



Mediterranean Dialogue

Conference Report

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Perspectives of European Foreign and Security Policy in the Mediterranean

on the Eve of the German EU Council Presidency

15th to 16th September 2006

Antalya - Turkey

This international conference of the Regional Program Near East/ Mediterranean of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in cooperation with the KAS-Office in Turkey, was attended by around 40 participants, journalists and security experts, from across the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean and from EU member-states. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information and perspectives on the current state of security in the Mediterranean Area and the Policies of the European Union and the NATO, on the eve of the German EU Council Presidency. Key conclusions were as follows:

- In spite of the quite critical assessments of the dialogue forums - Barcelona Process, Neighbourhood Policy and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue- all participants called to continue these efforts in adapting

more to the regional reality and in following a functional approach based on bilateral cooperation.

- The majority of the participants agreed that there is a list of common security concerns in the Mediterranean area, mostly in the field of soft security risks, although there was small common ground on how to deal with these challenges.
- Some participants from the Southern shore demanded more of Europe's engagement in the region. These claims were welcomed by the European side in precisising the US and EU agreement on common values and the common policy goals in this strategic region.

In his opening speech, **Hardy Ostry**, Regional Representative for the Near East/ Mediterranean, outlined the circumstances which led to the organization of this conference. Therefore, he emphasized the Foundations' commitment in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue program. In reviewing the last ten years of European engagement in the region and the divers institutional approaches, he concluded that common security issues still lack priority on the regional agenda. This situation is derived from the restriction on hard security issues as well as the distorted perceptions of security as a highly controversial topic on both shores of the Mediterranean. Hardy Ostry identified three goals of the conference: to encourage journalists and experts in exchanging their perceptions on the principles and ideas of the European Foreign and Security Policies. To sensitize the representatives from the South with the process character of such policies and finally to share views on common security concerns.

Initial Disputation: European Security Institutions (EU, NATO) – Crossing Perceptions in the Mediterranean

The initial disputation on "European Security Institutions (EU, NATO) – Crossing Perceptions in the Mediterranean" was meant to lay the ground for the coming debates and to give short views on common security issues from

both shores of the Mediterranean. The chair of this session was **Michael Däumer**, KAS Representative for Spain and Portugal.

Ahmed Driss, professor at the University of Tunis - Tunisia, delivered the first speech on "South Mediterranean Perception of the European Security and Defence Policy". He spoke primarily in a Tunisian perspective about the topic. In referring to surveys on the Southern perceptions, notably done in the framework of EuroMeSCo, he outlined how the South perceives the European Foreign and Security Policy. According to him, this perception is dominated not only by the ignorance of European politics in general but also by the ignorance of accessible information. At the beginning, Driss claimed that there is practically neither public debate on these issues nor coverage in the media, although official discourses emphasized the relevance of the EU on regional politics. Later he said that this perception is characterized by scepticism and doubts deriving from a lack of credibility of the European policy in the region. Ahmed Driss recognized the nature of this lack of Europe's disability to speak with one common voice detached from the US policy in the Middle East. Driss concluded that, with the expectations of the Southern countries vis-à-vis European politics in the region, there should be more common efforts in working on migration which is considered as the only long-term security issue. Secondly, Europe's policy on Islamic fundamentalism has to be aware of the different violent and peaceful Islamic movements and the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on this issue.

In a complementary perspective, **Gustavo de Aristegui**, Foreign Policy Spokesperson of the Partido Popular in the Spanish Congress, spoke about the "European-Transatlantic Cooperation in the Mediterranean". Following a historical approach, he gave a short assessment of the regional political development which is on its way to implement democracy based on its own political and historical background. Concerning Europe's policy, he came to the conclusion that until now the EU as an international actor has not yet been successful in filling the lack of real knowledge of what Europe stands

for. But also the Southern side has not been serious enough in the dialogue's efforts, for example approximately half of the European money destined for southern domestic reforms was not spent. In his second step, Aristegui presented the common view, but also the shortfalls of Europe and US cooperation in the region. In view of the US policy, he praised the US Middle East Partnership initiative as an approach not trying to implement specific policy approaches, but rather as an attempt to accompany domestic initiatives. This understanding and the fight against instability has to be seen as the common transatlantic concern in the region. All other attempts to divide the partners have to be seen as a false debate between them. However, there is still a lack of coordination between European countries and the US government when it comes to the concrete implementation of reforms. In this vein, he put the NATO Mediterranean initiative and EU approaches, as a part of a global transatlantic agenda to support countries on their way to democracy. Coming to the EU defence and security policy, he confessed a superficial knowledge of this process within European societies but also outside of the Union. Accordingly, he was quite critically vis-à-vis the formal neutral European countries, which have to adapt to the new European realities and common responsibilities in this field. As a former adviser at the Spanish Ministry of Interior, Aristegui concluded his presentation with deeper insights in the migration issue, notably the positive developments in the framework of the "5 plus 5" meetings.

In the following debate, the issue of common European-US policies in the region played a major role. Second, the identification of common security risks was discussed and it became obvious that there was an agreement on migration and radical Islamism as the major common security concerns in the Mediterranean area, although the ways on how to deal with it diverted largely.

First Working Session: How to Reflect Security Policy Facing New Threats?

Chaired by **Fouad Ammor**, researcher at GERM - Morocco, the first working session was introduced by a presentation of **Ingo Wetter**, a German journalist, on "Propositions to Enlarge the Security Concept in the Mediterranean Countries". Wetter started with a historical perspective to clarify the development of the EU in the field of security policy after the Cold War. Based on the assessment of the European Security Strategy, adopted in 2003 by the European Council, he gave insights into the regional situation in using a broader term of security policy covering the economic, social and political context. In doing so, he talked about regional conflicts, the threats posed by WMD and terrorism, failed-states, organized crime, the demographic explosion, the environmental and migration problems. Wetter identified conflict prevention and crisis management as major tasks of the EU's regional efforts. For adequate actions, it is necessary for the Union to dispose of civilian and military tools, according to the speaker. Finally, he underlined the strategic importance for the Middle East which represents the greatest political challenge European Union faces.

The second presentation "EMP and new Threats - From Rhetoric to Action" was delivered by **Yasar Qatarneh**, director of the Regional Conflict Prevention Centre – Jordan. In choosing terrorism as his main focus, he did not hide his disappointment on the last declaration about Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism from November 2005. In questioning if there was a need for this regional document, he criticized mainly that this text did not bring up anything new, rather than piecemeal of former UN documents. Based on this assessment, he asked what we should expect from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in this respect. Bearing in mind the prior national actions, Qatarneh suggested more information-sharing at the EMP level in the framework of a future Joint Information Agreement. Secondly, there has to be implemented a vast program of practical action

plans at the EMP level. Finally, he put forward the idea of strengthening the cooperation between other regional actors, like the United Nations, NATO, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council. He concluded his presentation, with stressing the need to more respect a bottom up approach, which gives national authorities the central role in fighting terrorism and the EMP level a role for exchanging information.

Roberto Aliboni, Vice President of the Istituto Affari Internazionali – Italy, extended the scope of analysis while speaking about “The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Going beyond the First Ten-Year Experience”. After the assessment of the past ten years, he emphasized the need to come up with an updated approach in order to follow the regional needs more and more. According to him, this could be done as the following: In criticizing the weak results of the EMP at the regional level he welcomed the bilateral approach of the new European Neighborhood Policy. In order to strengthen the institutional framework he suggested to reform the semi-institutions of the EMP and to establish a rotating presidency. Additionally, he was dissatisfied with the political dialogue because it lacks a common political ground. That was the reason, why he suggested giving priority to the societies and giving more chances to citizens. Finally, he talked about the marginalization of the south in question of proportions after the last enlargement of the European Union. He concluded his talk with emphasizing the need for a new institutional regional framework, including the Gulf countries and respecting sub regional settings as well as more bilateral actions.

The subsequent discussion focused on the policy recommendations to reform the EMP and to guarantee common security facing new threats. Bearing in mind the current challenges, there was a consensus to follow more a functional approach in order to take common decisions in real-time and problem orientated. However, the suggestions to reform the institutions were still controversial, ranging from a rotating presidency to ad-hoc bodies.

Furthermore some of the commentators were quite sceptical if information sharing of intelligence material is realistic because of the intra regional lack of mutual confidence.

A Common Security Agenda for the Mediterranean – Case Studies

The Second Working Session on “A Common Security Agenda for the Mediterranean – Case Studies” chaired by **Maher Abu Khater**, Correspondent and editorial journalist at DPA and the Jerusalem Times – Jerusalem, aimed to give deeper insights into the sub regional and national perceptions of the challenges existing in the Euro-Mediterranean area. First, **Cagri Erhan**, Associate Professor at the Ankara University and Director of Ankara University European Research Center, gave a speech on “Turkey’s Security Perceptions and Responses in the Mediterranean in the Post Cold War Era”. In the changing strategic landscape Turkey’s role in the Mediterranean concept is to be a passage to the EU, a port to the Middle East and a way to Africa while the NATO and the EU are the main references for the Turkish security policy. Erhan highlighted the access to the markets in Europe and in the Middle East as Turkish prior policy interest. However some critical points still remain on how to implement such a policy. There are first of all the controversial Turkish EU accession talks and the challenges rising from the Cyprus case. Within NATO, Turkey is an active player to support not only its Mediterranean policies, but also its new Middle East approach. But according to him Turkish public opinion shows only limited trust in the US Middle East Policy and their way of how to democratize Iraq. In his conclusion, Erhan stressed the need to deepen the regional cooperation in order to deal, in a common way, with the growing new threats.

The second speaker in this session was **Ahmad Abdel Halim**, a Strategic Expert and a Member of the Egyptian Shura Council, who concentrated his talk on the case of Egypt. His main message was that despite some improvements on the Mediterranean agenda, there were no major

breakthroughs in terms of increased regional security for the last ten years. Halim saw some slight improvements at the regional level as well as the national in the stagnation of military extension in the area. Concerning Egypt's policy towards NATO, he saw an improvement of this relationship, after 2005, when bilateral talks were reassumed. He described the situation in Egypt and its essential domestic changes as a transitional period which would lead towards democracy. In addressing US policy in the region, he was disappointed with the US approach in using force to realize political objectives. Finally, Halim repeated his main hypothesis of no deep improvements, for the last ten years, because of a lack of stability serving the people living in this area. That was why he urged real peace and more European engagement in order to be beneficial for all involved partners.

In the following discussion the participants concentrated their contributions on the questions if there was a common security agenda and what was the strategic relationship between USA and the EU. A minority stressed that there was no common agenda at all because of inter regional relations based on national security and zero sum logic. In view of Israel being surrounded by Arab countries, one participant pointed out that the only common ground in the region was geographic neighbourhood. Nevertheless, a majority refuted this pessimistic view and highlighted that the points of a possible agenda includes risks which are directed to all countries in the region. Concerning the sceptical Turkish approach towards the US policy, speakers from the EU membership countries clarified that the perception of a rift between the US and the EU was a wrong one, because of a common assessment of concerns rising from the region.

In a more regional perspective, **Mark Heller**, talked about "Mediterranean Security – An Idea Whose Time Has Passed?" In the beginning, the speaker threw light on the critical use of the notion of the Mediterranean region which is according to him a doubtful concept based on geographic neighbourhood but lacking a realistic basis. Hence, the status of the citizen of state has to be

used as the prior referential framework and not the Mediterranean basin or the notion of Mediterranean security. Accordingly the EMP had ended up in invention of their continued existence. However, there are some soft security issues crossing the borders, like natural disasters, man made threats like illnesses which urge the need to deepen translational cooperation. According to the speaker common actions does not emerge automatically among the countries abutting the Mediterranean Sea, but follow coalitions of the willing. Heller concluded his talk in quoting Gorbachev, who put common human concerns at the basis of cooperation.

The last speaker in the second working session was **Fouad Ammor**, Researcher at the Groupement d`études et de recherche sur la Méditerranée (GERM)– Morocco who spoke about "Regional Security – the Western Mediterranean Area". He urged more regional economic cooperation as the best way to enhance security. Having clarified the notions of security as relative, contextual and cooperation in difference to integration and association, he talked about some requirements of the new landscape of the Western Mediterranean countries. As a reference, he used some results from a survey conducted from September 2005 to March 2006 in the Maghreb countries, mainly Morocco, by GERM and the Jaffee Center in Israel. The major results were as follows: Under the umbrella of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) sub regional cooperation has to be strengthened starting from economic cooperation. In respect to the North-South cooperation, it seemed necessary to intensify the cooperation on a mature level going beyond the obstacles of former pure development policies. Most of the survey respondents were quite optimistic about the economic integration of Israel in the whole Mediterranean region, although the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict was still perceived as the major barrier. Despite these deviances, Ammor concluded optimistically while highlighting a functional approach starting from economic cooperation spilling-over into more sensitive fields of high politics.

In the following discussion, the participants agreed on the need for more intra regional cooperation based on a functional approach. There was a general consensus among the participants to overcome regional barriers like violent conflicts but also trade barriers to proceed in such activities. One participant from the Northern shore refuted the argument that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hinders more regional cooperation. Metaphorically speaking, he was convinced if taking Israel out of the Mediterranean map there would be still a lack of a common political ground. In conclusion, the idea of one common Mediterranean security community remained controversial.

Recent Developments on the Northern and Southern Shores of the Mediterranean

The third working session about “Recent Developments on the Northern and Southern Shores of the Mediterranean” dealt with the EU`s future role in the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, environmental security as part of the Mediterranean agenda and finally the recent European developments in the field of the European constitutional treaty. **Dina Ezzat**, journalist at the Al-Ahram Daily Newspaper – Egypt, chaired this session.

Being the first speaker in this session, **Yossi Ben-Ari**, Co-Director of the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information - Israel, concentrated his presentation “Renewing the Israeli Palestinian dialogue potential contributions of the European Union” on the inter regional relations and Europe’s possible engagement. In reviewing the results of the last clash between the Israeli Defence Forces and Lebanese Hezbollah, he stressed the engagement of some European countries as a positive action to implement the Security Council resolution 1701. Following the good experiences with the European monitoring mission at the Rafah crossing point, it was the first time that the USA agreed to make Europe’s action possible to back up a ceasefire. However, European engagement should not stop here. In fact, the European Union should take over the lead in the ceasefire mission and to continue their

state building efforts in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories. As another field of European action he identified an assistance mission for a possible joint Jordanian-Egyptian force, which could be deployed along the Gaza strip. In his conclusion, Ben-Ari talked about a window-of-opportunity for European`s role in the region which should be intensified following regional voices.

Representing the United Nations Environmental Program – Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) - Greece, **Tatjana Hema**, completed the conference`s approach of an enhanced term of security in focusing on environmental challenges in the Mediterranean Sea. In view of the armed conflicts in the Balkans and the recent environmental crisis on the Lebanese shore, she urged to come up with a global convention on environmental protection at time of armed conflicts. Until now the MAP concentrated their actions on four main goals of environmental sustainability in the Mediterranean: Pollution control and prevention, control of sea based pollution, conservation of marine and coastal diversity as well as environment and development. According to some research results, the South and the East of Mediterranean countries will face a 25% increase of water demand by 2025. While speaking about more need for irrigation, more pressure on natural resources and the degradation of the ecosystem, she could not rule out future conflicts over water.

In his starting statement, **Friedrich Bokern**, Research Assistant at the Centre de Recherche et d`Action Sociale - France , talked about the fact that not only the South is in a time of crisis but also the North - with the crisis on the European constitution. In a first step Bokern presented the double tensions of the Common European Foreign and Defence Policy (CFSP) as well as of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). These policies have permanently to find a way between integrationist and sovereignty ideas as well as between European and transatlantic approaches to European security. As major results of the constitutional treaty in this respect, he presented the following: on the institutional level, the single legal personality is the European Foreign Minister and the common diplomatic corps; in the field of

decision-making, the geometry varies as well as an enhanced capacity of actions. Concerning the failure of some national referendums, he described the political European landscape suffering from a “total blockage”. However, the increase in cooperation was not stopped in the field of security policy, like 16 former or ongoing civilian and military EU missions all over the world, the European Defence Agency, or the establishment of combat groups. In his final remarks, Bokern stressed that not only institutions matter, but that the European construction is more based on a “solidarité des faits”

The subsequent discussion concentrated on the role of the EU in the region. Some of the participants were more sceptical about a future European engagement in the region. The main reasons for this scepticism were the continued lack of coherence in EU`s policy deriving from diverging national strategic assessments and the fact, that until now, all European initiatives ended up in the White House. However, as one speaker from Europe put it positively the actors in the region have to understand that the EU has no interest in counterbalancing the US. In the same way, the cooperation in the field of crisis management between the EU and NATO has to be understood as a complementary rather than a diverting relationship. Despite of the ongoing constitutional crisis, Bokern asses the last and possibly coming changes of national leaders in the main European capitals as a good starting point for future transatlantic strategic agreement on the regional agenda.

NATO – Recent Developments and New Political Perspectives

In the fourth working session on “NATO – Recent Developments and New Political Perspectives”, chaired by **Gabriel Nasr**, Vice Editor in Chief of L’Orient Le Jour, the first presenter exposed the preparations for the coming NATO summit in Riga and, the second one talked about the recent engagement of the Transatlantic Organization in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Carlo Masala, from the NATO`s defence college – Rome, concentrated in his presentation about “NATO`s Transformation: A Potential Agenda for Riga”, on the topics which will be possibly addressed at the upcoming event. In his initial statement, he described the NATO as more military than ever, because of all the running operations, including the major operation in Afghanistan. As a consequence, he urged the need to make NATO now more political, too. In this respect, he highlighted on giving the signal from Riga that the Alliance is still open for more members. Speaking about the situation in the ascension countries, he clarified the need to more of consideration, if this step is backed up by a positive public opinion. As another topic, he spoke about the suggestions to develop new global partnerships, with Allied national governments all over the world, like Australia or Japan. He made clear that NATO should not become a global police, but a global actor cooperating with other security providers at a global stage. As a strategy, he preferred a functional approach on a mainly bilateral level based on national proposals for concrete measures, like training. In his final statement he stressed on the bright future of transatlantic relations with the possible take over of more pragmatic leaders in main European capitals. In perceiving the transatlantic relations as the strongest institutionalized tie across the Atlantic, he mentioned the positive effects of the European security efforts on them.

The last speaker of this day on “NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Recent Developments - From Dialogue to Partnership” was **Gilles vander Ghinst**, Officer at the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division – Belgium. In a first step, he presented some results and statistics about the work of the Mediterranean Dialogue, which covers mainly military issues, although the Alliance is no pure military organization. Concerning the number of Mediterranean partners’ participants, he observed a steadily increasing number since 1997. On coming to the Istanbul summit decisions, he concentrated on the progress made since 2004 as follows: more ministerial meetings, number of activities increased by 75 percent and the participation of Mediterranean countries increased by 85 percent. Finally, he suggested a

possible way from “Dialogue to a genuine Partnership” covering more selective bilateral activities based on specific objectives and priorities and in increasing the number of EAPC/PfP activities opened to the Mediterranean participants.

The following discussion referred mainly to the suggestion of transforming NATO into a global actor with global partnerships. On one hand there were participants who stressed more the doubtful aspects like the cooperation with the United Nations or the question of whom to choose for these partnerships. These arguments were supported by the limits in the field of financial, technical and human resources. Talking about the difference between the Partnership for Peace Program and the Mediterranean Dialogue approach, it became obvious that the first program could not be extended to the latter one because of some tools used by NATO for ascension preparations.

How to Develop a Common Perspective on Foreign and Security Policy in the Mediterranean?

The closing round table on “How to Develop a Common Perspective on Foreign and Security Policy in the Mediterranean?” was chaired by **Carlo Masala**. He engaged the discussion by gearing a provocative statement that despite functional cooperation in low politics there are no common perspectives in the field of high politics in the Mediterranean area. He put forward that in absence of a common agreement on what is good for the people, this region lacks shared perceptions on security threats.

Bearing in mind this opinion, the subsequent statements gathered along two axes. On one hand, the initial view was supported by the fact that states follow their own interests based on domestic policy structures and politics. Accordingly, there is a short common ground for a common perspective, because of the broad scope of political systems in the region, too. However, this pessimistic perspective was largely refuted by a majority who perceived

WMD, terrorism, violent conflicts, illegal migration but also state building as common security concerns. In this respect, the participants agreed on the need to go further with the dialogue in a more realistic way. Idealistically speaking this could be done by following a functional agenda which would start from low politics and could spill-over in high politics based on bilateral actions. In this way, it is necessary to exchange perceptions and to go on with the mutual understanding of common values which lay at the heart of this ongoing dialogue and which has to serve the idea of network building.