

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN – ACKNOWLEDGING REALITIES AND EXPLOITING OPPORTUNITIES

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The foundation in July 2008 of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has given rise to new creative opportunities to reshape multilateral European-Mediterranean relations. The UfM was launched as a “union of projects” at a summit meeting of 44 heads of state and government in Paris and currently comprises 43 states with a total of 756 million inhabitants. Just as this union was emerging out of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), founded in 1995, its ranks were increased by the addition of six new member states: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Monaco and Mauritania. The Arab League and Libya were both accorded observer status. Although the UfM now has its own headquarters in Barcelona with a General Secretary and a secretariat, it is neither recognized as an international body, nor does it have a distinct legal identity. The UfM is in fact an international association drawn together on the basis of two non-binding political declarations made in Barcelona in 1995 and Paris in 2008 respectively.

The occasion of UfM’s second anniversary has prompted the following questions: What effects has the union had? What should its future direction be? In order to answer these questions the first step is to present the regional framework conditions and patterns of relationship that have hitherto manifested before going on to consider as a second step the measures and actions that have been implemented since the foundation of the union. Against the background of these accomplishments a third step will be to use an analysis of the political process to evaluate the UfM and to undertake a critical review of the institutional structure; the outcome will then be to make recom-



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mendations for action and to gain a perspective on future relations. These proposals can be outlined as follows: To make allowances for political and financial realities and to acknowledge the lack of alternatives to regional and trans-regional cooperation.

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

A consideration of the situation in the Mediterranean in terms of the democratic, socio-economic and security-political framework gives rise to the following picture: A regional comparison shows that the southern Mediterranean states, with the exception of Israel, Lebanon and Turkey, are still only making slow progress in terms of democratic transformation. In terms of the degrees of democratization

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defined in the Bertelsmann Transformations Index, the Arab Mediterranean countries are lagging well behind¹. Causal factors for the "stability" of authoritarian regimes and the continuing lack of democracy can be recognized in the following conditions²: Rentier state economic structures; neo-patrimonial political systems embedded in patriarchal social systems; and finally an international system whose security interests are best served by maintaining stable regimes.

A comparison of the rankings of the southern Mediterranean states, drawing on the human development index compiled by the United Nations, reveals just how relatively poorly the Arab states fare, again with the exceptions of Israel and Turkey³. In the economic arena these states, with the above-mentioned exceptions, are failing in their attempts to become fully integrated into global economic structures. It is rather more the case that the effects of

1 | Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009, *Bertelsmann Transformation Index BTI 2010*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

2 | Nadine Kreitmeyr and Oliver Schlumberger. "Autoritäre Herrschaft in der arabischen Welt", in: *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (24): 16-22, 19. Cf. primarily: Beck, Martin et al. (eds.), *Der Nahe Osten im Umbruch – Zwischen Transformation und Autoritarismus*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009.

3 | United Nations Development Program, 2009, *Summary Human Development Report 2009*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Summary.pdf (accessed July 10, 2010).

the global economic and financial crisis are being felt more keenly on labor and financial markets that are already feeling the stain. The result is that reform processes designed to roll back dependence on foreign financial aid and to give the burgeoning younger generation prospects of employment and actual job opportunities are only making slow progress. Amplifying this effect is the fact that, when it comes to social, societal and political opportunities, most Arab countries are lagging behind other states at the same stage of development⁴.

A glance at the security situation reveals that two highly incendiary conflicts⁵ - the Mid-East conflict on the one hand and violent tensions between the Turkish government and Kurdish separatists on the other - mean that the southern Mediterranean region is sitting on a giant powder keg. In addition, the conflict in the Western Sahara and the Algerian and Egyptian governments' methods of dealing with their respective terrorist problems are characterized by violent confrontations.

VARIOUS DEGREES OF SUCCESS IN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS

Relations between the EU and the southern Mediterranean states are conducted via both bilateral and multilateral contacts⁶. On the bilateral level association agreements have been concluded with the partner countries in order to support the southern states in their efforts to bring about reform through the implementation of democratic, constitutional and market economic principles. Thus far all the desired association agreements have come into force, although in the case of Syria this step has not yet been completed, and Libya remains opposed to the negotiation

In the multilateral context hopes for an improvement in the regional situation ties rest on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as the Barcelona Process. The stated aim of the founding document, was to transform the Mediterranean region into a stable zone of peace and prosperity.

4 | Markus Loewe, "Die Diskrepanz zwischen wirtschaftlicher und menschlicher Entwicklung in der arabischen Welt", in: *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (24), 2010, 10-22, 10.

5 | Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research. 2009, *Conflict Barometer 2009*, 71-73.

6 | Cf. Gerrit F. Schlomach, "Der Fisch stinkt vom Kopf: Europäische Kopflosigkeit gegenüber der arabischen Welt.", *Die Europäische Union und die Türkei. tome II: Expansion in den islamischen Raum?*, Ingo Wetter (ed.), *Die Europäische Union und die Türkei*. Hamburg: Kovac, 2006, 133-158.

of such an agreement. In its relations with the EU Tripoli is however pursuing the conclusion of a framework agreement that is intended to cover the same basic points as the association agreement.

In the multilateral context hopes for an improvement in the regional situation and the strengthening of trans-regional ties rest on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as the Barcelona Process, that began in 1995. The stated aim of the founding document, which carried no legal weight but which laid out the fundamental principles, was to transform the Mediterranean region into a stable zone of peace and prosperity. This was to be brought about by intensified cooperation in three fields: Political and security-political dialog, along with cooperation in the spirit of partnership in the economic and financial fields as well as on social, cultural and human levels. Since the start of the EMP the European Commission has made available a total of 1.66 billion Euros for regional projects⁷.

Against the backdrop of the Barcelona Declaration's ambitious aims a sense of realism quickly set in with the dawning of recognition that the original expectations were not being fully met. The fact that security-political, democratic and economic successes have been so limited can be attributed to a wide range of factors⁸.

It is certainly true that, in some phases of the Mid-East conflict, the EMP has represented the only functional context in which Arabs and Israelis have sat down at the same table. However, deteriorations in Arab-Israeli relations have usually led to disruption of the Euro-Mediterranean arrangement, although communication across the Mediterranean has never broken down completely. In the medium term European policy has never been able to offer a constructive resolution to the dilemma between interest in domestic reforms and change on the one hand and the interests of

In 2004 the EU established a new political approach in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy. After the extension to the southern Mediterranean states action plans served to give bilateral relations with the EU a new direction.

7 | Stefan Füle, "Address to the 'For'UM meeting", in: *Speech/10/269*, European Commission, 2010, 3.

8 | Cf. Andreas Jacobs and Hanspeter Mattes (eds.), *Un-politische Partnerschaft. eine Bilanz politischer Reformen in Nordafrika/Nahost nach zehn Jahren Barcelonaprozess*, Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2005.

European security on the other. From a European point of view it is legitimate to give expression to both the security interests of European nations and the desire for change and political reform. However, the wariness of the southern decision makers, who are in this case the interchangeable object of both concerns, is also understandable. After all, the various reform or revitalization initiatives that came from the European side in the context of the EMP were not allowed to bring about any significant domestic reform on the part of the southern partner states or any improvement in regional relations. Not only this, but no successful long-term measures could be put in place to contain the permanent conflict between the southern and central European member states within the EU over the use of financial resources.

In the wake of the 2004 expansion round the EU established a new political approach in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)⁹. After the extension of this policy instrument to the southern Mediterranean states action plans served to give bilateral relations with the EU a new direction. Particular care was taken to integrate supportive measures into the reform agendas of the respective partner states. Alongside structural deficiencies in the design of the ENP there is also specific resistance to individual reforms on the part of the political decision makers in the south. Nonetheless, the most recent progress reports to the European Commission on the implementation of the action plans show a positive overall developmental trend. In selected cases the EU set its sights on deepening existing good relations through the offer of an advanced status. In October 2008 Morocco was the first southern partner state to be granted this privileged status.

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Against the backdrop of these hit-and-miss developments the tenth anniversary in 2005 of the founding of the EMP saw an increase in stridency of calls for the reform of the EMP and ENP in the southern context¹⁰. This critical mood was captured in 2007 by the then candidate for the French

9 | Cf. Steffen Erdle, "Die europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik. Ein Motor für Reformen im Mittelmeerraum?", in: *KAS Auslandsinformationen* 4/2007, 4-40.

10 | Cf. EuroMeSCo Secretariat, *Barcelona Plus / Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States*, Lisbon 2005.

presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy, who made the foundation of a Mediterranean union into one of the planks of his electoral platform. Whereas the initial ideas were very vague and at times contradictory, during the run-up to the French presidency of the Council of the EU and the presidency itself in the second half of 2008 the scene was set for a new beginning in relations between all concerned in the form of a union for the Mediterranean¹¹.

AMBITIOUS START OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

At the Brussels spring summit of March 14 2008 the European heads of state and government agreed to give the European Commission the task of defining and setting out the modalities of the new European approach

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to the Mediterranean region, the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean"¹². This step enabled Sarkozy's original ideas to be carried over to EU level and integrated into the existing Barcelona Process. The cornerstone of the Franco-German considerations, which formed the basic principles of the European agreement, was initially to involve the EU 27 and the ten southern Mediterranean states along with Jordan and Mauritania¹³. For the institution itself agreement was reached to set up a secretariat and a two-year standing co-chairmanship to be shared between an EU member state and a southern partner. At the level of heads of government a summit meeting was to take place every two years.

On July 13 2008 44 heads of state and government from the EU and southern Mediterranean states met in Paris

11 | Gerrit F. Schlomach, "Deutsche Erfahrungen in der Nahost-Mittelmeer-Region verstärkt für die europäische Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nutzen", in: *KAS Auslandsinformationen* 3/2008, 55-59.

12 | Cf. Council of the European Union. 2008, Presidency Conclusions. Brussels European Council 13/14 March 2008, in: *Annex 1*, 7652/08, 19.

13 | Gerrit F. Schlomach, "'Overview' Regional Dialogue and Cooperation in 2008 – Any Opportunities?", in: *EAG Policy Paper* № 3, July 2008, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (ed.); Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention. Amman: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2008, 1-2.

under Franco-Egyptian co-chairmanship to sign a joint declaration¹⁴. The French EU presidency succeeded in defusing the row surrounding the EMP's tenth anniversary celebrations and heading off a renewed threat of boycott by most of the political leaders from the south. The circle of southern representatives included within its ranks the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. The only ones to stay away were the Jordanian king Abdallah II, his Moroccan counterpart Mohammed VI and the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The UfM was to focus its attention on the following six projects: The cleaning up of the Mediterranean, maritime and land motorways, civil protection initiatives, a Mediterranean solar energy program, a Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia and an economic development initiative for the Mediterranean with the aim of strengthening the position of companies ranging in size from the very smallest to medium-sized.

On the level of heads of state and government a summit meeting will in future take place every two years. It is incumbent upon the high-ranking state representatives to make decisions concerning political direction and to approve the work programs of the UfM, thereby assuming a function corresponding to that of the Council of the EU. Agreement was also reached on a two-year co-chairmanship and the institution of a joint secretariat under the direction of a General Secretary. A joint standing committee prepares the meetings of the high officials and will assist the co-chairs in the arrangement of regular meetings of foreign ministers.

In the Paris Declaration the existing list of participating states was extended over and above that of the EMP. Thus it was that the partnership's ranks were increased by the addition of six new member states: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Monaco and Mauritania. The Arab League was accorded observer status. Libya decided to take part in regular meetings as an observer.

14 | President of the French Republic and the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, July 13, 2008, Paris.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS AFTER THE SUMMIT

The follow-up conference between foreign ministers that had been arranged at the Paris summit on the foundation of the Union for the Mediterranean took place on November 3 and 4 2008. The original date for the meeting in October 2008 had to be changed as the Arab states had cast doubt on their participation due to their reluctance to sit at the same table as the Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman.

The aim of this first meeting under the direction of the French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner and his Egyptian colleague Ahmed Aboul Gheit was to cement the new union and to address any open questions. In the closing declaration¹⁵ the foreign ministers firmed up the institutional structure, defined the work program and fields of cooperation for 2009 and carried out an examination of the most recent activities. The foreign ministers also decided on "Union for the Mediterranean" as the new official name. In the process the reference to the Barcelona Process, which had been included in the initial project phase at the behest of German chancellor Angela Merkel, was dropped.

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The question of which parties from the European Union or the European member states should chair the committee was also discussed at the foreign ministers' meeting in order to guarantee a coherent approach to the definition of policy. The joint declaration lent more precision to the European requirement for the office of co-presidency to be occupied in accordance with the treaties that had already been put in place. This was connected with the understanding that it was the role of the presidency and the European Commission to represent the EU in relations with other states. What remained unclear however were the questions of which European state should assume the chair for the EU presidency after the two-year French co-presidency and how the EU presidency and the Commission were to be coordinated.

15 | Council of the European Union, Union for the Mediterranean ministerial conference, Marseille, November 3-4, 2008, 15187/08 (Presse 314), (Barcelona Press 2008), 6-10.

Also created was the post of General Secretary: a post that could not initially be filled because it was seen in relation to the undecided question of where to locate the secretariat. The political influence of Syria led to the rejection of Tunisia as such a location¹⁶. In return, the Tunisian government declared its opposition to the compromise offer to allow Tunisia to appoint the first General Secretary and refused to make any proposal as to how this prominent position should be filled. Jordan was alone in holding out for her own candidate, although the overarching tensions in the Mid-East conflict prevented him from being elected quickly.

The joint secretariat has been assigned a purely technical task and therefore has no political mandate. The secretariat's role is limited to giving new impetus to the process and preparing, implementing and revising projects. Its support staff and office needs are financed from a combination of sources. The EU contributes a share, and the rest comes from the southern partner states, although the provision of these contributions is understood to be voluntary.

Although the Paris conference participants had agreed to involve the Arab League in the Union for the Mediterranean, the Israeli government continued to put up stiff resistance to the implementation of this agreement. This rejection by the Israelis led to the postponement of a meeting of environment ministers planned for the end of October 2008 in Jordan. It did however prove possible to prevent the November 2008 meeting of foreign ministers, placed under threat by the Mid-East conflict and the involvement of both Israel and the Arab League in the UfM, from ending in failure¹⁷. The continuing presence of the Arab League does however raise the question of what rationale is indirectly being given for the involvement of all Arab states, including those which do not directly or indirectly border on the Mediterranean, in a Euro-Mediterranean organization. Israel's critical position was overcome by an agreement to increase the number of deputy General Secretaries. One such post was assigned to a representative from each of the southern capital cities of Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Athens, Rome and Valletta.

Relations in the Mediterranean were suspended during hostilities in the Gaza Strip at the turn of the year 2008/2009 and followed by elections in Israel. This led to the complete cessation of meetings of the UfM.

16 | Cf. Florence Beaugé, "La France arrache un accord global sur l'Union pour la Méditerranée", in: *Le Monde*, November 5, 2008.

17 | Ibid.

THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE UNION MEET WITH LIMITED SUCCESS

Relations in the Mediterranean were suspended during, and in the wake of, hostilities in the Gaza Strip at the turn of the year 2008/2009 and following on from elections in Israel. This led to the complete cessation of both technical and diplomatic meetings in the context of the UfM. As a result even the European Commission had to make a public admission that the planned meetings were to be put on ice¹⁸.

In June 2009, in the wake of yet another postponement prompted by the Mid-East conflict of a meeting scheduled for the beginning of June in Monaco, the French energy minister Jean-Louis Borloo launched an initiative to bring his colleagues together in Paris on June 25 2009. The aim of this meeting was to discuss further steps that could be taken toward sustainable development in the region.

The question regarding the rotating co-chairmanship raised by EU came up again in July 2009 when the then foreign minister of Belgium, Karel de Gucht, refused

The political effects of the Mid-East conflict led to delays in the nomination of the first General Secretary. Ahmad Masadeh was declared as the first General Secretary of the UfM in March 2010.

to accept that the European Mediterranean states should automatically hold on to the co-presidency once the presidency of the Council of the EU had ended. This informal procedure came into being during the period of French co-chairmanship of the UfM for the EU from July 2008 to December 2009. The French government had managed to negotiate its retention of the co-chairmanship with the subsequent presidencies of the European Council of the Czech Republic and Sweden. However this led to confusion when at the beginning of 2009 two delegations – one under the leadership of the Czechs as the then holders of the presidency of the Council of the EU and one under the direction of the French in their capacity as co-chair – attempted to mediate on the ground in the Gaza-Israel conflict. Belgium was at that time concerned that Madrid too might stake a claim to the co-chairmanship after the

18 | "The crisis in Gaza at the end of 2008 resulted in a suspension of the UfM meetings during (sic.) some months." in: *Memo/09/333*, European Commission (2009): Union for the Mediterranean, Brussels, 10 July 2009.

end of the Spanish presidency of the Council of the EU at the end of June 2010. This fear led to an exchange of letters between the Belgian and Spanish foreign ministers.

Two different aspects have an effect on the question of European occupancy of the co-chairmanship: Firstly, by the start of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU in July 2010 no decision had been taken on this matter. It is foreseeable that a procedure will have to be instituted in Brussels to work out by negotiation how the position should be handed on to the French. Secondly, the decision-making process will be played out against the background of Belgium's policy decision to leave foreign policy issues to High Representative Catherine Ashton and the new European foreign affairs department. With these two factors in view it must be assumed that the European occupancy of the co-chair will continue to exercise the Council in the fall of 2010.

The fourth ministerial meeting on the issue of water in April 2010 ended without agreement. The underlying cause was the Israeli refusal to countenance the use of the term "occupied territories" in the concluding document.

In addition, the political effects of the Mid-East conflict led to delays in the nomination of the first General Secretary. An intergovernmental process led in March 2010 to the declaration of Jordanian diplomat and former EU and NATO ambassador Ahmad Masadeh as the first General Secretary of the UfM. With the strengthening of the European Parliament's role in foreign policy issues and decisions in view it is to be lamented that the filling of this position was not accompanied by the involvement of the Euro-Med parliamentary assembly. If the heads of state and government had adhered to their own declared intentions to fully integrate the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) into the UfM it would have been desirable for the candidate for the post of General Secretary to have appeared before a parliamentary hearing.

Notwithstanding the attempts to revive the union the fourth ministerial meeting on the issue of water of April 13 and 14 2010 ended without agreement. The underlying cause was the Israeli refusal to countenance the use of the term "occupied territories" in the concluding document.

Israel continued to oppose the use of the internationally recognized term for the occupied Palestinian territories, thus preventing the adoption of a joint water strategy¹⁹.

In the wake of Syrian and Egyptian threats to boycott the summit of heads of state and government scheduled for June 7 and 8 2010 the decision was taken at the end of May to postpone the summit until November 2010²⁰. This row had been ignited by the declaration of Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman of his intention to participate in the summit meeting, which led to boycott threats from the Arabs due to the fact that Lieberman was seen by the Syrian and Egyptian representatives as being anti-Arab. Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former representative of the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, attempted to persuade Lieberman to stay away, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. The plan is to hold the postponed meeting in the third week of November on the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the EMP.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND CRITICISM OF THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Although the French Mediterranean union project began with the aim of making good the deficiencies and defects of the Barcelona Process and the ENP, a preliminary verdict on the implementation of the ideas must tend to pessimism. According to this it would be difficult to discern where the UfM has succeeded where the Barcelona Process failed²¹. Looking back on the political events and procrastination in matters concerning the UfM it would be opportune firstly to undertake an analysis of the political process and secondly to look critically at the institutional structure²².

In general the question presents itself of the extent to which the UfM's chosen path will allow it to recreate the spirit of the EMP in new initiatives or to make progress in its institutions and projects.

19 | Eberhard Rhein, "Union for the Mediterranean has to get serious", <http://www.euractiv.com/en/east-mediterranean/union-med-has-get-serious-analysis-473553>, in: *Blogactiv*, April 23, 2010, (accessed July 10, 2010).

20 | Cf. "Mittelmeer-Gipfel wegen Nahost-Streit verschoben", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 22, 2010.

21 | Roberto Aliboni and Fouad M. Ammor, "Under the Shadow of 'Barcelona': From the EMP to the Union for the Mediterranean", in: *EuroMeSco Paper* 77 (2009).

22 | "[W]e observe a kind of Mediterranean fatigue when it comes to multilateral initiatives." Carlo Masala, Sarah Anne Rennick,

From a procedural point of view it can be viewed as a success that the heads of government met in Paris and gave mutual assurances of the importance of the Mediterranean dimension for both sides of the sea²³; however, this on its own is not enough. Nor can the follow-up meetings be viewed uncritically: The foreign ministers' meeting in Marseille revealed differences of opinion on the progress made: On the one hand it was viewed as a success that the conference participants had been able to agree on a work program for 2009. Some additional progress²⁴ was acknowledged in the areas of cleaning up the Mediterranean, new maritime and land routes, civil protection projects, alternative energy, the Mediterranean Solar Plan and higher education, along with a Mediterranean development plan for people in business. On the other hand, there was also a view that none of the six core projects had evinced any signs of further progress whatever as the foreign ministers had been unable to agree either on modalities of implementation or on further concrete steps to be taken²⁵.

In general the question presents itself of the extent to which the UfM's chosen path will allow it to recreate the spirit of the EMP in new initiatives or to make progress in its institutions and projects²⁶. As far as the projects are concerned there is strident criticism of the fact that no new projects have been instituted to address even "elements of the structural problems and developments in the Mediterranean area" (Schwarzer and Werenfels, 4-5) and which would have been in line with southern interests. The measures announced as new projects have in part

"'Overview' Mediterranean Fatigue? The State of Multilateral Frameworks in the Middle East". in: *EAG Policy Paper* 9, May 2010, Cairo: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 1-2, 1.

23 | Cf. Hardy Ostry, *Hochglanzbilder und Gipfelstimmung. Die Union für das Mittelmeer und der Nahost-Konflikt*, Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2008.

24 | Michael Reiterer, 2009, "From the (French) Mediterranean Union to the (European) Barcelona Process: The 'Union for the Mediterranean' as Part of the European Neighbourhood Policy", in: *European Foreign Affairs Review* (14):313-336, 327.

25 | Didier Billion, "L'Union pour la Méditerranée, nouvel acteur des relations internationales?", *L'Union pour la Méditerranée un an après*, <http://affaires-strategiques.info>, June 10, 2010.

26 | Cf. Ahmed Driss, "North-African Perspectives", Roberto Aliboni (ed.), *Putting the Mediterranean Union in Perspective* in: *EuroMeSCo Paper* 68, 19-24, 23.

already been put into action in the context of existing Euro-Mediterranean relations and institutions. Under the leadership of the European Commission the cross-border "Horizon 2020" initiative has since 2005 been working on improving water quality in the Mediterranean. A similar pattern can be observed in the field of education, where education ministers agreed as long ago as June 2007 in Cairo to create a joint research area and to more intensively promote the exchange of scientists.

In comparison to the Barcelona Process the UfM has been awarded poor marks in its dealings with the Mid-East conflict. There is a view that the Barcelona Process at least managed to survive in spite of all the setbacks to the peace process. The new institutional situation would allow the Arab states to hijack the whole UfM in the pursuit of their own interests²⁷. One acknowledged reason for this lies in the fact that within the EMP the Arab states and Israel were nothing more than guests of a process driven by the EU²⁸.

Cooperation in the renewable energies field seems to be a measure with a particularly promising future. The aim of the concept is to supply the local energy market in North Africa with solar and wind energy in the medium term and to do the same for the European market in the long term.

With the launch of the UfM, the co-chairmanship and the secretariat, the southern Mediterranean states would have assumed part-ownership, which might also mean the right to withhold consent. Whilst the EU has so far been able to override the protests and refusals that have come from both Arabs and Israelis, this is no longer tenable. When viewed against the backdrop of the desired development the basic European position, which states that the EMP and the UfM are not to be seen as direct instruments for dealing with the Mid-East conflict, has to be put into question.

Notwithstanding these pessimistic assessments successes have been recorded in the institutional arena in the further development of the EMP in the form of the UfM and in the generation of new project ideas. A secretariat has been set up in Barcelona and the co-presidency has begun its work. Against the background of current European financial projections to 2013 the European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle

27 | Tobias Schumacher, "A fading Mediterranean dream", in: *European Voice*, July 16, 2010.

28 | Roberto Aliboni, "The Union for the Mediterranean. Evolution and Prospects", in: *Documenti IAI* 9, 39e-December 2009, 3.

succeeded in getting the Commission to reassess its use of the available means along the lines of the list of priorities drawn up in Paris and Marseille²⁹ (31): in 2009 92 million Euros were spent on regional projects. In line with the priorities laid out in Paris the water sector received 22 million Euros, the transport sector 10 million and civil protection 4.4 million Euros. The EU financed the preparatory measures to the Mediterranean Solar Plan to the tune of 5 million Euros and supported economic measures with grants totaling 9 million Euros.

Cooperation in the renewable energies field seems to be a measure with a particularly promising future. The aim of the Mediterranean Solar Plan is to generate some 20 gigawatts of power from renewable energy sources and to implement energy-saving plans in the Mediterranean area by 2020. In January 2010 the European Commission presented a feasibility study that was complemented in February 2010 by the addition of a strategy paper drawn up by an expert working group. In the context of a private initiative twelve companies inaugurated the Desertec Foundation on October 30 2009 with the aim of securing climate-friendly power generation from the Mid-East and North Africa. The aim of the concept is to supply the local energy market in North Africa with solar and wind energy in the medium term and to do the same for the European market in the long term.

“Good” institutions, in the sense of those having the structural ability to generate the desired results, are no substitutes for a common political will to get things done.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The meeting of heads of state and government postponed to the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the EMP in the third week of November offers an opportunity to develop a joint response to shared challenges in the Mediterranean region. In the medium term it will be possible to develop sufficient political will, firstly within the EU and then among the southern partner countries within the context of the new institutional architecture, to actually make use of the new opportunities. One thing is clear: “Good” institutions, in the sense of those having the structural ability to generate the

29 | Füle, loc. cit.

desired results, are no substitutes for a common political will to get things done. Secondly, the way the UfM sets its priorities with a pronounced focus on projects should be seen as added value in the quest to expand the basis of trust between the southern states themselves and in relation to the EU in, as it were, non-political or technical areas.

If these far-off aims are to be achieved the EU, its member states and the southern partners must all acknowledge the realities of the situation. In the relationship between

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the project-focused approach and the outsourcing of political, security-political and human rights issues there are two schools of thought, both of which take their cue from the limited successes of the EMP: One recommends keeping faith with non-political projects in the medium term until such time as the regional situation has been defused and mutual trust established to the extent necessary to deal with critical issues within a common framework. Proponents of this argument base their view on the successful course of European integration after World War II and the supranational supervision of the coal and steel industries, so important for the war machine, that led to the formation of the ECSC. A critical note must be sounded here to the effect that the totality of global political relations as manifested in Europe post-1945 and those of the 1990s in the Mediterranean hardly present any historical parallels.

The other school of thought considers it a disadvantage that the EMP and the UfM born of it are not being directly brought to bear as instruments on the parties to the Mid-East conflict. Israel and the Arab parties, however, use the joint meetings as a forum to air their respective views of the conflict. They have not shied away from taking part in particular meetings and declining to attend others as their individual interests dictate. The EU and its member states must therefore finally learn to actively address unpleasant issues and to extend political dialog instead of sticking their heads in the sand and closing their eyes to regional realities.

As far as the UfM is concerned this means actively addressing the external challenges brought to its door. From the Arab point of view the foremost of these is the Mid-East conflict, which demands more intensive involvement on the part of the EU. It is the job of the EU, above all of its High Representative Ashton, to use the strengthening of partnership elements in the form of the co-chairmanship and the joint secretariat to make a constructive difference. It is just as untenable for the Israeli government to continue to ride roughshod over regional realities as it is for the Arab states to continue long-term with their policy of isolating Israel. It is incumbent upon all three sides to acknowledge political realities and face regional facts.

In addition it is essential to draw common conclusions and recommendations for action from the effects of the global economic and financial crisis, climate change and mutual energy relations. All three issues are indicative of the true extent of the politically desirable mutual intertwining and the mutual dependence that exist between all the parties. This background underlies the importance of acknowledging the lack of alternatives to regional and trans-regional cooperation. In this context the conclusion must be that the UfM's chosen cooperation projects point in the direction necessary for the reinforcement of mutual trust.