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**Political Conditionality in the European Neighbourhood Policy: The  
Case of the Southern Mediterranean**

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## I. Introduction

The debate over the frontiers or the limits of Europe is one of the most controversial in the current EU agenda. The latest wave of enlargement has brought into the Union's auspices ten new countries, with significantly different economic, political and social structures than the already member states and, as it was revealed during the Iraq crisis, with a different notion of the nature and the role of the EU in the international system. Bulgaria and Romania are up next, expected to become full members by the year 2007. The Turkish candidacy, however, raises the most vivid reactions. Turkey's poor economic performance, its slow progress in fulfilling the political criteria, the fear of massive migration as well as identity issues, related to the country's rigid Islamic tradition make Europe's political elites and public opinion very sceptical over its accession<sup>1</sup>. Frustration is already expressed along with anxiety over the eventual consequences of what is feared to be a process of uncontrollable expansion.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) appears as the latest outcome of these speculations. It is openly argued that the European Union has developed a post-modern notion of power in the international relations based on the ideal of the primacy of laws and on an implicit rejection of force in the international system. This notion inspires the structure of the Union's relations with its neighbours, notably the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. Through its Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and its recent Neighbourhood Policy, the EU is trying to create a new type of regional community that increases security and reduces politico-cultural tensions around the Mediterranean. But the question is whether these efforts really constitute a new approach to community building that differs from the old realist approaches and creates a new rationale for cooperation in the Mediterranean region grounded in the social constructivist notion of a "convergence of civilizations"<sup>2</sup>.

In the analysis that follows, focus is centered to the Southern Mediterranean region, because of its particular importance to Greece, due to obvious geographical,

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<sup>1</sup> See Triantaphyllou Dimitrios, "The 13<sup>th</sup> candidate- Turkey: Whither its march towards the EU?", in Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D. (eds.), *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, Chaillot Papers No 64, September 2003, p. 81-85.

<sup>2</sup> See Volpi Frederic, "Regional Community Building and the Transformation of International Relations: The Case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 2004, p. 146.

economic, political and cultural reasons, which will be explained later. The emphasis is given to the application of political conditionality by the ENP in the relations with this area, which involves the support for democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and their connection to the immediate EU's security concerns. Next, an overall assessment is attempted with regard to the inherent complexities and the potential effectiveness of the use of conditionality in the examined framework. Finally, the position of Greece in the Mediterranean region is analyzed, with the view to detect recommendable policy choices.

## **II. The Context: Main Characteristics of the European Neighbourhood Policy**

The European Neighbourhood Policy was launched by the European Commission as a reaction to the ambitious project of the recent enlargement of the EU, which brought in its auspices ten new states. Consequently to this historic event, the EU's external borders were extended to the East, reaching the former Soviet states and to the South, until the countries of the southern Mediterranean coast. The **rationale** that lies behind this new idea is the need to create a solid framework of close cooperation between the enlarged EU and the countries that found themselves on its threshold. The geographical proximity increases the already existing interdependence with the EU's neighbourhood in such a way that the interest of the EU in ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in the interior is considered to be directly linked with the high level and quality of its relations with its neighbours<sup>3</sup>. As Romano Prodi puts it, the vision is about the establishment of a "ring of friends" surrounding the Union and its closest European Neighbours<sup>4</sup> and the avoidance of drawing new dividing lines in the modern globalized international scene<sup>5</sup>.

In other words, the ENP was designed as a new instrument of the EU's Foreign Policy. Until now, the most powerful tool of influence to the EU's direct environment has been the prospect of membership, which has worked wonders so

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<sup>3</sup> See Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, *Wider Europe- Neighbourhood: A New Framework of Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, Brussels, 11.3.2003, COM(2003) 104 final, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Prodi Romano, *A Wider Europe- A Proximity Policy as the key to stability*, speech to the sixth to the sixth ECSA- World Conference , Brussels, 5-6 December 2002, SPEECH/02/619.

<sup>5</sup> See also European Council Conclusions, Copenhagen, December 2002.

far<sup>6</sup>. Literally, it has been the main motor of the massive political and economic transformations that have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe since the early 1990s. But the EU is already showing signs of “enlargement fatigue” and some within the existing member states fear a “dilution” of what has been achieved so far<sup>7</sup>. A constant process of enlargement would threaten the Union’s cohesion, would cause the resent of its citizens, and might probably endanger its ability to provide the benefits which make it so attractive<sup>8</sup>.

Yet the EU cannot simply reinforce its new borders and show indifference to what happens beyond them. The steep division between prosperity within the EU’s borders and poverty outside poses direct threat to the internal security and stability. Therefore, the EU has to choose whether to export security and stability to its new neighbours or risk importing instability from them. That’s why the Union is trying to develop an acceptable alternative to membership, in order to prevent (at least for the moment) the deposit of new applications coming from the neighbouring states and the possibility of an instability crisis, following what might be considered as an indifferent attitude to the serious problems pending in its backyard<sup>9</sup>.

The **geographical scope** of this new approach covers the so-called Western Newly Independent States (WNIS), Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova and the ten countries of the Southern Mediterranean, notably Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia<sup>10</sup>. The countries of the Southern Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, which were excluded at first from the ENP framework<sup>11</sup>, became recently members of the partnership<sup>12</sup>. All these different countries share common land or maritime borders with current or future EU member states and have no prospect of membership to the EU in the near future. That is to say that the new relationship aims at responding to the practical issues posed by proximity and neighbourhood separately from the question of EU

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<sup>6</sup> See Soros George, “Europe must take a wider view of the future”, *Financial Times*, March 30, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> See Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, Chaillot Papers No 64, September 2003, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25*, Notre Europe, Policy Paper No 4, July 2003, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> See Wallace William, *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> See Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy STRATEGY PAPER*, Brussels 12.5.2004, COM(2004) 373 final, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> See General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions, 14 June 2004.

accession, which can, realistically, only be settled in the long run<sup>13</sup>. Consequently, the Western Balkans, which are considered “potential” candidates, Turkey, whose accession negotiations are scheduled to start soon and Russia, who is not interested in EU membership, fall out of the scope of this particular framework.

The general **objective** of the whole strategy is the development of an enhanced cooperation in crucial aspects such as the economic and trade relations, the political dialogue, the fight against common security threats, the resolution of regional conflicts, the management of borders and of migration flows, the connection in the fields of energy, transport, environment, research and technological development, and the promotion of people-to-people contacts through the establishment and strengthening of cultural, educational and societal links<sup>14</sup>. The **ultimate goal** is to offer the partners a stake at the EU’s Internal Market and the prospect of further integration, by the promotion of the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and by the progressive participation of the neighbours in key aspects of EU policies and programs<sup>15</sup>. This is a concept often described as “sharing everything with the Union but institutions”, in the example of the European Economic Area, which brings together the EFTA countries and the EU in one single market, without presupposing nor excluding the prospect of accession. According to Prodi, “if a country has reached this level it has come as close to the EU as it is possible to be without being a member”<sup>16</sup>.

The **instruments** which the EU has at its disposal for the implementation of the new strategy vary. The Commission has stressed that the already existing and well-functioning instruments of EU’s policy for its neighbours will serve as foundations for the new approach, which will be combined with the variety of the existing partnership, cooperation, association and stabilization agreements<sup>17</sup>. In Eastern Europe, the basis for contractual relationships is provided by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements whereas in the Mediterranean, the Euro- Mediterranean

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<sup>13</sup> See Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, ..., p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final.

<sup>15</sup> ..such as intensified co-operation to combat security threats, involvement in conflict prevention, transport, energy and telecommunication networks and European research. See Kok Wim, *Enlarging the European Union- Achievements and Challenges*, Report to the European Commission, European University Institute, Florence, 26 March 2003, p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> See Prodi Romano, *A Wider Europe- A Proximity Policy as the key to stability*, speech to the sixth to the sixth ECSA- World Conference , op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> See Prodi Romano, *ibid*.

Partnership (the “Barcelona Process”) provides the regional framework of co-operation and is complemented by a network of Association Agreements. The ENP intends to go further than this initial framework, by developing an enhanced cooperation, in order to enable the EU and its partners to attain the full benefit of the structures which are already in place<sup>18</sup>.

The initial step towards realizing the vision set out above is made by the launch of the Commission’s **Action Plans** for each of the partner countries involved. They represent a comprehensive approach but at the same time they identify clearly a limited number of key priorities, intended to strengthen commitment to common values and to offer real incentives for reform<sup>19</sup>. The EU intends to offer additional financial assistance in order to encourage and facilitate the efforts of its neighbours to foster internal transformations. For this purpose, the Commission proposes the creation of a new **European Neighbourhood Instrument**, which will gradually replace the current diverging systems of financial management of Community funds allocated to its neighbours, solving the various difficulties in coordination<sup>20</sup>. The new instrument is suggested to be developed in two phases: the first (2004-2006) would focus on achieving better coordination between the various financial instruments concerned within the existing legislative and financial framework and the second, from 2006 onwards, would introduce this new legal instrument<sup>21</sup>. In addition, the prospect of the development of new contractual links, in the form of **European Neighbourhood Agreements**, between the EU and its partners, is proposed and will depend on the progress made in meeting the priorities set out in the Action Plans<sup>22</sup>.

The **novelty** of the ENP approach lies mostly in the emphasis given to the elements of **differentiation, progressiveness, joint ownership** and the enhancement of **regional cooperation**. A differentiated method is imposed by the fact that the neighbouring countries do not start from the same point in their relations with the EU. Consequently, different stages of reform and economic development also mean that different rates of progress can be expected. While aiming at introducing a

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<sup>18</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> See Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the Council on the Commission Proposals for Action Plans under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)*, Brussels, 9 December 2004, COM (2004) 795 final, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> See Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission, Paving the way to a New Neighbourhood Instrument*, Brussels, 1 July 2003, COM (2003) 393 final, pp 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> See COM (2003) 393 final, *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final, p. 9.

comprehensive, coherent approach the EU cannot foster a one-size-fits-all policy<sup>23</sup>. Differentiation and progressivity will constitute the basis of the new ENP, meaning that the quality of the relations and the level of integration of each neighbouring country will depend on its progress in reaching agreed benchmarks of reforms, which are set separately in the different Action Plans<sup>24</sup>.

The differentiated approach is closely linked to the principle of joint ownership. According to the Commission, “joint ownership of the process, based on the awareness of shared values and common interests is essential. The EU does not seek to impose priorities or conditions to its partners. The Action Plans depend, for their success, on the clear recognition of mutual interests in addressing a set of priority issues. There can be no question of asking partners to accept a pre-determined set of priorities. These will be defined by common consent and will thus vary from country to country.”<sup>25</sup>

Another new element introduced by the ENP is the emphasis placed on regional cooperation among the neighbours, a notion hitherto avoided because of the persistence of unfriendly relations and raging regional conflicts<sup>26</sup>. The EU seems now determined to foster closer cooperation both across its external borders and among its neighbours themselves- especially among those that are geographically close to each other, bearing in mind the different circumstances and the history of relations. To this goal, the Union intends to create and finance concrete projects aiming at encouraging and facilitating the development of inter-regional relations<sup>27</sup>.

The brief overview of the principal elements that characterize the new European Neighbourhood Policy leads to the conclusion that the process reflects the Union’s desire to repeat the success story of the enlargement by setting some of the same targets and by using similar instruments and methodologies, among which **conditionality** is of primary importance<sup>28</sup>. Looking into the specific content of conditionality in the ENP, we find out that the EU is seeking to ensure political

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<sup>23</sup> See COM (2003) 104 final, p. 6 and 16.

<sup>24</sup> See Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, ..., op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>25</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> See Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, ..., op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>27</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Stanford Institute for International Studies, Working Paper Number 25, 2 November 2004, p. 5.

stability, prosperity and economic development in its close environment by proposing a bargain to its neighbours: In return for progress in demonstrating shared values and effective reform, they may benefit from the prospect of closer economic and political integration. The big question, the answer to which will determine the success of the whole strategy, is whether the EU will be able to support the transformation of the states on its borders into zones of stability and prosperity without offering the incentive of membership<sup>29</sup>.

### **III. The Case of the Southern Mediterranean**

#### **1. Particular Risks and Challenges**

The Mediterranean region presents some very particular features, which differentiate it from the other neighbouring zones of the EU and give it a special importance. First of all, there is a tradition of long-lasting close relations between the countries of the South Mediterranean and some countries of the EU in many fields, such as trade, migration, culture, tourism and financial assistance<sup>30</sup>, which ages back to the colonial period. On the other hand, despite the constant exchange and influence, it is true that the Mediterranean literally separates two worlds that are very different socially, culturally, economically and politically<sup>31</sup>. The countries of its southern coast are characterized by pre-modern structures and phenomena like religious fundamentalism, authoritarian governments, economic underdevelopment and poverty, demographic growth, informal economic practices, low levels of education and the marginalization of women<sup>32</sup>. In addition, the south and east of the Mediterranean form a zone of instability and conflict. Regional relationships have in

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<sup>29</sup> See Lynch Dov, *The European Neighbourhood Policy*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, paper presented at the workshop "European Neighbourhood Policy: Concepts and Instruments", organized in Prague on June 9-10, 2004 by the European Commission with DGAP, CEFRES and IIR, p. 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25, ...*, op. cit., p. 8-9.

<sup>31</sup> See Ortega Martin, "A new EU policy on the Mediterranean?", in Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, Chaillot Papers No 64, September 2003, p. 86.

<sup>32</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue*, The European Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Papers no 52, Paris, May 2004, p. 27.

many cases been traditionally hostile, especially in the Middle East, between Israel and Palestine and in the Western Sahara<sup>33</sup>.

Recent events have increased the tension in the relations between the so-called “West” and the “Arab world”. The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the military interventions in Iraq in 2003 have renewed the focus on paradigms such as the “clash of civilizations”<sup>34</sup>. Most importantly, they have established the conviction that the security of the West is directly linked with the stabilization and development of the Arab countries. The EU has realized the fact that its internal security depends largely upon the situation prevailing in its neighbouring countries, especially in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, where the economic, political and social conditions pose a constant threat to the stability of the region. The fear of an eventual destabilization of the Arab countries that might spill over to affect Europe has increased the importance of the relations with the Mediterranean neighbours and the interest in reassuring their peace, stability and prosperity<sup>35</sup>.

However, although the Mediterranean region is of crucial importance for the EU’s future status, the prospect of membership has been explicitly excluded for the South-Mediterranean countries, the emphasis given instead on co-operation with and within the region<sup>36</sup>. This is because these countries do not geographically belong to Europe and thus they do not fulfill one of the basic conditions required by the treaties for a country to become a member of the EU<sup>37</sup>. This argument has already been used in the past. When the Moroccan government expressed twice, in 1987 and in 2000, its ambition to apply for EU membership, it was given a polite refusal, on the grounds that it was not European<sup>38</sup>. This point places the Mediterranean partners of the ENP in an inferior position than this of the eastern neighbours, for whom the prospect of membership is neither guaranteed, nor clearly denied in the long-term<sup>39</sup>. In other

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<sup>33</sup> See COM (2003) 104 final, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> See Huntington Samuel, “The Clash of Civilizations”, in *Foreign Affairs*, no. 3, spring 1993, pp. 22-49.

<sup>35</sup> See Barcelona Declaration, adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of 27-29 November 1995.

<sup>36</sup> See Patten Christopher and Solana Javier, *Wider Europe*, letter to the members of the General Affairs Council, 7.08.02.

<sup>37</sup> See article 49 TEU, which states that any European State which respects the fundamental principles of the Union can apply for membership.

<sup>38</sup> See Fraser Cameron, *The Wider Europe*, The European Policy Centre, 12/6/2003, from the website: <http://www.euractiv.com>.

<sup>39</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25, ...*, op. cit., p. 8. The author states “that Ukrainian leaders, in particular, refuse to accept permanent exclusion. The EU’s post-2004 eastern neighbours constitute what officials in Brussels now describe as a ‘grey zone’: neither accepted as definite candidates, nor clearly denied the long-term prospect of membership”.

words the task of efficiently implementing the provisions of the ENP is expected to be more difficult for the countries of the Mediterranean, since the real incentive to the required reforms, the EU membership, is unattainable for them, even as an unclear, distant prospect.

It is important that the problems and needs of the Mediterranean neighbours are not overlooked in the framework of the new ENP. While the “centre of gravity” of the EU’s attention seems to be orientated towards the East after the enlargement, many of the major security concerns continue to be in the South<sup>40</sup>. The new countries’ adjustment and full integration will probably monopolize the interest and the funds of the EU for the following years<sup>41</sup>. Moreover the number of countries interested mainly in the relations with the Eastern neighbours has increased with the recent enlargement<sup>42</sup>, introducing a rivalry among member states about the potential balance between eastern and southern concerns. The French, Italian, Spanish and Greek attention to the south is outnumbered by the various new and old members sharing borders with the eastern neighbours, which have the reasonable priority of securing a framework of close cooperation with them<sup>43</sup>. But as described above, it is to the Union’s common economic, security and also moral interests to show the necessary sensitivity to its Mediterranean neighbourhood and concentrate on the objectives of its Mediterranean policy<sup>44</sup>.

## 2. The Existing Framework of Relations- The “Euro-Mediterranean Partnership”: A Useful Learning Process

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was designed to be the general framework for the relations between the European Union, its 15 member states and 12 countries situated in the South and East of the Mediterranean area, notably Algeria,

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<sup>40</sup> See Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, ..., op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>41</sup> See Ortega Martin, “A new EU policy on the Mediterranean?”, in Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D. (eds), *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, ..., op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> Poland’s activism vis-à-vis EU-Ukrainian relations is a case in point.

<sup>43</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25*, ..., op. cit., p. 9. It is argued that the ENP approach had been tailored initially to introducing coherence in the relationships between the EU and its eastern neighbours, while relations with Mediterranean partners were considered to be already well established in the framework of the Barcelona Process. About this see Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D., *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*...op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>44</sup> See Ortega Martin, “A new EU policy on the Mediterranean?”, *ibid.*, p. 101.

Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority. At the close of the Barcelona Conference, in November 1995, these entities adopted an executive agreement, launching a triple partnership: a) a political and security partnership aiming at establishing “a common area of peace and stability”; b) an economic and financial partnership aiming at “creating an area of shared prosperity” mainly through the establishment of a free trade area; and c) a social and cultural partnership dedicated to human resources development, better understanding between cultures and exchange between civil societies<sup>45</sup>.

The Barcelona process is based on three main guiding principles: equality in the partnership, complementing rather than displacing bilateral activities, comprehensiveness, decentralization and gradualism in the approach<sup>46</sup>. From the very first moment, the whole project was granted with a clear, multi-level institutional dimension<sup>47</sup>. Considerable changes have also been brought about in the number of funding programs, the overall size of the budget and the allocation system. There was a deliberate attempt to decrease the number of budget lines and channel as much funding as possible through one program, the **MEDA**<sup>48</sup>. The MEDA regulation has established political and economic **conditionality**, a novelty in EU relations with the countries in the region. Funding can be suspended in the case of violation of democratic principles and of the rule of law, as well as of human rights and fundamental freedoms<sup>49</sup>. Besides, funds are allocated among other things on the basis of progress towards structural reforms<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> See *Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference (27-28 November 1995)- Declaration and Work Program, Brussels 4.1.1996*.

<sup>46</sup> See Philippart Eric, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Unique Features, First Results and Future Challenges*, CEPS Working Paper No 10, April 2003, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, Jean Monnet Centre, Department of Political Studies, University of Catania, p. 9. The institutional structure can be summarized as follows: 1) The Euro-Mediterranean Conferences of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in which all partners take part and which monitor the implementation of the Work Program. 2) The Euro-Med Committee, constituted by the European Troika (the current and incoming presidencies, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Commission) and a representative from each partner country. 3) A series of ministerial meetings with the Ministers in charge of specific cooperation matters. 4) Periodical meetings of the Senior Officials on Political and Security Questions, in relation with the issues of the first basket. 5) The new Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, launched at the Ministerial Conference held in Naples, on December 2003.

<sup>48</sup> *Mesures d'Accompagnement*.

<sup>49</sup> See Council Regulation (EC) No. 1488/96 of 23 July 1996 on MEDA, Art. 3.

<sup>50</sup> See Philippart Eric, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Unique Features, First Results and Future Challenges*,..., op. cit. p. 4.

Yet, despite all these ambitious efforts and the crucial importance of the region, the EU institutions have repeatedly recognized that the Barcelona process has not made sufficient progress<sup>51</sup>. The first reason for the problems and failures of the EMP lies in the attitude of the EU towards the operation of the whole project. As the *new-institutionalism* teaches, decisions and rules do matter. The very decision-making process poses limitations and traps. The scheme functions by unanimity, with all the drawbacks in speed and coherence, which are inherent to that form of decision making<sup>52</sup>. The success of the process is trapped to a large extent by the EU's limited capacity to act in a unitary manner. Even at the start of the Barcelona process, the EU position on the Mediterranean was the result of a delicate compromise between the member states in an attempt to counterbalance the Union's Northern and Eastern dimension of enlargement<sup>53</sup>, but did not necessarily reflect a common view of the strategies and priorities to be adopted towards the region<sup>54</sup>.

Weaknesses in the policy also stem from the *priority setting*. Over-emphasis is given on the economic basket while security issues are relatively under-estimated, even though they tend to slow down economic progress. There is the view that economic liberalization would automatically spill over into other fields of reform and lead towards political liberalization and good governance<sup>55</sup>. But the empirical proof seems to be confirming the opposite. In practice, the priority so far accorded to the second basket (economy) of the Barcelona process might not be sufficient to satisfy its ultimate aim of creating a free trade area by 2010, as its progress could be stalled by unresolved issues in the first basket (security)<sup>56</sup>.

More importantly, the incentive for the Southern Mediterranean states of establishing a free trade area is in blatant contradiction with the EU's continued protectionism towards certain goods of particular importance for the Barcelona partners. The case of powerful interest groups seeking to maximize their profits,

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<sup>51</sup> The Commission published a Communication which identified the weaknesses of the process and outlined some recommendations to "reinvigorate" it. See European Commission, "*Reinvigorating the Barcelona Process*", COM (2000), 497 final, Brussels, 6 September 2000.

<sup>52</sup> See Philippart Eric, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Unique Features, First Results and Future Challenges*, ..., op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> See Barbé Esther, "Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions", in Zielonka Jan, *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 1998, p. 117-29.

<sup>54</sup> See Monar Jorg, "Institutional Constraints of the European Union's Mediterranean Policy", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 39-60.

<sup>55</sup> See Hunt Diane, "Development Economics, the Washington Consensus and the Euro- Mediterranean Partnership Initiative", in Joffé George (ed.), "Perspectives on Development: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", Special Issue of the *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1998, pp. 16-38.

<sup>56</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue...* op. cit., p. 8.

supported lately by the *public choice* theory, is relevant here. Within the EU, member states, especially the southern ones, have resisted the market-opening measures in sensitive sectors like agriculture and textiles, in which most Mediterranean neighbours have the comparative advantage. The outcome has been frustration on both sides, with few incentives for the Mediterranean associates to fulfill the obligations to which they had agreed<sup>57</sup>. On the other hand, the northern EU states seem reluctant to provide significant financial transfers as a substitute for trade concessions<sup>58</sup>.

The second set of problems has its origins in the region itself. The presence of Israel and the Palestine Authority within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has been a major obstacle to progress in multilateral cooperation, despite the EU's emphasis on keeping the Middle East Peace Process separate but complementary to the EMP. Relations between Israel and the Arab states have huge repercussions that go beyond issues directly related to regional security and can well block progress in other fields<sup>59</sup>. Generally, relations among North African states are often hostile. Trade relations are minimal. Libya was not until recently a full Mediterranean partner state. Morocco and Algeria remain divided over the future of the Western Sahara. Moreover, the quality of the domestic administration is very low, hampering significant disbursements under the MEDA Program. The observance of democratic principles, civil and human rights remains highly problematic<sup>60</sup>.

On the other hand, the stagnation of the Barcelona process is certainly due to the fact that the two groups of partners don't share the same views on this whole project. Europeans and Arabs pursue different goals and accordingly give different meanings to the term "partnership". Europeans are preoccupied with preserving international economic conditions, allowing the continuation of economic growth and internal stability in the framework of European Union development. In harmony with the views of the European integration process, the Europeans view partnership building in the Mediterranean as a slow process of change, aimed at linking North Africa to the liberal-capitalist world via tighter Euro-Mediterranean ties<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> See Balfour Rosa, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 13-14.

<sup>61</sup> See Attina Fulvio, "The Euro Mediterranean Partnership Assessed: The Realist and Liberal Views", in *European Foreign Affairs Review* 8, 2003, Kluwer Law International, p. 16.

Arab governments acknowledged the need to respond positively to the European proposal of reshaping Euro-Mediterranean cooperation by establishing the sophisticated mechanism of the Barcelona process mainly in view of solving domestic economic problems and enhancing their position within the world economy. In fact, the EMP promised to ensure better utilization of national resources and achieve fast economic development. However, Arab elites and economic experts did not hide reservations and criticism. They were aware of important risks and problems. Among these, they pointed out trade liberalization as not necessarily resulting in economic development; free trade in industrial products as leading to the erosion of the Arab industries; restructuring as resulting in social instability; the vertical integration with the European economies as an injury to horizontal Arab cooperation and the prospects of establishing an Arab free trade area. Further they protested against the lack of new concessions and insufficiency of European aid<sup>62</sup>.

In other words, many of these former European colonies resent and suspect European motives as neo-colonial, attempting to reimpose Western values and Western economic interests, rather than pursuing genuine partnership<sup>63</sup>. In fact, the EMP suffers from asymmetries in the multilateral structure that contradict the partnership spirit. Partnership is more an objective than a reality. In line with the strong dependence of the Med partners and the unfavourable power distribution, the nature of the relationship often corresponds more to a soft form of hegemony than to a partnership<sup>64</sup>.

Thus, an empirical assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership cannot be very positive. Barcelona experience teaches how difficult it is to eliminate reciprocal diffidence and cultural incomprehension among the constituent parts of a region<sup>65</sup>. However, there are solid arguments for the continuation of the EMP. The scheme is not without qualities<sup>66</sup>. Among its strengths is its “global approach”, which embraces a large number of issues, from development and economic reform to security and human rights. Thanks to this, the EMP has provided the only forum in

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<sup>62</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 17-18.

<sup>63</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> See Philippart Eric, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Unique Features, First Results and Future Challenges*, ..., *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> See Schmid Dorothée, “Optimiser le processus de Barcelone”, *Occasional Paper 36*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, July 2002.

which Israel and Arab states sit around the same table- an achievement per se. It also reflects what the EU has developed since the half of the 1990s in terms of exercising its influence abroad through the use of a wide range of civilian tools, which have been gradually refined in the contexts of development policy, enlargement and the stabilization approaches, for example, towards the Western Balkans<sup>67</sup>.

Moreover, the scheme provides a specific institutional framework, assuring the initiative's regional dimension and guaranteeing the effective participation of the Southern Mediterranean partners<sup>68</sup>. The EMP is by now a well-established element in the European, North-African and Middle-East landscape, with fairly stable features. Confronted with the dramatic deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian relations, the long stalemate in key bilateral negotiations (notably with Egypt) and the labourious take off of the MEDA, the scheme has indeed demonstrated its resilience. Its institutional performance at other levels is also significant, but often underestimated. In terms of identifying problems, defining objectives, selecting intervention logics, programming, delivering projects and anchoring the policy reforms, the EMP fares much better than any previous or actual schemes in the region<sup>69</sup>. It is true that a lot of capital has been invested until now in the EMP scheme in order to develop, if not a sense of common identity, at least cooperative mechanisms. Barcelona's main achievement has been the rise in the awareness of the importance of fostering sub-regional cooperation among partners and developing a common identity between the two shores of the Mediterranean<sup>70</sup>.

In conclusion, it seems that, despite the difficulties and shortcomings, the Barcelona process could still serve as the appropriate framework in which to organize relations within the region as a whole<sup>71</sup>. While taking into account the EMP's strengths and potential, the ENP is hoped to offer the key to the urgent need of a new dynamic in Euro-Mediterranean relations. The EU documents make it clear that the

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<sup>67</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> See Philippart Eric, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Unique Features, First Results and Future Challenges*, op. cit., p. 10. A previous report of the Development Assistance Committee concludes in particular by noting a marked improvement of the EU structures and processes in terms of strategic oversight, programming, budgetary procedure, evaluation and policy feedback. (See OECD-DAC, *Development Cooperation Review- European Community*, OECD Paris 2002).

<sup>70</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> See Ortega Martin, "A new EU policy on the Mediterranean?", op. cit., p. 100.

EMP and the Neighbourhood Policy are not mutually excluding projects<sup>72</sup>. The ultimate priority should be to make existing policies work better, rather than supplant them with new strategies which, however innovative, still need to be tested<sup>73</sup>. At the same time, the ENP cannot be considered as a simple mechanism of coordination of existing initiatives involving neighbours. It should be intended in fact as a policy with its own specificity, able to bring an added value to the running regional projects<sup>74</sup>.

#### **IV. Political Conditionality in the ENP: Linking Security to Democracy.**

Political conditionality entails the linking, by a state or international organization, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid), to the fulfillment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles. Positive conditionality involves promising the granting or the increase of benefits to a state if it fulfils the conditions; negative conditionality involves reducing, suspending or terminating those benefits if the state in question violates the conditions<sup>75</sup>. During the last decade, a gradual shift was observed from negative to positive conditionality, which is considered as part of a more co-operative approach. The European Union's culture of conditionality has to date always emphasized the principles of positivity and proportionality<sup>76</sup>.

In the framework of the ENP, political conditionality is primarily linked to EU's security concerns. As has been mentioned above, the overall objective of the ENP is to counterbalance possible fears that the new borders of the Union will become a new dividing line in Europe and to create a "ring of friends" from Morocco to Russia and the Black Sea<sup>77</sup>. The emphasis is thus on promoting stability both within and between the neighbouring states and economic and social development, leading to increased prosperity and increased security on the EU's borders. One of the

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<sup>72</sup> See COM (2003) 104 final, p. 15, where it is stated that the European Neighbourhood Policy is not going to "override the existing framework for EU relations with Russia and the countries of the Western NIS, and the Southern Mediterranean. Instead it would supplement and build on existing policies and arrangements".

<sup>73</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue*, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> See Smith Karen, "The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations with Third Countries: How Effective?", in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 3, 1998, p. 256.

<sup>76</sup> See Schmid Dorothée, "Linking Economic, Institutional and Political Reform. Conditionality within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", *EuroMeSCo Paper* 27, 2003, p. 28-29.

<sup>77</sup> See COM (2003) 104 final, p. 4.

mechanisms for achieving this objective is the use of a strong element of political conditionality. The focus is directed to the development of democracy and of the rule of law, as a vehicle to EU's overall objectives in relation to the E.N.P. states, especially its security objectives. In fact, the promotion of the rule of law within the E.N.P. may be seen as an aspect of the Union's developing security policy towards and within the region<sup>78</sup>.

The content of conditionality in the Union's strategy towards its neighbourhood can be summarized in the idea that relations with neighbours will be gradually upgraded to reach the prospect of closer economic and political integration only as progress is demonstrated in issues related to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law<sup>79</sup>. The difficulty lies in the fact that conditionality works only when eventual membership is at stake<sup>80</sup>. If membership is the "golden carrot" but is not on offer, what "silver" or "bronze" carrots can be devised for the EU to encourage effective reforms and bring about the "Europeanization" of its southern neighbours<sup>81</sup>?

### 1. EU's Security Concerns and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The Commission Policy Paper on the ENP focuses on the key ideas of stability, prosperity, the Union's borders and shared values. The underlying concern is no longer merely to assure the Union's neighbours that enlargement will benefit them economically but to build a relationship that will enhance the security of the Union itself. It has been argued that the enlargement, or at least the idea of exclusion, may act as a divisive and destabilizing factor. The security dimension of the ENP is brought out by Javier Solana in the EU Security Strategy, which confirms the

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<sup>78</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> See Jonansson-Nogues Elisabeth, "A 'Ring of friends'? The Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, Summer 2004, No. 2, p.244-245.

<sup>80</sup> See Missiroli Antonio, "The EU and its changing neighbourhoods: stabilisation, integration and partnership", in Batt J., Lynch D., Missiroli A., Ortega M. and Triantaphyllou D. (eds.), *Partners and neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, Chaillot Papers No 64, September 2003, p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> See Emerson Michael, "Deepening the Wider Europe", *CEPS Articles*, January 2005. The writer defines "Europeanisation" as: "The transformation of national politics in line with modern European values and standards through: a) legal and institutional obligations flowing from the norms and rules of the EU and Council of Europe, b) objective changes in economic structures and interests of individuals as a result of integration, c) subjective changes in beliefs, expectations and identity."

conceptualization of security that the EU developed during the 1990s of a Union as “civilian power”<sup>82</sup>. Inspired by the “democratic peace” theory, which argues that modern liberal democracies do not go to war with each other, this Strategy considers development, the rule of law and human rights as keys to building a secure environment.

The text reads as follows: “It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organized crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe. The integration of acceding countries increases our security but also brings the EU closer to troubled areas. Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations”.

As far as the Southern Mediterranean is concerned, the document admits that “the area continues to undergo serious problems of economic stagnation, social unrest and unresolved conflicts. The European Union’s interests require a continued engagement with the Mediterranean partners, through more effective economic, security and cultural cooperation in the framework of the Barcelona Process. A broader engagement with the Arab World should also be considered”<sup>83</sup>.

To reach its security goals, the ENP builds on commitments to common values, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights, and to the principles of market economy, free trade and sustainable development, as well as poverty reduction. Consistent commitments will also be sought on certain essential concerns of the EU external action, including the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and efforts towards the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts as well as cooperation in justice and home affairs matters<sup>84</sup>.

The Union has recognized that it is not possible to seal off instability beyond ever tighter borders. The choice therefore is whether to export stability and security to its near neighbours or risk importing instability from them. The fundamental case for giving priority to the EU’s neighbours remains the same as the earlier justification

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<sup>82</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue*, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> See Solana Javier, “A secure Europe in a better world. European Security Strategy”, document adopted at the European Council, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 7-8.

<sup>84</sup> See GAER Council Conclusions on European Neighbourhood Policy, 14 June 2004.

both for the Global Mediterranean Policy and for eastern enlargement and is about managing security threats, especially migration, in the Southern Mediterranean's case. If economic and political development fails to move forward across North Africa, more of their rapidly rising young population will press across the Mediterranean into Europe- some of them to plot from within Europe against their home governments and their perceived European sponsors. Experience in recent years suggests that even increased maritime patrols cannot stop the desperate and the determined from getting across<sup>85</sup>.

In the Wider Europe regional integration project, the Union's approach to security objectives is a comprehensive one and is inspired by the EMP's respective concept. The EU is generally used to concepts like that of comprehensive and cooperative security, in order to get regional stability, because of the successful experience of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the so-called Helsinki Process. In the ENP, political issues are strictly linked to social, economic and environmental concerns. A comprehensive security concept is directly connected to the development of trust and confidence among the units that constitute a region. This, in turn, implies further attention towards dialogue between cultures<sup>86</sup>. In general, the framework aims to link economics, politics and culture to security and to mobilize a variety of tools to tackle the root causes of conflict. This is in principle the so-called "holistic" vision of security<sup>87</sup>.

Looking into the particular **Euro-Mediterranean security issues** which are addressed by the ENP, one should start by the need to strengthen the **political dialogue and cooperation on foreign and security policy**. The Commission's Action Plans provide for the development of an enhanced political dialogue and regular exchange of information on Common Foreign Security and Defense Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)<sup>88</sup>. The security dialogue

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<sup>85</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 18-19.

<sup>86</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, op. cit., p. 10. In the Barcelona Declaration, as stated above, a specific chapter, the third one is dedicated to the issue of cultural dialogue. Accordingly, in the Wider Europe Communication one can read that "the importance of dialogue between civilizations and free exchange of ideas between cultures, religions, traditions and human links cannot be overemphasized."

<sup>87</sup> See Solana Javier, Speech delivered at the Annual Conference of the EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 1 July 2002. Javier Solana calls this a "specific culture of security", which is "based on conflict prevention, political management of crises and taking account of the economic and social root causes of violent action of all kinds". Javier Solana defines this view as "holistic security".

<sup>88</sup> See European Commission, *Proposed EU/Jordan Action Plan*, Brussels, 9 December 2004, p. 5.

between the two shores could indeed benefit from greater military cooperation in traditional security issues. In this sense the partners could also look elsewhere to find further ways of cooperating. NATO, the Western European Union (WEU) and the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OCSE) all have or have had institutionalized frameworks involving Southern Mediterranean countries<sup>89</sup>.

An important aspect of regional security lies also in the fight against the **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**. So far, this has remained a good intention given the profound disagreements on virtually all issues involved. The Action Plans refer to the matter, calling for cooperation<sup>90</sup>. Some new prospects could come about thanks to a recent decision by the Council of the EU to develop a policy on WMD, in the wake of the deep divisions caused by the military intervention in Iraq<sup>91</sup>. The Mediterranean could become an area of special focus, by carrying out a WMD threat assessment and by promoting a broader adherence to international treaties.

Regarding **regional conflicts**, it has been advocated that it is time to end the artificial separation between the Middle East Peace Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and use the Barcelona framework to discuss regional peace building<sup>92</sup>. The European Neighbourhood Policy sets the ambitious objective of cooperation on progress towards a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflicts<sup>93</sup>. The EU has a strong interest in overcoming the impasse in the Middle East as the continuation of the conflict has significant negative effects. It implies the holding back of economic growth and the continuation of ineffective spending by the Union, it endangers stability and aggravates threats emanating from the region. Most of all, it can put the whole ENP project in danger, by spreading mistrust and frustration<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> See Ortega Martin, "Military Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Charter: An Unjustified Absence", *The International Spectator*, vol. XXXV, no. 1, January-March 2000, pp 115-125.

<sup>90</sup> See Commission de l'Union Européenne, *Proposé Plan d'Action UE/Tunisie*, Bruxelles, 9 Décembre 2004, p. 7-8.

<sup>91</sup> See Council Secretariat and European Commission, "Basic Principles for a EU strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction", Doc. 10352/o3, PESC 315, Brussels 2003.

<sup>92</sup> See Ortega Martin, "A new EU policy on the Mediterranean?" , op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>93</sup> It appoints to Israel to "work together with the EU, on a bilateral basis and as a member of the Quartet, with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and a permanent two-state solution with Israel and a Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security, in accordance with the Roadmap and the obligations of the parties set out in it".

<sup>94</sup> See Asseburg Muriel, "The EU and the Middle East Conflict: Tackling the Main Obstacle to Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Volume 8, Summer-Autumn 2003, Numbers 2-3, p. 189.

**Terrorism** remains one of the most controversial issues among the Mediterranean partners and is placed at the center of the ENP's main security concerns. At the same time, attention is paid to the reassuring of the respect of human rights in the fight against terrorism<sup>95</sup>. The terrorist attacks of **September 11** and their aftermath have had important repercussions to the way Europe sees its Southern partners. It is well known that European perceptions of the southern Mediterranean have always been overshadowed by vague, diffuse fears. The EMP was an ambitious approach to the objective of overcoming mutual distrust through dialogue and cooperation. However, since the roots of international terrorism were traced back to the realm of radical Islamism, the process of gradual rapprochement faced the risk of coming to a halt or even going into reverse. The Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is dominated increasingly by security concerns, reviving latent feelings of mutual rejection<sup>96</sup>.

These evolutions have influenced the way in which **migration problems** are currently treated. The fear of terrorism and illegal immigration is pushing the member states to adopt an increasingly restrictive approach to allowing people into the Schengen zone of passport-free travel<sup>97</sup>. The Commission's strategy, launched through the ENP, includes the development of the legislation according to the international principles and standards in the issues of asylum and refugees and the reassurance of the efficient management of migration flows. All this is accompanied by a call for cooperation towards the reinforcement of the institutional and organizational capacities of **border controls** and of surveillance of entry and exit zones<sup>98</sup>. As regards the requests of the neighbours for the facilitation of the visa-granting system, the Commission's response is limited to the engagement to an enhanced dialogue, which doesn't seem to satisfy the masses of population that aspire to the better living standards of Europe<sup>99</sup>.

A final aspect of the ENP's security dimension in relation to the Mediterranean states has to do with the commitment to the fight against **organized**

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<sup>95</sup> See European Commission, *Proposed EU/Jordan Action Plan*, Brussels, 9 December 2004, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> See Junemann Annette, "Security-Building in the Mediterranean after September 11", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Special Issue on Euro-Mediterranean Relations After September 11, Vol. 8, Summer-Autumn 2003, No. 2-3, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> See Grabbe Heather, *How the EU should help its neighbours*, Policybrief, Centre for European Reform, London, June 2004, p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> See Commission de l'Union Européenne, *Plan proposé d'Action UE/Maroc*, Bruxelles, 9 Décembre 2004, p. 21-22.

<sup>99</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 24.

**crime.** The first step to this direction is the encouragement of the ratification and implementation of international instruments<sup>100</sup>. The strategy also provides for the exchange of information and the development of close relations between the Mediterranean states and EU member states' judicial and law enforcement authorities, including the establishment of adequate correctional centers (prisons) conditions<sup>101</sup>.

Finally, it would be useful to point out that the main reason for the lack of security co-operation in the Mediterranean region, lies not so much with the complexities of the Middle East conflict, nor with the strategic disequilibria in the area. It is the wide **gap between security cultures** of the countries on the two shores of the Mediterranean that poses the most difficult problems. Regional security cooperation is unfamiliar to Arab elites and to the strategic communities of the Arab world. Governments attached to national military power and to the traditional view of state secrecy in military matters have strong reservations about building regional security through cooperative means. On the other hand, the environmental and economic dimension of security is taken in practice as a form of external interference in national sovereignty. Similarly, human and political measures to enhance state and regional security are considered as a true violation of the Arab political order. Bridging such cultural gaps is a very difficult process and takes long time and serious efforts<sup>102</sup>.

## 2. Promoting Democracy and the Rule of law: The New Concept of Conditionality

The generalization of political conditionality could be observed after the end of the Cold War. Following two decades of rather narrow practice of macro-economic and financial conditionality, the agenda of the major donors progressively evolved to integrate new priorities. In the 1990s there was a new focus on poverty and on the global concept of 'governance', which was introduced into co-operation frameworks. This can be considered as the turning point for the emergence of the institutional and political version of conditionality. This new direction for the use of classical

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<sup>100</sup> ...such as the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols on smuggling migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms.

<sup>101</sup> See European Commission, *Proposed EU/Jordan Action Plan*, Brussels, 9 December 2004, p. 17-18.

<sup>102</sup> See Attina Fulvio, "The Euro Mediterranean Partnership Assessed: The Realist and Liberal Views", op. cit., p. 12-13.

conditionalities has been generally termed as the ‘new’ conditionality<sup>103</sup>. After the end of the Cold War, democratic governments from the North gradually took to imposing general institutional and political conditions upon the granting of development aid to emerging countries in order to normalize them into a balanced pattern of political, economic and social development<sup>104</sup>.

In the EU’s context, the rule of law represents one of the constitutive, foundational values of the Union. It appears in Art. 6(1) TEU among the principles, on which the Union is founded and which are common to all member states<sup>105</sup>. It is included among the values of the Union in the Constitutional Treaty, which the Union’s external policy is to uphold and promote<sup>106</sup>. It has also played a prominent part in the Copenhagen criteria, the conditions against which candidate states are now judged. Promotion of the rule of law possesses a central role in EU external policy, being found in “essential elements” clauses of agreements, as an objective of financial and technical assistance, as a key element of conditionality and, currently, as part of the Union’s developing conflict prevention and crisis management policies<sup>107</sup>.

At its most basic, the rule of law refers to a State where power is exercised according to and accountable to law. In this sense, the rule of law is linked to the values of democratic government and human rights guarantees, and indeed in EU policy, democracy and the rule of law are often combined and not clearly differentiated. Until now, the rule of law was seen by the EU and its member states as a pre-requisite for economic, social and political development. More recently, a further aspect of the rule of law has emerged in EU policy: its **link to security** and defense policy, as the rule of law is deployed in both conflict prevention and crisis management instruments<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>103</sup> See Uvin P. and Biagiotti I., “Global Governance and the ‘New’ Political Conditionality”, in *Global Governance*, Vol. 2, 1996, p. 378.

<sup>104</sup> See Schmid Dorothée, “The Use of Conditionality in Support of Political, Economic and Social Rights : Unveiling the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’s True Hierarchy of Objectives?”, in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, autumn 2004, No 3, p. 400.

<sup>105</sup> See Art. 6 (1) of the Treaty for the European Union.

<sup>106</sup> See Articles I-2, , I-3 (4), and III-193 of the Constitutional Treaty, text taken from the Provisional Consolidated version of the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, 25 June 2004, CIG. In Article III-193 (1), the Constitutional Treaty requires the Union to “seek to develop relations and build partnerships with third countries and international, regional or global organizations which share (its) values”(among others democracy, the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms).

<sup>107</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, ..., op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>108</sup> See *ibid.* p. 11.

Each of these aspects of the rule of law is bound up with **institutional development**, most especially the institutions of central and local government but also the institutions of a functioning civil society. It is not just- or even mainly- a matter of constitutional law. It requires functioning institutions and not only those that are directly related to government. The growth of a “rule of law culture” depends on the strengthening of civil society institutions, including the universities, media and professional organizations<sup>109</sup>. This has implications for the planning and targeting of technical assistance programs<sup>110</sup>, given that support measures for civil society must confront huge difficulties. Legality in the Arab World is rarely conferred enthusiastically upon genuinely autonomous organizations and some very significant non-governmental organizations are inspired by religious (Islamic) principles and are intolerant in their attitudes to other sectors of society<sup>111</sup>.

Seeing security as a rule of law objective and the rule of law as a security objective, has meant an increasing emphasis on particular aspects of the rule of law, including anti-corruption policies, measures to combat organized crime, effective policing and the relationship between the security forces and political institutions. No longer is the rule of law seen as having purely domestic connotations. This has to be kept in mind in order to consider the rule of law as an aspect of the ENP, or even better as its foundation or basis<sup>112</sup>.

The Action Plans contain a number of priorities intended to strengthen commitment to common values. These include strengthening democracy and the rule of law, the reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption and in favour of transparency; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of media and expression, rights of minorities and children, gender equality, trade union rights and other core labour standards and fight against the practice of torture and prevention of ill-treatment; support for the development of civil society; and co-

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<sup>109</sup> See Council Secretariat and European Commission, “Strengthening the EU’s Partnership with the Arab World”, D (2003), 10318, Brussels, 4 December 2003., p. 8. The document suggests that the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches needs to be strengthened through a firm and frank political dialogue and by identifying partners at different levels, in order to build a dialogue with civil society.

<sup>110</sup> See Corothers Thomas, “Promoting the Rule of Law Abroad: The Problem of knowledge”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Working Papers Rule of Law Series*, No. 34, January 2003, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> See Gillespie R. and Youngs R., “Themes in European Democracy Promotion”, in *Democratization*, Vol. 9, spring 2002, No 1, Special Issue: The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa, p. 13.

<sup>112</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, ..., op. cit., p. 19.

operation with the International Criminal Court<sup>113</sup>. Generally, in the framework of the ENP, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law as well as the support for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are not referred to only as values but as policy objectives, which dictate specific actions.<sup>114</sup>

The language of shared values, while very much in evidence in the documents on the ENP, is not an innovation in EU policy towards the Mediterranean region. In all its Association Agreements with the Mediterranean countries, the EU has included a clause defining respect for human rights and democracy as “essential elements” of the relationship. The “essential element” clause stipulates that relations between the parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for Human Rights and democratic principles, which guide the parties’ domestic and external policies and constitute an essential element of the Agreement<sup>115</sup>. The agreements open the possibility for the EU to take ‘appropriate measures’, where there is a violation of an ‘essential clause’. Furthermore, through the EU’s Common Strategy on the Mediterranean, the promotion of “core values” embraced by the EU and its member states has already been made a key goal of Union policy towards the area<sup>116</sup>.

Most recently, the Commission published a Communication, in which it stresses the need to promote democracy and human rights in the Mediterranean countries, where there still exist important deficits to this respect. To this goal, the Commission proposes a list of guidelines to both the EU and its partners. On the level of the EU it recommends that political dialogue should include a systematic cooperation on human rights issues and that a specific technical subgroup could be established. In order to enhance EU knowledge on the human rights situation within the partner countries, sources of information should be streamlined. In order to better identify priorities, the EU should promote workshops with civil society, even at a regional level and integrate those priorities in the National Action Plans. These plans should also serve to introduce the promotion of human rights and democracy

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<sup>113</sup> See COM (2004) 373 final, p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> See European Commission, *Proposed Action Plans EU/Jordan, EU/Morocco, EU/Tunisia, EU/Israel, EU/Palestinian Authority*, 9 December 2004.

<sup>115</sup> Association Agreements have entered into force with Tunisia, Israel, Morocco, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (interim agreement). Agreements have been signed with Egypt (June 2001), Algeria (April 2002) and Lebanon (June 2002).

<sup>116</sup> See Common Strategy of the EU on the Mediterranean Region, adopted by the European Council at Feira, 19-20 June 2000, at para 7, the core values include “human rights, democracy, good governance, transparency and the rule of law”.

objectives into MEDA assistance programs, along with the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights funding program<sup>117</sup>.

These regulations represent subsequent attempts to reform the security environment of the Southern Mediterranean, which is characterized by the consistent pattern of non-democratic regimes<sup>118</sup>. But, indeed, North Africa and the Middle East are in a difficult predicament: the fear that greater political liberalization could lead to a power transfer into the hands of non-democratic groups is not just a mere justification for the current ruling elites to stay in power, often through permanent states of emergency; it is also a cause of concern for European governments<sup>119</sup>. On the other hand, the vicious circle that is perpetuating itself is that authoritarianism is a cause as well as a consequence of the democratic deficit. Some of the fears of EU governments, notably the rise of fundamentalism, the perception of its links to Islamic terrorism, need to be understood in the light of the lack of democracy and of failing post-colonial state-building projects. It is for these reasons that human rights and democracy need to underpin any conception of security in the Mediterranean, both at the level of developing “comprehensive” security and in the humanitarian dimension<sup>120</sup>.

Passing from the normative level to the empirical evidence concerning the state of democratic development in the Southern Mediterranean, it should be said from the outset that although there is no developed democratic political structure, most regimes claim to be democratic and admit that democracy is the preferable political system. In reality, much as gradual progress has been made in terms of relatively fair election procedures, Southern Mediterranean countries are on different levels of development, which all seem quite far from the desired end-goal of full and real democratization.

In countries like Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon, there is an open multi-party system, periodic and fairly clean elections are held and a reasonable degree of power rotation is maintained. These regimes experience a significant level of respect for

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<sup>117</sup> European Commission, Communication to the Council and the European Parliament, “Reinvigorating EU actions on Human Rights and Democratization with Mediterranean partners. Strategic guidelines”, COM(2003), 294 final, Brussels, 21 May 2003.

<sup>118</sup> See Brynjar Lia, “Security Challenges in Europe’s Mediterranean Periphery- Perspectives and Policy Dilemmas”, *European Security*, vol. 8, no. 4, Winter 1999, p. 47.

<sup>119</sup> See Balfour Rosa, *Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

human rights and a fairly good degree of freedom of the press. In Algeria, political freedoms are available, but they are not fully protected, due to the political instability caused by the civil war. In Egypt and Tunisia, the process of democratization started but did not fulfill its promises, depriving any reforms of real substance. Syria, on the other hand, has been resistant to introducing any significant reforms to its political system. Generally, in all these countries, there is a wide gap between the rules listed in the constitutions and laws, on the one hand, and what is actually implemented on the other<sup>121</sup>.

The difficult task in designing democracy promotion policies for the Arab countries is to achieve a consensus on what democracy might mean and what the appropriate measures to reach it might be<sup>122</sup>. The apparent convergence of Arab and western demands for democracy disappears when it comes to the meaning and content of democracy, let alone the ways, timing and responsibility for democratization<sup>123</sup>. In a region with so different cultural and religious characteristics, the question of cultural relativism is relevant and the Commission has conceded to the requests of the Southern partners to include such provisions into the Barcelona Declaration.

The concept of democracy which is desirable in order to achieve the targets of security and prosperity in the Southern Mediterranean needs to be cleared up here. The meaning of democracy is frequently restricted to the engagement in competitive, multiparty elections, though for almost a century, democracy in the West has meant *liberal* democracy, which is a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers and the protection of basic liberties of property, speech, assembly and religion. This bundle of freedoms constitutes the notion of constitutional liberalism, which is theoretically different and historically distinct from democracy. While democracy means people's sovereignty through a government elected by the majority and has its roots in ancient Greece, constitutional liberalism is about government's goals and refers to the long western

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<sup>121</sup> See Soltan Gamal, "Democratic Reform in the Arab Countries of the Southern Mediterranean", in Kostakos Georgios (ed.), *Democratic Elections and the Mediterranean*, ELIAMEP, Athens 1999, p. 33-40.

<sup>122</sup> See Attina Fulvio, "The Euro Mediterranean Partnership Assessed: The Realist and Liberal Views", *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>123</sup> See Aliboni R. and Guazzone L., "Democracy in the Arab Countries and the West", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, spring 2004, No 1, p. 85.

tradition to protect the individual's autonomy and dignity against coercion by state, church or society<sup>124</sup>.

Liberty and democracy do not necessarily coincide. Historically, constitutional liberalism has led to democracy, but democracy does not seem to bring constitutional liberalism. In many Southern Mediterranean states and generally in the Islamic world, democratization has led to an increasing role for theocratic regimes, eroding traditions of secularism and tolerance. Moreover, if elections took place now in countries like Tunisia or Morocco, the resulting regimes would almost certainly be more illiberal than the ones currently in place<sup>125</sup>.

Experience from all over the world, notably from the East Asian and Central European countries, has shown that constitutional government is the key to successful economic reform policy. When regimes, either authoritarian, as in East Asia, or democratic, as in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, protect individual rights, reinforce the rule of law and the administration, growth will follow<sup>126</sup>. The same goes for security. In countries not grounded in constitutional liberalism, the rise of democracy often brings with it explosions of nationalism and war. Peace and security are linked not to democracy itself but to the respect of the rights of citizens, to a system of checks and balances that would prevent a single leader from dragging his country into war and to liberal economic policies, such as free trade, which create interdependence and make war costly and undesirable<sup>127</sup>.

The previous perceptions should guide the setting of priorities in EU's reform strategy towards its neighbourhood. The targets of increasing prosperity and promoting security in the Mediterranean are not well served through the mere introduction of European-styled democratic institutions, based on the fair elections procedures. Such an effort is not only ineffective but dangerous as well. Democracy without constitutional liberalism is likely to bring with it the erosion of freedom, the abuse of power, internal divisions and war<sup>128</sup>. The process of genuine democratization is gradual and long-term and elections are only one step. The most important ones concern the consolidation of the rule of law in all the important political, economic and social sectors, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, such as

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<sup>124</sup> See Zakaria Fareed, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy", in *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 76, Number 6, November/December 1997, p. 26.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42-43.

property and religious rights, freedom of speech and economic activity. These are the central subjects on which the dialogue between partners needs to focus.

### 3. Problems and Limits related to the Use of Political Conditionality

Much as conditionality is considered to be a very practical and rather fair method to restore dialogue between the EU and partners from third countries, its use is related to a number of problems and difficulties. Some of them are connected to the very nature of this process. Conditionality has been criticized as illegitimate interference in the domestic affairs of other states, as a challenge to state sovereignty. Counter to this is the conviction that human rights are universal principles and that the spread of democracy makes manifest its universal appeal. What is true, though, is that a highly directive and interfering conditionality, by substituting EU policy objectives for domestic policy goals, has the effect of undermining the capacity for autonomous policy development<sup>129</sup>.

On the other hand, the fact that the EU is applying “multilateral” conditionality, agreed by twenty five member states, increases its acceptance and legitimacy. However, as far as legitimacy is concerned, EU’s conditionality could be criticized on the grounds that the EU itself suffers from a lack of democracy<sup>130</sup>.

There is also the problem of subjectivity and consistency. Apart from gross violations of human rights or clear reversals in the democratization process, judging whether a country has met the criteria is bound to be highly subjective. Questions like which human rights and democratic principles are to be considered more important, what is the minimum degree of democratization required to fulfill the set conditions and which human rights are to be respected as a matter of priority<sup>131</sup>, or what should happen if a country makes improvements in one area, but relapses in another, cannot be answered in the same way for every case. Subjectivity and inconsistency in the EU’s application of conditionality is linked to the problem of double standards

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<sup>129</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues, ...*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>130</sup> See Smith Karen, “The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU’s Relations with Third Countries: How Effective?”, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>131</sup> See Uvin Peter, “Do as I say, not as I do: the limits of political conditionality”, in Georg Sorensen (ed.), *Political Conditionality*, Frank Cass, London 1993, p. 70.

applied to different countries depending on their economic and strategic importance and the EU's special interests<sup>132</sup>.

Another problem arises from grouping together human rights and democratic principles. It is argued that frequently human rights are reduced to democracy, which is further reduced to multi-party elections. But new democracies may not be able to guarantee human rights; majority rule can result in the denial of equal rights to minorities<sup>133</sup>.

Along with these theoretical issues, there are more specific problems related to the conditionality mechanism designed in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, concerning the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. First and foremost, the **weakness of motives** has already been stressed. The ENP emphasizes that relations with neighbours will be upgraded only as progress is demonstrated on issues related to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. However the policy also makes explicitly clear that the partner countries will not-for the time being- have the ability to opt for EU membership<sup>134</sup>. It is highly doubtful that instruments and mechanisms of the accession process, like conditionality and differentiation will operate, without the goal of accession to provide the motive, but with the vague substitute of the unclear prospect of a high degree of economic and political integration.

The lack of the membership motive may be a crucial impediment to reform. An example might serve well in illustrating this view. Two Mediterranean countries, Morocco and Turkey exemplify two rather different types of relationship with the European Union moving in parallel<sup>135</sup>. They have manifested contrasting types of reactions towards European conditionalities. Drawn by the prospect of joining the EU, successive Turkish governments have chosen to somewhat anticipate European conditions and to be preoccupied with matching the Copenhagen criteria, with the same motivation and consistency manifested by the Eastern European applicants. On the other hand, Morocco seems to manifest a relative degree of independence with

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<sup>132</sup> See Smith Karen, "The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations...", op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>133</sup> See Tomasevski Katarina, *Development Aid and Human Rights Revisited*, Pinter, London 1993, p. 13-14.

<sup>134</sup> See Johansson-Nogues Elisabeth, "A 'Ring of friends'? The Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean", op. cit., p. 240-241.

<sup>135</sup> See Schmid Dorothée, "The Use of Conditionality in Support of Political, Economic and Social Rights: Unveiling the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's True Hierarchy of Objectives?", op. cit., pp. 398, 406-407.

respect to European exigencies. The country has had to accept for more than fifteen years that it has no credible prospects of ever becoming a member of the EU. This is why the governments have remained relatively immune to conditionalities, the economy has not changed fundamentally nor the autonomy of the state in it<sup>136</sup>.

The whole concept of the ENP is to provide neighbours with alternatives to membership that will help them to become more stable, secure and prosperous. But unless the Union gives much stronger incentives to the neighbouring countries, its policy will have little effect and its influence on the region will be diminished. It is unfortunate that the Commission has been unable to grant through the ENP the two benefits that the neighbours really opt for: easier passage for travelers across EU borders and free trade in agricultural products. These matters are extremely sensitive for the member-states and decisions on them are in the hands of national ministries with no foreign policy perspective. These deficiencies make the Commission's proposals look like a token policy, not a serious attempt to transform the EU's neighbourhood<sup>137</sup>.

In the absence of any other strong incentive, only the promise of increased financial transfers might offer tangible benefits to partner states. But the ENP documents do not contain any generous language or substantial commitments from EU funds. The phrasing suggests that much of the aid might be provided by the international financial institutions- the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank<sup>138</sup>. It will be difficult to achieve agreement among national governments with the argument that states which are mostly of peripheral economic interest should attract ministerial attention and additional financial resources, when so many more immediate issues, such as the recent and following enlargements and their implications to the Union's internal cohesion, are on the agenda<sup>139</sup>.

However, if the EU member states want to benefit from increased security and from the positive cumulative effects of increased prosperity across the wider European region, then they all have to pay: the poorer states in trade concessions and adjustment, the richer states in financial transfers. Substantial benefits well worth the

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<sup>136</sup> See Dillman Bradford, "International Markets and Partial Economic Reforms in North Africa: What Impact on Democratization?", in *Democratization*, Volume 9, Spring 2002, No. 1, p. 63-86.

<sup>137</sup> See Grabbe Heather, *How the EU should help its neighbours...* op. cit., p. 1-3.

<sup>138</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, ..., op. cit., p. 9.

investment required. One of the challenges to political leaderships in democratic states, though, is that the costs of change are always more immediately apparent than the benefits; and that those who expect to lose fight harder than those who may hope to gain<sup>140</sup>.

The second problem relates to the question of the **asymmetry in positions and objectives** between the two sides of the partnership. As an ideal, the partnership concept is obviously of a rhetoric value to the EU, given that the impression of imposing its policies in a highly sensitive region should be avoided. If the promise of a partnership is not realized, this may lead to confusion, disappointment and inefficiency. The EU- Mediterranean relationship has always been characterized by asymmetries, because of the overwhelming economic and political power and influence of the EU on this region. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is based, as we saw previously, on a vision and a framework designed in Brussels and it is an insulated intergovernmental affair. This asymmetry is also reflected to the aid relationship. Of course there is co-operation and consultation at many different levels, but at the crucial strategic level, partner governments have a weak role and civil society groups none at all<sup>141</sup>.

The same features apply also in the ENP. The whole concept, objectives, means, instruments and conditions are set by the Commission and are modified according to progress, measured by predetermined criteria. The principle of joint ownership, which is stressed as one of the fundamental elements of the procedure, remains mostly theoretical. It is quite natural to be sceptical about the real extent of common consent in defining standards and targets to be met. The relationship will remain one in which the actions of one are judged by the other. There is no doubt that the agenda is being set by the Union and focuses on Union priorities, including border security, regional stability and the rule of law. Economic integration is presented as an incentive rather than a shared objective. The implication is that the Neighbourhood countries will be the potential beneficiaries of this economic integration, as long as they demonstrate the economic and legal ability to take that step and the readiness to

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<sup>140</sup> See Wallace William, *Looking after the neighbourhood...*, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> See Holden Patrick, "Partnership Lost? The EU's Mediterranean Aid Programmes", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 10, No 1, March 2005, p. 19, 34-35.

share broader EU foreign policy objectives. The real mutuality of partnership is somehow missing<sup>142</sup>.

Obviously, there is a clear asymmetry of objectives between the EU and its Mediterranean partners in the framework of the ENP. The primary EU's goal appears to be ensuring security inside and outside its borders. The Union is attempting to export stability in order to avoid importing instability. Instead of a truly shared objective, there seems to be the incentive of economic integration and a closer relationship with the EU being offered, in order to achieve EU security goals. And this closer cooperation will involve alignment to EU norms and policies concerning the sensitive issues of democracy and the rule of law. In a few words, EU is mainly interested in security through democracy, while its partners long for economic development through economic liberalization and these two targets can hardly be pursued by the same policies, as we have already seen in pages 27-28.

This apparent inconformity of goals between the two parties is likely to undermine the effectiveness of conditionality in the ENP process. If the Union is really interested in persuading its neighbours to undertake reforms and co-operate with its policies, it has to offer more than its help in their transformation to full market economies and in the battle against terrorism. These are EU priorities and are much less attractive to the neighbours' governments and peoples. The Union needs to give them much more help with the areas they really care about<sup>143</sup>, instead of promoting only its own concerns<sup>144</sup>. In the long term period, the lack of a sense of common identity, of belonging to the same region, of co-ownership, of common institutions<sup>145</sup> could induce neighbours to negatively perceive their asymmetrical relation with the

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<sup>142</sup> See Cremona Marise, *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, ..., op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> See Corothers Thomas, "Promoting the Rule of Law Abroad: The Problem of Knowledge", ..., op. cit. The author stresses that the enactment of legislation in such areas as corporate law, accountancy, taxation and anti-trust will not in itself encourage investment (domestic or foreign) in the absence of such principles as the transparency and stability of laws and effective anti-corruption controls. The role played by the rule of law in encouraging foreign investment may be challenged. There is evidence that it is not a determining factor.

<sup>144</sup> See Grabbe Heather, *How the EU should help its neighbours...* op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>145</sup> See Adler Emanuel, "Condition(s) of peace", in *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No 5, 1998, p. 189. Speaking about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the author argues that "behind the EMP and related efforts lies the...idea that the most promising-perhaps only-way to achieve long-term security, economic welfare, political stability and peace in the Mediterranean area is neither an elaborate system of alliances or collective security system, nor a functional scheme of economic integration, but the socio-cultural process of constructing a region", whose success depends on "political and social engineering of a Mediterranean 'we-feeling' or collective social identity".

Union. This is probably going to mine the foundations of the Neighbourhood Initiative over time<sup>146</sup>.

Finally, maybe the most serious and complicated problem stems from the **reluctance of the EU to implement conditionality measures**, especially those of negative conditionality, i.e. sanctions. Apparently, interests other than the promotion of democracy are given priority, to such extent that the genuine concern of the Union for democratic principles can be strongly contested. There are obvious tensions between the long-term strategic aims of the EU engagement with its Mediterranean partners and its tactical security choices. On the one hand, the EU is attempting to strengthen existing illiberal state institutions in North Africa and the Middle East, in order to gain more effective co-operation on security, anti-terrorist policies. On the other hand, it is keen to promote power-sharing and good governance in countries that function essentially on a non-democratic basis. In other words, democratization is seen as an ambiguous process and political good. The assumption that political liberalization does not pose a major threat to political order but rather is a prerequisite for a functional political and economic system is placed under scrutiny<sup>147</sup>.

The fight against terrorism has further accentuated the perceived dilemma between democratization and stability, through the rise of fundamentalism: By focusing on the terrorist threats, southern regimes have been very successful in branding all manifestations of opposition – violent and non-violent – as a threat to the stability of the region<sup>148</sup>. In this sense, the EU priorities in the Mediterranean of developing security and stability have so far translated largely into maintenance of the status quo<sup>149</sup>, rather than questioning the origins of the issue of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the legitimacy of the partner governments. The tightening grip on

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<sup>146</sup> See Moschella Manuela, *European Union's Regional Approach towards its Neighbours: The European Neighbourhood Policy vis-à-vis Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>147</sup> See Volpi Frederic, "Regional Community Building and the Transformation of International Relations: The Case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 9, summer 2004, No 2, p. 159-160.

<sup>148</sup> See Brynjar Lia, "Security Challenges in Europe's Mediterranean Periphery- Perspectives and Policy Dilemmas", ..., op. cit., p. 49-50.

<sup>149</sup> See Youngs Richard, "The European Union and Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: A New or Disingenuous Strategy" in Gillespie Richard and Youngs Richard, "European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa", Special Issue of *Democratization*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2002, pp. 42-60.

opposition seems to have become more stringent in the post-11 September environment, partly due to pressure from western governments<sup>150</sup>.

One of the clearest manifestations of the Union's lack of determination and consistency in the application of conditionality clauses was its reaction towards the military coup in Algeria in January 1992. The case is particularly interesting because it reveals the reasons that hide behind the EU's reluctance to stick to its own democracy promotion strategies. Despite the fact that the EC had just adopted clear guidelines as how to tackle such situations, France and most European governments remained silent on the rights and wrongs of the military intervention. Evidently, a number of European governments considered a military government in Algeria to be 'less of an evil than to adjust to a FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) government', which had already declared that it did not accept the western concept of democracy. Within the European community context, France had traditionally been intimately tied to the development of Algeria. French priorities were to dominate EU policies towards the North African country. According to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Juppé, in 1994, the only possible role for Europe was to give economic and financial support to the Algerian government. So, instead of cutting economic assistance as a response to the reversal of the democratic transition and to the massive human rights violations, the total aid from the EU and the bilateral European donors doubled from 1990 to 1994<sup>151</sup>.

A number of observations can be made related to this case. First of all, it is obvious that the EU did not live up to its own declarations on human rights and democracy. The general acceptance of France's dominating position within the EU concerning the policies towards Algeria meant that the policies stressing the condition of democracy and respect for human rights were given considerably less attention than the issue of stability and security. When security and the principles of democracy and respect for human rights are in conflict, security concerns receive the highest priority from the EU<sup>152</sup>. On the other hand, the institutional structure and the political-bureaucratic culture of the community pose limits to the promotion of democracy<sup>153</sup>,

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<sup>150</sup> See Junemann Annette, "Security-Building in the Mediterranean after September 11", op. cit., pp. 1-19.

<sup>151</sup> See Spencer C., "Islamism and European Reactions: The Case of Algeria.", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 2, 1996, London: Pinter, pp. 132-137.

<sup>152</sup> See Olsen Gorm Rye, "Promotion of Democracy as a Foreign Policy Instrument of 'Europe': Limits to international idealism", in *Democratization*, Vol. 7, summer 2000, No 2, p. 155-157.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

by giving priority to the policy aims of the individual member states rather than to those of the Commission, especially when the former possess a leading role in the EU, like France.

It seems that security concerns and strategic interests are qualified as more important than democratic principles in the EU's agenda. However it would be wrong to conclude that the policy declarations on democracy are not important to the EU and the member states. They may not have great significance per se, but they are important for serving other purposes. Firstly, promotion of democracy abroad is conceived as the main instrument for promoting European security in the post-September 11 era. Secondly, it is considered as a means to ensure and develop European economic interests in the region. Thirdly, it has contributed in giving to the EU the strong profile in world affairs that it has sought since 1958. And finally, the high international profile might have pushed the integration process further within Europe<sup>154</sup>. Apparently, the EU is only interested in promoting that form and degree of democracy which would best serve its own purposes<sup>155</sup>, mostly security.

But the link between security and democracy is not self-evident. There is no stringent relationship between the democratic character of a nation and its aggressiveness, its desire to dominate or to use violent means to assert its own perceived interests abroad. In this sense, it would be wrong to believe that if a country becomes democratic it becomes peaceful as well, a point that has already been illustrated previously. The right framework for correlating democracy and security is the virtuous combination of developments in domestic democracy, economic liberalization and international law<sup>156</sup>. It is to this direction that EU efforts need to be orientated.

In conclusion, one can argue that the ENP might become a victim of its own success in that its emphasis on political reforms (democracy, human rights etc.) which are essential for long-term political stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region, concerns issues that are always very much in tension with the Union's recurrent preoccupation with short-term stability (border management) in the Mediterranean

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>155</sup> See Gillespie R. and Youngs R., "Themes in European Democracy Promotion", ... op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>156</sup> See Aliboni R. and Guazzone L., "Democracy in the Arab Countries and the West", op. cit., p. 89-90.

area<sup>157</sup>. While democracy has to be promoted in the longer term in the framework of the prevention of security threats, outstanding risks must be tackled in the short term with appropriate policies, of an urgent and not always very democratic character. A successful security strategy is about the interplay between longer and shorter-term actions towards both the prevention and the resolution of security problems respectively<sup>158</sup>.

## **V. Greek Presence and Policies in the Mediterranean: Prospects and Dilemmas within the European Neighbourhood Policy**

Since the times of antiquity, the Mediterranean Sea has been one of the most important theatres of action for the Greeks. The first colonies, stretching from the Black Sea to Gibraltar were founded by the Greeks. Greek ships sailed the waters of the Mediterranean, bringing peoples and cultures closer together. Greek communities in almost all Mediterranean countries were always a dynamic part of the region in which they lived and made a substantial contribution to its development, not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in the Western nucleus. Greeks have always been strongly connected with the Mediterranean area<sup>159</sup>.

Nowadays, Greece can be described as democratic, internationalist, Western, status quo, free enterprise oriented and a sensitive outpost of the European Union and NATO in the troubled areas of the Balkans and the Central-Eastern Mediterranean. The country's strategic importance is currently enhanced by its position in the Mediterranean, a region which is seen as the "faultline" between what has been described by analysts as the emerging great division of the world: the North and the South<sup>160</sup>.

Although Greece has good relations with most Arab countries and Israel, it maintains relatively little contact with its southern neighbours as compared to its Balkan counterparts. Due mainly to traditional but also emergent security concerns, (such as the Greek-Turkish relations and the problems with FYROM's recognition) as

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<sup>157</sup> See Johansson-Nogues Elisabeth, "A 'Ring of friends'? The Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Mediterranean", op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>158</sup> See Aliboni R. and Guazzone L., "Democracy in the Arab Countries and the West", op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>159</sup> See Ministry of Press and Mass Media, Secretariat General of Information, *Greece in the World: A Global View of Foreign and Security Policy*, Athens 2002, p. 45.

<sup>160</sup> See Dokos Thanos, "Greek Security Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era", in *Thesis, A Journal of Foreign Policy Issues*, Vol. II, Issue No. 2, summer 1998, p. 27.

well as to the centrality of religion in Greek identity, the country orients its foreign policy more towards the Balkans than the Mediterranean. But the emerging Euro-Mediterranean space is now attracting greater attention from Greek foreign policy makers, as it represents an embodiment of a long-standing view that Greece cannot, as a nation, be oriented towards one direction, but has to strike a balance between its European, Balkan and Mediterranean identity<sup>161</sup>. The European Neighbourhood Policy constitutes a great opportunity for the Greek foreign policy to make new choices and redefine its political priorities, in order to claim a leading role in the EU's Mediterranean policies.

In an attempt to identify the factors that favor the strategic presence of Greece in the Mediterranean area, one should start by stressing the long tradition of friendly relations between Greece and the Arab world. The Greek positive attitude towards the countries of the central and eastern Mediterranean can be explained through a number of reasons. The Greek economy has always depended on the oil supply from these countries and at the same time it has always opted for the development of economic cooperation with the Arab states. Politically, Greece has tried to reassure the widest possible support of these states to the Cyprus problem and to alienate Turkey from its Arab environment<sup>162</sup>. On the other hand, there are strong cultural ties, represented by the Orthodox Patriarchates in the region and by the old and active Greek communities which used to live there, especially in Egypt<sup>163</sup>. Lately, Greece has been presented as a credible mediator between the Arab and the Western World, through its participation in the EU and its emerging strong role in the European economic and political space<sup>164</sup>.

In the last fifteen years, Greece's attitude in the Middle East has been more balanced between the Arab countries and Israel, due to the deeper integration of the Greek Foreign Policy to that of the EU. In 1990, Greece recognized de jure the state of Israel and the economic relations between the two countries developed rapidly ever

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<sup>161</sup> See Chrysoschoou Dimitris and Xenakis Dimitris, "Greece and the Mediterranean", in Ministry of Press and Mass Media-Secretariat General of Information, *Greece in the European Union: The New Role and the New Agenda*, Athens 2002, p. 247.

<sup>162</sup> See Tsardanides Haralambos, *The "Renovated" Mediterranean Policy of the European Community and Greece*, (in Greek), edited by Papazisis, Athens, 1992, p. 102.

<sup>163</sup> See Tasios Petros, "The Arab World" (in Greek), in SAFIA (Student Association for International Affairs), *Greek Foreign Policy Textbook*, edited by Sakkoulas, Athens-Komotini, 1997, p. 64.

<sup>164</sup> See Dokos Thanos & Pierros Philippos, *The Mediterranean towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The position of Greece*, ed. Papazisis, Athens 1996, p.290-291.

since<sup>165</sup>. On the interpersonal level, however, the relations between Greeks and Jews have generally been warm and close, since the two peoples have shared common struggles throughout their long history and have developed cultural and religious bonds. Greece was actually one of the few countries in which the anti-Semitism never spread<sup>166</sup>.

Greece's particular interest in the Mediterranean region is also linked to the visible old and new security threats emanating from the area. The perception of a potential military threat from Turkey has been widely shared by public opinion and reflected in expert debates as well as in Greek security planning for at least the last two decades. The emergence of the Cyprus problem in the 1950s, the Greek-Turkish crises of the 1960s, the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus in 1974, which continues to the present day, the series of Greek-Turkish frictions in the Aegean region, caused by Turkey's pressure for the revision of the Aegean status quo have rendered the relations with Turkey the main security concern for Greece<sup>167</sup>.

In addition, urgent security risks originate also from the current instability in the Mediterranean. The persistence of regional conflicts, mainly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the reversals in the peace process, can lead to regional spillovers of terrorism and political violence affecting a range of interests, from tourism to maritime security. The unchecked population growth in the so-called authoritarian "failed" or "troubled" states of the Mediterranean and the subsequent poverty, migration pressures, ecological breakdowns are dangers that have direct influence on Greek security interests. Migration constitutes the gravest challenge to Europe's security and is linked to the questions of integration, assimilation and citizenship of migrants and to the issue of the rise in Islamic fundamentalism<sup>168</sup>. Overall the ever closer linkage between security in the Mediterranean and security in Europe (which we have already assessed in the previous pages) means that Greece will wish to take a more active role in European and Western policies that can have direct consequences for Greek security and prosperity<sup>169</sup>, such as the ENP.

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<sup>165</sup> See Roussos Sotiris, "The Greek Policy in the Middle-East", in Arvanitopoulos K.- Koppa M. (eds.), *Thirty Years of Greek Foreign Policy* (in Greek), ed. by Livanis, Athens 2005, p. 91-92.

<sup>166</sup> See Kranidiotis Yannis, *The Greek Foreign Policy* (in Greek), ed. by Sideris, Athens 1999, p. 335.

<sup>167</sup> See Dokos Thanos, "Greek Security Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era",..., op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>168</sup> See Veremis Thanos, "Old and New Challenges in the Mediterranean Region", in Andreas Theophanous & Van Coufoudakis, *Security and Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Intercollege Press, pp. 45-46.

<sup>169</sup> See Lesser I.O. Larrabee, F.S., Zanini M., Vlachos-Dengler K., *Greece's New Geopolitics*, RAND National Security Research Division, p. 27.

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Eastern Coalition, there was a gradual shift in the interest of the USA, NATO and the EU towards the Eastern Europe and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, which affected the Greek Foreign Policy. As a small country, Greece needs to aggregate its voice and integrate its policies with those of the European Community partners and its NATO allies, in order to promote its security interests most effectively. Both institutions seek to adapt to the new political and security environment, in which risks and opportunities emanate from Europe's southern periphery<sup>170</sup>. These powerful clusters of democratic and industrial states offer excellent opportunities for multilateral cooperation and for the effective maintenance of regional and global stability<sup>171</sup>. Greece is a trustful member of both these institutions and can serve as an effective mediator of the Mediterranean interests, while promoting at the same time Europe's and its own security objectives.

Despite these positive trends, one has to bear in mind that Greece is a small state, with limited economic and political resources, which itself depends largely on foreign financial aid from the EU Structural Funds. Therefore, its capability to shape and implement an effective, long-term Mediterranean policy is restricted, especially in the multi-lateral level, whereas considerable progress has been made bilaterally, as we will see later.

On the other hand, for decades, Greece has had the tendency to downgrade or even ignore the Mediterranean region as a major concern of its foreign and European policy. Greece's relations with Turkey have constituted one of the most important constraints upon Greek efforts to articulate a coherent policy towards the Mediterranean. For a considerable period of time in 1990-92, Greece prevented the adoption of the "renovated" Mediterranean policy because it wanted to ensure that Turkey would not benefit from the latter's horizontal aspect, envisaging financial assistance to all Mediterranean countries linked by association or cooperation agreements with the EC.

This case illustrates well the dilemmas in which Greece is caught regarding the Mediterranean. Because of its problems with Turkey, it has been unable to view the Mediterranean as a collective entity. So long as problems with Turkey persist, a

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>171</sup> See Coulombis Theodore, "Introduction: the impact of EC (EU) membership in Greece's foreign policy profile", in Kazakos P. & Ioakimidis P.C., *Greece and EC Membership Evaluated*, Pinter Publishers, London, St Martin's Press, New York, p. 192.

fundamental objective of Greece's policy will be to seek to contain Turkey by striving to exclude it from collective schemes of cooperation in the Mediterranean and elsewhere<sup>172</sup>. That's why Greece has been reluctant to introduce or to support initiatives of multi-lateral cooperation in the region. Its attitude entails the danger of causing frustration to its EU partners and to its traditional Arab friends, who expect to benefit from the development of cooperative schemes<sup>173</sup>.

A further constraint is the fact that Greek foreign policy makers are so overwhelmed by day-to-day crisis management and the handling of "national issues", such as relations with Turkey, the Cyprus problem, problems in the Balkans, that very little time and resources actually remain for the consideration of broader foreign policy questions of a multi-lateral long-term nature<sup>174</sup>. There is also the economic constraint posed by the defense of domestic agricultural interests. Greece is involved in the strong competitive relations between the northern and the southern Mediterranean countries, which arise from similar or identical patterns of production, especially in the field of agriculture<sup>175</sup>. Consequently, Greece has been reluctant or has even refused to accept the preferential model of trade relations with the Southern Mediterranean countries, while supporting instead the granting of financial assistance to them in order to promote diversification of their economies.

On the other hand, Greece has always been sceptical towards the use of the political conditionality as a tool for initiating reforms. This is due to the particularities of Greek history and the deep-rooted notions of national sovereignty that prevail in the people's conscience. Given its strategic location in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, Greece throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century was subject to the competing bids for Great Power penetration. Its near total exposure by sea placed the small state under the direct influence of whatever Great Power exercised naval control in the Mediterranean (Great Britain before 1947 and the United States after that time)<sup>176</sup>. For

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<sup>172</sup> See Ioakimidis P.C., "The role of Greece in the development of EC Mediterranean Policy", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 2, London, 1996, p. 76-77.

<sup>173</sup> See Lyberopoulos K., *The Mediterranean Policy of the European Union. The Greek Priorities* (in Greek), ELIAMEP, ed. by Sideris, Athens 1996, p. 73.

<sup>174</sup> See Ioakimidis P.C., "The role of Greece in the development of EC Mediterranean Policy",..., op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>175</sup> See Tovias A., "The Mediterranean Economy", in Ludlow P. (ed.), *Europe and the Mediterranean*, London, Brassey's Centre for European Policy Studies, 1994.

<sup>176</sup> See Couloumbis Th., Petropoulos J., Psomiades H., *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics. A historical perspective*, Pella Publishing Company, New York 1976, p. 151.

decades, Greece was classified by political scientists among those states with penetrated (dependent) political systems<sup>177</sup>.

This long-lasting dependence became engraved on the public conscience. Many years later, Greek political notions are still characterized by distrust, suspiciousness or even hostility towards everything western or foreign. One of the most interesting Greek paradoxes is the fact that while Greece is a member of almost every western, European or international organization, it has often acted in opposition to the western views, denouncing its allies for attempting to violate its national sovereignty<sup>178</sup>. Consequently, European policies that bear the signs of a neo-colonial strategy tend to cause Greece's instinctive aversion. This trend has changed however since the last few years. The Greek foreign policy has become fully integrated to the European views and the principles of democracy and the rule of law are considered as central elements to the Greek foreign policy agenda<sup>179</sup>.

The relations between Greece and the Mediterranean countries are articulated both on the multi-lateral and on the bilateral level. As a member of the EU, Greece participates in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, whose development was inspired by the Corfu Declaration of June 1994<sup>180</sup>. The Greek presidency asked through that document the revision and reexamination of the Union's Mediterranean Policy and it was then that the decision to broaden the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation was taken. The Barcelona Declaration, signed a year later, followed these directions<sup>181</sup>.

The bilateral economic relations with the countries of the Mediterranean are influenced by the fact that most countries of the region, if not all of them, face unstable political and social situations, which have a direct and decisive impact on their economic structures, behavior and relations. Numerous bilateral agreements have been signed since the beginning of the '90s by Greek government officials visiting the countries of the Middle East, especially in the sectors of trade, tourism,

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<sup>177</sup> See Coulombis Theodore, "Introduction: the impact of EC (EU) membership in Greece's foreign policy profile",..., op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>178</sup> See Rozakis Christos, "The sterile stereotypes of the Greek Foreign Policy" (in Greek), in the book *In Research for a Foreign Policy*, Conference of the department of Foreign Policy of Synaspismos, 12-13 January 1996, p. 54.

<sup>179</sup> See Papandreou George, "Greek Foreign Policy: A Policy of Stability, Cooperation and Development", in *Thesis*, Vol. II, Issue No. 4, Winter 1998-99, p. 3.

<sup>180</sup> See Kranidiotis Yannis, *The Greek Foreign Policy* (in Greek)..., op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>181</sup> See Kefala Vivy, "The Greek Foreign Policy in the Middle East: 1990-2002" (in Greek)..., op. cit., p. 677.

taxation, investment protection and promotion, transport, energy, constructions and navigation. However, the end results have been poor<sup>182</sup>.

According to bilateral trade relations statistics, the volume of trade has increased with those countries where the local social, political and economic conditions have allowed it and vice-versa. Thus, in the seven-year period 1991-97, trade volume increased greatly with Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon; it remained unchanged with Tunisia, Jordan and Syria; and fell with Libya and Algeria<sup>183</sup>. Greece's most important trade partner in the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East is Israel, whose modern political and economic structures favor international economic relations. In 2003, Greek exports to Israel reached 155, 5 million dollars. Whereas, the participation of Greece in the overall Euro-Mediterranean trade transactions barely reached 3% in 2000<sup>184</sup>.

The same pattern can be observed in the investment of Greek companies. These try to win over a share of the local market in trade or industry, usually through joint ventures. The greatest number of companies with a Greek majority holding is to be found in Egypt, where at least 12 companies are present, including big manufacturers. According to the figures available, there are two companies with Greek majority holding in Jordan, ten in Tunisia and four in Lebanon. The limited presence of Greek companies is due to two factors: On the one hand, the unstable sociopolitical and therefore economic situation in these countries. On the other hand, Greek businessmen who are attempting to internationalize their companies increasingly tend to turn to the Balkans and not to other neighbouring countries, such as those of the Mediterranean<sup>185</sup>.

A modern aspect of the bilateral economic relations between Greece and some of the Mediterranean countries is the financial aid. The Greek state has recently become a significant aid donor to the developing countries, despite its restricted domestic resources. The Greek humanitarian aid and development assistance is granted mainly via Greek NGOs in collaboration with the Greek Ministry of Foreign

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<sup>182</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 688.

<sup>183</sup> See Ministry of Press and Mass Media, Secretariat General of Information, *Greece in the World: A Global View of Foreign and Security Policy*,..., *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>184</sup> See Roussos Sotiris, "The Greek Policy in the Middle-East", ..., *op. cit.*, p. 91-92.

<sup>185</sup> See Ministry of Press and Mass Media, Secretariat General of Information, *Greece in the World: A Global View of Foreign and Security Policy*,..., *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Affairs and is directed to many countries all over the world, among which Egypt, Syria (since 2003) and the Palestine Authority<sup>186</sup>.

In these background conditions, Greece is challenged to play a pivotal role in the Mediterranean region. Current trends make the timing favorable. Greek-Turkish relations have significantly improved since the opening in 1999 of the prospect for Turkey's membership to the EU. Greece has no reason to try to ban cooperative initiatives in the Mediterranean in order to exclude Turkey from the regional activities. On the contrary, the two countries can work together to suggest joint schemes of cooperation in the EU framework, with the view to exploit their crucial strategic location as bridges between the North and the South<sup>187</sup>. At the same time, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems to have entered a new era, after the death of the leader of PLO Arafat, which is hoped to be more peaceful and productive than the previous one. The European Neighbourhood Policy offers the framework for the development of these opportunities. Greek policy-makers should realize that modern threats and opportunities stem from the South and should make the right choices and redefine policy priorities, looking southwards.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Despite the ambitious, rhetorical declarations of policy engagement to the promotion of democratization, which seem to be inspired by social constructivist notions of a 'convergence of civilizations' based on 'shared values', in reality EU policies towards the Mediterranean states reflect rather its realistic purposes of maintaining its position of strength in the region. In this context, conditionality might fail in democracy development, but appears very effective in ensuring the furtherance of the status quo<sup>188</sup>.

In view of the difficult problems and of the poor results expected, it might be a good idea for the EU to try to move beyond the concentration on conditionality. An

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<sup>186</sup> See Iakovou Cristos, "Economic diplomacy in the Mediterranean", (in Greek) in the Greek newspaper *Ta Nea*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1995.

<sup>187</sup> See Kazakos Panos- Liargovas Pan., *The Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation: Potentials and Limits in the New European Framework* (in Greek), ed. by Papazisis, Athens 1997, p.148-160. The authors propose the introduction of common Greek-Turkish programs of interregional cooperation in the framework of the INTERREG Initiative of the EU.

<sup>188</sup> See Volpi Frederic, "Regional Community Building and the Transformation of International Relations: The Case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership",...., op. cit., p. 161.

alternative, perhaps more effective way to promote democracy and human rights might involve the strengthening of economic and political links with the countries concerned and thus the engendering of a process of internal change<sup>189</sup>. A flexible and open method like this, without rigid obligations and targets, could prove less controversial and more applicable by the EU and at the same time less suspicious and more attractive for its Mediterranean partners. Greece is now able and should be willing to contribute to the adoption of such innovative initiatives.

The real challenge, however, will involve the task of keeping the needs of the neighbourhood in high priority among the EU's internal complications and member states' national issues. It is not only the difficult compromises and concessions and the investment in considerable amounts of human and financial resources required, which risk making the matter slip to the bottom of the EU's agenda. Most importantly, it's the imminent institutional crisis provoked by the problems in the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, which is likely to initiate a much more introvert perspective in the EU for the following years. It seems that the future of the Union's relations with its environment depends inevitably on the survival and the development of the EU's own institutional identity, which is currently under question.

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<sup>189</sup> See Smith Karen, "The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations...", *op. cit.*, p. 258.

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