

## Editorial

Ten years of cooperation under the umbrella of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) have been celebrated in the November 28-29 summit bringing together the thirty-five partners of the EMP. It was a summit to celebrate the EMP as the clearest and most ambitious cooperative framework between the EU and southern Mediterranean countries to date. Starting in 1995, the EMP has envisaged political, economic, and cultural areas of cooperation to establish a peaceful environment in the southern Mediterranean. Among the achievements, the most outstanding are the bilateral association agreements, aid programs and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). This summit provides an opportunity to reevaluate and reassess its achievements as well as the changing dynamics within.

Changing dynamics within the EMP and around have imposed new co-operational concerns for partner countries. On one hand, EU enlargement, social integration problems of immigrants, and terrorism are main factors to have affected the EU commitment to the EMP. But the EU's steady interest in the Southern Mediterranean has shifted EU interests in stability in Southern Mediterranean countries toward democracy and reform efforts. This has resulted in an interest towards civil society cooperation within the EMP. On the southern side, however, the war on terrorism, developments in Iraq and diverse reform efforts have also affected commitment to the EMP. This was expressed with the weak representation of the southern Mediterranean countries in the summit. However, southern countries should invest more in the EMP as it is the strongest cooperative tool with the EU and for the region balancing the effect of transatlantic relations of the EU.

This issue of 'Conflict INFOCUS' is devoted to assessing the EMP and discussing its future after being in effect for 10 years. In the EU Monitoring section, Roberto Aliboni reviews the main achievements of the EMP: the Europe Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as one arm of the EMP and the evolvement of a sense of joint ownership toward the EMP. Aliboni also sheds light on the main change in perspective within the EU. This refers to the EU shift of interest from stability in the south as it was in earlier phases of the EMP, to an interest in democracy. In this regard, the EU is encouraging civil society dialogue to engage moderate Muslim parties in the democratic process in the Mediterranean south.

The Forum of this issue sheds light on the security dimension of the EMP. In his "The Barcelona Process: A Security Perspective," Qatarneh addresses the security dimension in light of the limitations and insufficiencies of the EMP. The negative image of EMP in southern partners, EU enlargement, and the shadows of transatlantic relations have weakened the EU role in southern partners. Qatarneh concludes by advocating emphasis on political reform, increase in European investments in the south, bilateral and multilateral aid programs, and a larger role for public diplomacy. The common interest in the security is further highlighted in Andreu Claret's "The Mediterranean: One Last Opportunity." Claret explains how the two main outcomes of the summit: a Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism and the Five Years Work Program, are meant to address security concerns. The Code of Conduct allows for common positions and understanding on terrorism, while the Five Years Work Program on migration, integration, justice and security addresses EU concerns over migration. This is an attempt to maximize co-development chances of legal immigrants in the EU, and to reduce illegal immigration. In this sense it reflects the change in migration dynamics with source countries turning to host or transit countries. Claret concludes by stressing the southern partners' role and the push the EMP needs to sustain itself. ■

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 01 Editorial

#### EU and Conflict Prevention:

### 02 Ten Years of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: What Next? Roberto Aliboni

#### The Forum:

### 04 The Barcelona Process: A Security Perspective Yasar Qatarneh

### 07 The Mediterranean: One Last Opportunity Andreu Claret

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### TEN YEARS OF EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP: WHAT NEXT?

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The 28-29 November 2005 anniversary conference in Barcelona has closed a full year the EU devoted to celebrating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and reinvigorating it for the years to come. True, the outcome of the conference proved unsatisfactory and to some extent even disappointing. A conference, though, is but a diplomatic event. The balance sheet must be that of the ten years elapsed so far and not that of the conference in itself. With this caveat in mind, the relevant question is what is the outlook of the Barcelona process after ten years of working?

In the last few years, after the crisis of 2000 - when the Partners proved unable to sign the Charter supposed to establish the political principles for their cooperation - thanks to EU's impulses, achievements did not fail to emerge. While, broadly speaking, EMP's common ground has remained weak, thanks to such achievements the EMP "acquis" has definitely been strengthened and enlarged. It would not be easy to find out in the world a framework for cooperation as rich and articulated as the EMP.

EMP achievements are carefully listed in the Conclusions released by the Presidency at the occasion of the seventh EMP Ministerial Conference held on the 30th and 31st of May 2005 in Luxembourg<sup>(1)</sup> - and reaffirmed by the Presidency Conclusions of the Barcelona conference<sup>(2)</sup>. Among them, those certainly worth mentioning are the completion of the Association Agreements bilateral network between the EU and the Southern Partners; the establishment in 2003 of the Euro-Mediterranean Investment Facility (FEMIP); the creation in 2004 of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly; the setting up in 2005 of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and the signature of the Agadir trade agreement between Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan in 2004.

To these specific achievements, one has to add that EU aid (channelled through the MEDA fund), despite persistent shortcomings, has strongly improved its performance, so that funds are now reaching out to beneficiaries more easily and quickly. Most of all, the principle of joint ownership has been clearly and explicitly embedded in the decision-making mechanisms of the EMP. This means that EMP decisions have now to reflect a genuine consensus among partners to be implemented. In this sense, the EMP is getting closer to a true partnership than was the case in the past. Maybe, EMP decisions will be fewer and more difficult to reach than today, yet they will be actively shared and then made more effective.

Unless ownership will be used by Southern partners just to skip EU's exhortations for change and reform, joint ownership could well emerge as a real turning point in the EMP.

In the Barcelona conference, the Ministers did not add new significant building-blocks to those pointed out above. Still, they have reaffirmed their ambitions to pursue and strengthen cooperation with a view to keep on evolving and enlarging the Euro-Mediterranean "acquis".

One can wonder, however, about the prospect of this "acquis". What next with the Barcelona process? One can speculate by taking into consideration the platform from which Northern and Southern Partners are apparently about to sail for navigating throughout next ten years in the Barcelona process. The EU has, no doubt, made an effort of imagination in past few years and, in fact, it has set out a platform which - in this author's view - includes two most prominent and significant orientations: European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and emphasis on political reform.

The ENP is not to replace the EMP and dilute it in the wider context of the East-South arc of EU neighbouring countries and regions. It is juxtaposed to the EMP with the aim of modifying its methods and procedures, while leaving its backbone intact. It increases the stakes of regional integration by adding the liberalisation of institutional regulations to that of commercial trade. Neighbours are expected to be integrated in what the EU calls "internal market". This integration, however, will be pursued less regionally than bilaterally. Just because of ownership, Partners will opt for very different agendas so that the speed of integration will result very differently from country to country. In sum, the challenge is for a more integrated area, with less regional cohesion however. What this will entail politically is difficult to say. There are dangers in this perspective as well as opportunities. In any case, Partners will enjoy more freedom in cooperating with the EU but will have to take more responsibility in picking up or putting aside opportunities. At the end of the day, the overall picture could contemplate a more developed and politically mature region or, a persistently underdeveloped region with a few countries having been able and willing to progress.

(1) Conclusions of the VIIth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Luxembourg 30-31 May 2005) , published in the "EuroMed Report" series, edition No. 90, 1 June 2005.

(2) 10th Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Barcelona Summit Conclusions 27-28 November 2005, published in the "EuroMed Report" series, edition No. 92, 30 November 2005.

In the EU perception, the bolder economic challenge the ENP brings to bear, is coupled by the need to promote political and social reform in Southern domestic arenas. The ENP economic agenda is linked to reforms: the Action Plans the EU is presently already stipulating with its neighbours - in the event its' Southern Partners - contemplate a combination of development policies and economic as well as political reform. When it comes to political reform, today's mainstream thinking in the EU is that democratisation in the Southern Mediterranean countries cannot be imposed from outside, although it can be supported and stimulated from outside. Democracy has to come from within and, to that purpose it has to be fostered by domestic forces and internal values. In this perspective, these forces are expected to be able to integrate the masses and reflect their consensus and support. The few western-minded liberals in the Arab world cannot attract such consensus nor can they represent the masses of a modern democracy. Such masses can only be integrated by moderate Islamic parties having accepted the rules of the democratic game. In general, within the EU there is a growing feeling that these moderate parties are there and that next endeavour in the EMP (and elsewhere in the wider Middle Eastern and North African region) is to open a political dialogue with them. The Commission seems to believe the same.<sup>(3)</sup>

As the EMP remains fundamentally an intergovernmental framework, EU openings towards the Islamic parties will face strong opposition by the Partners' governments. How to reach out to civil societies, associations, NGOs, parties and groups in the Southern Mediterranean remains an unsolved problem as of today. The EMP's significant transactions among Northern and Southern civil societies (besides the intergovernmental relations it is already assuring) are perhaps the most important condition for making the new EU platform work. The Anna Lindh Foundation is a first good step - although the fact that its decisions are definitely in the hands of the 35 EMP governments is not auguring well.

Thus, the key point regards the EU's ability to open a dialogue not only with governments but with civil societies as well. Will this platform work? The first Barcelona's years - particularly in the 1990s - have seen the EU - as well as the United States - mostly concerned by the upsurge of violent opposition from radical Islamic parties. This swayed the Europeans to privilege the stability of the authoritarian regimes prevailing in the South with respect to democracy. The motto was "One man, one vote, one time", inspired by the comment of an American official on the outcome of the 1991 Algerian elections and the FIS victory. Ever since perceptions have changed. Today, the EU could well be able to privilege democratic change over stability. This will not be easy though. It is likely that next ten years will be needed to set out nothing more than the sheer conditions for

more flexible and trusting relations to be set among EMP Partners.

These difficulties may be multiplied by the general political conditions in which the new ten-year cooperation, wished for by the EMP Partners, is unfolding. Presently, Euro-Mediterranean relations are included in a difficult political framework, essentially because of the uninterrupted crisis in Iraq and the strong tensions it triggers in the United States-Arab World-Europe triangle. The course of the Palestinian crisis after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza is giving raise to hopes, yet what its evolution will actually be looks very uncertain and there are little motives for optimism. Most importantly, the US policy of democracy promotion - of which the military intervention in Iraq is part - has stirred up strong opposition in the Arab and Muslim world, both in undemocratic and democratic quarters. Finally, the EU is weakened politically by its inability to master its enlargement to East Europe and, at the same time, its institutional and political deepening. These conditions should not be underestimated, as much as should not had been so the worsening of Palestinian-Israeli relations when in 1995 the EMP was established.

The EMP, however, is working. This is most definitely an asset. As marginal as it may be with respect to the grand trends we have just mentioned, it may help the Euro-Mediterranean countries to overcome ongoing hardships and get to a robust framework of regional cooperation. ■

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(3) See Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A Work Programme to Meet the Challenges of the Next Five Years, published in the "EuroMed Report" series, edition No. 89, 14 April 2005. In this text the Commission says that it is important "to strive towards common perceptions of the challenges of democratisation, including the role of democratic Islamic political movements in national polities".

### THE BARCELONA PROCESS: A SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

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From its very beginning the European Union had a strong Mediterranean dimension. However, the exigencies of the Cold War overshadowed regional specificity by focusing almost exclusively on Central and Eastern Europe. Security in the Mediterranean was thus largely seen, during this period, as a part of the overall East-West confrontation, a fact reflected by the Mediterranean region being portrayed as Europe's 'Southern Flank'. At present, this period of bipolarity is way behind us. Yet, the recent set backs in the Middle East Peace Process, the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq have shown that a stable and enduring peace in and around Europe is yet to be achieved. In other words, considering the diverse problems in the Mediterranean, a stable and enduring peace is an ambitious goal.

As far as the EMP is concerned, this year it acknowledges ten years of its existence. But, anniversaries are also a time for reassessment. What has the EMP been able to achieve in terms of its stated goals and purposes? The EMP includes 25 member states of the European Union and 10 partners in the southern neighborhood. It was predicated upon the premise of tackling the southern threat. In specific, the 'Southern flank' was widely considered as an unstable place permeated with economic and political imbalances. Europeans, thus, became convinced that this could be addressed by the Euro-Med Partnership initiative, which essentially proposed three inter-related strategic objectives: the first, through political and security instruments, aims to establish a peaceful and stable neighbour; the second, through economic instruments, aims to establish market economies and free trade zones; and the third and final objective, through long-term instruments, aspires to bridge the cultural gap between the two neighbouring entities<sup>(1)</sup>.

However, a decade later one must acknowledge the fact that the current EMP framework apparently suffers from its own limitations and insufficiencies. Indeed, not only the recurrent set-backs in the Middle East Peace Process and the War-on-Terrorism seriously impeded the first and second levels of 'hard security' objectives, but it is also increasingly apparent that economic aid granted to the southern neighbours have mainly ended up supporting the chains of state-led and even 'protected corruption'. Ironically, this has empowered the very structures- political and economic -that the EMP originally sought to transform in the last decade.

To illustrate, the following problems impede the Euro-Med Partnership initiative:

- With regard to bilateral relations, it is increasingly evident that the Euro-Med Partnership, in effect, lacks the essential qualities of partnership although the stated aim is partnership. What is evident is old gospel; according to Europe 'what is good in the eyes of Europe must be good for the Southern "partners"' while according to the South, 'European ideas of what is good for "us" harks back to another colonization effort'. This seriously undermines the quality of the partnership and makes progress for both sides rather frustrating. In her article "Assessing 10 years of the EMP: Conceptions of the Barcelona Process" Emily Landau proposes that discussions should be held within the regional framework thus encompassing different expectations that all sides have from the partnership goals<sup>(2)</sup>. She further elaborates that these discussions need to move beyond the Northern expectations from the South, and Southern reactions to the North's agenda, to become a discussion of the common project that all sides have an interest in maintaining<sup>(3)</sup>.
- EMP has a negative image in the Southern Mediterranean countries, for example, it plays a very passive role in the development of political processes in the region. Seen from the "southern" side of the Mediterranean, the European project was positively ambitious in its aims and scopes, but quite poorly backed by effective political will and by clear executive tools. This pitfall has surely more to do with Europe itself. Today's European Union, with its 25 member states, is crippled by bureaucratic weight that

(1) In her article 'What Next?' Christian Hanlet stated 'three areas of cooperation-politics, security, economy and social welfare, and culture and civil society-provide instruments for transformation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. She also explained that financial aid is given through MEDA (measures d'assistance / support measures) programs, and credits and grants are provided by the European Investment Bank, altogether amounting to nearly three billion euros annually. These funds are provided for the economic and administrative modernization of Arab societies, a stronger trans-Mediterranean understanding, and ultimately for a contribution to finding solutions to conflicts in the region, especially the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. For more see Christian Hanlet, 'What Next?' in "Ten Years of the Barcelona Process", Bitterlemons-International, Edition 42, Volume 3-November 24, 2005

(2) Emily Landau, "Assessing 10 years of the EMP: Conceptions of the Barcelona Process", January 2005 [http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publi\\_artigo.asp?cod\\_artigo=113734](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publi_artigo.asp?cod_artigo=113734)

(3) Ibid.

translates into diplomatic anemia. Due not only to its internal deliberation procedures, but also because it has to constantly arbitrate among priorities, Brussels' foreign policy is for the time being doomed to remain that of the minimal consensus possible and of the lowest common denominator.

- EMP in particular and the Euro-Arab relationship in general are victims of the Transatlantic relationship. Finding itself confined by the US as well as by local actors to the role of 'payer not player' in the realm of peace designs, Europe also feels the limitation of its financial power when it comes to political demands, and will probably now have to rediscover the need and use of more balanced carrots and sticks. This is where Europe has to acknowledge another kind of limitation, one pertaining to its partners' political culture: despite and behind the lip service paid to the necessity of boosting an active European diplomacy in order to counterbalance American unilateral policies, Middle Eastern political as well as economic elites are much more attracted-for reasons good or bad-to the lights of Washington, DC, than to the labyrinths of the Brussels bureaucracy<sup>(4)</sup>.
- Another problem is an operational one. Lack of institutional cooperation (NATO, OSCE, etc.) and the lack of coherence in the European agenda make it difficult to come to a common understanding of the purpose and goals of the partnership for both Northern and Southern members.

### What Can Be Done?

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, I think we need to keep ourselves optimistic and think positively about the future of EMP's involvement in the region. Thus, how can we move forward in this regard, or where do we go from here is a crucial question to be addressed. In this regard, the European Union should take political reform in the southern Mediterranean more seriously. In specific, in the sphere of political reforms the European Union lacks an effective approach. As mentioned earlier, aid and efforts in this sphere have only empowered current structures of governance. What are sorely needed are good governance and a just implementation of the rule of law whereupon confidence is built in the Arab region. The economic pay-off of such confidence would increase investments in the region. Investments in turn, create job opportunities and thus pose prospects for the development of a healthy economy as well as the well-being of citizens of the region. For Europe, this means a limit on population movements for better job opportunities in Europe.

In terms of political aspirations, it is evident that the region's public is aware of and seek to secure

their right to choose their government representatives democratically. Cases in point are the latest elections and efforts for political reformation in Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan. Taking cue, the European Union should, through its aid programs, support particularly those Arab partners working intensively and seriously toward reforms. To achieve optimal results with limited resources, bilateral and multilateral aid programs should be coordinated and grouped. In this context, cooperation could also be linked with the United States, whose interests in this perspective are similar. The aim is not to destabilize Arab states through regime change, but rather to develop and consolidate the economy, society, rule of law and political participation in the region. Europe should prove its seriousness by calling for political reforms, supporting them, and not abandoning the Arab reformers midway or when it suits the economic climate.

Subsequently, I suggest three schemes as a vehicle for this attempt to enhance the conceptual and operational clarity of the EMP:

#### - Optimism

The challenges that EMP faces in the Mediterranean countries are very different, but by no means less difficult and complex than those the EU faced at the beginning of its cooperative relationship with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the transformation of the adversarial relationship that existed during the Cold War into the far-reaching integration of countries in that region into the EU structures is remarkable by any standards.

#### - Public Diplomacy

To achieve the same outcome in the Mediterranean, I believe we must start with a joint Public-Diplomacy effort that provides a better understanding of EMP's current policies; increase awareness of the positive elements that partnership with Europe can offer; achieve a better mutual understanding and dispel any misconceptions

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(4) Arguably, the differing EU-US approaches mainly have an advantageous effect. Most importantly, they send out the message to the region that there is no transatlantic anti-Arab or anti-Muslim conspiracy or coalition. While the EU-US divergence might be perceived by some as a severe crisis in transatlantic relations, it is also an opportunity. After all, it raises questions and encourages actors from the region to challenge and overcome stereotypes dominant about the West in public discourse. It also provides opportunities for Americans and Europeans to come in with their own explanations and World views. Not least, this plurality of agents might foster security orders and hence be helpful for the people in the region, as it means more money for programmes and more attention to the problems of the Middle East. Moreover, the US and the EU engagement reduce the dependency of local activists on a single external actor.

about EMP among the general public in the Southern Mediterranean countries.

### - Creating Incentives

Within this context, I think we should see an increase in current deliberations in moving from Partnership to Membership. In this regard, we can start with enhancing ownership of Mediterranean countries and expanding partnership to other countries like Syria, Libya, Lebanon and even Sudan, Iraq and the Palestinian Authority.

### Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, as part of the re-evaluation of the Barcelona Process, and in light of some nascent indications of a somewhat improved atmosphere, the time is ripe to take stock of European goals, and initiate more focused North-South dialogue on the derivative core concepts of the partnership. The Barcelona process still stands as an essential framework for dialogue between the two banks of the Mediterranean. It is indisputable for all European member states that security in Europe is indivisible from security in their southern flank. Yet, in order to cope with emerging security threats from the 'southern flank', stronger and a short-term involvement from the European partners is certainly required. In other words, we need to witness a fundamental reorientation of the EMP framework in a more pragmatic manner. The partnership must seek short term solutions in order to counter the most obvious threats, including terrorism and migration. However, encouraging a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a sovereign and united Iraq, and a more rational War on terrorism certainly remain number one concerns to be addressed. In this respect, all three issues have proved that a stable and conflict-free Mediterranean is yet to be achieved. ■



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### THE MEDITERRANEAN: ONE LAST OPPORTUNITY

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One of the most remarkable features of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit, celebrated on the 28th November in Barcelona, was the marked asymmetry in the presence of leaders of the 35 countries which participate in the Partnership. While the European Union was represented at the highest level, no top leader from any Arab country, (with the sole exception of Palestine), attended the Summit. The image of the Summit was surprising because of its unbalance. Not only because the attendance of Europeans has increased from 15 to 25 in relation to the first Summit (1995) - incorporating two of the countries that at the time were part of the Partnership's southern partners; Cyprus and Malta - but also because, among the ten countries that are still considered "partners", only Turkey was represented by its most relevant political figure, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. None of the other nine countries (eight Arab countries and Israel) were represented by their Head of State or their most relevant institutional figure. The causes of the absences were diverse. In some cases, they were due to domestic political conjunctures which discouraged travelling to Barcelona. Subsequently the Summit, with the prospect of going down in the history of relations between Europe and its southern neighbours, ended up devaluated by absences. We should therefore seriously reflect on the meaning of such key absences.

Before issuing conclusions about the non-attendances, some attention should be paid to the attendances and to the contents of the Summit, which also have an important and positive meaning. The fact that the main European political leaders in power travelled to Barcelona - amongst them, the most significant are those of the "new Europe"- seems to indicate that the European Union is much more interested on what happens in its southern area than is generally said. This fact undoubtedly constitutes one of the most positive outcomes of the Summit. During the stocktaking of these ten years of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the lack of political involvement by its European partners has been highlighted as during the last decade, they have been concentrating most of their political energy and resources to the enlargement towards the East. However, the image of the Summit encourages thinking about the existence of a renovated conscience and about the importance of the challenges that the European Union has to face in the Mediterranean area. The subjects upon which the Summit focused, show the reasons for this interest: terrorism and the management of migratory flows, two issues of great transcendence for European public opinions. Both issues occupy a central position in

the conclusions of the Summit - in the case of terrorism, with the adoption of a common Code of Conduct - which responds to an important evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. Thus, we are facing one of the most interesting novelties for the future of the Barcelona Process as the best way to involve all Europeans in the evolution of the Partnership (not only southern Europeans) is to link it to their interests, their security, and the management of subjects which are relevant for their national agenda.

In the light of these priorities, some Arab absences are even more surprising. In fact, terrorism, as much as the management of migrations, are no longer exclusively EU preoccupations. In comparison with the dominant ideas in 1995, the conviction that both challenges are common prevails and claims for shared answers. Only this way the reach of an agreement on a subject as difficult as the adoption of a Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism can be understood; an agreement in which the Summit has managed to overcome part of the obstacles that block this debate at the United Nations General Assembly. It is true that an agreement about the doctrinal definition of terrorism has not been possible; however, the Code entails a very important step in the adoption of a common position. It implies the rejection of any attempt to legitimize terror because of religious or national reasons, and it expresses the determination of the 35 countries in the necessary cooperation for fighting against terrorists and their accomplices. The fact that terrorism has indiscriminately hit Casablanca, Madrid, Sharm el Sheik, London, Istanbul or Amman, has contributed to this rapprochement of positions, which is one of the most encouraging current facts in the Euro-Mediterranean space. Especially when this agreement on the Code coincides with a police cooperation against the terrorism of Al Qaeda including the United States, the European Union, all the countries of the Euro-Med and other Arab governments. The difficulties appeared when having to deal with this topic in the Middle East, where the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel makes it difficult to reach an agreement about the condemnation of terrorism in the region. Bearing in mind the pre-electoral political convulsion that Israel is going through, there was no reason to expect novelties in its positions.

Something similar occurs with migrations, where the Summit managed to overcome the North/South logics that encapsulated them ten years ago and that fed a dynamic of criticism and incomprehension between North African countries and the European Union. The irruption of powerful migratory flows coming from sub-Saharan Africa has transformed reality. Morocco, Algeria, Libya and other southern countries have become transit and even destination places for immigrants. This

change in the nature of the flows has generated common preoccupations which also raise the need for shared answers. In this sense, the fact that the management of migratory policies occupies a first row position in the Five Year Work Programme, adopted during the Summit, is important. It is the first time that, in a document adopted at the highest level, a specific chapter is open to discuss on Migrations, Social Integration, Justice and Security, understood as “issues of common interest in the Partnership”. It is also the first time that a document on the Barcelona Process makes a clear distinction between the “promoting legal migration opportunities” and the need to “reduce significantly the level of illegal migration”. Furthermore, if we take into consideration the preoccupation for promoting co-development, through a better use of the immigrants’ remittances and the call for assisting the human dimension of migrations, we can conclude that we are facing a discourse full of suggestions. A discourse more readably able to transform human movements in the Mediterranean area into an opportunity for development, mutual knowledge and dialogue. The commitment to call for a ministerial meeting about this subject and the support offered to the Spanish proposal of celebrating a Euro-African conference to address the future of migrations from an intercontinental perspective, constitute a further two positive facts in the same direction.

The tensions that the Summit has experienced in its preparation and development have not allowed a more ambitious deployment of the new Neighbourhood Policy with which the European Union intends to address its relations with the countries placed at the East and South of its borders. However, both the Statement of the British Presidency and the Work Programme, count on new political indications with regard to 1995. There is an ascent on the need of deepening economic, social and political reforms much more clearly than in 1995 and that will inspire the Neighbourhood Policy and its Action Plans. It can even be affirmed, that the Summit has modified the traditional equation between stability, development and democratisation and that it has given pre-eminence to reforms about the status quo. There exists a growing conviction, in Europe, about the need of gradual but effective changes in the Arab world, in order to prevent social crisis and political ruptures which could entail populist or Islamist groups to get to power and open a phase of deep instability in the region. The situation which some countries are going through, particularly Egypt, expresses a will of participation and change in Arab societies that can not only be attributed to North American pressure. The references to the processes of democratisation that includes the Action Plan, with specific proposals designed for guaranteeing freer and more transparent electoral processes is important. It is also important for the ascent of Human Rights and Freedom of Expression. In 1995, Europe opted for a clear support to Arab regimes independently of their political nature. Now, it seems to have reached the conclusion

that the status quo is no longer a guarantee of stability and that a controlled risk of changes is more preferable, even if these changes may imply the participation of the most moderate expressions of political Islamism in Parliaments and in some governments too. The main conditionality that will go with the Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans should be understood from this perspective. We will see how the development of this Neighbourhood Policy - a bilateral strategy, designed to move forward at different rhythms, depending on the availability of the concerned countries - is combined with keeping the regional and multilateral perspective that implies the Barcelona Process. The ratification of the integrally multilateral philosophy of the Partnership that took place at the Summit - in the Work Programme and in the Chairman’s Statement - is addressed to answer these preoccupations.

The Five Year Work Programme adopted in Barcelona does not clearly define the “road map” that should lead the region to the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area previewed by the Barcelona Process. This one is an important omission considering that we are currently at five years from the 2010 deadline. However, the Summit also provided some important novelties, by explicitly positioning itself in favour of a progressive liberalisation of agricultural exchanges and of services, for the first time. We will have to see, now, how to incorporate this offer to the reform of the EU Agricultural Policy.

On the other hand, southern countries will have to show that they are in the position of benefiting from this liberalisation. The opening of markets will only be beneficial if the third countries’ economies continue economic reforms. Several studies warn that a broader liberalisation of commercial exchanges without higher competitiveness could potentially be counterproductive. Reforms are definitely necessary if we want the creation of a free trade area to become a win-win solution, capable of contributing to the creation of 34 million employments which will be necessary, in the next 20 years, in order to face the incorporation of so many other youths to the labour market.

The Barcelona Summit has ratified the validity of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in a moment in which other strategies intend to have incidence in the region, mainly, the Broader Middle East Initiative promoted by the United States. The European Union has reaffirmed its support to a gradual and inclusive change, which can be appropriated by those who, from Arab societies, think of a modernizing task. But the Summit has also been useful to become conscious of the size and urgency of the task. The next five years will be decisive. They will indicate if the possibility of a deeper regional integration can be confirmed, which can have different speeds depending on the countries, or which can show the limits of the Process and the dangers of a political involution and

of an identified withdrawal. The European Union seems to be conscious of those dangers and strongly supports another opportunity to the Barcelona Process, which can be the last opportunity. This is the chance that should be presented to its main leaders in the Summit. We still have to see if this conscience is the same one in the Arab countries and to check if the absences were circumstantial or had a higher importance. Sometimes it seems like Arab leaders are not conscious neither of the demands existing in their own countries, nor of the urgent challenges that globalisation poses them. It seems as if they were not conscious of the fact that the terms on which history walks have extraordinarily accelerated, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of China and India as new economic powers. We also have to check which interpretation the Bush Administration will give to the Barcelona Summit. The Bush Administration would make a mistake if it arrived at the conclusion that the Summit has been a failure and that only its ideas can generate a virtuous circle in North Africa and the Middle East. The limits of its strategy are even more evident, as much as its credibility problems have arisen since the Iraq war started. A more sensible interpretation should bring them to look for more complicity with the European Union in order to face the challenges of the Mediterranean and the Arab world. ■

#### About ConflictINFOCUS:

Conflict In Focus is a bi-monthly online bulletin designed to provide busy readers in the EMP policy community and interested general public with a concise and regular update on the current state-of-affairs of the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict in the Middle East. Conflict in Focus is compiled by RCCP/IAI, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our software (CCP).

Conflict in Focus alerts readers to situations where, in the near future, there is a particular risk of new or significantly escalated conflict. In specific, the newsletter is divided into three sections. The first section includes accounts of and comments on EU developments and policies during the previous two months in the field of conflict prevention.

In its second section, Conflict in Focus summarizes recent developments in a conflict analysis perspective, using our CCP model of analysis, where the overall situation in each case has significantly deteriorated.

The third and final section aims at providing experts and researchers from the Partnership with a forum for common work and collaboration. Toward this end, the newsletter will host, in each issue, two short articles, one by a European scholar and the other by a Middle Eastern one on conflict prevention in the Middle East, with the final aim of provoking a debate on such sensitive subject.

We welcome your feedback at [info@rccp-jid.org](mailto:info@rccp-jid.org)