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The distant neighbors — EU, Middle East, North Africa and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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Abstract

The Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference (1995) was intended to be a "launching pad" for creating a new, innovative relationship between the EU-Fifteen and a selected set of non-member Middle Eastern and North African countries. The Barcelona Process was to become the European Union's first attempt, of several, to create postmodern inclusive policy spheres as a way to deal with the post-enlargement problems of 'ins' and 'outs' in its immediate periphery. Nevertheless, in spite of geographical proximity, common problems and stated interest in creating amorphous EU borders in different sectors, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is today all but abandoned. This paper will examine some of the factors behind the current degeneration of the EU's post-bipolar foreign policy strategy in the Mediterranean, by exploring the dialectic between the Union's desire to expand its geopolitical, economic and cultural boundaries and the need to secure its territorial area (from migration, proliferation, social instability etc.). In the final part of the paper some suggestions for how to revive the relationship across the *Mare Nostrum* will be forwarded.

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I. Introduction

The meeting in Barcelona 1995 between the European Union, its member states and twelve selected southern Mediterranean participants could not have had a more auspicious beginning. For many, the first Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference was to be both a historic and triumphant encounter, having brought together in Barcelona such a complete selection of Mediterranean countries; even counting on the participation of countries which normally do not coincide in other international fora, except for the United Nations and a few more. Moreover, coming into being in a climate of global realignments and with the Middle Eastern Peace Process on track, it was inevitable that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was to become imbued with almost unbounded optimism. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was intended to be a 'launching pad' for a new relationship between the northern and the southern shores of the Mediterranean¹. Reluctant to return to Cold War models of interaction with its Mediterranean neighbors, the Fifteen opted in 1995 in Barcelona for a bold, new model of proximity policy.²

The enthusiasm which Barcelona espoused stands in sharp contrast to the somber atmosphere at the recent Euro-Mediterranean ministers' conference in Valencia (April, 2002). Valencia was supposed to be a meeting to restart the work of the Barcelona Process, after the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had been duly 'relaunched' by the French EU Presidency in 2000. However, rather than making much progress on concrete work programs, the summit in Valencia was completely overshadowed by the grave Middle East crisis and the consequences of 11 September, etc. Although the Spanish host afterwards attempted to pass the meeting off as a success in that issues such as cooperation on anti-terrorist measures had been discussed, in reality the Valencia conference marked yet another low point of the Barcelona Process and put into relief the growing distance between Europe and its Mediterranean neighbors³.

Hence, seven years into the Partnership, some would hold rather than a launching pad, the Barcelona Process has proven to be a veritable Pandora's Box with potentially serious future consequences for EU's foreign policy actuation in the Mediterranean. This paper will explore the construction of the Euro-Mediterranean polity space and its later degeneration. In the latter part of the paper, a few proposals for possible remedies to overcome the current impasse will be forwarded.

II. Building bridges

Barcelona wanted to mark a before and after in EU-Mediterranean relations. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was launched as an opportunity to reinvent relations between the European Union, its member states and twelve selected southern Mediterranean participants: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey⁴. To enable such a change a new policy formula was needed.

¹ Felipe González, as quoted in Esther Barbé, "The Barcelona Conference: Launching Pad of a Process," *Mediterranean Politics* (1) (Summer 1996): 25-42.

² Thus abandoning earlier EC policy schemes, for example the 'Redirected Mediterranean Policy' which never got off the drawing board, as international events (end-Cold War, Gulf War, Algeria and the Oslo Middle East Peace Accords etc.) accelerated beyond the Redirected Policy's limited scope and instruments. Richard Gillespie, "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative," in R. Gillespie ed. *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Political and Economic Perspectives*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

³ "Objetivos cumplidos," *El País*, 16 June 2002.

⁴ Libya, which was excluded in 1995 due to its connections to the Lockerbie incident, has been invited to become a full member (currently it has observer status in terms of some meetings) of

For its basic structure the Barcelona Process would draw heavily from two earlier Mediterranean initiatives. At the economic level the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership took a note off a previously discarded EC scheme of creating a Euro-Maghreb free trade area. The free trade proposal was now dusted off and expanded to include all the selected southern Mediterranean countries. Another policy initiative that was recycled and adapted to the EMP would be the Spanish-Italian proposition to create a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), which had been sounded out with potential participants in the early 1990s, but failed to come to fruition. As a result, a core Euro-Mediterranean economic and financial aid basket was constructed and flanked by a political and security, as well as a social, human and cultural one. Thus, reminiscent of the CSCE Helsinki Process, but strengthened by a trade and aid component, the Euro-Mediterranean multidimensional agenda was to be hailed with expectation on both sides of Mare Nostrum. The Barcelona Process seemed to want to target security and socioeconomic issues in a holistic way, and thus it looked like the adequate instrument to deal with some of the more difficult root-causes of Mediterranean insecurity and socioeconomic underdevelopment. Never before, in the history of the relations between Europe and the southern and eastern shore of the Mediterranean, had such a comprehensive set of issues been brought together into a single framework.

The innovative features of the new Euro-Mediterranean relations did not end there. Another novel feature was the contextualization of the set of already existing EC-Mediterranean bilateral accords in a multilateral political framework initiative. The multilateral component of the Barcelona Process – much insisted on from Brussels and although at first resisted by some Mediterranean partners, notably Morocco – was to become perhaps its most valued feature. Given the past decades' disappointing and heterogeneous results of political dialogues carried out on a strictly bilateral level, and the little added value for fomenting economic growth of the EC-Mediterranean hub-and-spoke economic relations, it made perfect political sense for EU to argue for a multilateral framework this time around. The multilateral framework was designed to foment openness and transparency in Euro-Mediterranean North-South relations, and, however fragile, permanent South-South contacts among the countries in the region. Long-term reform in the Mediterranean basin depended on the southern partners' willingness to interact, trade and conduct cross-border cooperative projects (e.g. water, infrastructure etc.) and hence good-neighborly multilateral relations were needed. Implicit in the multilateralization of the relations was also a widely acknowledged feature of multilateral frameworks: that group pressure ensures that even less willing countries feel obliged to adhere to the parameters set by the group. The new EU-Mediterranean framework thus could act to provide the Union's with a multiplier effect on its possibility to shape the relations in the Mediterranean basin.

Another key feature of the new Euro-Mediterranean relation was the connotations inherent in the term 'partnership.' The partnership structure was to imply an association between 'equals,' hence signaling the Union's desire to leave behind the former post-colonialist and Cold War client-state pattern of interaction with the Mediterranean South. The Union's Mediterranean neighbors were with the new framework provided with a status (i.e. 'partners') which supposedly, at least conceptually, leveled the playing field between North and South. This was further accentuated by the fact that the Barcelona Process was to provide the Med-12 with access to decision-making processes and thus being in a position to steer/influence the development of the new Euro-Mediterranean relationship. The Barcelona conference work program established that periodic meetings should take place between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and ad hoc thematic meetings of senior officials and/or experts to 'define actions enabling the objectives of the partnership to be achieved⁵.' Moreover, a Euro-Mediterranean Committee consisting of the EU troika (now EU Presidency, EU External Relations commissioner and the High Representative) and representatives from each Mediterranean partner was created. The Committee was intended to provide joint oversight of the partnership process and carry out preparatory work for the ministerial conferences.⁶ The new cooperation

the Partnership. Nevertheless, Tripoli has shown itself reluctant to adopt and adhere to all Euro-Mediterranean *acquis politique*.

⁵ 1st Euromed Foreign Ministers Conference, "Barcelona Declaration," 1995.

⁶ Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, (London: Routledge, 1999): 160.

represented “the wish of the EU to work together with its partners and to get away from the previous situations where the EU made proposals and its Mediterranean partners either accepted or rejected them.”⁷

The 1995 signing of the Barcelona Declaration, in other words, marked the launch of one of the Union’s most ambitious and comprehensive Mediterranean policies until date. Indeed, to most observers such a long-term and elaborate formula was surprising, considering how EU foreign policy is made (intergovernmental and interpillar bargaining), and thus in many ways also marked a before and after in EU foreign policy making. Barcelona, one can therefore infer, inaugurated a new EU foreign policy relations model, a pattern which later has been repeated in relation to other countries in its periphery.⁸

The basic model is, to summarize, a multilateral framework with a multidimensional and comprehensive agenda and introduces the notions of reciprocity and joint ownership into the policy process. The multilateralism and the comprehensiveness of the agenda treated have become core features in all EU proximity policies towards the Union’s near abroad in the past decade⁹. Moreover, in contrast to EU cooperation development arrangements with non-neighboring third countries (e.g. ACP etc.), the EMP and other proximity policies are formally directed by the CFSP-pillar, and not the communitarian pillar, giving both the multilateral undertaking and the comprehensive agenda a perceived extra weight and strategic importance. In terms of the proximity policies, the Commission functions here rather as the liaison between all the actors and the coordinator of the policy initiatives. The ‘partner/partnership’ aspects of EU foreign policy, such as reciprocity, joint ownership and a measure of joint decision-making is also unique to EU proximity policies.

Based on these observed features – multilaterality, multidimensionality and the existence of reciprocal decision-making processes – one could argue that the EMP represents, in effect in the abstract sense, the intent to create of a shared polity space between the Union and its Mediterranean neighbors. The Barcelona Process – as the Northern Dimension, the Stability and Association Process and even the European Economic Area arrangements with Norway and Iceland – are thus part of a European post-bipolar process of renegotiation of space, authority and, some would say, identity. Changing notions of sovereignty and growing feelings of interdependence, and the experience of EC integration for the past 50 years, functions as the catalysts for such renegotiation.

The notion of a shared polity space has interesting implications for EU foreign policy in that as a result, as Teemu Palosaari points out, these inclusive polity spaces (‘grey zones’ in his terminology) are changing the quality of EU borders and “affecting the foreign policy making in that the distinction between a clear-cut inside and an outside becomes increasingly ambiguous, in that the neighboring non-members cannot be considered neither full member nor completely outside.”¹⁰ Territorial borders are and will continue to be a relevant feature in inter-state relations, however, at the same time one can hold that functional and/or sectoral boundaries are becoming less sharp and thus more inclusive of outsiders.

Apart from addressing interdependence, another objective for creating such framework policies, or shared policy spaces, is that the Union needs to deal with the internal and external effects of the Eastern enlargement process. Internally, this kind of foreign policy model allows the Union to have a good balance the Union’s foreign affairs’ focus, where global as well as parochial

⁷ European Commission, “Reinvigorating the Barcelona Process” COM(2000) 497 final Brussels, 6 September, 2000.

⁸ Other examples would be the Northern Dimension, for the Arctic, Barents and Baltic Sea area, and the Stabilisation and Association Process for the Balkans. There is also talks about creating an Eastern Dimension, possible including Ukraine, Moldova and, maybe one day, Belarus.

⁹ A multilateral relationship was even attempted with the CEECs in the EU enlargement process, however, it was largely rebuffed by the candidate states in that it seem to undermine individual efforts to ensure faster accession to the Union.

¹⁰ Teemu Palosaari, “Comment: Northern Dimension as a Tool for Building Grey Zones between Membership and Non-Membership” in H. Ojanen (ed.), *The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* (Helsinki: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti, 2001): 209.

member states' concerns are dealt with. The Barcelona Process, for example, was launched as a tribute to the real and perceived security concerns which many EU member states had, as well as to Franco-Spanish concerns over the, at the time, almost total monopolization of the communitarian policy agenda in favor of Central and Eastern Europe¹¹. Externally, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative, and other proximity policies like it, serves to assuage neighbors' concerns that the enlargement will mean a 'Fortress Europe' or that it will cause new divisions in and around Europe. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was in this sense also a forward-looking, futuristic policy, designed to bridge the 'ins' and the 'outs' of the European Union. Close collaboration on an ample set of policy issues in joint structures, it was hoped, would make the difference, and thus the importance, between being members and non-members less stark.¹²

Some analysts have referred to this model of EU foreign policy in its periphery as postmodern. The postmodern epitaph on the one hand stems from the very multidimensionality of EU foreign policy schemes which spans economic, security and other areas of inter-state concern¹³. On the other, postmodernity, one might infer, is represented by the fact that the cooperation is articulated within a polity space where there is no close fit between territory and authority. EU extends its authority beyond its member's territorial borders, and simultaneously receives external feed back with repercussions on its own territory. Although EU foreign policy initiative is predominant, these polity space arrangements are far from being a mere exogenous exercise, there are plenty of possibilities for lobbying and policy influence from interested third country partners, thus balancing the structure with some endogenous feedback¹⁴. EU is, in other words, flexing its internal geopolitical, economic and cultural boundaries beyond its territory through these polity spheres, thus creating a closer relationship and somewhat blurring the meaning of traditional foreign policy-making.

The postmodern take of EU foreign policy in creating inclusive polity spheres regardless of territorial borders is not surprising, considering the very nature of the Union. The EU itself is constituted as an entity which defies fitting into traditional definitions of neither a nascent nation-state or as a typical international organization. John Ruggie put it squarely when he stated that the EU may be "the first truly postmodern international political form."¹⁵ By being, as Andrew Moravcsik has defined it, a 'state-like non-state' the Union can not be expected to conduct a traditional state-like foreign policy, nor indeed would it be capable of doing so, considering the multitude of actors and interests which have to be compatible before a policy can be adopted. The European Union and "European integration provides an obvious example of how the frontiers of the state no longer coincide with the boundaries of problems and solutions have to be found within a new spatial framework."¹⁶ The resulting deterritorialization of polity and the functional overlaps of authority which the Union has experienced in its own development as a

¹¹ Esther Barbé, "Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions," in J. Zielonka (ed.) *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*, (London: Kluwer Law, 1998).

¹² However, it is worth noting that these postmodern polity spaces also functions as convenient covers for the Union and can be used in a very realist and pragmatic fashion. In having created a structure which was intended to reduce the real differences between member/non-member, one can infer, that the Barcelona Process also came to serve as a sort of a compensation, or an alternative, for those Mediterranean countries which (although some had applied for EU membership) were to be left outside of the European Union for the foreseeable future. There was a widely felt expectation in some European capitals, in the early to mid-1990s, that perhaps a customs union and the EMP would satisfy Ankara and in turn Turkey would not press further for full EU membership. The EMP also came as a response to Rabat's disappointment over that Morocco's 1987 formal accession application had been denied.

¹³ Pertti Joenniemi, "European Varieties of Regions and Subregions," in Nikos Frangakis, *The Southern and Northern Dimensions of Europe: Subregional Cooperation and Integration*, (Athens: Greek Centre of European Studies and Research, 2000): 101-130.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ John Ruggie, as cited in Bretherton and Volger, 1.

¹⁶ Malcolm Anderson and Eberhard Bort, *The Frontiers of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2001): 178.

Community during the past forty-five years, is increasingly also applied to cross-border and interaction with third states in the Union's periphery.

III. Constructing moots

Structural interdependence and post-Cold war realignments indeed figured prominently among the reasons behind the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995. However, notwithstanding the feel-good atmosphere and good intentions which permeated the first ministerial conference in Barcelona in 1995, the progress in the past seven years towards an inclusive, shared EU-Mediterranean policy space has been disappointing. The political reality in the region has been one of the predominant factors for scarce advances. The ever-deteriorating Middle East Peace Process has marred most Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences since Barcelona, and the most recent Euro-Mediterranean foreign minister meeting held in Valencia on 22 and 23 April 2002 was to be no exception. The Valencia summit took place against the background of the highest levels of tension in the region in recent times, as a consequence of the Second Intifada and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon's particular 'war on terrorism.' Seeing the grave state of the conflict, EU External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten would even express the opinion during the meeting in Valencia that indeed "[s]ome may find it unrealistic to speak about the Barcelona Process when the Middle East is in flames and that view is not entirely unfounded."¹⁷ Due to the situation in the Middle East, Syria and Lebanon did not attend the Valencia meeting and that the tribulations were on everybody's mind is reflected in that a extensive part of the Valencia Conclusions pay homage the Middle East conflict. The situation at Valencia merely underlines the much repeated notion that until the Middle East situation is duly settled real Euro-Mediterranean advances will unfortunately continue to be scarce.

Apart from set-backs in the Middle East Peace Process, other factors have also contributed to that the Partnership is currently experiencing one of its darkest moments so far. The repercussions of post-11 September international developments have, in particular, served as a catalyst to that today the Mediterranean seems more as a sea of division, or a moot, than a uniting seaboard. Among the currently more sticky Euro-Mediterranean issues we find Mediterranean apprehensions about recent European policies, such as terrorism and migration and the accelerating European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)

One of the primary topics to cause tension in the Euro-Mediterranean relationship right now is the recent developments in the field of European justice and home affairs. The political climate of vulnerability in Europe in the aftermath of the 2001 al Qaeda attacks has had stark repercussions in the field of civilian security and civil protection. The European political agenda has in the past year become almost exclusively focused on terrorism, drugs, crime and illegal immigration, out of which terrorism and immigration decidedly loom larger than the rest. These issues have of course also had a repercussion on EU foreign policy and on its relations to third countries, and therefore were very much present at the Valencia Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference.¹⁸

A related European security concern, which also generates Mediterranean tension, is the heightened European political activity in terms of illegal immigration. Xenophobia and anti-immigrant feelings have been on the rise in Europe in recent years, a fact which has favored the emergence and electoral successes of right-wing anti-immigrant parties in many EU-countries (Holland, Denmark, France etc.), joining the already established ones such as in Austria. And their anti-immigrant discourse has found itself onto the European agenda, as is illustrated by the fact that immigrant issues became the centerpiece of the discussions at Seville European Council (June 2002). Even traditionally liberal countries have, as it seems, to a certain extent joined the anti-immigrant bandwagon. This was reflected in the run-up to the Seville European

¹⁷ Speech by Chris Patten, "Valencia and the Middle East," European Parliament Plenary Brussels, 24 April, 2002.

¹⁸ 5th Euromed Foreign Ministers Conference, Valencia 22 and 23 April 2002.

Council, when British prime minister Tony Blair in an open letter proposed different measures to ensure a stricter EU immigration policy, detailing measures such as a common EU border-police, refusal or suspense of bilateral agreements and aid grants as a means to make third countries take back EU asylum seekers who receive a negative response on their request etc. An earlier version of Blair's proposal, which was filtered into British press, even included the possibility of using Royal Navy boats and Royal Airforce aircrafts in the fight against illegal immigration, above all in the Mediterranean.¹⁹

These developments in Europe have not been taken lightly by EU southern Mediterranean partners. To many Mediterranean countries the international campaign against terrorism has provoked a criminalization of Muslims in the West, and some observers even draw parallels to the Christian crusades or to Cold War containment of communism. A development that in itself is preoccupying and not conducive for a dialogue among 'partners.' Moreover, in terms of the illegal immigration issues, there is a marked Mediterranean alarm that the Union will convert itself into a Fortress Europe, although both the Spanish EU Presidency and Downing Street tried to assure the most concerned third countries that these European proposals should not be interpreted this way. For many southern Mediterranean countries the monthly remittances that European émigrés send back home is a lucrative input into the local economy. Moreover, legal and illegal emigration serves to reduce domestic social tensions, which overpopulation and weak economies generate. The potential closing of this economic and social escape valve thus cause unease among some southern Mediterranean governments. However, it was perhaps the call for a possibility to suspend bilateral agreements and/or aid grants, if third countries did not collaborate with EU over asylum seekers and did more to stop EU-destined migration at their borders, which caused most uproar, especially among those southern Mediterranean countries which are among the largest sender countries of migrants to Europe. In the end the Seville European Council rejected the using of automatic sanctions, but settled for a formula in that the EU should perform a "systematic assessment" of those countries not cooperating with the EU in terms of stemming the immigration flow. Failure to conform, it was pointed out at the Seville European Council, might hamper the establishment of closer relations between the third country in question and the Union. Southern Mediterranean, especially Maghreb countries', reactions against such a measure is a result of the perceived arbitrariness and subjectivity which it implied, potentially finding their economic aid suspended if perceived by Europeans as doing too little to fight immigration. Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania instead argued that joint EU-Mediterranean efforts and more technical and financial assistance from Europe are better methods to fight against the trafficking of undocumented workers in the Mediterranean.²⁰

Finally, another factor causing friction in the Mediterranean is the acceleration of the European Security and Defense Policy. The ESDP envisions the creation of a European civilian and military rapid reaction forces by 2003 to deal with conflicts where European interests are at stake, was officially launched at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. Before the 11 September attacks the general foot-dragging among European leaders made the self-imposed time-limit of 2003 look doubtful, however, the past year has seen a number of rapid developments on this front. Once the new dispute with Turkey over the use of NATO planning and logistics has been resolved (it is, ironically, currently in the hands of the Greek EU Presidency to resolve it), the EU rapid reaction forces will be fully operational.

Although the ESDP is not directed at any particular geographic zone, the accelerated pace of the EU rapid reaction instruments during the past year has caused some alarm among the Union's Mediterranean partners. Mediterranean unease today, reminiscent of the apprehensions surrounding the launch of the EUROFOR/EUROMARFOR, stems from that southern Mediterranean countries inevitably feel themselves the target of such European force mobilizations. They perceive as if the Europeans are gearing up against a 'threat from the

¹⁹ First published in The Guardian, later republished in "Blair planea usar aviones y buques de guerra para detectar y deportar a los 'sin papeles': Londres quiere sancionar a los países que no acepten la repatriación de indocumentados," El País, 24 May 2002.

²⁰ "La política de inmigración preocupa al sur del Mediterráneo," El País, 31 May 2002. Suggestions which were adopted later in the Presidency Conclusions of the Seville European Council.

South,' and feelings run, of course, especially high these days, as in the past year Samuel Huntington's famous theory of 'clash of civilizations' has been a recurrent (into monotony) theme in all kinds of gatherings between the two shores. Although the Huntington thesis is widely refuted, both by European and Mediterranean observers, the subject matter still manages to condition the post-11 September debate between northern and southern shores and thus generates feelings of uncertainty for the future. The ESDP generates concern among some of the more susceptible southern Mediterranean countries that the new EU rapid reaction forces could be used to intervene in conflicts or humanitarian situations on their home territory, with the infringements which this entails for the country's sovereignty etc.

One might thus infer, that overall the European feelings of vulnerability in the wake the incidents in New York and Washington has translated into that some European politicians appears to have reconceived the Mediterranean as being a first line of defense: a space where the boundaries of the EU may be pushed out to create a security belt around the Union. And, as a result, some Mediterranean countries feel themselves targeted as the cause for European insecurity or as a blank for the ESDP. It is doubtful if any of the European proposed anti-terrorist or anti-immigrant measures will be more than marginally effective, however, one has to keep in mind that most of these proposals are born in the spirit of upcoming elections in various European countries and as a way to assure voters that actions are undertaken. Notwithstanding, these are clear examples of European short-term security goals and parochial electoral pandering which have a severely negative impact on EU's relations to its neighbors, in this case especially the southern Mediterranean Arab countries.

IV. A postmodern polity for a 'postmodern international political form'?

The realities of Barcelona and of Valencia are thus difficult to reconcile. What started out as an ambitious policy to include southern Mediterranean countries into a joint Euro-Mediterranean cooperation initiative and draw these countries closer to European structures, appears today as almost an impossibility. By the automatism of the functionalist escalator (low policy cooperation, producing integration and mutual understanding), the Union expected to be able to consummate a postmodern shared polity space with its Mediterranean neighbors through the Barcelona Process. However, over the past seven years the Process has only advanced marginally, and, to many, the Partnership has thus been a great disappointment. Even the much valued feature of all-encompassing multilaterality of the Barcelona Process has been dented, in that due to the ups and downs of the Peace Process Syria and Lebanon have been absent at several EMP minister conferences. Hence, EU's dialogue with these two Mashreq countries has been reduced basically to the bilateral level. EU's postmodern polity is thus not allowed to advance in part due to the existing 'modern' security concerns (open conflict and territorial disputes) which continue to exist in the Mediterranean basin. Unless settled these hard security concerns will inevitably abort all effectiveness of the efforts to promote 'soft' security in the Mediterranean area.²¹ Bilateral and international diplomacy (i.e. UN) should thus be increased to settle not only the Middle East conflict, but also the pending disputes over Western Sahara and others.

Moreover, to explain the current ebb in Euro-Mediterranean relations, the European outplays in Valencia and Seville, in combination with the current international situation (Middle East, Iraq and post-11 September), have coincided in such an unfortunate way that the Partnership is experiencing an especially delicate and troublesome moment. Although the current tensions in the Mediterranean are a reflection of more long-standing problems related to EU's postmodern polity space; the differentiated European and Mediterranean prioritization of security and socioeconomic issues seem to have become increasingly acute in the past year. Consequently, the postmodern spirit of the Barcelona Process appears to be lost in an increasing polarization of Euro-Mediterranean interests. While European concerns center on the first Barcelona 'basket,' southern Mediterranean countries focus their attention in the second Barcelona

²¹ This notion is corroborated by Europe's own integration experience, which could only be launched after a proper peace conference had settled outstanding concerns.

'basket' (the third basket still being largely unexplored). In the case of the Europeans, it is almost sad to note that, far from postmodernist, the European Mediterranean agenda has become almost monothematic as of late, as an excerpt from the Danish EU Presidency program ("One Europe") illustrates. Apart from the Middle East conflict, the only other reference to the Mediterranean in the current EU Presidency's program is: "[t]he EU's relationship with ...North Africa is marked by the EU's decision, following the events of 11 September 2001, to intensify the dialogue not least with this group of countries on the effort to combat terrorism."²²

Moreover, the Barcelona principles of partnership and reciprocity are being hollowed out as the idea of 'give and take' has been relegated to the background. From the European perspective the Barcelona Process has proved to be frustrating in that the framework has not produced a greater policy input from the southern Mediterranean countries, although this was one of the explicit rationales for the Partnership.²³ In the absence of viable southern Mediterranean policy input, the Europeans have tried to supplement the vacuum with own policy proposals. However, this has produced a feeling among the southern Mediterranean countries of growing resentment towards what they perceive as European intrusiveness and unilateralism in the Mediterranean.²⁴ A prime example of this is the Seville debate about economic sanctions in third countries not collaborating on asylum and illegal immigration. Again, one could attribute the Mediterranean concerns as due to 'modern' concerns, where it is difficult for southern Mediterranean countries to accept European leadership due to lingering colonial memories and jealous protection of their sovereignties. For many Mediterranean countries, as young nation-states still reeling from the colonial ghost, EU's systemic link between political and economic reform and the struggle to root out causes of instability and conflict is not appealing. The view from EU's Mediterranean partners is that "[t]he North wants to conduct a proactive range of long-term policies aimed at fundamental political and economic reform in the Southern countries with a view to imposing systemic changes on their polities."²⁵ This generates, in turn, a backlash from some southern Mediterranean countries, which "confronted with proactive Northern policy, conducts defensive policies intended to secure good political relations and socio-economic co-operation while avoiding interference and destabilization."²⁶ Most EMP Southern Partners, perhaps a bit naively, would prefer that EU limited itself to only providing financial and technical assistance to remove structural socioeconomic imbalances. This would, on the whole, be rather unsustainable given the smoke screens which some southern Mediterranean leaders have put up to avoid closer European inspection of where MEDA assistance funds end up. Notwithstanding, too strict and detailed conditionality will also damage the principle of Partnership and ownership of the policy process and thus damage the value which the shared polity space might have for the longer term. Perhaps closer Euro-Mediterranean collaboration on large scale (and expensive) projects could be undertaken, and smaller sums of money could be given without any conditionality clause (however, always under the understanding that revisions will be undertaken and abuse resulting in the reduction of available funds).

The Partnership is to some sense also eroded by the fact that European short-term and, in some cases, parochial interests have been able to enter the Euro-Mediterranean agenda, as we have seen in terms of terrorism and immigration. The Europeans must, of course, be able to pursue what they perceive as legitimate security threats. However, unfortunately the European

²² Danish EU Presidency Program, "One Europe," 2002. <www.eu2002.dk>

²³ The only recent exception, which must be evaluated positively, was the initiative by King Mohamed VI of Morocco who, in the wake of Washington and New York attacks, called for holding an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum, to examine issues pertaining to security in the area, which later found itself into a common Euro-Mediterranean stand on terrorism. "Maher attends Euro-Mediterranean forum meetings in Morocco," Arabicnews, 18 October, 2001.

²⁴ Perhaps a notable exception was the intent of the Spanish EU Presidency to consult with the Southern EMP partners in the lead-up to the Valencia meeting, however, the actual effect of these meetings and the real input of the Southern Mediterranean partners on the Valencia agenda is not so clear.

²⁵ "Security and Common Ground in the Euro-Med Partnership" First Year Report, EuroMeSCo "Papers 17, June 2002.

²⁶ Ibid.

short-term perspective is to some extent clouding the long-term vision of the Barcelona Process (peace and stability), which is of much greater value. Conversely, the southern Mediterranean countries feel that although they have to pay attention to European concerns, there is very little reciprocity from Europe in terms of their security concerns, such as domestic instability, low economic performance and cultural protection. The lack of true reciprocity (or at least a better balance) is thus causing a growing Southern alienation towards the Barcelona Process. Therefore, the Europeans short (election cycle length) view of security must thus be counterbalanced with attending to the areas long-term security issues better (such as socioeconomic development and fomenting of civil society, democracy and human rights).

Pure European policies may also become a bone of contention in the EU-Mediterranean relationship, such as has been the case of the ESDP. Here the Partnership principle is jeopardized by the fact that one party perceives the other as mobilizing militarily against it. Here, more than anything, the problem appears to be a general lack of information – and the abundance of misinformation – in the Mediterranean which surround the development of the ESDP. Javier Solana himself has noted that much of southern Mediterranean suspicion against the ESDP could be overcome if the EU invested in a large scale information campaign to explain ESDP and its rationale to EU's southern Mediterranean neighbors. If the EU adopted a security concept for the new ESDP which made clear that EU rapid reaction force intervention will only be undertaken with a UN Security Council mandate, most southern Mediterranean partners wary of the NATO's Kosovo intervention, would be much reassured.

The blame for the poor performance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is thus to be placed squarely on both sides. However, the many inconsistencies in the EMP policy have, in particular, potentially severe long-term consequences for EU foreign policy influence in the Mediterranean basin. Moreover, there are also several inconsistencies between purely European policies and their effects beyond EU territory. Common European policies, such as the ESDP or the ambition to make EU an 'area of freedom, security and justice' are prime examples of how the EU does not seem to make the link between the deepening of its internal policies and integration process and the consequences of these for neighboring countries. The suspicion and preoccupation which the European Union's short-term thinking and lack of reciprocity are generating cause a general southern Mediterranean disaffection towards the EMP. This could translate into an outright failure of the EU's postmodern polity sphere and, more importantly, reduced long-term influence for the Union to mold this important periphery to the south of the Union in the future.

The European EMP focus for the future must be to become better to explain to its neighbors the purpose of European policies and priorities, as well as listen more attentively to its neighbors concerns. Thus, the original 'spirit of Barcelona' postmodern polity must be found again. The Euro-Mediterranean polity space which Barcelona created is an excellent instrument for the EU to draw its neighbors closer to EU structures and well as establish a measure of EU influence beyond the Union's borders. These ambitious proximity policies will take on even greater importance once the current EU enlargement process finds an end, perhaps as early as 2004. To avoid new divisions around Europe and power-balancing mechanisms by its neighbors as the Union grow larger, such shared polity spaces are promising. Moreover, given the present shortcomings of the Union's foreign policy articulation and implementation, these shared polity spaces may assist the Union and improve its actorness in the international arena as third countries and the EU work together to find some solutions to common problems.²⁷

How to save the Barcelona Process then? The first step must thus inevitably be to promote a culture of cooperation in the Mediterranean. The Barcelona conference diplomacy must retrace its steps to revive the original idea of long-term, multilaterality, multidimensionality and reciprocity/joint ownership of the polity process. One can infer that the following ingredients should be introduced and/or strengthened in the Euro-Mediterranean relationship –

²⁷ Filtenborg, Mette, Stefan Gänzle and Elisabeth Johansson "An Alternative Theoretical Approach to EU Foreign Policy: 'Network Governance' and the Case of the Northern Dimension Initiative". Cooperation and Conflict, (December, 2002, forthcoming).

1. **Strong EU lobbying for return to Middle East Peace Process.** This is the only realistic approach to safeguarding the multilaterality of the Partnership.
2. **Return multidimensionality of Euro-Mediterranean agenda.** The Partnership principle can only be safeguarded through a careful balance of European vs. Mediterranean security interests, short-term with long-term. In this sense the Commission's Regional Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 is a welcome initiative which might promote greater overall equilibrium in Euro-Mediterranean relations.
3. **Transparency.** Inform about the EU integration process and development of common European policies, in the spirit of Partnership. For long-term security the EU should undertake an open and frank dialogue, where the South feel that they are partners and parties to finding a solution to the problem, not targets of EU unilateral action and short-term security concerns.
4. **Democratization.** The Mediterranean ambiguity towards greater democratization of their societies must also be overcome, in that this is the only way to ensure greater social stability and progress which these societies deserve.
5. **Promoting multilateralism.** Another way of strengthening the Partnership principle could be to find common positions which can be supported jointly in international fora.

V. Conclusions

The EMP was launched, it was thought, as a proud statement to that time had indeed radically changed as a consequence of the end of the Cold War and that new relations thus could be forged. By bringing together in Barcelona such a diverse set of countries, with such a different bipolar experience, divisions in and around Europe seemed to wane and a new promising future seemed to wait around the corner. As a consequence, the EU and its twelve partners opted in 1995 in Barcelona for a bold and innovative model of foreign relations. The hallmarks of this new relationship were to be its inclusiveness, multidimensionality and reciprocity which seemed to make it an ideal tool for constructing a common area of security, prosperity and socio-cultural dialogue.

Barcelona thus stands in sharp contrast with recent developments. At present, the Mediterranean seems to be populated by a set of distant neighbors, each reflecting a different political reality, such as Europe, Middle East or North Africa rather than a shared polity space. This segregation is unfortunate in that the basic model and policies of the Barcelona Process are sound and the potentials of the Partnership should be exploited. Especially since the Mediterranean region is of strategic importance to the EU. Indeed, the European Union's Common Strategy on the Mediterranean has recognized that "[a] prosperous, democratic, stable and secure [Mediterranean] region, with an open perspective towards Europe, is in the best interests of the EU and Europe as a whole."²⁸

The future possible larger role of the EU in the international arena, will not only depend on strengthening internal instruments and increase interpillar coherence, it will also depend on the Union being able to engage its neighbors in a positive way. EU's postmodern polity spaces have a clear added value in that the multilateral mechanisms allow for the EU to enhance its influence and actorness beyond the Union's borders. The shared polity spheres as a foreign policy strategy are particularly useful in that they are based on reciprocity and joint-ownership of the policy process, and thus the Union avoids losing credibility by unilateral undertakings. This latter aspect should not be underestimated in the light of the commotion which U.S. Iraq policy is creating at the moment. Moreover, by combining free trade, with aid, assistance and an attachment to a genuine and comprehensive multilateralism the EU has a powerful instrument to engage its neighbors in the benefit of a more open, transparent international system. However, such a multilateral framework can only come about in close collaboration with the Union's neighbors. High Representative Javier Solana has put it in the following way -

²⁸ Official Journal of the European Communities. "Common Strategy of the European Council on the Mediterranean region," 2000/458/CFSP, Brussels, 19 June 2000.

“...We [the EU] must seek to harness the potential that we have when acting with our international partners - be it the United States, Russia, or others - to the multilateral mechanisms available to us...We must not think that there is an inevitable trade-off between effectiveness and inclusiveness. Acting alone has the advantage of clarity of purpose, but at the cost of legitimacy and thus of effectiveness in the longer-term.”²⁹

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²⁹ Speech by Javier Solana, "Europe's place in the world: the role of the High Representative" Stockholm, 25 April 2002.