

PEACE AND SECURITY

THE INADEQUACY OF THE BILATERAL EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY FRAMEWORK AMID REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

A Lebanese Perspective on Security Policy
in the Southern Neighbourhood

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Given the geographical proximity of the Mediterranean and the European Union, a causal link was naturally established between the stability of the former and the security of the latter. The Mediterranean has always been at the heart of the security order in Europe with a focus on the Middle East.



With the ENP, the security of neighbouring countries was no longer part of a partnership approach. It became a necessary condition for ensuring EU internal security, expressed by a unilateral neighbourhood policy.



With the limited effectiveness of the bilateral management of regional security challenges in the south in the ENP framework, there is a need for regionalized complementary initiatives ensuring the implementation of EU security objectives.

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Executive summary

Over the past decades, various regional and international stakeholders have given great importance to the Mediterranean basin due to the central place it occupies on the international security scene. Given the geographical proximity of the Mediterranean and the European Union (EU), a causal link was naturally established between the stability of the former and the security of the latter. The Mediterranean has always been at the heart of the security order in Europe with a focus on the Middle East, and the subject of debates preceding the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

In the context of security threats following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, a review of the internal security of the EU was required. In 2003, the European Security Strategy (ESS) was developed and led to a shift from the Euro-Mediterranean security approach to building security in countries neighboring the EU. However, this Strategy was ensured exclusively by the bilateral ENP approach and produced modest results in the Mediterranean framework. In June 2016, the European Union unveiled its new Global Strategy for its foreign and security policy, adopting it as the normative framework for the future orientation of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It replaces the ESS of 2003 without leading to a change in the EU's action or approach in the region.

The need for a new approach to security is essential in ensuring a coherent EU action in the region. In this context, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) associated with the ESS appears to be an instrument that contributes to EU efforts to devise more coherent external action concerning security. Therefore, the ENP was advisedly chosen as the preferred tool for the implementation of the ESS. As will be shown in this analysis, the security record of the ENP demonstrates that the ESS in the region is incompatible with a bilateral security framework for neighboring countries and varying regional geometry.

Introduction

Since 1995, the Barcelona Declaration has placed relations between the EU and the Mediterranean within a regional and global framework¹. The term »Euro-Mediterranean« itself expresses the desire to implement a political partnership between the EU as a political entity and all its Member States on the one hand, as well as with Mediterranean partner countries on the other. The successive EU enlargements have been a determining factor in the evolution of EU/EC relations with Mediterranean Non-Member Countries (MNM). The fifth enlargement of the EU in 2004² resulted from the geopolitical change on the European continent since the 1990s.

Even though the enlargement of 2004 was internal, its amplitude was great because it altered the EU relations with countries in its proximity and led to the development of the ENP. This time, the multilateral political dialogue of the Barcelona Process was faced with the consequences and challenges of the fifth enlargement. The multilateral political dialogue suffered strategic consequences because of the enlargement without benefiting from a strengthened revision despite the findings resulting from the impasse in the Barcelona Process.

The internationalization of security has impacted Euro-Mediterranean relations since 2001. The ESS was adopted in 2003, defining a new EU approach to security. It was developed during the preparatory phase to accession and, thus, constituted a key element in the evolution of the conceptualization of the ENP, which became a main tool for security building in the neighbourhood of the EU. Many authors argue that security is clearly pervasive in the frame of the ENP. The Union sets the agenda that focuses on its priorities, including border security. Thus, regional stability and the fact that the ENP is essentially a global initiative, represent common values shared with partners (Cremona 2004), (Cremano and Hillon 2006), (Del Sarto and Schumacher 2005).

The Barcelona Declaration acknowledges the transition to a new phase in the approach to relations with Mediterranean partners in terms of strategic political issues in the context of peacebuilding in the region, as well as regional security issues in the EU and partner countries. While the Mediterranean region has always been a priority interest for the Union, the Middle East retains the attention of European diplomacy (Lannon 2002). Given the mixed results and relative failure of the Barcelona Process, the ENP righteously presented itself as an opportunity to optimize Euro-Mediterranean relations in the post-enlargement period. However, the ENP, essentially bilateral in nature, had no direct objective of relaunching the regional Euro-Mediterranean dimension. The disregard for this dimension risked creating an imbalance within the relationship framework between the bilateral dimension relaunching by the ENP and the abandoned multilateral political and security dimension.

This paper focuses on the intrinsic dynamic of the Euro-Mediterranean security issues in the period preceding the implementation of the ENP and its articulation with the EMP. It offers a critical analysis of the lack of coherence between the various European policies and initiatives, leading to the weakness of the EU's reaction to the Arab Spring from 2011 and the total erasure of multilateral political and security initiatives.

¹ Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean conference (27-28.11.1995), published in Europe Documents, Bulletin Quotidien Europe n° 1964.

² The fifth enlargement took place on 1 May 2004. The accessions concerned the following countries: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

1. CHANGES IN THE EU APPROACH TO SECURITY: FROM EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY TO SECURITY IN THE EXTENDED EU NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Brussels European Council held on 12 and 13 December 2003 adopted a document titled *A Secure Europe in a Better World - European Security Strategy*³, drafted under the authority of the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The ESS is a document that clearly defines the exact nature of the threats, then sets out general guidelines for the necessary action and measures to be taken. Among its main responses to threats, it envisions building security in the EU neighbourhood for the very first time. In order to ensure the effective achievement of objectives set by the ESS and improve the coherence of EU external action in the Mediterranean, the ENP became the primary policy tool for the implementation of the ESS.

1.1 THE EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY AIMED AT BUILDING SECURITY IN THE EXTENDED EU NEIGHBOURHOOD

The ESS sets forth the engagement of the EU in its direct neighbourhood in the face of security threats as a major strategic objective. While changes in international and regional situations characterized by increasing instability have led to a redefinition of security in the Mediterranean within the frame of a wider neighbourhood, the concept of global security remains a constant in relations with partners, as was the case in the EMP.

From a methodological point of view, the structure of the ESS compiles a report on the security environment at a global level at the time of the fifth enlargement, and then determines the challenges of EU action before setting its strategic objectives. Introduction and conclusion aside, this document is divided into three main parts covering, respectively, the security environment, strategic objectives, and their political implications in the EU. It is presented as the principal conceptual reference that is likely to meet the need of the EU to establish a security strategy in the period following 9/11. In order to become a full-fledged stakeholder, the EU showed, through the ESS, its willingness to assume its share of responsibility in the midst of enlargement by ensuring an innovative definition of major security threats.

At the time, the international scene was experiencing »unusual« (Solana 2002) events leading to the hyper-securitization of international relationships. It was specifically in the context of the post-9/11 era and the Iraq war that the EU committed itself to playing a role at the international level by providing a conceptual definition of its fight against threats, both old and new. While large-scale aggressions against member states re-

mained unlikely – threats having been less visible – the EU decided to assume its share of responsibility for international security.

The strategy emerged in an international context marked by the full-fledged war against international terrorism led by the United States and its allies. At the European level, internal divisions had greatly affected the unity of EU foreign policy. This was especially true given that some countries opposed the war, such as France and Germany, whereas other member states and future member states, such as the United Kingdom, Spain, and Poland, rallied to support the United States and participated in the invasion of Iraq without a UN mandate. This profoundly changed the regional situation, heralding the complete hegemony of the American vision of security. For the EU, it was a matter of seeking a common discourse and integrating, in a global vision, the scattered foreign policy initiatives taken during previous years as well as the military tools and institutions put in place since the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 (Remacle 2004) which led to the appointment of the CFSP High Representative.

At the same time, the EU underwent deep changes as a result of its greater enlargement. Its foreign policy – including its Common Security and Defense Policy – was obliged to adapt to this dual evolution, both internal and external. In fact, as the EU prepared for enlargement, intra-European antagonisms grew with regard to the commitment to American positions⁴, especially following the »Old and New Europe« polemic launched by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The EU was divided on the issue of Iraq, as well as the issues of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which raised fundamental questions about the strategies to be adopted (Solana 2009). The adoption of an action strategy capable of building a common consensus on these landmark issues remained paramount against the background of the EU assuming its political role on the international scene. In this complex regional and global context, the ESS became necessary for the EU to demonstrate its adaptation to the profound changes on the international scene. The successful development and adoption of a document by consensus was, in itself, considered a masterstroke against the magnitude of the differences between EU member states.

The growth of phenomena of transnational security around the time of the EU enlargement phase was the main instigator behind the reorganization of the security and defense concept of the EU. This enlarged EU needed a new security strategy to guarantee its internal security through the stability of its new neighbourhood. Indeed, strategic security questions arose and solutions were required in the face of this convergence

³ European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World, Brussels, 12.12.2003 (not published in the Official Journal), retrieved from http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/r00004_fr.html

⁴ In times of American hegemony, the strategy establishes a doctrinal parallel with the National Security Strategy of President George Bush in order to succeed in establishing itself on the international scene as a global player in its own right. It must therefore be endowed with its own strategic concept to play its part in international security, which is becoming increasingly transnational. The strategy had addressed threats to European security through three main objectives: the fight against threats, the security of the European neighbourhood, and the EU inclusion in the world order based on multilateralism.

between enlargement and instability risks. The challenge was to meet the expectations of new neighbours, either by supporting the aspirations of new neighbours in the East to accession or by strengthening relations with old neighbours in the South, without compromising internal EU security in the face of possible destabilization from these countries (Balzacq 2007). Thus, the strategy provided a common ground for the conception of security in the EU, while including neighbours through the same strategy in the security shield of the enlarged EU.

With the EU being as concerned with its role in addressing global threats as with security challenges of its neighbourhood in the post-enlargement phase, only a security strategy synthesizing these external and internal factors could create new foundations for a security doctrine (Lannon 2006). This strategy constituted an element that overcame the military deficit of the EU and was in line with the objective and gradual evolution of the CFSP⁵. However, its development was not based solely on a process of internal evolution at the European level.

A first initiation of the ESS concept was presented to the Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003⁶. From its first presentation to its final adoption in December 2003, the text was examined by EU institutions, giving rise to consultations with the scientific community and civil society⁷. A team headed by Robert Cooper⁸ assisted the High Representative in its final drafting. Few significant changes were made to the security approach throughout this phase. Regarding its structure, the document provides an overview of the dangers facing the EU by exposing the most significant threats. It then examines the responses to these threats. Finally, it exposes the responses underlying the threats presented.

In its first part, the strategy defines the main threats perceived by the EU. While the title of the final adopted document was Security Environment: Global Challenges and Major Threats, the first Thessaloniki document was named Security: New Threats in a New Environment. In this document threats were grouped into three categories: international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, lastly, organized crime and failed states under a single heading. Although its content did not change from the document of June 2003, it did present certain differences at the lexical and semantic level, and the final version added the term Security Environment in the title of the first part, reflecting the modest

yet significant will to mitigate the highly securitarian approach of the first version. In addition, the final version delineates ›major threats‹ rather than ›new threats‹, thereby avoiding to introduce this document as a rupture with previous policies.

1.2 A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SECURITY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE EU IN A CONTEXT OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY

For the Mediterranean, the new EU security strategy marked the intensification of issues as such and became increasingly needed outside the comprehensive, exclusive, and securitarian approach of the Barcelona Declaration. The political context was no longer the same. The peace-stability equation was no longer an option in the same way given the challenges of the peace process. Also, the shift towards the security-stability equation reflected reality. Despite this, the EU did not break with the Barcelona framework and called for more effective cooperation in the economic, security and cultural fields in the ESS. While security building in the neighbourhood was marked by perceived heightened security threats and took place in a climate of growing instability at the global and regional levels, the EU remained in line with its commitment to defend the concept of global security in its internal strategies, such as the ESS, as well as its external policies, such as the ENP. The comprehensive security approach is a primary concern of the ESS. The interdependence is very close between economic failure and a lack of development on one side, and political instability and insecurity on the other. Certain countries or regions were caught in a cycle of instability and economic failure that grew more vicious. On the one hand, »poverty and disease cause ineffable suffering and are the reason behind particularly urgent security problems«⁹. On the other hand, security is a »necessary condition for development«¹⁰. Global security must also be taken into consideration seen the scale of threats which can be categorized as hard security (proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts), soft security (state failure and organized crime), and cross-cutting threats (terrorism).

The ENP therefore appeared as one of the most recent and appropriate tools for the EU's foreign policy, aimed mainly at strengthening or building internal security in new neighbouring countries following enlargement. Since enlargement was a direct motive behind the ENP, the roots of this policy were set out in the ESS. The global securitarian approach of the ENP revolved around the semantic trilogy: prosperity, stability, security. Stability is closely linked to democratization and political reform, and prosperity is connected to economic reform and a successful transition towards a market economy¹¹.

⁵ In fact, despite commitment, during the Franco-British summit in Saint-Malo in 1998 to develop a European Common Security and Defense Policy with common institutions and actions, the delays in the implementation of the objectives of the Helsinki Headline Goal had previously marked the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils of 1999. (Lannon 2002).

⁶ A Secure Europe in a Better World. Thessaloniki European Council S1038/03, 20.6.2003.

⁷ It must be noted that the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) had participated in the optimization of the final version of the document without straying away from the general outlines rectified beforehand.

⁸ At the time, Robert Cooper was the Director General for Political-Military Affairs in the EU Council.

⁹ European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World, op.cit, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Communication from The Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, COM (2003). 104 final, Brussels, 11.3.2003, p. 3.

The security of neighbouring countries became a necessary condition, more for the internal stability of the EU than for the good of these countries. Faced with this Eurocentric security approach, there was a risk that partner countries would not react in the same manner as the EU. At the European level, security was emphasized, but there was no guarantee that partners shared the same agenda. As stated above, the three objectives of the ENP were prosperity, stability and security – and achieving the goal of security required the promotion of stability and prosperity. Economic and social development would then lead to prosperity, promoting security in the region and, therefore, improving the security climate in an enlarged EU (Landaburu, 2006).

At first glance, the ENP and ESS seem to be in line with the objectives set by the Barcelona Declaration. The approach to global security thus remained a shared objective of the EMP and ENP, without the two being completely identifiable with one another. Meanwhile, in the context of the impasse in the general framework, the lack of conceptual coherence of Euro-Mediterranean global security has not allowed it to adapt to emerging security realities. In the EMP, no link existed between the achievement of short-term objectives or the implementation of initiatives (be it bilateral or multilateral) at institutional, economic or sectoral levels on one hand, and the long-term achievement of a zone of peace and stability on the other (Youngs 1999). However, it was the structure of the ENP action plans that allowed for a better balance in the prioritization of long, medium and short-term action. The new security approach of the ENP was not fully aligned with that of the EMP, partly due to the general impasse in the EMP and increasing instability, which demonstrated the limits of the Mediterranean approach.

In other words, security in the Barcelona Declaration was a means to improve the political and economic situation, which remained in the EU's interest. Security helps strengthen economic relations and contributes to development. This global security grew in importance with regard to the neighbourhood policy. Thus, the ENP reaffirmed the European conviction that democracy and economic development are paramount to the elimination of insecurity in partner countries and, by extension, the EU. However, in the ENP, the EU was deeply influenced by the ESS¹².

Ultimately, the ESS/ENP strategy did not break with the comprehensive security approach of the Barcelona Declaration, which remains pertinent today, despite the change in the regional context. The 'safety' component in the initial Mediterranean Union project was gradually reduced following successive amendments until nearly evaporating from the current Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) formula. By returning to the Barcelona acquis, the UfM did not propose much regarding the issue of security¹³. In its final version, the UfM does not intend to replace the security structure of the EMP. It does not undertake any real commitment to resolve conflicts or mitigate instability in the region. In the EMP, the global approach is »the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity«¹⁴.

This purpose of the neighbourhood policy contains an approach that is comprehensive but generally comparable to that of the Barcelona Declaration. However, delving deeper into this study highlights a notable difference in terms of their purposes as well as their means.

2. THE INSUFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF EU SECURITY OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ENP

The ENP became the preferred tool for the implementation of the ESS. However, the security outcomes of the ENP prove that compatibility is uncertain between the EU security strategy in the region and the bilateral neighbourhood framework characterized by a variable geometry. The response of the ENP to EU security objectives fell short of anticipated ambitions. For the time being, initial assessments show that it remains difficult for neighbouring countries to appropriate the common threats set out by the ESS through a highly Eurocentric ENP. Moreover, the response of the ENP concerning the improvement of external action in the Mediterranean was modest.

2.1 THE DIFFICULT APPROPRIATION OF COMMON THREATS OF THE ENP BY PARTNERS

Unlike the EMP, the ENP is a European policy emanating from the very will of the EU and its institutions have proved to be difficult for partners to appropriate. The appropriation of Euro-Mediterranean security was not too successful despite being established through a consensus-building process. However, it was difficult to hope that the implementation of EU security objectives would succeed through the instrument of unilateral – not specifically Mediterranean – external action. The incomplete balance sheet raises questions about the limits of the ability of neighbours to appropriate common threats and the primacy of soft security issues over hard security issues that must be passed on to these countries.

2.1.1 THE HIGHLY EUROCENTRIC DEFINITION OF COMMON THREATS

A question was raised within EU bodies during the preparation phase of enlargement about how to deal with the indirect effects of enlargement on new EU borders (Balzacq 2007). This is a rationale that clearly distinguishes internal from external security issues. How can relations with neighbours be strengthened to contain new threats without creating dividing lines between the EU and its neighbours? Thus, the joint letter from Christopher Patten and Javier Solana proposed a neighbourhood policy with several objectives: »stability, prosperity, the rule of law and shared values along our borders are fundamental to our own security. Failure in one of these areas will expose the Union to negative externalities (Patten, Solana 2002). The circle of friends (a term used in the literature of the ENP) would protect the enlarged EU as well as its neighbours through the construction of their security in the face of identified peripheral threats. The main threats to the EU, set forth by the ESS and reiterated in the Second Communication on the ENP (2004), would also become threats to its neighbours.

The ENP does not want to »impose priorities or conditions on its partners. The Action Plans depend, for their success, on the clear recognition of mutual interests in addressing a set of

¹² Conclusions of the EU Council on 18.6.2007.

¹³ Sécuriser le développement durable de la Méditerranée, Cahier de CEREM n° 6, p. 57.

¹⁴ The Barcelona Declaration, op.cit

priority issues. There can be no question of asking partners to accept a pre-determined set of priorities.¹⁵ This basically means that strengthening EU security through the ENP must be established along with neighbours, not alone. Once communications of the European Commission on ENP described threats to the EU as common, their existence began to require cooperation on both sides¹⁶.

In principle, any ›joint ownership‹ of this process can be gained solely by taking common interests into account. At the security level, the term ›common security threats‹, which appeared only in the Second Communication of the ENP (2004), indicatively defines terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the illegal export of weapons.¹⁷ The mere acceptance of these priorities by ENP neighbours does not render them common priorities. This common security interest is mainly based on the real political and economic interdependence between the Union and its neighbours¹⁸. The communication of 2003 did not stop there. It equally established a subtle link between the strengthening of economic relations and the common security situation with neighbours. This geographical proximity created an equal interest between the efforts promoting transnational trade and investment flows and an even more important shared interest to work together in combating cross-border threats.

Enlargement, which was a major internal event for the EU, admittedly remained external to neighbours and ›forced‹ them to take responsibility in ensuring EU security. The ENP remained a unilateral European policy based in principle on the ESS. From this fundamental perspective, the formally shared interests ultimately amount to EU interests, especially the strengthening of EU internal security. This was materialized through a regional ›security community‹ (Zaiotti 2007) by defining specific ›threats‹ described as ›common‹ between the EU and its neighbours¹⁹.

This is also reflected in the attention and primacy given to direct security interests of the Union over those of its neighbors. The asymmetry and inequality with Southern Mediterranean neighbours had never disappeared, but the EMP allowed overcoming the simple North-South challenges in order to establish a framework of equality and reciprocity and create a climate of trust. With the EMP, the EU's foreign policy ›remained soft, civil, and normative‹ with Southern partners (Del Sarto and Schumacher 2005). The consensual and conventional nature of the EMP gave the EU the opportunity to accompany the political and economic transformations of its partners. In comparison with the EMP the ENP is even more Eurocentric than it may seem at first. The ENP prefers a bilateral approach over the principle of a Euro-Mediterranean regionalization with the creation of a circle of friends, at the center of which is the EU. This represents a shift from North-South cooperation to center-periphery cooperation. At that point, the term ›partner‹ became more important. The idea of equality was replaced by the term ›neighbours‹, which remained a Eurocentric term in the sense that the status of neighbour was still defined in relation to the EU.

With the ENP, the security of neighbouring countries was no longer part of a partnership approach. It actually became a necessary condition for ensuring EU internal security, expressed by a unilateral neighbourhood policy with references in a security strategy. The generous offer of the ENP represents a carrot on a stick for neighbours to ensure EU security. To this end, the Commission argued, ›a shared neighbourhood implies, in its very nature, sharing burdens and a joint responsibility for responding to challenges (conflict and insecurity) that threaten stability‹²⁰. In other words, geographical contiguity, which gave rise to a policy favoring neighbours, cannot go without a redistribution of responsibilities. Given this proximity, neighbours must participate indirectly in the preservation of EU security and ensure that the impact of suspected instability does not spread within the Union.

The notion of ›partner‹ was virtually abandoned, giving way to that of ›neighbour‹, a Eurocentric vision of regional security. The very idea of creating a circle of friends reflects Eurocentrism; the EU did not propose a horizontal system based on a basic conventional policy document shared by all ›partners‹. The action plan of choice reinforced the idea that neighbours constitute a potential threat that is, in fact, unrelated to any common threat presented in the Communications on ENP. In order for the ENP to attempt to address threats and mitigate dangers, only a regional security policy could gain more acceptance from governments and create less sentiments of constraint.

2.1.2 THE PRIMACY OF THE SOFT SECURITY OVER THE HARD SECURITY DIMENSION

The ENP clearly separates soft security from hard security issues. In the beginning priority was given to strategic issues, such as conflict resolution and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation. With the ENP, strategic issues were treated as political issues in an attempt to minimize differences and address all problems on an equal footing, such as the right to asylum, illegal immigration, and trafficking. The program of the ENP places them in the first instance as strategic issues.

While security and defense issues qualified as hard security are present in the ESS and have been clearly presented in the ENP as well, their importance was attenuated in favor of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) actions classified as soft security. In reality, the focus of the ENP on security was not so visible from the outset of reflections on the ENP. When the Commission began its work, no details existed on the content and organization of this initiative.

The majority of the work on ›enlarged Europe‹ communications, introduced in July 2003, was done by the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX), whereas other Directorate-Generals (DGs) played a less central role in policy development. The Commission often underwent political pressure from the EU countries to follow a more securitarian program (Bigo and Guild 2002). In addition, the DG RELEX supported the pressure practiced by Enlargement DG members to influence the ENP (Goujon 2005). The Middle East and Mediterranean Directorate was not involved in the ENP process. Although less visible, the DG for Justice, Freedom and

¹⁵ COM (2004) 373, Communication from the Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper, Brussels, 12.5.2004, p. 4.

¹⁶ The ubiquity of the terms mutual joint, and shared testifies to the attachment of ENP advocates to the collective nature of the project. In the communications of 2003 and 2004 of the Commission, these terms appear up to fifty-five times.

¹⁷ COM (2004) 373, op.cit, p. 14.

¹⁸ COM (2003) 104, op.cit, p. 3.

¹⁹ COM (2004) 373, op.cit, p. 3.

²⁰ COM (2003), 104, op.cit, p. 12.

Security (JFS) exerted an equally important influence in favor of this rapprochement within the ENP (Desboz 2005). While DG RELEX felt that these issues must be considered as one of the many elements forming the global policy, soft security issues occupied a greater place in it. With the ENP, the distinction between hard and soft security became blurred. Better coordination between these two domains is necessary (Zaiotti 2007). The ESS is at the root of this interference, which encompasses all threats and considers that »violent conflict, weak states where organized crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe«²¹.

Nevertheless, the trend towards merging between hard and soft security is not simply related to the ENP. The line dividing the two is thin, especially in such an unstable region. In fact, a mitigated management of soft security issues can easily transform them into hard security issues. Certain soft security issues are crucial for hard security issues. Such is the case with the economic inequalities between different ethnic components that lead to large-scale military clashes²². In a region where political instability is accompanied by significant economic problems, the traditional dividing line between hard and soft security can be problematic. Issues that are not properly addressed, like regional conflicts, could trigger internal conflicts of such magnitude that they can be qualified as hard security issues.

As long as regional conflicts persist, hard security issues will not exceed the limits of declaratory measures in ministerial or ENP declarations. It remains clear that, with the ENP, cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners is more likely to make progress in terms of soft security. The ENP responds to a European need and attempts to address migration-related pressure and instability at the EU borders within the same framework as terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflict, state failure, organized crime, and other specific problems related to the access to energy resources like oil and gas. This can be noticed through the reiteration of objectives in communications and action plans.

The remarkable fusion of these threats points to ambiguity. Since the beginning of the war on terrorism, a growing trend emerged where the EU prioritized security issues, namely migration, trafficking, and terrorism in the region which had become a threat to it. European policy towards the Mediterranean had been fueled by two contradictory security discourses. On the one hand, the contribution to stability and security in the region is seen as an enabler of democratic reform and the promotion of human rights. On the other hand, it is considered that terrorist threats, radicalization, migration, and organized crime stem from the political and social problems of the region and are connected to the lack of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, and economic growth (Malmvig 2006). The contradiction lies in the fact that a discourse based on soft security will prioritize close cooperation with authoritarian regimes when addressing the common challenges of terrorism, radicalism, WMD, organized crime, and illegal immigration.

Thus, while the first approach called for democratization and concerted liberalization of »rotten« states and societies, the

second approach called for cooperation with societies and regimes in the fight against common threats. With the merging of hard and soft security, the EU is promoting the security and stability of regimes through democratization and the promotion of human rights. Indeed, the EU is finally ready to tolerate rogue regimes in exchange for cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

2.2 THE LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BILATERAL MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE SOUTH

One of the major problems of the ENP is that it emphasizes differentiated bilateralism unlike the previous Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which was based on the principle of regionalization. This change in approach does not put forward the development of regional cooperation. Consequently, it limits EU contribution to provisions, such as the Middle East peace process or the fight against terrorism and WMD, which are predominantly regional.

The choice to integrate all neighbourhood zones into a single framework has shown limitations. The function of security issues in the East is completely different from that in the South, which renders the ENP a security framework with variable geometry that has been proposed without conceptual distinction between different neighbours (Balzacq 2007). For some, the ENP does not encourage regional cooperation and was conceived as a global framework that has been narrowed in order to give a new dynamism to bilateral relations by promoting differentiation between partners and multilateral convergences (Terpan 2010). However, the lack of confidence is growing progressively in the absence of a suitable climate.

For now, the bilateralization of security objectives has proved to have limited effectiveness. The link between the ENP approach and the »global approach«, along with the new concepts of »differentiation«, is not so obvious. It would be advantageous for neighbouring countries to make progress on the condition that they do not question the entire regional approach, which remains indispensable (Balfour 2004). The Commission raised the possible failure of the ENP. It considered that if the ENP were unable to contribute to the resolution of the conflicts in the region, then it »would have failed in one of its fundamental missions«²³ namely conflict prevention. Similar conflicts could endanger the security of the Union.

So, how can the ENP simultaneously ensure balance in the bilateral management of regional crises and reserve adequate importance for multilateral cooperation? The security issue of the ENP remains a reflection of an internal EU analysis of relations with the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood. Thus, the ENP achieves its goal of moving or pushing threats away from its borders without addressing their political origins. This does not, in any case, ensure that a conflict prevention mechanism or, if need be, a solution to real regional problems is provided. As long as the Euro-Mediterranean framework is in place, responses to security threats cannot be bilateral.

²³ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, COM (2006) 726, Brussels, 4.12.2006, p. 10.

²¹ European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, op.cit, p. 3.

²² Hitti, Nassif, New Security Challenges in the Mediterranean, in Hegazy, Sonja (ed.), Egyptian and German Perspectives on Security in the Mediterranean, pp. 37-40, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Cairo, p. 37.

The 2008 report on ESS²⁴ implementation established a link of convergence and a rapprochement between the ENP, UfM, and Eastern Partnership²⁵. However, the EU failed to join all the components of its external action to act effectively in the face of regional crises. The Eurocentric approach and bilateral implementation of ESS objectives by the ENP prove that the EU is confined, to some degree, to a security logic that is conceptually sterile and practically ineffective. A multilateral approach has become essential in the case of the Mediterranean since the interdependence of threats at the international level can no longer be addressed unilaterally; conflicts and crises, by their nature, cannot be framed by mere bilateral cooperation. Bilateralism remains necessary to gradually strengthen technical cooperation in specific areas. The global approach to the security issue must not be reduced to the level of bilateral cooperation as is the case in ENP action plans.

In June 2016, the European Union unveiled its new Global Strategy for its foreign and security policy, adopting it as the normative framework for the future orientation of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It replaces the European Security Strategy of 2003. The concept of strategic autonomy forms part of the European Union Global Strategy. It refers to the ability of the European Union to defend Europe and act militarily in its neighborhood without so much reliance on the United States. The idea behind strategic autonomy in so far as it informs the European Global Strategy is that Europeans collectively have the capability and the will to stand up for themselves from a security and defense perspective.

The Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Professor Nathalie Tocci, argues that »the EUGS stands firm on the affirmation of the EU's internal values ... [and] its firmness on this point is all the more important given that those values are being questioned within, as evident with the rise of extreme-right populism across the continent. But this does not mean that the EU expects its internal liberal values to be adopted externally too« (Barbé and Morillas 2019). This more moderate vision was present as well in the mindset of representatives from EU member states at the time of drafting the EU Global Strategy (EUGS). As an official put it, »the motivation for new strategic thinking was more defensive, based on security threats, the diminishment of internal cohesion and a wobbly internal and external environment«, which also reveals a consciousness that »the world did not want to be like us Europeans anymore« (Morillas 2019).

The challenge is that the internal context of the EU is directly affected by the instability of its immediate neighbours as well as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. This was recognized by the 2016 EUGS which stated that »internal and

external security are ever more intertwined: our security at home entails a parallel interest in peace in our neighbouring and surrounding regions. It implies a broader interest in preventing conflict, promoting human security, addressing the root causes of instability and working towards a safer world«²⁶. This approach is also consistent with the EUGS, which emphasized the necessity to create »practical« and »functional cooperative regional orders« to enhance cooperation between the EU, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the Middle East²⁷.

The neighbourhood security approach therefore handles the complexity of security and stability issues with Southern neighbours in a reductive manner. However, the ENP did not address the different expectations of neighbours, which explains the temptation to strengthen the security approach. Given the regional nature of security and strategic issues, one can say that the true handicap of the ENP lies in the impossibility of reducing security in Southern countries and the EU to the mere stabilization of trade or the economy, chiefly because of their proximity. This bilateral implementation of ESS objectives upholds the differentiation between Maghreb and Mashreq countries. In Maghreb countries (Tunisia and Morocco), attention is given to soft security issues like illegal immigration and organized crime. In these countries, the EU relies on differentiated action plans to address transnational threats of destabilization bilaterally. The need for the bilateral implementation of EU security objectives became necessary due to the failure of the Barcelona approach to meet strategic and global objectives.

3. THE NEED FOR REGIONALIZED COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EU SECURITY OBJECTIVES

While simply reverting to the Barcelona equation is not realistic, it remains difficult to take into account the real stakes in the South. A new way of reflecting on this matter must be pursued. A formula must be found to make a return to the core ESS objectives without solely passing through the ENP or Euro-Mediterranean security cooperation. This article calls for a new regionalization of cooperation and a certain degree of mitigation of the global and indivisible Euro-Mediterranean dimension through the differentiation of the Euro-Mediterranean political dialogue.

The differentiation between the Maghreb and Mashreq is an observation that was never taken into account within the Euro-Mediterranean framework. Some supported strengthening Euro-Maghreb relations, whereas others advocated a new European policy in the Middle East. However, the most appropriate approach requires for the two reinforcements to be proposed in parallel. The renewal of the Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue requires the institutionalization of the Euro-Maghreb dialogue, which will allow the specificity of the region to be considered in the global Euro-Mediterranean

²⁴ Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World, Brussels, 11.12.2008, S407/08

²⁵ The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a joint initiative of the EU, its member states and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (the partner countries). Launched in 2009, the EaP is a strategic and ambitious partnership based on common values and rules, mutual interests and commitments, as well as shared ownership and responsibility. It aims to strengthen and deepen the political and economic relations between the EU, its member states and the partner countries, and supports sustainable reform processes in partner countries. As a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership combines bilateral and multilateral tracks. The overall framework guiding relations between the EU and its six Eastern Partners is provided by the relevant bilateral agreements, such as the Association Agreements, as well as the Association Agendas and the Partnership Priorities and the EaP 20 Deliverables for 2020 aligned along the four key priority areas: (1) stronger economy; (2) stronger governance; (3) stronger connectivity and (4) stronger society, together with targets for the cross-cutting issues of gender, civil society and strategic communication.

²⁶ Council of the EU, Council conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, Outcome of Proceedings, From General Secretariat of the Council to Delegations, 13202/16, CFSP/PESC 814, CSDP/PSDC 572, 13201/16 CFSP/PESC 813 CSDP/PSDC 571, (Or. EN), Luxembourg, 17.10.2016.

²⁷ HR/VP, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, June 2016, p. 34 and 35.

an framework. At the same time, the dimension of problems in this area can be addressed by broadening relationships in the Middle East beyond a strictly Mediterranean framework.

3.1 ENHANCED POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH THE MAGHREB FOR THE SUB-REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY OBJECTIVES

The specificity of the Maghreb does not only result from the differentiation related to the historical context of the Maghrebi component specifically. It is also the fruit of the objective differentiation related to the Maghrebi success that is significantly superior to that of the Middle East²⁸. Nevertheless, any proposal to institutionalize the Euro-Maghreb framework remains indispensable in order to consider the security and political specificities of the Maghreb and must remain a component of the global Euro-Mediterranean context.

3.1.1 THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE EURO-MAGHREB DIALOGUE IS INDISPENSABLE FOR COOPERATION ON REGIONAL SECURITY

While the Mediterranean generally represents a priority area for action in the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Middle East has received special attention from European diplomacy²⁹. The multilateral Euro-Mediterranean strategy, in which Middle East issues have taken precedence, hindered the recognition of the specificity of the Maghreb sub-region and the institutionalization of a specifically Euro-Maghrebi dialogue (Meniaoui 2008).

Although the institutionalization of the Euro-Maghrebi dialogue was never introduced within a unified framework, it remains relevant and seems crucial for the consideration of EU security interests while also respecting the expectations of Maghrebi neighbours. Such a restructuring will enable a dialogue on security priorities in the Maghreb region while contributing to the enhancement of South-South inter-Maghrebi integration, which remains indispensable for more effective cooperation with all countries of the zone.

However, the impossibility of resolving the conflict in Western Sahara continues to poison relations between Morocco and Algeria as well as the countries which support the Polisario, in particular Spain. This conflict remains an obstacle to the easing of tensions, though it is by no means on the same scale as the Israeli-Palestinian military and political conflicts. Ultimately, the Euro-Mediterranean concept of regional security does not embody, for the partners of the South, a recognized geographical unity³⁰. In addition, South-South regional integration was presented as one of the objectives of EU cooperation with Mediterranean countries. However, the action plans only called for the promotion of intra-regional economic and com-

mercial integration (particularly within the Agadir Agreement)³¹ and for intensified cooperation within regional Maghreb institutions (such as a rapid commitment to support South-South integration), without any real effectiveness³². Support for South-South integration under the EMP and the UfM is weak, especially seen that Euro-Mediterranean institutional instruments are adapted to a North-South logic.

As for the Maghreb, its difficulties are less complicated to overcome than those of the Mashreq although this has not yet been successful. Integration processes in Europe and elsewhere showed their potential to foster a climate of international trust and easing tensions among countries, enabling the establishment of a regional appeasement that is indispensable for economic development and political stability. In the specific case of the Maghreb, although certain conditions are well met to launch this type of sub-regional cooperation, political difficulties persist, in particular the Sahara problem and its impact on relations between Algeria and Morocco as well as between Morocco and certain Member States, namely Spain. For now, it is apparent that the institutional frameworks in the region are insufficient because they do not allow for further integration of the Maghreb. The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)³³ has been unable to function effectively so far. The last AMU summit was convened in 1994. A Heads of State meeting was meant to be held in Algiers in December 2003 but was canceled. A new summit in the same format, scheduled to be held in Tripoli in May 2005, was postponed and no summit has been held since.

With this state of affairs, the Maghreb sub-regional framework did not produce satisfactory results. The AMU exists only officially. The Agadir Agreement was unable to set up a free-trade area (FTA) by the deadline of 2006. Could EU engagement through its Euro-Maghrebi dialog help promote a climate of trust simultaneously between the EU, which is the largest economic partner of the region, and the countries of this very region? Once confidence is established, the role of the EU will be crucial to ensure an integration process that can only be beneficial to security in its comprehensive concept.

It should be noted that attention to South-South integration can also be given at the sectoral level in order to enable, among other things, the currently difficult convergence between the ENP and the UfM. The ENP had previously proposed to the UfM a form of cooperation in the field of energy in the context of the EMP, and in particular with the creation of a Euro-Maghrebi electricity market that could have been complemented by a gas market and approved Euro-Mediterranean networks³⁴.

³¹ The Agadir Agreement is a free trade agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Named after the Moroccan city of Agadir, where the process to set up the pact was launched in May 2001, it was signed in Rabat in February 2004 and came into force in March 2007. The Agadir Agreement is open to further membership by all Arab countries that are members of the Arab League and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, and linked to the EU through an Association Agreement or an FTA. Its purpose is to facilitate integration between Arab states and the EU under the broader EU-Mediterranean process

³² EU-Morocco Action Plan item 12.

³³ The Arab Maghreb Union is better known by its French acronym UMA (Union du Maghreb Arabe)

³⁴ COM (2004) 373, op.cit, p. 19.

²⁸ The advanced status that was proposed to Morocco and Tunisia can be considered as proof.

²⁹ From the outset of the CFSP, the European Council in Lisbon in June 2002 differentiated the two sub-regional areas of the Middle East and the Maghreb while establishing the scope of common actions.

³⁰ It is clear that although many of the conditions for launching this type of sub-regional cooperation have been met, political difficulties persist. Currently, the institutional frameworks present in the region are insufficient because they do not allow progress towards an integration of the Maghreb and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); until now they have not been able to operate efficiently.

3.1.2 THE MITIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF MIDDLE EASTERN CHALLENGES ON EURO-MAGHREBI RELATIONS THROUGH CLOSER EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE

The EU considered resolution of conflicts and regional instability among the main objectives of the EMP, ESS and ENP. Although various publications refer to a number of different conflicts, it is evident that the emergence of instability in the Middle East is at the center of the conflicts in need of resolution. And, this is where the EU has fully engaged. Although the situation in the Near East remains a topic of concern at the international level in general and in the Arab world in particular, Maghreb countries do not directly suffer the impact of this situation. In fact, this lack of a Maghrebi dimension in the Euro-Mediterranean context was detrimental to the full commitment of the EU to reduce political tensions (relative to engagement in the Middle East), and prevented the political and economic integration of Maghrebi countries.

However, it is the Western Sahara problem between Morocco on the one hand and the Polisario Front and Algeria on the other, that remains the main obstacle to a successful Euro-Maghrebi and inter-Maghrebi political dialogue. Since 1975, Morocco has claimed the attachment of the former Western Spanish colony and opposed the Polisario Front which fights for the independence of this desert territory with an area of 266,000 km². Following decolonization, the Sahara became the point of structural discord between the riparian countries of Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania, preventing all possibilities of regional cooperation³⁵.

The proximity to the EU and the economic interests in a solution to the Sahara problem (with stimulus from the EU) could quickly relaunch South-South integration among Maghrebi countries. The involvement of European diplomacy in the Maghreb remains more effective than in the Middle East, given the role that the US plays there. The challenge of the Western Sahara is the true challenge facing European diplomacy. Any success in resolving this conflict will give the EU more credibility in order for it to fully participate in the resolution of Middle East conflicts. To further these objectives, the Union could propose the creation of a multilateral negotiation framework for the Western Sahara, where Morocco and the Polisario Front can engage in discussion with each other, Algeria, Spain, the USA, France, the UN and the EU.

At this stage, the Union member states should begin by elaborating a shared position based on consensual principles to solve the Western Sahara problem. The two most involved countries, Spain and France, must act in order to bring their positions closer. Indeed, France favors the stability of Morocco, thus its possession of the territory, whereas Spain insists on the free determination of the Saharawi people as the only possible formula. Therefore, European countries must converge to a consensual approach to the Sahara problem. However, no agreement can be effective if it does not ensure a peace-

ful solution to the conflict and negotiation between parties within a multilateral framework, supported by the EU, its Member States, and their commitment to ensuring that the outcome of the referendum in Western Sahara is respected (Ortega 2006).

3.1.3 STRENGTHENED SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION ON COMMON THREATS IN THE MAGHREB

In the global Euro-Mediterranean framework, the common threats defined by the ESS and reiterated by the ENP do not apply homogeneously in the geographical components of the Mediterranean. In fact, issues in the Middle East primarily revolve around the peace process and the WMD proliferation, whereas the Maghreb suffers the impact of increased migration control and the fight against terrorism and organized crime. Through the ENP, the EU shows its intentions to ›relocate‹ the management of Maghreb and sub-Saharan migration flows. The highly bilateral and securitarian approach of the Maghreb to issues that are of paramount importance to EU security impedes the Euro-Maghreb relational dynamic. This partly explains why the ENP was not well-received in the Maghreb (Meniaoui 2008).

Therefore, it seems possible to propose enhanced cooperation to a group of States wishing to go further together in a specific field (be it political or technical), which will then spread to other countries engaged in the global Euro-Mediterranean framework. Today, the Maghreb appears to be the part of the Mediterranean with which it is possible to undertake cooperation in the areas of security and the fight against terrorism, but also in social projects or environmental protection. Ultimately, the Maghreb is well adjusted, within its Euro-Mediterranean scope, to a possible Euro-Maghrebi cooperation that is enhanced in relation to the Euro-Mediterranean threshold in the matters of economy, the environment, energy, security, and the fight against terrorism (Daguzan 2004). Will the success of a similar sub-regional cooperation make way for a shift from the case of the Maghreb specifically to a Mediterranean framework? The institutionalization of the Euro-Maghrebi dialogue in the form of an integrated component within the global Euro-Mediterranean framework will allow revalorizing global security as an operational conceptual guideline for EU action in its Mediterranean neighbourhood.

3.2 REGIONAL PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION IN SECURITY BEYOND THE DIRECT NEIGHBOURHOOD IN A BROADER MIDDLE EAST

While sub-regionalization in the frame of the ENP and EMP is amongst the alternatives to challenges of the Maghreb, the situation in the Near East requires an expansion of cooperation outside strictly Mediterranean boundaries. Expanding cooperation beyond a strictly Mediterranean framework can enable improved action in the region. This enlargement of security beyond a single framework can be credited for meeting EU security objectives and ensuring the coherence of European security action and priorities in the region.

Broadening cooperation beyond the Mediterranean reflects a need emerging from changes in the region. The EU came to realize this need when it launched the Strategic Partnership

³⁵ From 1976 onwards, conflicts between Moroccan and Algerian armies led to the rupture of their diplomatic relations. In 1979, Mauritania emerged from the conflict and gave way to its consolidation between Algeria and Morocco, as well as to an increase in reciprocal national claims. In 1981, the referendum in the Sahara territories became the only means to settle the question, however, without resolving the dispute on the composition of the electorate.

with the Mediterranean and the Middle East (SPMME) in 2004³⁶. Moreover, even in a highly bilateral framework, the Commission defended the idea that the implementation of the objectives set under this Partnership must be based on that of the ENP³⁷. This initiative, which specifically began in the context of the global war on terror after the invasion of Iraq, was not followed up at the time and was quickly abandoned.

Though it did not follow suit, an initiative similar to the SPMME could be helpful in addressing current challenges in the Middle East. Despite the failure of this initiative, it remains necessary to develop cooperation with a Middle East whose limits exceed the Mediterranean. At that stage, the SPMME could be a new starting point preserving its geographical frame and building security and stability, not only with its direct neighbours, but also with their own neighbours. Nevertheless, the geographical relevance of the SPMME must be reviewed for the approach and priority objectives initially set.

3.2.1 THE DIFFICULT RETURN TO A STRICTLY EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE

The need for cooperation with the neighbours of neighbours, which had been called for specifically by the ENP, is consistent with ESS objectives. Meanwhile, the scope of this will must be delineated. For now, alternatives such as the return to a Euro-Arab dialogue lack realism and comprehensiveness.

The High Representative and the Commission presented a paper on strengthening the partnership between the EU and the Arab world³⁸. The influence of the Euro-Mediterranean logic is visible in the text, which comprised three sections on reform: political reform, economic reform, social reform and political dialogue. The document itself does not propose new ideas for mechanisms or institutions and simply advocates for better »coordination between the different policy instruments that it uses to ensure a more coherent global approach«³⁹ keeping the ESS in mind⁴⁰. A few months later, the EU abandoned Euro-Arab strengthening to promote the SPMME. The ESS had called for broader engagement with the Arab world⁴¹ without proposing any means or reflections. However, the reference to the SPMME was later missing from the report on ESS implementation and replaced by a reference to »security interests beyond its immediate neighbourhood«.

Professor Bichara Khader clearly calls for a return to dialogue between the EU and Arab countries with a Euro-Arab dialogue⁴² in the form of a Euro-Arab partnership or even an Arab policy towards Europe. In fact, Khader considered that the EU must take note of this development and move in a different direction: to contribute to the emergence of an Arab political and economic entity based on the feeling of belongi-

ng inter-Arab flows, and the urgency of overcoming common challenges. There is no such thing as a strictly Mediterranean identity, but there is obviously an Arab identity. The arbitrary divisions of space in the Western Mediterranean, the Near East, the Middle East, and the Greater Middle East dilute the collective Arab identity. While operational in terms of intervention policies, they are not always relevant in sociological, cultural or even geopolitical terms. Naturally, the EU is not empowered to force the economic, and a fortiori political, integration of the Arab world. This remains the primary responsibility of Arab leaders, first and foremost. However, through a sort of announcement effect, multiple incentives, positive conditionalities, clear messages, and a vision based on a united future, the EU can help break the current status quo and initiate desired transformations (Khader 2010). The problem is that the Euro-Arab approach was abandoned many years ago. All arguments for a return to different forms of Euro-Arab dialogue or partnerships can solely gain legitimacy by stigmatizing the EMP without just criticizing balance sheets, but, also questioning the Euro-Mediterranean concept itself. The problem of relations between the Arab world and the EU reflects the diversity of legal situations, which does not allow the direct transition to a single partnership framework.

While the SPMME was presented as part of a response to EU security objectives, its failure deserves to be offset by a new initiative that respects pre-existing relationship frameworks.⁴³ Apart from the words used to describe the framework of a broader Middle East, such as »neighbours of neighbours« or »beyond the immediate neighbourhood«, the need for cooperation can only lead back to ESS objectives and the coherence of EU action. This article points to the distinction between the reflection upon another partnership with the Arab World and the development of a strategy for the broader Middle East to better address security challenges. Ultimately, any EU reflection or action that attempts to limit itself to the Mediterranean framework risks fragmenting the reflection of the EU in this priority area, causing harm with little overall understanding of the situation. Efficiency requires a comprehensive understanding of regional challenges. It necessitates a cooperation framework encompassing a number of countries beyond the strictly Mediterranean and Arab framework.

3.2.2 THE ARAB NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ANP): AN ARAB INITIATIVE ADAPTED TO A BROADER GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK

In 2010, an Arab initiative confirmed the relevance of the geographical framework of the SPMME. This initiative, developed by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, once again justified the abandonment of a return to a Euro-Arab dialogue. The initiative of the League of Arab States toward

³⁶ EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Euromed Report n° 78, 23.6.2004.

³⁷ COM(2004) 373, op.cit, p. 6.

³⁸ Paper on the enhancement of the partnership between the EU and the Arab world presented by High Representative Javier Solana and the European Commission to the European Council on 12.12.2003 (Brussels), D(2003) 10318.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁰ That is through the establishment of adequate consultation and cooperation mechanisms to initiate a strengthened political dialogue that focuses on conflict prevention, crisis management, the fight against terrorism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

⁴¹ European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, op.cit, p. 9.

⁴² Launched in the early 1970s, the idea of a Euro-Arab dialog materialized in 1973 following the Yom Kippur War and the first oil shock. The parties involved were the EEC and the Arab League. It is necessary to achieve an overhaul of relations between the partners based on equality and respect for one another's interests and to create Euro-Arab cooperation in the face of the US policy in the Middle East.

⁴³ The document describes the attachment of the EU to its relations with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries as well as the fact that the EU has long felt concerned by the challenges they face. This has resulted in frameworks such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Neighbourhood Policy, and cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Iran, and Yemen, and the Strategic Partnership between the EU and the region Mediterranean as well as the Middle East.

its neighbors, the Arab Neighbourhood Policy (ANP), paved the way for a neighbourhood logic transcending the limits of inter-Arab cooperation. Even if this initiative was quickly abandoned following the events of 2011, it remains interesting as a reflection coming from the South and which could eventually intersect with European policies in the region.

It was presented at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in September 2010, in preparation for the presentation of an extraordinary summit that was scheduled to take place no later than the following month⁴⁴. In October of the same year, during this Arab summit in Libya, Arab leaders were to discuss the improvement of joint Arab action through institutional reform of the League and approve the report of the Secretary General on the ANP⁴⁵.

It is worth noting that, given the context of the region and the initial weakness of the League of Arab States, it is difficult to consider prospects for the success of this initiative⁴⁶. Despite this, it is a new approach from Arab countries that surpasses the strictly Arab framework of cooperation. The willingness to open up to circles existing outside the Arab framework is a novelty in the current system that reflects the insufficiency of strictly Arab approaches as they hinder the League from playing a role. The Secretary General demonstrated that the future of Arab cooperation requires close cooperation with direct neighbours.

3.2.3 TOWARDS A PARTNERSHIP WITH NEIGHBOURS OF NEIGHBOURS?

The evolving context in the Middle East is proof to the value of a real cooperation framework stepping beyond the direct neighbourhood of the enlarged EU and into the neighbours of neighbours present in the Middle East. Similarly, to the SP-MME geographical framework, a partnership with neighbors of neighbors could take the form of a dialogue in an enlarged Middle East to enhance the potential of the ENP/ESS as tools for rapprochement with neighbors. This is evident in the Mediterranean seen the expansion of cooperation with a broader Middle East (Biscop 2005). With this state of affairs, should only a modestly institutionalized informal structure

be established, similar to the initial structure of an informal framework? Two guidelines should steer reflection on the future of a partnership with neighbours.

The first guideline is a substantive issue related to the search for conceptual convergence and a crossroads of objectives. While the direct link between the new ANP and the European initiatives in the region currently remains unclear, this initiative gives legitimacy to a redefined SP-MME from the other side of the Mediterranean. It has been revised at the conceptual level through a break with the strictly Arab concept of the Arab dialogue, as well as with the presence of a country like Turkey in both projects. It has also been redefined at the political level seen the cooperation prospects between Arab countries and the direct or indirect neighbours of the EU, especially with the central and pioneering role attributed to cooperation with Turkey, as an EU candidate country, and to political, economic, and security convergence, such as in the matters of WMD non-proliferation, the common Iranian threat, and the fight against terrorism.

Despite the major political differences, the analogy between the ANP and ENP is not merely linguistic. It is clear that the idea of breaking the logic of strictly inter-Arab cooperation was inspired by the ENP, which avoids creating new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and new neighbours. Moreover, even if action for peace is not on the regional agenda, EU action in this direction can still preserve stabilization in the region, which constitutes the main objective of the ESS. Ultimately, the ANP must draw on the structure of the Forum as an informal instrument. In contrast, it must avoid replicating the forum for intergovernmental dialogue by ensuring a vital role for the EU and Arab League. At first, it should possess neither a tangible decision-making capacity nor a constraining role on its partners. It must focus, for an initial period of time, on an approach to dialogue aimed at recovering mutual trust on common security issues through unanimous decisions. In addition to ministerial meetings, forum members hold regular meetings at the level of senior officials. In that sense, these conferences would succeed if they formed a sort of antechamber for the production and analysis of implementable ideas from the perspective of a structured long-term partnership⁴⁷.

CONCLUSION

From 2011, the whole experience of regional cooperation was shaken, which led some to call for a re-establishment of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The upheaval in the Arab world occurred at the same time as the failure of the UfM, which constitutes yet another reason to relaunch the multilateral Euro-Mediterranean framework (Schäfer 2011). This multilateral framework should be utilized in a more strategic manner to advance bilateral relations between partners, especially with regards to conflict resolution⁴⁸. Seen how the added value of the ENP only partially improved coherence between existing frameworks, the problem of relations between the ENP and

⁴⁴ Final declaration of the Sirte-Libya summit. Retrieved from <http://www.arab-summits.org/s1/upfiles/final22.pdf>

⁴⁵ The ordinary summit of the League of Arab States in Sirte in March 2010 welcomed the project of the Secretary General, called the Arab Neighbourhood League at that time, and asked him to prepare a working document for neighboring countries in the Arab region in Asia, particularly Turkey, as well as in Africa, particularly Mali and Chad, and in the Mediterranean basin with European and African countries. The Secretary General therefore presented a report on the project called Arab Neighbourhood Policy (ANP) with the objective of developing links and coordinating with them, including the possibility of forming the Neighbourhood Association orchestrated by the League itself. Amr Moussa, then Secretary General of the League of Arab States, proposed a set of principles establishing a regional association through a new international organization that would likely be named the Arab Neighbourhood League. This new initiative launched, for the first time, political or economic cooperation between the Arab countries, represented by the Arab League, outside of a strictly Arab sphere and extending into the African and Asian neighbourhoods. Therefore, the stated objective behind the launch of the ANP was to create a framework, a regional association, or a regional forum where the League would play a central role. Such cooperation must not be limited to political and strategic issues, but also be extended to economic cooperation, including the creation of one or more free-trade zones and coordination on issues such as climate change, renewable energy, food or water security, and cultural cooperation.

⁴⁶ Faced with the limited effectiveness of previous Arab initiatives, the emergence of the Arab League initiative has yet to be demonstrated. For now, we must hold on to our reservations about the success of such an initiative, especially since the recent and old history of the League proves that its projects often never take off. Several political initiatives (political union between certain countries), security initiatives (Treaty of Joint Defense of the League of Arab States), and economic initiatives (Arab Common Market) have never materialized.

⁴⁷ Ultimately, this conference could surpass the shortcomings of the ENP and UfM and return to the Barcelona acquis by ensuring the participation of civil society in order to embody the expression of the political will and reach an understanding on common interests and needs, all while respecting democratic principles and values and human rights.

⁴⁸ Joint Communication of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new response to a changing neighborhood. COM(2011) 303, Brussels, 25.05.2011, p. 16.

and EMP framework, and subsequently the UPM framework, is rendered more legitimate than ever.

The ENP has not proven to be successful to deliver on its promises in promoting prosperity, security and stability in the neighbourhood of the EU⁴⁹. The cases of Libya, Palestine, Syria and Western Sahara are clear examples in this respect. The refugee crisis is a prime example of how insurgent parties have broken ranks on current foreign policy debates. This issue – together with European integration at large – sits »at the heart of the complex internal–external nexus« (Balfour 2016), so populism has mobilized the public opinion in areas where foreign policy has a pronounced impact. As another signal of emerging politicization, the »substantive conflict between restrictive and liberal positions emerges as the principal conflict dimension of asylum policy« in the European Parliament (Frid-Nielsen 2018).

Thus, given the impracticality of merely reverting to the Barcelona equation, the regional dimension of the ENP remains unfeasible. It equally remains difficult for it to take into account the real challenges in the South. This analysis argues for a new regionalization of cooperation, which requires a mitigation of the global and indivisible Euro-Mediterranean dimension, achieved through a sort of decentralized Euro-Mediterranean political and security dialogue.

However, while the place of the ENP is clear in the EU security approach, its impact on the clarification and harmonization of the Mediterranean dimension of the neighbourhood remains uncertain, to say the least. Although it has been confirmed that the ENP draws on the Euro-Mediterranean experience and is consistent with its continuous achievements, it remains difficult to see compatibility between the highly bilateral European initiative and the partnership spirit of multilateral regional initiatives. This means that even a few years after its implementation, the questions of the regional approach to Euro-Mediterranean security and its marginalization of the neighbourhood remain legitimate.

Currently, in the absence of a regional vision, the implementation of security objectives orchestrated by the ENP seems to be a risky strategy. It is possibly counterproductive because it increases mutual distrust among partners. Therefore, the bilateralization of security issues in action plans is clearly essential to the Euro-Mediterranean security approach. Ultimately, this incompatibility calls for a regional and sub-regional approach to security in the Mediterranean.

⁴⁹ Council of the EU, Copenhagen European Council 12 and 13 December 2002: Presidency Conclusions, 15917/02, POLGEN 84, Brussels, 29.1.2003, p. 6, para. 22

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THE INADEQUACY OF THE BILATERAL EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY FRAMEWORK AMID REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

A Lebanese Perspective on Security Policy in the Southern Neighbourhood



Given the geographical proximity of the Mediterranean and the European Union, a causal link was naturally established between the stability of the former and the security of the latter. The Mediterranean has always been at the heart of the security order in Europe with a focus on the Middle East.



With the ENP, the security of neighbouring countries was no longer part of a partnership approach. It became a necessary condition for ensuring EU internal security, expressed by a unilateral neighbourhood policy.



With the limited effectiveness of the bilateral management of regional security challenges in the south in the ENP framework, there is a need for regionalized complementary initiatives ensuring the implementation of EU security objectives.