Europeanization beyond the EU:
The Dynamics of Europeanization in the
Southern Mediterranean Partner States

Moritz Schneider

Visiting Researcher, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, German Institute for Institutional and Security Affairs, Brussels, Belgium.

Introduction

Enlargement policy has been the EU's most effective instrument when it comes to exporting European institutions, values and standards to neighbouring countries. With growing consensus that the Union's enlargement process has almost reached its natural geographical borders, this method of Europeanization is today limited. Yet, even without the incentive of a concrete membership offer, the EU enjoys several bilateral and multilateral policy frameworks to spread its values and institutions beyond the European territory. This, the neglected external dimension of Europeanization, is based on the diffusion of governance institutions, norms and identities, and could allow the Union to exert considerable influence in regional and international politics.

In its relationship with the Southern Mediterranean states, the Union seeks to export its principles, normative standards and even its *sui generis* model of regional integration abroad. A multilateral framework supports the adoption of European patterns in the region and promotes purposeful changes to the regional institutional setting. The EU-27 not only boasts stable, prosperous institutional structures, the European project is the most successful example of regional integration in the world and its unique model of organization and governance could provide attractive solutions for the Mediterranean region. The power of example

is not enough, however, and the two main mechanisms for inducing Europeanization in the Southern Mediterranean states -change fostered by the conditionality rules of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the softer socialisation and imitation processes involved in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)- have proved ineffective.

This paper examines the EU's efforts to foster regional integration and to export European institutions, reforms and values in the Mediterranean region through its external policy framework. This paper describes the external dimension of Europeanization, the goals and contents of this approach and the mechanisms for the promotion of Europeanization in the ENP and the EMP. It will show that the available instruments of Europeanization are only slowly progressing without the core elements of Europeanization -the *acquis communautaire* and the membership perspective and the EU's modest efforts at region-building cannot effectively spread its ambitious European model. It will conclude that the EU has not been following a clear strategy in the Mediterranean region and the new Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) which combines elements of the two former approaches is not going to change this.

The External Dimension of Europeanization

The term "Europeanization" has no single precise definition but consists of different models which explain how "institutions co-evolve through processes of mutual adaptation".[1] The concept of Europeanization covers a variety of phenomena and change mechanisms. More important than its definition is how the term "can be useful for understanding the dynamics of the evolving European polity"[2] and complexity of European transformations. Europeanization is thus more a conceptual framework than a theory.

> *"Europeanization is a means and an end; it is method as well as substance; it is a project and a vision. It signifies a certain political, socioeconomic, and cultural reality, but it is also an ideology, a symbol, and a myth. It has universal value by virtue of its historical, holistic, and globalizing nature. At the same time, its impact has internal consequences for Europe and an external significance for the rest of the world".[3]*

As Anastasakis states, Europeanization combines internal and external aspects of the European project and is therefore not limited only to processes inside EU members. While the concept of Europeanization was often used to explain the

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1. Olsen, J. (2002): *The Many Faces of Europeanization*, Journal of Common Market Studies, Volume 40 (5), Oxford, p. 923.

2. Ibid. p. 922.

3. Anastasakis, O. (2005): *The Europeanization of the Balkans*, University of Oxford, Brown Journal of World Affairs, p. 78.

changes in aspirant states it serves also to analyse neighbouring states without accession perspective. According to Olsen's conceptualization, the external dimension of Europeanization concerns the EU's influence beyond Europe's territory by exporting political organization and governance that are typical and distinct for Europe and which "exert more influence in international fora".[4]

The causes for Europeanization can also be manifold, although two rather contradictory approaches might be especially relevant. On the one hand, the causes could be described in terms of *structural power* towards third countries and regions outside the EU. Structural power is according to Susan Strange, the "power to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy".[5] In this case, Europeanization would be mainly dominated by the EU's own economic interests with a preference for promoting economic liberalization, privatization and deregulation rather than political and social reforms. This *Realpolitik* approach could be identified as regards the implementation of foreign and security policy.

On the other hand, Europeanization could be described in a more altruistic way as the Union's foreign policy is promoting its norms and values beyond its borders. This *normative power* concept derives from the Union's lack of effective coercive power-politics instruments and the EU identity as such which fosters normative values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law.[6] The EU differs from "pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference predisposes it to act in a normative way"[7]. As a result, the EU projects its domestic characteristics and identity into its foreign policy agenda. This *Idealpolitik* approach is particularly prevalent in the declarations of intent of the EU's policy documents towards the Southern Mediterranean countries.

In the following, two mechanisms by which the Europeanization process is exported to the Southern Mediterranean countries will be assessed. The EU's capacity to spread norms is analysed by means of the regionalist approach of the EMP and the bilateral strategy of the ENP.

Logic of regionalism: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Multilateral relations with other blocs are an important tool for the Europeanization process. The European Commission has developed initiatives to support regional integration and unification processes in other regions and the neighbouring countries. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of 1995 is an exceptional foreign policy initiative which aimed to promote economic and political reforms in

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4. Olsen, 2002: p. 924.

5. Strange, S. (1988): *States and Markets*, 2nd Edition, Continuum, London, p. 24

6. cf. Manners, I. (2002): *Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in Terms?*, Journal of Common Market Studies, Volume 40 (2), Oxford.

7. Ibid. p. 242.

the region, encourage dialogue and foster social cooperation between the Southern Mediterranean partner states and the EU. The EMP (or Barcelona Process) is a product of the post-Cold War effort to address soft security issues. The framework provides financial and technical assistance as well as institutional ties which should lead to stability, prosperity and security in the region. Multilateralism and regional integration have gained tremendous momentum since the 1990s and in light of the reopening of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in this time the EMP was regarded as an appropriate instrument to stabilize the Mediterranean region and develop patterns of cooperation between the two shores.[8]

The Barcelona process includes a bilateral dimension by means of Association Agreements between the EU and the individual Mediterranean countries. The bilateral dimension contains however less specific elements towards each partner state but rather reflected general principles for the Euro-Mediterranean relations. The main components and objectives of the EMP should be developed at the multilateral level: namely, the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone and an area of peace and stability. The multilateral institutional framework pursues the goal of regional integration and shared norms as well as the resolution of conflicts between the members. The EMP stresses on the one hand the importance of south–south integration and on the other hand the importance of inter-regional north–south cooperation. At the heart of the EMP is the support of regional integration among the partner states based on the logic of functional regionalism which expects normative spill-over effects from the EU to the partner states.[9] Governments and decision-makers might "undergo a learning or socialization process whereby they perceive their interests to be better served by seeking an international (or regional) institution's solutions, rather than national ones".[10]

The learning and socialization process within the EMP framework for the promotion of regionalism is best analysed in the sociological institutionalism approach. According to Bicchi, given the "emphasis placed on isomorphism between institutions, this perspective highlights how practices, norms and organisational arrangements travel from a Western centre to the periphery with little adaptation".[11] In the relations, a shift in the institutional setting from the original conception to the current framework has taken place which has brought about

8. Schumacher, T., Del Sarto R. (2005): *From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean?*, European Foreign Affairs Review 10: 17-38, Kluwer Law International.

9. cf. Pace M. (2007): *Norm shifting from EMP to ENP: the EU as a norm entrepreneur in the south?,* Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Volume 20 (4), P. 660f.

10. Ibid. p. 664.

11. Bicchi, F. (2006): *Our size fits all: normative power Europe and the Mediterranean*, Journal of European Public Policy, Volume 13 (2), P. 294f.

significant similarities and parallels between the multilateral structure and institutional practice of the EMP and the EU. For instance, the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meetings show a "remarkable similarity between the topics they address and the topics around which sectorial EU Councils are organized".[12] The Euro-Mediterranean Committee as well as various working groups and meetings of senior officials mirror the gatherings within the EU Council structure. In addition, the agenda of the EMP is similar to the agenda of the EU with a priority set upon issues of trade, economics and culture, as well as social and environmental issues.[13]

The conceptual rationale of this approach is that the EU induces Europeanization according to the logic of appropriateness. In this logic, the Union does not seek to impose European norms but rather offers other countries the EU model for imitation to solve their own problems.[14] The changes in the institutional settings point to a closer resemblance to the EU model and "the pace, the venue and the participants in the meetings mirror now more than in 1995 the EU institutional structure".[15] The adjustment in the institutional framework and in the content of the working agenda "highlights a close, unreflexive link from the EU to the EMP and a eurocentric transfer of norms from the EU to the Mediterranean".[16] However, this transfer has not so far brought any socialisation or learning process for the Mediterranean governments to seek out regional institutions. The framework of multilateralism of the Barcelona-Process which should strengthen horizontal integration in the political, security and social sector is based on a commitment to shared norms; yet, the EU is not able to enforce normative pressure on Mediterranean partners to endorse its own principles.

The EMP's regional concept is characterised by a strong north-south asymmetry. This was especially evident in the economic field: the GDP per capita of the EU-15 was in 1995 more than five-times higher and the overall trade imbalance was huge with about half of the share of exports going to the EU-15, while the share of EU exports to the Mediterranean states amounted less than 8% in 1995. [17] The absence of an equal footing has undermined the EU's inter-regional arrangement which was also reflected in the political structures of the EMP. The principle of joint ownership was not applied and "Mediterranean partners had

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12. Ibid. p. 295.

13. Ibid. p. 296.

14. cf. Schimmelfennig F. (2009): *Europeanization beyond Europe*, Living Reviews in European Governance, Volume 4 (3), P. 8f.

15. Bicchi, 2006: p. 296.

16. Ibid. p. 298.

17. cf. FEMISE (2005): *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 10 Years After Barcelona: Achievements and Achievements And Perspectives*, ERF, Institut de la Méditerranée.

repeatedly complained about the lack of sufficient consultation and involvement in the formulation of the country-specific priorities".[18]

This asymmetry could not be reduced. Between 1995 and 2003, the share of the Mediterranean States in trade with the EU remained almost unchanged at about 6.5 % while during the same period the share of European trade of the New Member States increased from 7.5 % to almost 12 %.[19] Also intra-regional trade was not enforced. The South-South free trade agreements which have been established to promote regionalism in the Mediterranean region were more "symbolic than substantial", rarely implemented and "riddled with exceptions"[20]. In the consequence, the trade orientation has not changed in favour for the Mediterranean neighbours. The share of imports and exports between the Mediterranean countries remained at the same level between 1995 and 2003.21 South-South integration has progressed little and the attempts to create transnational agreements or to vitalize for example the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) have been so far not successful.

Logic of differentiation: the European Neighbourhood Policy

One of the most important instruments to efficiently spread the Union's common values is the enlargement and neighbourhood strategy which put the EU into direct contact with new areas of strategic interest. The ENP was introduced by the European Commission in 2003 and further developed in the "Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy"[22] published in 2004. Initially established with the purpose of providing its new eastern European neighbours with a credible alternative to membership[23] in order to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours, the EU decided later to offer the same type of structured relationship to its southern neighbours (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia).

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18. Schumacher, T., Del Sarto R.: (2005): *From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean?*, European Foreign Affairs Review 10: 17-38, Kluwer Law International.

19. cf. FEMISE, 2005: p. 31.

20. Bicchi, 2006: p. 294.

21. cf. FEMISE, 2005.

22. European Commission (2004): *Communication on European Neighbourhood Policy –Strategy Paper,* COM (2004) 373 final.

23. Since the accession conditions of Copenhagen, the EU started elaborating conditionality for new members. The EU applied a targeted use of conditionality in the accession process to secure compliance on political, economic, and legal matters. The general nature of the conditions allowed a "wide margin for policy entrepreneurship in setting demands that change the policy and institutional frameworks of these countries". (Grabbe, H. (2003): Europeanization Goes East: Power and Uncertainty in the EU Accession process, In: Featherstone, Radaelli (eds): *The politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, p. 307.).

Since the Barcelona process incorporated a rather weak bilateral dimension, the new Neighbourhood Policy was seen as an advanced tool that covered all basics aspects of cooperation with neighbouring countries. Although the ENP and its "wider Europe" approach should not replace the EMP but be complementary to it, the new policy shifted the EU's focus from the principles of multilateralism and regionalism to differentiated bilateralism. Via the signing of bilateral agreements a rather multispeed Europeanization process was enhanced which takes into account the different aims and political and economic conditions of each partner.

The new framework of the ENP is a combination of bilateral cooperation and dialogue, based on the existing association agreements and jointly agreed individual action plans in which the EU and the selected partners in the Neighbourhood define a set of priorities covering a number of key areas for specific action. It offers to every single Mediterranean State the possibility to upgrade its relations individually to the EU. Those states committed to undertake political and economic reforms negotiate a country-specific Action Plan with the EU and agree on common targets. The Southern Mediterranean states should benefit from closer integration with the EU "in return for concrete progress demonstrating shared values and effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms, including aligning legislation with the acquis".[24] This instrument of positive conditionality offers for instance an increased participation in programmes, aid flows, and a stake in the EU's internal market. However, the principle of conditionality was subsequently watered down and instead the principle of joint ownership based on shared values gained importance in the EU's approach. The failure to use "conditionality as a mode of top-down policy transfer on the basis of external incentives" was not least caused by the lack of appropriate incentives.[25]

However, the EU's transformative power in the neighbourhood has been low and the policy achievements are mixed since the ENP's launch in 2004. The record on democracy and civil liberties remained poor in the region and "more has been achieved in the economic sphere, notably trade and regulatory approximation, than in the area of democratic governance".[26] Thereby also the consequences of the ENP's differentiation logic have already become evident. While Morocco and Jordan made significant use of the Action Plan and made some progress in reforming the political and legal systems, other countries such as Al-

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24. European Commission (2003): *Wider Europe Neighbourhood*, COM (2003) 104 final, p. 10.

25. Lavenex, S., Schimmelfennig, F. (2009): EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics, Journal of European Public Policy, 16:6, p. 797.

26. cf. European Commission (2010): *Taking stock of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, COM (2010) 207, p. 14

geria, Libya, Syria as well as Egypt show a slow implementation of reforms in the field of democratisation, fundamental freedoms and human rights.[27]

In general the ENP can be "classified as a low-credibility association policy because it explicitly excludes a membership perspective for the ENP countries and does not set high political standards for participation"[28]. The ENP format can not replicate the reform stimulus of enlargement to the new neighbours. The important social learning process during the enlargement strategy in form of progress reports, regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism could not be compensated adequately. Except of the country reports the ENP is lacking a similar communication instrument to develop a socialisation process between the governments. While the prospect of EU membership represents the most effective mechanism through which the Union can realize its normative foreign-policy objectives the neighbourhood policy towards non-candidate countries encounters some constraints in the incentives to cooperate. Greater access to the EU internal market and cooperation and integration in certain fields in exchange for political, institutional and economic reforms – or as former President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi said, "sharing everything but institutions"- has been failed to be an effective tool for Europeanization in the Southern Mediterranean region.[29]

The Dynamics of Europeanization

The mechanisms by which the Europeanization process is exported can be described as both "combining rational institutionalism through policies of conditionality, and sociological institutionalism through norm diffusion and social learning"[30]. The extension of EU standards and European models of polity and society is an instrument to shape the relations with the periphery. The diffusion of EU institutions and norms should bind neighbouring states closer to European structures with certain conditionality and socialisation measures. Changes through policies of conditionality may occur in the short to medium run but the more "deep-rooted changes, which occur through the actual transformation of identity and interests, may only be expected as a result of socialisation in the longer run".[31]

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27. cf. European Commission (2010)

28. Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. (2009): EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood, National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century, Working Paper No. 9 2009: p. 24.

29. Prodi R. (2002): *A Wider Europe - A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability*, Sixth ECSA-World Conference, Jean Monnet Project, Brussels, 5-6 December.

30. Emerson, M. (2004): *European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy or Placebo?*, Centre for European Policy Studies: Working Document No. 215, p. 2.

31. Ibid. p. 2. However the diffusion of a European model of political organization is not a short-term process as institutions and identities are stable elements and "established institutions do not always adapt quickly to

The success of Europeanization and norm-promotion in the Southern Mediterranean countries via the EMP is far from substantive and the expected goal of encouraging regional integration in the area could not be achieved. Although, some similarities in the institutional framework could be reached, these parallel structures have not led yet to the desired outcomes such as implementation of democratic or legal reforms, or to the enforcement of intra-regionalism. For example the South-South free trade agreements among Southern Mediterranean countries seem only "symbolically mimic the institutionalized pattern of relations with the EU" but the success and the functionality are rather low.[32] The EU and its Member States have many varied and often contradictory priorities in the Mediterranean region, and with the Middle East and West Sahara conflicts the most severe obstacles for regional integration remain unsolved. The shared willingness among the Southern Mediterranean countries to create a regional entity is in general rather low. The importance of national sovereignty prevails which hems the readiness to give up competences to regional cooperation forms. The adaptation of European models of organization and governance transformation and the modernization of economies, polities, and societies cannot be enforced coercively by the EU. Instead these models and structures could only be copied voluntarily by neighbours convinced of their functionality, utility or legitimacy.[33] EMP processes therefore relied heavily on the partners' ability and willingness to take action for themselves.

The EU's neighbourhood policy applies the concept of exporting Europeanization in the periphery and was initially seen as a complement to enlargement. The EU accession process is probably the most effective mechanism the EU has at its disposal as the prospect of membership in the Union has promoted countries to undergo fundamental changes in order to prepare for accession. While conditionality during the enlargement process was a powerful instrument for dealing with candidate states, the strategy has not been successful with the Mediterranean states as regards the promotion of democratization and political reform. The "top-down political conditionality" and "bottom-up socialization" in the context of the ENP has its limits in the region. The ENP can not offer sufficient incentives for southern governments to undertake political, economic and institutional reforms according to European standards. In addition, the EU has not even used conditionality or imposed punitive action to push for political and economic reforms as it might create instability which the Union tries to cir-

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changes in human purposes and external conditions" as concepts such as *Path dependency* proof (Olsen, 2002: p. 925).

32. Ibid. p. 294.

33. cf. Olsen, 2002: P. 938f.

cumvent.[34] Although the Commission identified certain instances where it might make use of negative conditionality, the EU has never invoked this principle (e.g. suspending the Association Agreement if a partner violated the principles of the agreement such as human rights violations). Without offering partner countries sufficient incentives for closer cooperation, the consistency and effectiveness of EU conditionality on policy change is low. Economic incentives and increased partnership are not enough to encourage a uniform willingness in the region to pursue political reforms. The ENP's forms of conditionality and coercion will not have a comparable effect when it comes to spreading European institutions and principles outside Europe. The prospect of membership "appears to be a crucial condition of Europeanization".[35]

EU's Strategy in the Region: Stuck in the Middle

The European Union is a unique global actor combining soft power elements, a strong economic influence and a rather weak military strength. The EU has proven capable of developing a wide net of foreign relations and has "used its enlargement policy to increase its importance as an international actor".[36] The nature of the EU as an international or regional actor in the Mediterranean is difficult to capture as the EU attempts to promulgate its foreign policy through various mechanisms which are based on normative "soft-power" and structural power elements. The Barcelona Process and the ENP has not been successful in the promulgation of the EU's normative foreign policy. The European policies towards the Mediterranean region are viewed by many Arab countries with scepticism and as mostly designed to pursue EU interests. Despite the EU's rhetoric, the promotion of democratization and political liberalization were insufficient due to competing priorities. Especially economic and security concerns were dominant and more progress was achieved in economic liberalization, than in political or legal fields. The fact that the economic sphere was the main engine of the process supports the reasoning that Europeanization was predominantly used as a tool to promote European structural power in the region.

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34. The EU fears that a democratisation process might bring along political instability and security threats in the region. These perceived threats discourage the EU to put pressure on the governments to respect human rights or political reforms and thus, the EU supports a stable and pro-Western orientated but authoritarian government. (e.g. Youngs, R. (2002): The European Union and Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: A New or Disingenuous Strategy? In: Gillespie, Youngs (eds): *The European Union and democracy promotion: the case of North Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, London. / Jünemann, A. (2003): "*Security-Building in the Mediterranean After September 11*", Mediterranean Politics, Volume 8 (2).)

35. Schimmelfennig, 2009: p. 21.

36. Bonvicini, G. (2006): The European Neighbourhood Policy and its Linkage with European Security, In: Tassinari, Joenniemi, Jakobsen (eds): *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe*, Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies DIIS, p. 21.

In North Africa and in the Middle East the European governments are following a dual strategy somewhere between the concepts *Realpolitik* and *Idealpolitik.* So far the EU has proved to be "unable to stick to one strategy, namely either fostering its image as a normative power through EU-Mediterranean relations or pursuing its political and economic interests in the region".[37] The evolution of the Mediterranean region's geopolitics determines the level of integration with the Union. The EU's soft power instruments have been insufficient to make the Union a major player in the region of conflict and to push for systemic democratic change. The Union is "driven by a security agenda that is judged to be best served by a stabilizing liberalization of still-autocratic regimes, in a context in which conditionality is judged neither feasible nor desirable".[38] This might explain also why the EU has in its relations with other regions succeeded in terms of improving regional integration efforts, for example in the ASEAN region or the African Union, but failed with its policy towards the Mediterranean.[39]

The Union for the Mediterranean

Within the EMP, horizontal cooperation between the governments should promote the way to deeper political and economic integration. Since this framework was established in 1995 the "regional and global parameters within which EU policy towards the Mediterranean takes place" have changed.[40] The EMP's "one-size-fits-all" approach proved to be unsuccessful regarding the altered international politics setting and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict which have negative impacts upon region-building. Thus the ENP can be considered as a reaction to the failure of the multilateral partnership with the Southern Mediterranean region. With the consequence that the "hub-and-spoke arrangement of independent bilateral agreements with the European Union will dissipate hopes of integration of the economies in the Southern Mediterranean into a single market to partner the European Single Market".[41]

The EU modified with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), initiated on 13 July 2008, a new strategic framework towards the region. The new Union

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37. Pace, 2007: p. 669.

38. Youngs, R. (2009): *Democracy promotion as external governance?,* Journal of European Public Policy, 16: 6, 895-915, p. 912.

39. cf. Bendiek A., Kramer H. (2008): *Die europäische Politik der interregionalen Beziehungen und "strategischen Partnerschaften" Hegemoniale Politik im neuen Gewand?*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Diskussionspapier FG2, 08, Berlin, p. 18.

40. Schumacher, T., Del Sarto R. (2005): *From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean?*, European Foreign Affairs Review 10: 17-38, Kluwer Law International, p. 18.

41. Joffé, G. (2008): European Policy and the Southern Mediterranean, In: Zoubir, Fernández: *North Africa: politics, region, and the limits of transformation*, New York, Routledge, p. 324.

combines patterns of the bilateral ENP approach with the logic of differentiation and co-ownership and the multilateral EMP approach with the logic of regionalism. On the one hand, the principle of co-ownership is reinforced by setting-up a two year co-presidency presided by one state of the South and the EU which should act as agenda setter. In addition, the "Joint Permanent Committee" composed of specifically appointed representatives from all participating states and the Commission and a common secretariat based in Barcelona were established. These new forms of institutional governance should abandon the asymmetric power structure within the EMP, enhance co-ownership and promote a more balanced partnership. These structures may be important for an advanced learning and socialization process and could push forward regional integration in the long term. On the other hand, the UfM focuses on sectoral cooperation projects. This approach follows the logic of differentiation whereby Southern Mediterranean states may participate on a project-by-project basis. The aim to avoid the influence of sensitive political issues such as the Middle East or Western Sahara conflict on the UfM has however so far not worked out. Two years after its creation the UfM is blocked by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hindering the implementation of any common strategy in the Euro-Mediterranean realm.

Although the UfM has copied some important policy features of the EMP/ENP the new Union is not based on "a collective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Barcelona Process but was the product of bluster and horse-trading"[42]. Thus also its main objectives give "rise to ambiguity; it is sometimes presented as a political endeavour and sometimes as an economic one".[43] It seems that the creation of institutional governance is not accompanied with an appropriate strategy. This "function follows form" approach will not be effective within a Union of 43 Member States with different political, cultural and social starting points and objectives.

Recommendations

If Europe wants to become a coherent and strong political entity in its interaction with non-EU States it is firstly important to reconsider the use of conditionality as a means to advance its normative foreign-policy agenda in the short term. The EU has to provide its neighbours with more consistent incentives to cooperate and to make the political conditionality component of the ENP more credible. Some envisaged projects of the UfM (e.g. Mediterranean Solar Plan) could help to improve the credibility of the EU in the region and to enhance co-

42. Schumacher, T. (2009): *A fading Mediterranean dream*, European Voice, 16 July 2009.

43. Aliboni, R. (2010): *New as it is, the Mediterranean Union needs an overhaul*, Europe's World, Summer 2010.

operation between the partner states by having positive transnational effects for the whole region.

Secondly, the principle of a variable-geometry should deserve more consideration to prevent an over-politicisation of the Union. In the terms of Euro-Mediterranean relations, the constructed regional group of the "Mediterranean", a product of the political realities after the Cold War, should be revised. Different policy approaches one towards the Mashrek and the Maghreb should be tested. The establishment of a genuine free trade zone in the Maghreb could be a first step. The intra-regional trade in these five countries represents in 2010 about 1.3% of foreign exchange and only with the establishment of a free trade area the trade between the five countries could be increased by 3 to 4,5%.[44]

Thirdly, it is important in the long term, to promote regionalism and institutionalize the relations with other regions. Parallel structures, such as ministerial and parliamentary meetings and interregional cooperation fora and dialogue forms, have to be further strengthened and made more transparent. As far as the Mediterranean is concerned the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network or the Anna Lindh Foundation are examples how they could look like. A strategy to encourage willing partners to follow the EU's own integration path could be supported by establishing political, civil or economic institutions similar to the European ones. Regional integration would give the countries the opportunity to achieve stability and economic growth on the one hand, and provide the EU a chance to impact positively upon the public policies of neighbouring states and exert global governance with its normative policies on the other hand.

Fourthly, the EU has to make clear which strategy it follows in the Mediterranean. The new institutional setting after the Lisbon Treaty with a genuine foreign policy chief and a full-fledged foreign service allows the Union finally to speak with one voice at the international level. If the Mediterranean region should still be a priority for Europe in the future, the Common Foreign and Security Policy needs to be reinforced to strengthen the EU's political influence in these countries.

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44. Thomas More Institute (2010*): Towards a sustainable security in the Maghreb: an opportunity for the region, a commitment for the European Union*, Special Report- April 2010, Institute Thomas More, p. 24.