe itself. Muslim immigrants who felt alienation from their environment and had thus resorted to Islamist activism within Europe committed the terrorist attacks in the UK in July 2005, as well as recent attempts in Heathrow airport in August 2006. The problem is not so much the migration but the lack of proper assimilation within receiving countries that leads young immigrant youth to resort to terrorism as a form of identity assertion. Ironically, it is often this misperception of Islam in European media that increases such levels of fundamentalism in Europe. A more rounded understanding of an immigrant's cultural background (particularly second-generation immigrants) would also encourage them to re-identify themselves with aspects of their culture that are not necessarily associated with fundamental Islam.

This fundamentalism that is central to the current understanding of global terrorism does not have its roots in a single source. However, there are certain key factors both in the Arab world as well as in the West's relationship with the Arab world that have played a significant role in the current rise of terrorism stemming from the region. One central issue is the socio-economic inequality witnessed in the Southern Mediterranean: the income gap between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries has contributed to political instability and extremist ideology. As Arab populations experience socio-economic

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<sup>26</sup> Chater, 1996



deprivation, particularly relative to the population of Europe, this translates to resentment against the status quo both in their own countries and in the broader global context.

Unfortunately, this is where the EMP has failed entirely. When considering the fact that the economic sector is a fundamental aspect of comprehensive security, there is little doubt that the current EMP trade policy, as well as the structural adjustment programs are not only inadequate to solving the problems, but have been proven to increase unemployment and eliminate local producers in the region.<sup>27</sup> It is blatantly obvious that the economic interests of the EU are more at the forefront of the EMP, which reduces the success of full security in the Mediterranean region. These policies include, but are not limited to: heavy focus on ‘free’ trade at the expense of investment, continued protectionism in agriculture, and the economic liberalization of MENA states without a comprehensive understanding of their economic structure. The EU must revisit the economic pillar and consider it within its dialogue on achieving a region of peace and security in order to show its full commitment to this goal. Its current policies seem to lean more towards the goal of ‘achieving a peaceful and secure EU by keeping the Mediterranean security problems contained’. As Giovanna Tanzarella (2005) puts it, “to ignore the issue of inequalities in exchanges would be tantamount to emptying dialogue of all meaning and engaging in a game in which one of the players is a de facto loser.”<sup>28</sup>

Cultural dialogue, in its truest sense, does not only involve mutual understanding but also the ability to visualize a common future in the field of security cooperation for the Euro-Mediterranean region. This will not be possible so long as the Mediterranean countries suffer blatant inequalities, not only at the economic level, but also in terms of political liberties and freedoms. Undemocratic regimes are prevalent in the Arab region; in most countries, elections are not free and fair, the participation of women is restricted, and more recently, civil society organizations have faced considerable constraints under the broad guise of the war on terrorism. This has frustrated the development of democratic movements, and has continued to be an impediment towards the realization and respect for human rights in the Arab world.

In order to ensure long-term peace and security, democracy promotion must be featured high on the list of policies promoted by the EMP. Although there are certainly difficulties with promoting democracy using normative power, the fundamental aim should be to create a “more responsible and aware society [in the Middle East], where common and

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<sup>27</sup> Nienhaus, 2003

<sup>28</sup> Giovanna Tanzarella- Mutual Understanding and Cultural Exchanges in the Mediterranean Region: Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Policy and Proposals for its Revitalization

individual security are both provided and respected.”<sup>29</sup> More recently, the concept of security has not taken into account the contradictory security threats of states and peoples within the Euromed region, and it could be argued that the security of the former has taken precedent over the security of the latter, all in the name of promoting ‘peace’ and ‘stability’. These terms need to be redefined, as many in the Arab world see Western peace and stability taking precedence over the fundamental economic, political, and social rights of Arab people. The EMP is no exception to this.

There needs to be greater autonomy of the social sphere with regards to the state, and the EMP can facilitate this process by making the empowerment of local civil society organizations the benchmark of their political and social reform program. One of the ways this can be done is to link people across borders that share common objectives, ideals, and views, in order to work together within a cross-cultural framework. Trans-border linkages would lead to greater understanding of ‘the other’, and would also help facilitate the creation of a Euro-Med identity that transcends North/South or EU/Arab national borders. Creating networks of NGOs and civil society organizations across the North and South of the Mediterranean would help facilitate dialogue among the people.

Particularly important is the current exclusion of many Muslim or Islamist groups from EMP dialogue under the guise that they do not uphold “European” values towards democracy or human rights. By continuously excluding such groups from dialogue, the EU only encourages the notion of a clash of civilizations, and these Islamist groups use such exclusion as proof of an us vs. them scenario. Including such groups within the dialogue can help to create a more cross-cultural approach to a shared understanding of security and human rights, rather than the universal or western notion of human rights. There is an increasing consensus by many experts in the field on how important it is to invite civil society into the dialogue on regional security; so far there have only been very modest steps in this direction. The way the new European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has been designed, created, and approved without the consultation of civil societies is a strong caveat in this respect.<sup>30</sup> As religious fundamentalism flourishes where no opposition is allowed and economic injustice is high, it is only logical to assume that the opening up of political systems and economic prosperity would eradicate these militant groups in the Southern Mediterranean.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Abdel Samad, 2004

<sup>30</sup> Martin, Ivan (eds). *Bringing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Closer to the People: 35 Proposals to Engage Civil Society in the Barcelona Process*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Maroc), 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Pierro et al., 1999:16

The war on terrorism has heavily hindered the EMP's progress in the past five years, and this has increased the level of vulnerability and distrust felt by the Arab world towards Western intervention in all its forms. There must therefore be a clarification of what the relationship is between the Mediterranean and the EU vis-à-vis liberal democracy, human rights, and peace. The concept of pluralism must be introduced into the Arab world, and this will require sustained investment in cross-cultural dialogue on questions related to security, intervention, religion, vulnerability, and human rights. The EMP must work to eliminate prejudices held against European efforts that are seen as hypocritical, interventionist, and at worst a form of neo-colonialism. Once the EMP can move beyond these pre-conceived notions, it can begin to achieve what is on its agenda. However, this requires much cooperation and recognition, as well as taking a step back from looking at this as an EU effort, or extension of EU foreign policy, and more towards a partnership based on equality and mutual effort.

#### **4.2. Cultural Perceptions of The Partnership: Cooperation or Colonization?**

A second weakness of the Partnership lies in the fact that the South increasingly sees it as a Western-oriented approach. Because of deep Arab suspicions of western attempts to impose a regional identity on them, some Arab participants and governments may find themselves de-legitimized by partaking in the EMP. In fact, "the identity that the theory of pluralistic security communities predicts as a key ingredient in "region-building" is distinctly derived from Western Enlightenment principles and values."<sup>32</sup> While from the perspective of the EU, the Barcelona Process is understood as a means to facilitate 'dialogue' between civilizations with an emphasis on shared values, yet to many Arabs it is seen as a way for the 'West' to export their values to the rest of the world.

This perception must be examined in further detail by both sides: is the EMP merely an extension of EU foreign policy, or is it seen as a genuine and autonomous region-building project? Questioning of the true intentions of the Barcelona Process intensified following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the reaction of the US and other Western powers to forces of resistance coming from within the Arab world. The concept of security was permanently transformed, and the EMP immediately changed gears and was undermined by US foreign policy vis-à-vis the Middle East. The notion of security was re-defined almost exclusively to

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<sup>32</sup> Adler, Emanuel and Beverly Crawford. Constructing a Mediterranean Region: A Cultural Approach. Presented at the Conference on "The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region," Arrabida Monastery, Fundacao Oriente, Lison, Portugal, June 2002. [<http://ies.berkeley.edu/research/MeditAdlerCrawford.pdf>]

refer to security from terrorism, which in turn put more fundamental security issues like human rights and freedoms on the backburner, even though the absence of the latter is a major reason of the widespread use of the former. The silencing of the democracy agenda froze any support for reform in undemocratic regimes, and in fact the ongoing fight of authoritarian regimes against terrorism has been used as an excuse to further curb socio-political rights and freedoms.

The increased role of the US, and the consecration of the use of force in conflict resolution (Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003) severed any remaining trust that the EMP had built between both sides of the Mediterranean, and “the suspicions Arabs have towards the US for its biased Middle East policy inflicted considerable damage to Arabs’ perceptions of the EMP.”<sup>33</sup> The issue of double standard in the use of violence was also highlighted during the US ‘War on Terror’; the issue of double standards should not be avoided in the efforts to find a common language for cultural and religious differences. It needs to be addressed in its full scope, ranging from US Middle East Policy to Muslim calls for boycott against Denmark.

US unilateralism not only reflected double standards that alienated the EU from the Middle East, but it also de-legitimized the EU as an influential player in the preservation of regional and global security. These suspicions of Western intervention touch upon deep-rooted fears and otherness that are still present in the Arab region due to the legacy of European colonialism and imperialism, and this shared history is a large impediment to the improvement of relations and an obstacle to region-building within the EMP context. “Many in Arab nations view the EMP attempt at ‘region-building’ as threatening neo-colonial machinations.”<sup>34</sup>

The EU must work within the EMP to ensure that Southern partners do not feel that the Partnership is yet another attempt to make the EU more interventionist in the region. Cross-cultural differences reflect not only differences in specific policy issues, “but also often reflect more fundamental differences concerning motivations, events and their contexts that result from different philosophical, ethical or cultural traditions.”<sup>35</sup> There is thus an urgent need to heavily involve both state and non-state actors in the Southern Mediterranean to

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<sup>33</sup> Gawad Soltan, Gamal A. *Perceptions of Security in the Euro-Med North-South Dimension: The Southern Perspective*. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000

<sup>34</sup> Adler, Emanuel and Beverly Crawford. *Constructing a Mediterranean Region: A Cultural Approach*. Presented at the Conference on “The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region,” Arrabida Monastery, Fundacao Oriente, Lison, Portugal, June 2002. [<http://ies.berkeley.edu/research/MeditAdlerCrawford.pdf>]

<sup>35</sup> Keith Krause, “Cross-Cultural Dimensions of Multilateral Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dialogues: An Overview” in Krause K. (ed.), *Culture and Security*, London: Frank Cass 1999.

develop a common language that respects and discusses cultural differences in an effort to reach a convergence on issues of security. However, this must not be seen as an extension of the EU model, but rather as an alternative model that recognizes the power structures and colonial history that continue to play a part in this ‘community building project’.

## **5. Policy Proposals**

The creation of a region of peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean will only be achieved through an understanding of all security perceptions within the region, and the EMP must use an approach that combines cross-cultural security aspects to provide protection in a more coordinated way. This requires a number of theoretical approaches to security promotion; firstly, all actors should be involved in the dialogue on security, since it is the individual element of cooperation that becomes a part of the collective effort to secure the overall goal; secondly, dialogue on security should take a post-colonial approach that would address the issue of economic, political, and social inequalities, and act upon those issues to make the ‘Partnership’ more of a partnership; thirdly, eliminate the double standards prevalent in immigration policies, education systems, and immigration laws that are prevalent on both sides of the Mediterranean.

On a more practical note, the following EMP laws should be revised as soon as possible: i) removal of protectionist trade barriers for agricultural goods; ii) suspension of the reciprocity rule; iii) free, or freer, movement of labour; iv) technological research and training; v) re-focus attention back to human security, which incorporates a dialogue on changing perceptions, as well as cross-cultural values of human rights and freedoms. These inequalities will be discussed more specifically below.

### **5.1. Establishing a Cross-Cultural Understanding of the ‘Other’**

There is no doubt that cultural perceptions of security and threats have made it very difficult to achieve a level of dialogue that is conducive to the building of a security cooperation region. One of the most important hindrances in this regard is the commonly held stereotypes of the other that have been propagated through the media and educational systems in the EU and the Arab world. Euro-Mediterranean relations are an area where the need for a trustworthy, responsible, and contributive attitude of the media is substantial. At this point in time, images and information presented to both sides have remained highly selective and

fragmented, and are mostly confined to politics while other spheres of every-day life and culture are underrepresented or simplified.<sup>36</sup>

Kai Hafez (2000) outlines ways the Euro-Med Partnership should promote greater understanding in the media, which are highlighted and expanded upon below:

- **Create and increase Mediterranean-specific training modules for young European and Arab Journalists.** Training of young journalists in cross-cultural reporting is an example of ways to create a more responsible media in the Euro-Med region. Training modules could be devised that would integrate training journalists in several European and Arab schools. Partnerships could develop between these institutions, where modules would be dedicated to understanding the ‘Other’ in all its aspects. It could also be concluded by a traineeship in an Arab country (for European journalists) or an EU state (for Arab journalists). Support for such a program, under the guise of cross-cultural dialogue, would strengthen Arab media and also help to legitimize it and create diversity of opinion often prevalent in the state-controlled, state-monitored, self-censored media of the Arab world today.
- **Establishment of a code of conduct.** As Hafez (2000) explains, “One proposal for an international code of ethics consists of four paragraphs: a) prevention of war and promotion of peace; b) respect for culture, tradition and values; c) promotion of human rights and dignity; and d) preservation of human associations in the context of home, family, and community.”<sup>37</sup> Such a media code would bridge the ideological gap between different trends in both the West and the Islamic world.
- **Mediterranean observatory on the media.** It would serve as a media-watch documentation center that could promote criticism of the media’s behavior in international and intercultural relations.

There is also a strong need to strengthen the idea of pluralism within the Arab world, and this begins with the educational system. This is particularly needed in public schools, where the syllabus should be reformed towards a more modern understanding of religion, culture, and ethnicity. In most cases school syllabi in the Arab world offers a narrow and outdated focus on these issues, which does not take into account the increasingly globalized world of the twenty-first century, where interactions with other cultures and religions are inevitable. The EMP should encourage Arab NGOs working in the field of education to reform the syllabus to promote pluralism and break down stereotypes of the West.

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<sup>36</sup> Hafez, Kai 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Hafez, Kai, 2000.

## 5.2. Reducing Inequality and Double Standards

Reform within the Barcelona Process should focus on three main angles to reduce inequality in both dialogue and EMP structure. Firstly, one of the key threats to security in the region is due to poor standards of living, and thus the fight against fundamentalism and terrorism must also include a fight against poverty and socio-economic inequality. Those concerned with security in the MENA region should also be concerned with those excluded from economic, political and cultural processes, as it is amongst these populations that dissatisfaction, fundamentalism, and militancy will prosper. This can be done through the introduction of fairer trade policies, particularly regarding agricultural exports from the MENA region, as well as heavy investment in the fields of training, research, and institutional development. In the political realm, the EMP should hold an honest and strong position in favor of human rights, freedom of expression, and democracy in the MENA region, and should provide an arena for dialogue to take place between state and non-state actors such as religious groups and civil society organizations.

The second angle regards inequalities with regards to freedom of movement across the Mediterranean Basin. The current difficulty in obtaining a visa for the majority of the Arab population does not create a sense of community with the EU. Rather, it only helps increase the frustrations and alienation felt by the population of the Southern Mediterranean. Allowing free movement of labour throughout the Euro-Med would require a serious re-visitation of current EMP policies towards immigration as a 'security threat'. Keeping the Mediterranean partners away is not conducive to creating an area of cooperation, security, and peace. According to Olivan and Aragall (2002), the tightening of immigration policies as suggested by the Barcelona Process could trigger further security crises in the future.<sup>38</sup> The European Commission Horizon 2000 paper suggests the development of a strategy focusing on increasing aid and improving family planning programs across the region as a more sustainable way to curb migration flows to the North.<sup>39</sup>

The third angle of inequality lies in the aforementioned Euro-centric approach to the EMP. Currently, the EMP is often mistaken to be an extension of EU foreign policy as it has been initiated and controlled primarily by EU forces and with EU interests in mind. A concerted effort to differentiate the EuroMed institutions from the EU is essential if it is to be viewed as a cross-cultural region building exercise. This requires collective management of EMP institutions, agendas and priorities. There are a number of concrete policy proposals to address the above three problems associated with inequality, as highlighted below:

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<sup>38</sup> Olivan and Aragall, 2002

<sup>39</sup> Lister, 1997:100

- **Supporting a transnational civil society forum.** The lack of state legitimacy in the MENA region makes a bottoms-up approach to transnational integration all the more necessary. Transnational empowerment could be achieved by offering an open and transparent arena for meetings between EU and Arab representatives of NGOs and CSOs.
- **Adopting a common EU migration policy.** This is essential for both EU foreign policy as well as EMP coordination, as views on immigration vary from country to country due to varying legal, historical, political and cultural legacies towards race, ethnicity and citizenship. The immigration-relating risks Europeans perceive are thus largely due to European policy inertia and institutional incoherence.<sup>40</sup>
- **Improving economic and social conditions in the Arab world.** The root of the immigration problem lies in economic and social instability in the MENA region. Containing these instabilities is unrealistic in the long run, and the EMP should address the root of the problem rather than the symptoms. This involves economic, social, and political dialogue. From within the EU, however, the EMP should focus on strengthening their assimilation programs within each EU country, as well as helping to forge transnational networks to use immigrants as a bridge between North and South Mediterranean Partners.
- **Promoting the mobility of cultural role-players and youth through the creation of a ‘Euromed Cooperation’ Visa and mobility funds.** The two fundamental constraints regarding travel to Europe are lack of financial resources and the difficulties in obtaining a visa. The former can be solved by the creation of mobility-assistance funds managed with administrative flexibility and simplicity. The latter is slightly more complicated: visa policies are decisions made by each state, and the EMP has again failed to unify the European policy towards Schengen visas; it has also failed in easing movement from the Southern Mediterranean (in fact, in some cases such as Italy, consular procedures were hardened). This results in a lot of frustration and hypocrisy, and so it has been suggested that the creation of a visa that would bear the ‘Euromed’ label would ease transportation and cross-cultural communication.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Aliboni, Roberto. *Perceptions of Security in the Euro-Med North-South Dimension: The Northern Perspective*. Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome. 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Giovanna Tanzarella- *Mutual Understanding and Cultural Exchanges in the Mediterranean Region: Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Policy and Proposals for its Revitalization*



## 6. Conclusion

The dialogue on security has in fact been weakened due to perceptual differences, and the solution to re-starting dialogue would be to develop a cross-cultural understanding of security to be incorporated within the structure of the EMP. Any attempt by the EMP to build a region of peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean area should include an alternative approach that includes intercultural dialogue to complement the traditional institutions of security. It is important to differentiate between the contradictory perceptions of security, particularly as it relates to Arab society and the Arab state. Thus, an understanding of the culture of security should encompass a thorough analysis of perceptions of security that are shaped by history, power relations, religion, and previous interactions with 'the other'. From such an analysis, it was found that the political and security concerns of the Arab states are not specifically related to the EU; this is in contrast to the EU states, which conceive their major security threats as stemming from the Southern Mediterranean.

The importance of a dialogue between cultures within the framework of security has been the topic of countless discussions and declarations, particularly after 9/11. The controversy over the Pope's remarks about Islam in September 2006 indicated just how little negotiations have advanced, particularly in the EuroMed context. The EMP project began with auspicious beginnings and common consensus, yet it has "failed to develop peace-making practices, increasingly exhibited inconsistencies and dilemmas, and proven unable to provide a framework for the negotiation of a security partnership."<sup>42</sup> If the eventual aim of the EMP is in fact to construct a region of collective peace and security, there is an urgent need to revisit proposals for intercultural dialogue, which in many cases could be considered root causes of security threats.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Barcelona Process has failed to follow through on its goal for three fundamental cultural reasons: firstly, the EMP approach to security has been more concerned with short-term developments rather than long-term structural trends (particularly with regards to trade and migration); secondly, the EMP has not properly addressed the lack of trust that exists between both sides that has its history in the legacy of colonialism and the more recent US military interventions in the region; and finally, there are structural impediments to the creation of a EuroMed region, such as the lack of a coherent shared narrative, as well as external identity ties that are contradictory to the idea of a EuroMed region.

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<sup>42</sup> Nicolaidis, K. and D. Nicolaidis. *The EuroMed beyond Civilizational Paradigms*. Institute of European Studies, University of California, Paper 040618, 2004.

An arc of crisis and mistrust resulting from inequality, instability, history, and xenophobia plagues the Euro-Mediterranean region. As a result, the creation of a regional identity along EuroMed lines brings forth a number of problematic questions. Is it realistic to expect the construction of a collective EuroMed regional identity? While such a common identity would ease negotiations and provide a basis for shared interests, it is questionable whether a process such as the EMP would be able to consciously construct a regional identity “that would not replace, but only supplement national identities”<sup>43</sup>. Furthermore, to what extent would such a construction of a Mediterranean region be able to ensure stability and prosperity, given the amalgam of diversities in cultural perceptions towards security?

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<sup>43</sup> Adler, Emanuel and Beverly Crawford. Constructing a Mediterranean Region: A Cultural Approach. Presented at the Conference on “The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region,” Arrabida Monastery, Fundacao Oriente, Lison, Portugal, June 2002. [<http://ies.berkeley.edu/research/MeditAdlerCrawford.pdf>]

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