



DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
STRANDGADE 56 • 1401 COPENHAGEN K • DENMARK  
+ 45 32 69 87 87 • diis@diis.dk • www.diis.dk

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COOPERATION OR DEMOCRATISATION?  
THE EU'S CONFLICTING MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY  
DISCOURSES

Dr. Helle Malmvig

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Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS

Strandgade 56, DK - 1401 Copenhagen, Denmark

Ph: +45 32 69 87 87

Fax: +45 32 69 87 00

E-mails: [diis@diis.dk](mailto:diis@diis.dk)

Web: [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

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# Contents

Abstract .....	1
Introduction.....	2
The Launch and Logic of the Barcelona Process.....	4
Studying Security Discourses .....	7
Conclusion .....	22
Literature .....	24
Defence and Security Studies at DIIS.....	27
Review Panel.....	28
More Information .....	29



## **Abstract**

This paper argues that the EU's strategy towards the Southern Mediterranean states has been marked by a simultaneous presence of two conflicting and mutually incompatible security discourses. Each of these discourses entail different conceptualisations of how security is to be achieved, who is the referent object of security, and which type of relationship exists between Self/the EU and Other/the Southern Mediterranean. This, the paper suggests, has resulted in an uneasy and contradictory EU policy toward the region, while at the same time causing suspicion and mistrust on part of the Mediterranean states.

## Introduction

After several years of talk of the need to reinvigorate the Barcelona Process, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership now seems to have risen to the top of EU's foreign policy agenda. The fight against terrorism and the recent terror attack in Madrid have once again accentuated the importance of the Mediterranean and the Middle East for European security, and with the ascension of ten East and Central European states, the EU is increasingly focused on the need to enhance stability on its Southern periphery without holding out a promise of future membership.

In March 2003 the Commission launched a proposal for a New Neighbourhood policy (COM(2003)104 final). This policy is identified as a continuation of the Barcelona Process, but the document also suggests new measures to make the Partnership more effective; especially with respect to the goal of promoting democracy and human rights. In December 2003, a first draft to a Strategic Partnership with the Arab World was equally launched, partly as an effort to counter-weight the US Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Greater Middle East Initiative (D(2003) 10318).

The introduction of these many initiatives should also be seen against the backdrop of an increased Western attention to lack of development and democracy in the Arab World. The region's poor economic record, the regimes' authoritarian character, and the widespread violations of basic freedoms have been widely identified as sources of political instability, violence and radicalism. The Arab Human Development Report from 2002 has in particular gained a strong resonance in Western foreign policy documents (UNDP, 2002). The Report has been widely used as a powerful argument in favour of the need to promote political reforms and to formulate new strategies towards the region (see e.g. COM(2003) 294 final, D(2003) 10318, 7498/1/04, President Bush, 06.11.2003, William Burns, 12.11.03).<sup>1</sup>

Despite the "new" emphasis on the need for democratisation and human rights in the Mediterranean/Middle East, much of the basic logic and instruments of EU's new Neighbourhood Policy and Strategic Partnership initiative resemble the basic tenets of the EU's nearly ten year old Barcelona Process. This Process has, however, only been a very

<sup>1</sup> According to the latest Arab Human Development Report from 2003, more than one million copies of the report have been downloaded from off the internet, and Time magazine has cited it as one of the most important publications of 2002 (UNDP, 2003:1).

modest success, especially in terms of the goals of promoting democracy and human rights (see e.g. Youngs & Gillespie, 2002, Spencer, Jünnemann, 2004, COM (2003) 294 final).

Several studies have investigated the reasons behind the Barcelona Process's modest results (see especially Spencer, Biscop, 2003, Youngs & Gillespie, 2002, Jünnemann, 2004, Joffé, Ortega, 2003). However, discourse analysis has very rarely been used to analyse neither the EU's Mediterranean policies nor to account for the dilemmas and barriers which have marked the Process (for two notable exceptions see Holm, 2000, 2002, Pace, 2002). This paper will, however, suggest that discourse analysis can contribute to the existing literature in so far as it can provide an alternative understanding of how security threats and responses to these threats are constructed within the framework of EU's Mediterranean Partnership. Discourse analysis can in particular highlight the paradoxes and "taken for granted" character of discursive constructions; showing that the way in which identities, objects, subject and strategies are articulated have important consequences for how we perceive, manage and respond to the world.

More specifically, this paper will - by use of a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis - argue that the Barcelona Process' modest success in part can be seen as a result of the presence of two conflicting security discourses: a *liberal reform discourse* and a *cooperative security discourse*. The simultaneous presence and intermingling of these two discourses have meant, it will be argued, that the EU has wavered uneasily between different priorities and logics in its Mediterranean policy. This has given EU policies a somewhat schizophrenic character, while at the same time causing suspicions on part of Arab member states about the real intentions and goals of the EU in the region.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part will describe the security context within which the Barcelona Process was launched in 1995 and briefly account for the existing literatures' explanations for why the Process hitherto has not fared very well. The second part will outline the discursive approach that guides the analysis of this paper; defining the main elements and concepts used in the empirical analysis. The third part will delineate two distinct security discourses which have marked the EU's approach to the Mediterranean states within the framework of the Barcelona Process. In the final section it will be argued that the new EU initiatives - the Neighbourhood policy and the Strategic Partnership initiative - also are marked by the simultaneous presence of these two discourses.

# The Launch and Logic of the Barcelona Process

With the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, Western Europe became unlocked from the security environment of the Cold War era, and the EU became increasingly focussed on the unstable conditions in its immediate neighbourhood in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The fragile economic and political structures in the many states surrounding the borders of the EU were seen as potential sources of unrest or even as sources of so-called soft security threats. These new security challenges, it was believed, could – and should - not be countered by traditional power politics and military means, but called instead for a more comprehensive and liberal approach to security (see e.g. Biscop, 2003, Jünnemann, 2004, Spencer, 1998).

The EU's main focus was obviously on East and Central Europe, where the EU held out the promise of future membership in exchange for extensive political and economic reforms. The Mediterranean, however, also drew increased attention. In particular the South European states were worried about the lack of political and social stability on the southern shores of the Mediterranean basin, which threatened to spur organised crime, migration, radical Islamism, and terror. Moreover, the South European states also feared that the EU's future eastern enlargement would divert resources and attention from the South.<sup>2</sup>

The launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995 marked the adoption of a comprehensive and long-term approach to security in the Mediterranean. The new security challenges facing the Union could, it was presumed, not be seen in isolation from the regional and domestic security problems of the Mediterranean states. Conflicts and lack of development in the Mediterranean region constituted shared security concerns. By enhancing security in the southern Mediterranean region, the security of the EU would also be enhanced. This conceptualisation of security's indivisibility was also expressed in the founding document of the Barcelona Process: "The participants express their conviction that the peace, stability and security of the Mediterranean region are a *common asset* which they pledge to promote and

<sup>2</sup> The launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should, hence, also be seen as a south European attempt to balance the Union's security agenda from an east-west to a north-south axis (Spencer, 1998: 1, Holm, 2000, 2002).



strengthen by all means at their disposal". The objective is to create a "common area of peace, stability, and shared prosperity" (*italics added*, Barcelona Declaration, 27-28/11/1995).

The Barcelona Process was, thus, set up as an extensive partnership programme based on cooperation and dialogue within three different baskets; a political and security partnership, an economic and financial partnership and a partnership within cultural and human affairs. Yet, in line with the EU's comprehensive conceptualisation of security, it was not only the obvious military and political cooperation within the first basket that was to increase security and stability. Rather it was the full range of socio-economic, cultural, ecological, military and political measures within all of the three baskets that were to contribute to the creation of a shared zone of peace, stability and prosperity (Biscop, 2003: 185).

From the very beginning, The Barcelona Process was, therefore, an ambitious project both in terms of its institutional set-up and its overarching aims. In evaluations of the Process' effectiveness and achievements, it is, however, rare that scholars question the institutional framework or the basic objectives of the Process. It is rather the Union's lack of will to use the full range of instruments within the three baskets which has been called into question. Studies on the Barcelona Process have in particular stressed the EU's reluctance to implement the human rights and democracy clauses of the Barcelona Declaration and the bilateral association agreements, and pointed to the fact that the EU has pursued a very soft and regime-friendly approach in terms of selection and support to NGOs and civil society organisations (Youngs & Gillespie, 2002: 57 Jünnemann, 2004). Moreover, several studies have questioned the EU's preoccupation with economic rather than with political liberalisation, while also stressing that the imposition of structural reforms and trade liberalisation mostly have been to the advantage of the EU (Cassarino, 1999, Gillespie & Youngs, 2002:52, Joffé, 1999).

When explaining this reluctance on part of the EU to push for democratisation and respect for basic human rights norms in the Mediterranean states, most studies tend to see this as a result of the security-driven character of the Barcelona Process itself: The EU has, it is often concluded, favoured security and regime stability in the short run, at the expense of the long-term goal of democratisation and proliferation of human rights norms. To a large extent the EU has prioritized cooperation on issues of illegal immigration, organised crime and terrorism, while also seeking to accommodate fears from the Southern Mediterranean states that the EU would impose its own political system and values on the Mediterranean states or

even engage in outright intervention. Moreover, the EU has also itself feared that too strong pressures for political reforms – e.g. in the form of punitive top-down conditionality - could lead to violent and troublesome transition processes, or result in Islamists taking over government power (see e.g. Spencer, 2002:14, Gillespie & Youngs, 2002, Jünnemann, 1998).

In a recent anthology on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), Jünnemann equally suggests that the EU's inconsistent policy and lack of will to push for real democratic reforms should be seen as a consequence of the predominance of security concerns. Although the EMP is based on the notion that democratisation and security are two sides of the same coin, in the nexus between democratisation and security, the EU has always favoured the prior goal of security, Jünnemann argues. This constitutes a structural deficit of the Barcelona Process, and this “deficit” has become even more outspoken in the aftermath of the terror attacks of September 11, since the Mediterranean governments have become necessary partners in the fight against terrorism. In short, when the EU has been forced to choose between security and democracy, it has chosen the former (Jünnemann, 2004:7).

This paper similarly argues that EU's policy in relation to the Mediterranean states has been marked by contradictions and inconsistencies. Yet these contradictions, it will be argued, should not merely be analysed in terms of a dilemma between security and democracy, where security always gains the upper hand, but rather as a result – and reproduction - of the fact that the EMP is based on two different and conflicting discourses on which type of threats the Union face, how security is to be achieved, and what the Mediterranean is.

Before turning to the empirical delineation of these discourses, the next section will briefly explain what is meant by an analysis of EU's Mediterranean security discourses and how such an analysis can be carried out.

# Studying Security Discourses

The paper approaches the EU's Mediterranean policy as a discursive practice, which constructs distinct conceptualisations of what the Mediterranean is in relation to the EU, which security challenges and problems that emanate from the Mediterranean, and how the Mediterranean should be managed and responded to as an object of such security policies. This means that in contrast to most studies on security and the EU's relationship with the Mediterranean states, EU policies are not viewed as "natural" responses to prior defined problems and threats, neither is the identity and interest of respectively the EU and the Mediterranean states treated as already given entities. In line with the Copenhagen School's conceptualisation of security, EU policies are instead seen as constitutive actions, which construct and define threats, identities, and interest (Wæver, 1995, see also Huysmans, 2000: 757).<sup>3</sup>

What is to be understood discourse? No unanimous definition exists, but discourse can in general be taken to denote an order that makes specific beings and practices intelligible, makes us who we are, what we do and think (see e.g. Milliken, 1999, George, 1994, Simons, 1995). More specifically, this paper proceeds along the Foucauldian definition, and hence understands discourse as a group of statements which govern the production of objects, concepts, subjects and strategies (Foucault, 1972).

While poststructuralist theories and discourse analysis have gained a relatively firm hold within the discipline of International Relations, different perceptions prevail in terms the basic aims and assumptions of discourse analysis (Neumann, 2001, Milliken, 1999, Åkerström, 2002). I will therefore briefly qualify how discourse and discourse analysis is understood within the context of this paper.

Albeit discourse analysis is concerned with language in a broad sense, discourse should not be conflated with mere speech, rhetoric, or ideology. The aim of the analysis of this paper is not

<sup>3</sup> As Wæver writes "security is a speech act, a discursive practice through which a condition of insecurity is identified, threats are pointed out, and an object of security is constructed[...] It is only from the moment when somebody – mostly the political elite – claims that something is threatened, that an issue becomes a question of security concern.[...] Naming an issue as a security problem has the effect of raising a specific challenge to a principled level[...] requiring emergency measures and justifying action outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Wæver, 1995)

to expose or unravel what rests underneath of discursive articulations, nor to investigate what kind of interest or motive may have guided the speech of a certain subject (Foucault, 1972). For instance, when it is noted in EU policy statements that the Mediterranean states are equal partners with whom the EU shares a rich history and cultural heritage, the point is not to disregard such articulations as manipulative constructions or simple rhetoric, which is only applied to hide e.g. realist interest and power politics. Articulations are analysed at the manifest rather than latent level. They are taken at face value and treated as performative actions, which bring objects, subjects and concepts into being (Foucault, 1972).

This also implies that discourses are not analysed in order to assess whether they accurately represent reality. In the context of this paper, the intention is, therefore, not to evaluate whether the EU's security discourses constitute true representations of the nature of security problems in the Mediterranean or whether they portray the identity of the Mediterranean states most accurately. Neither is the objective to engage in normative evaluations of present discourses, for instance by depicting the cooperative security discourse as politically or morally superior to the liberal reform discourse. The aim of the analysis is not to further a basis for policy recommendations, but rather to unravel the assumptions and different political consequences of discursive constructions.

Moreover, although this paper proceeds from the assumption that the world is socially constructed and always open to different articulations and temporary change, discourses are not be regarded as purposeful and subjective constructions, which simply can be revised in accordance with different actors' wishes or instrumental preferences. Discourse does not equal subjective perceptions or constructions of the mind, but are relatively rule-bounded orders that set the conditions of possibility for being and knowledge. Discourses are therefore also relatively difficult to change (Foucault, 1984b, 1972, see also Malmvig, 2002: 13ff).

While discourse analysis is based on text-readings, text is not to be understood in a narrow sense as e.g. formal policy declarations, commentaries or speeches. Maps, architecture or movies, for instance, are also discursive articulations that produce discursive events (see e.g. Der Derian, 1992, 1994, Foucault, 1977, Neumann, 1996). However, the analysis of this paper will be limited to secondary literature and official documents and policy statements in the form of e.g. Council Conclusions, strategic papers of the Commission and the High Representative, and Euro-Mediterranean agreements from 1995 until present.

The analysis of these documents will be guided by three analytical questions which serve to distinguish and differentiate the two security discourses from one another. In accordance with

the Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse these questions focus on the articulation of strategies, of objects, and of subjects: 1) How are security threats articulated and how are these to be countered? 2) Whose security and interest is to be protected? 3) How is the relational identity between the EU and the Mediterranean states construed?

### **Mediterranean Security Discourses**

Based on the theoretical discussion above, the following sections will show how the EU's Mediterranean policy is founded on two conflicting security discourses, and how the simultaneous presence and intermingling of these two discourses partly can account for the Barcelona Process' modest results and the EU's contradictory approach to the Mediterranean states. It will firstly proceed with the analysis of the "cooperative security discourse".

### **Security through Cooperation**

How are threats articulated within the cooperative security discourse, and how are they supposed to be tackled? Most EU documents seldom refer to threats, but rather invoke the notion of (security) challenges. Moreover, the threats identified are depicted as *common* Euro-Mediterranean challenges, taking the form of terrorism, radicalism, WMD, organised crime, illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Characteristically, the security problems identified are, hence, not linked to any particular groups or countries. There are apparently no actors or subjects behind these phenomena who pose a threat to the EU/the Mediterranean – e.g. terrorists, Islamic extremists or trans-national criminals - but rather a list of anonymous concepts and '-isms' that are to be countered by concerted action and cooperation:

“The EU will identify common ground on security issues aiming at establishing a common region of peace and stability [...] it will reinforce cooperation against global challenges to security such as terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking.” (Common strategy, 2000)

To tackle these challenges, dialogue and cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean partners should be strengthened, it is repeatedly emphasised. Furthering cooperation and enhancing a common understanding of security issues will not only aid to confront shared problems, but also constitute a means to attain the long-term goal of creating a shared zone of stability and peace (see e.g. Third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers: Chairman's formal conclusions, Stuttgart 15-16/4/1999; 2000/456/CFSP; 9890/03 (Presse 151), 2003).

It is, however, left rather ambiguous which states that are to make up the members of this common zone of peace. At times it seems as if the objective is to build an all-encompassing Euro-Mediterranean area, where the EU and the Mediterranean states supposedly merge into *one* security community. At others, it appears if the aim is to push for further integration among the (Southern) Mediterranean states alone, hereby emulating the EU's own integration process. For instance, in the Barcelona Declaration it is stated that the EU "stress[es] the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and [is] moved by the will to give *their* future relations a new dimension, based on comprehensive cooperation and solidarity" (italics added, Barcelona Declaration, 1995) whereas in the EU's Common Strategy it is stated that "the EU intends to strengthen together with its Mediterranean partners cooperative security in the region" without stipulating whether this region is the (South) Mediterranean or the Euro-Mediterranean region.<sup>4</sup>

The emphasis placed on the development of common security understandings, on dialogue and cooperation echoes, as it is often stressed, Karl Deutsch's concept of security community (Deutsch et al, 1957, see also Adler & Crawford: 9, Jünnemann, 2004: 5). According to Deutsch a security community is an integrated region comprised of sovereign states in which relations are marked by expectations that disputes will be settled peacefully and where its members states possess a mutual identity, a common interpretation of reality and a set of shared values (Deutsch et al. 1957:5).<sup>5</sup> However, within the 'cooperative security discourse' it is not the presence of shared values and "we-feelings" which are taken to constitute the basis for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and the furthering of a common area of peace and

<sup>4</sup> Further confusion is added since the concept of the Mediterranean in itself is rather elusive. As Michelle Pace has demonstrated several conceptualisations of the Mediterranean can be detected from EU documents (Pace, 2002). Ulla Holm has similarly argued that the Mediterranean is a European and in particular a French construction, which derives from France's colonial past. Ulla Holm, however, also emphasises that the Mediterranean is not only portrayed in terms of threats and conflicts, but references are also made to a shared civilisational past (Holm, 2002, 2004). Moreover, the invocation of a Mediterranean region can also be seen as an attempt to distinguish this region from the negative and conflict-ridden connotations of the Middle East; The Mediterranean being associated with summer holidays, healthy food, and beautiful beaches

<sup>5</sup> In the theoretical debate on security communities and cooperative security - which has gained a strong revival in the aftermath of Cold War- scholars, however, disagree as to whether cooperative security demands that the participating states from the outset share the same values and political systems - values and identity being preconditions for community building - or whether cooperative security can evolve between different types of states. For the latter point see Mihalka 2001, Adler & Crawford, 2002, for the former see Cohen, 2001.

stability. On the contrary, it is often stressed that the partnership is founded on respect for religious, political and cultural particularities of the member states. Instead, it is the presence of common security challenges, which are taken to unite the EU and the Mediterranean in a common endeavour. The presence of common threats rather than a common identity necessitates and encourages cooperation, and can possibly lead to the formation of a security community.

Moving to the second question of the referent object of security, it is presumed – in accordance with the argument above - that the security of both the EU and the Mediterranean states will be enhanced through political, economic and cultural cooperation. Both “communities” appear to constitute equal referents of security – or even to constitute one collective referent (the Mediterranean) - to be protected from threats of terrorism, WMD, and organised crime. The EU and the Mediterranean states have a mutual interest in cooperation, because they seemingly face common challenges:

“Stability in the Mediterranean region requires a comprehensive and balanced approach in order to address common security concern and strengthen cooperation (Stuttgart, 1999)

“Aware that the new political, economic and social issues on both sides of the Mediterranean constitute common challenges” (see Barcelona Declaration, 1995).

The implication of this construction is obviously that any differences in perceptions of interest or in power between the EU and the Mediterranean states are evaded. The partnership is inscribed as a mutually beneficial process, where both partners are equally committed and enthusiastic: “The discussions have shown that the Partnership is solid and lasting. All members remain fully committed to all its objectives” (Third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers: Chairman’s formal conclusions, Stuttgart 15-16/4/1999).<sup>6</sup> In this sense,

<sup>6</sup> Conflicts and divergence in perceptions and interests do, however, appear implicitly. For instance, the references to the need to “promote understanding between them [the partners] and improve their perceptions of each other” (Barcelona Declaration, 1995) indicates that this goal - understanding and shared perceptions – has yet to be achieved, and thus that there does exist a sense of conflict and mistrust between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

security is constructed as indivisible across the two sides of Mediterranean basin. The two sides presumably share security perceptions, agendas and prioritizations, at least to the extent as to make cooperation possible and mutually advantageous.

In line with this understanding of common concerns and equal benefits, the identity ascribed to the Southern Mediterranean region and its position vis-à-vis the EU can be seen as a curious example of a Self-Other relationship. As it has been argued by several scholars, the constitution of an Other can take many forms. The Other does not necessarily have to take the shape of an inferior, backward, or even threatening identity as within Edward Said's seminal study on the West and the Orient (Said, 1978). The Other can also be constituted as equal or even superior to a (national) Self, it can be located in a different time, and it can, for instance, be constituted as one's own historical past.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between Self and Other can accordingly also be marked by enmity or amity, by admiration or indifference. The Self can identify with the Other or even submit to the Other (see Neumann, 1996, 1993, Campbell, 1998, Hansen, 1998, Todorov, 1992). In short, analysing constitutions of Self-Other relations have to include more nuances and dimensions than entailed by the notion of a radical Other.

Within the cooperative security discourse, the Mediterranean partners are indeed articulated as different from Europe/the EU, and they are, in fact, explicitly named as an Other. Yet, this Other is not constituted as backward or inferior, neither as a threat which is to be combated or transformed. The relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean is rather articulated as a partnership based on equality and respect; free from notions of superiority/inferiority. It is, hence, not a radical Other, but what could be called an equal Other, which is invoked: "The ultimate goal of the dialogue should not be to change the Other, but rather to live peacefully with the Other" "Conscious that the values of dialogue, tolerance and respect for the Other [...] constitute an important factor in bringing closer together cultures and civilisations" (9890/03 (Presse 151)). The partnership is based on "due regard for the characteristics, values and distinguishing features peculiar to each" (Barcelona Declaration, 1995). Each people "has its own values, customs, language and beliefs", but these differences are not sources of enmity or conflict, but of enrichment (9890/03 (Presse 151): 13).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Post War Germany has, in her efforts to come to terms with Nazism and the two world wars, constituted its own previous past as the main threat to present Germany that has to be prevented from reappearing (see Wæver, 1990, 1992, Hansen, 1998).



These presumptions of the equality of the Other and the possibility of mutual enrichment are further legitimised by references to a shared Mediterranean past, in which “our” different cultures and religions were born: “The Mediterranean region is the birth place of several great civilisations of the history of the world in which originated the three monotheistic religions” (9890/03 (Presse 151), see also Holm, 2004). By invoking this common past, the Other, although articulated as different, is at the same time situated very close to the Self (Europe). The shared Mediterranean past becomes a type of “mother-figure”, which has given birth to equally grand and civilised children. Now as adults, the “siblings” have to remember their common roots. They are to be brought closer together and learn from one another, yet to respect each other’s autonomy and difference.

The emphasis placed on difference, autonomy and respect also has a political-judicial dimension. In the Barcelona Declaration it is, for instance, stated in several paragraphs that the sovereign equality of the partners shall be respected and that the partners agree to refrain from any direct or indirect intervention in the internal affairs of another partner (Barcelona Declaration, 1995). Each partner, it is underlined, has a right “to choose and freely develop its own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system.” In other words, the Mediterranean states are not potential objects of intervention that are to be changed in accordance with European values and political systems. The partnership is based on freedom and equality, where neither party can – or wishes to - impose its norms and ideas upon the other.

Summing up, within the cooperative security discourse, threats are articulated as common concerns that face both partners equally and which both partners have a mutual interest in combating. To tackle common challenges it is necessary to cooperate, hereby also furthering the gradual establishment of a security community. Security cooperation is based on the presumption that security is indivisible and shared, but also on the equality and respect for differences in the identity of the two partners. The Mediterranean states and the EU have common historical roots, but they each possess their own distinctive values, religions, and political systems that are to be respected and guarded from attempts of intervention or impositions from the outside.

Within the liberal reform discourse, which I will turn to next, the relationship between Mediterranean states and EU, the articulations of threats and how they are to be handled are, however, constructed in very different - or even opposing - terms.

## Security Through Liberal Reforms

On the surface, the security threats of the “liberal reform discourse” can be said to resemble those of the “cooperative security discourse”. Thus, terrorism, radicalism, migration and organised crime still figure as important security challenges, but these threats are seen as deriving from the deeper political and social problems of the Mediterranean region. The absence of democracy, basic freedoms and economic growth are identified as the root causes of the instability and violence marking the region. Lack of economic opportunities and authoritarianism creates a dangerous cocktail that fuels political extremism and domestic violence. This, in turn, creates an unstable and volatile region close to the European border: “Authoritarianism and poor economic and social performance favour political marginalisation and provide fuel for radical movements and violence” (COM(2003) 294 final). “The Mediterranean region continues to be faced with political, economic, judicial, ecological and social challenges [that] are to be overcome” (2000/458/CFSP).

Thus in contrast to the “cooperative security discourse”, a sharp boundary is drawn between the Mediterranean region and Europe. The Mediterranean is explicitly defined as a troubled and unstable space, which is of “strategic importance to the EU” and from where threats to Europe originate: “The Ministers expressed also their concern and eagerness to confront violence and hatred by addressing the very causes of violence, terrorism and dehumanisation in the Mediterranean” (9890/03 (Presse 151), 2000/458/CFSP, see also Pace, 2002:203-5). Much emphasis is, as noted, placed on the underlying causes of these threats. While terrorism, extremism and illegal immigration are constituted as immediate security concerns to Europe, it is the authoritarian character of the incumbent regimes and the lack of economic growth that is seen as the real root causes of these threats. In short, the nature of the political and economic systems of the Mediterranean are implicitly defined as security challenges to the EU.<sup>8</sup>

How are these challenges to be tackled? Having identified the root causes of the security threats in the region, it appears as if the strategy to counter these problems follows from the very identification of the problems. In so far as the absence of democracy and liberalised economies is established as the source of instability, violence, terrorism and radicalism, it seemingly follows that the promotion of democracy and a liberal market economy will counter

<sup>8</sup> Yet it should be stressed that the Mediterranean states are not taken to constitute a military threat to the EU/Europe.

these threats.<sup>9</sup> By furthering democratisation and liberal reforms, the poor political and economic conditions, which at present feed dissatisfaction and terrorism, can be improved and grasped by the root: “One of Europe’s priorities is [...] supporting political reform and defending human rights and freedom of expression as a means of countering extremism” (COM(95)72 final). “The EU will actively promote the strengthening of democratic institutions [...]” “The European Union will [...] promote speedier economic transition, sound fiscal and monetary policies and fiscal reform” “The EU [will] promote the core values embraced by the EU and its memberstates including human rights, democracy, and good governance [...]” (2000/458/CFSP). More specifically, democratisation is to be advanced by putting financial pressure on the Mediterranean governments for liberal reforms – top-down conditionality – while combining this pressure with active support to and cooperation with civil society groups.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, just as the cooperative security discourse drew on Deutsch’s theory on security communities - and later constructivist studies on regional security identities - the liberal reform discourse can be said to reflect the assumptions of the so-called democratic peace theory (see also Gillespie & Youngs, 2002: 8ff, Jünnemann, 2004:6ff). This “theory” has gained a strong momentum in the wake of the Cold War and has been identified as “close as anything to an empirical law in international relations” (Levy, 1988:661-662).<sup>11</sup> Lately, scholars have also argued that not only are democratic states less inclined to go to war with one another, democratic states also experience less domestic violence and internal ethno-religious strifes. Democracies are seemingly more stable and peaceful, since governments can be held

<sup>9</sup> The EU strategy of promoting economic liberalisation and privatisation rests in this respect also on an “indirect logic” in that, as it has often been pointed out, the EU has presumed that economic liberalisation would lead to political liberalisation (see e.g. Gillespie & Youngs, 2002, Hollis, 2000:113, Joffé, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> The association agreements are in particular invoked as a means which can be used to pressure for reform “The association agreements stipulate that human rights and democracy are essential elements of the agreement and that action can be taken if non-compliance (COM(2003) 294 final) “The Association Agreements with the EU can provide an anchor that reinforces the commitment to reforms and enhances the credibility and prospects of the reform process (9890/03 (Presse 151).

<sup>11</sup> In a seminal article Michael Doyle argued that democracies seldom go to war with one another (Doyle, 1983). In its wake scholars have fiercely debated *what* makes democratic states less prone to engage in war with one another, but few have disputed that democratic states have created a separate peace. (for overviews see e.g. Chan, 1997, Russett and Star, 2000)

accountable and societal conflicts can be worked out in the political arena (see in particular Rummel, 1997, for an overview see Paris 2004, pp.64-68). Thus, drawing on the democratic peace thesis, it is presumed that by encouraging a process of democratisation and liberalisation in the Mediterranean, the EU can address the root causes of the problems in the region and thereby enhance the security of the EU in the long-run.

Turning to the second analytical question of security referent and interest, it is clear that it is the Union's security which is to be increased through the promotion of liberal reforms. Democratisation seemingly serves the strategic self-interest of the EU in that it uproots the very causes of the "soft" security threats emanating from the Mediterranean: "The Mediterranean region is of strategic importance to the EU. A prosperous, democratic and stable region [...] is in the best interest of the EU and of Europe as a whole" (2000/458/CFSP). In contrast to the cooperative security discourse, the security concerns of the two sides of the Mediterranean are, hence, not articulated as common or harmonious. Rather an explicit reference is made to the EU's own best interest.

This could seem as if this discourse is founded on a realist logic of self-interest alone. Yet, it is rather the case that realist and idealist concerns are fused into *one* powerful strategy. Democratisation is seen as a means to attain security for the EU, and in this sense the EU follows its own strategic interest. Concurrently this policy is, however, also taken to be an ethically sound policy, which benefits and improves the livelihoods of peoples in the region, by ensuring them better political representation and respect for basic political rights (see also Gillespie & Youngs, 2002:8).

Moving to the third question of identity and Self-Other relations, the identity ascribed to the Mediterranean region and the relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean is constructed in almost opposite terms compared to the cooperative security discourse. The Mediterranean is conveyed as an unstable, conflict-ridden and socially troubled area, where repression and extremism reign. These "characteristics" of the Mediterranean are seen as causes of insecurity for the EU, and the Mediterranean region is, in this sense, portrayed as a threatening area and identity.

Thus, the Mediterranean is not only constituted as different from the EU – as within the cooperative security discourse – but also as a radical and inferior Other. As Pace equally has argued:

“The portrayed instability and chaos in the Mediterranean is perceived as a source of insecurity for Europe. The hierarchical division which the EU has created vis-à-vis its southern partners always portrays the European partner as superior and the Mediterranean partner as inferior. Thus, security discourses separate the alleged (assumed) victim of insecurity and the cause of insecurity that is Europe and the Mediterranean respectively” (Pace, 2002:203)

However, it is at the same time assumed that the Mediterranean region has a capacity and potential to transform. Liberal reforms can alter the current state of crisis and instability; gradually turning the Mediterranean states into democratic and market based systems. The Mediterranean can, in other words, potentially become like “us” (the European Self) by adopting the political and economic identity of the Union’s member states. The peoples of the Mediterranean are, hence, not portrayed as *inherently* backward, barbaric or unable to change. They are not depicted as “frantic and uncivilised people” (Pace, 2002:203), but rather as *potential* liberal democrats.

This identity ascribed to the Mediterranean region also connotes a very different Euro-Mediterranean relationship. Whereas the cooperative security discourse was based on notions of partnership, equality and mutual enrichment, the liberal reform discourse articulates the Mediterranean as inferior, problematic and undeveloped. The Mediterranean is presumed to be the source of problems, while the EU is defined as having the solutions and capacity to help solving these problems. “The EU will assist the Mediterranean partners with the process of achieving free trade [and] economic transition” (2000/458/CFSP). “The Association Agreements with the EU can provide an anchor that reinforces the commitment to reforms and enhances the credibility and prospects of the reform process” (9890/03 (Presse 151)). The relationship is, hence, explicitly based on an asymmetry of power. The EU is invested with the power and right to define what the problems of the Mediterranean consist of, which type of reforms are needed, and to assess how far these reforms have progressed. The Mediterranean states are objects of “EU”- reforms and support, whereas the EU is the active inducer and evaluator of these reforms.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> To stay within ‘family’ metaphors, one may accordingly argue that the EU and Mediterranean rather than being conveyed as siblings that have been nurtured in the same cradle, the Mediterranean is portrayed as an unruly child who is to be helped and taught by the EU-parent.

In sum, within the liberal reform discourse, it is the poor political and economic conditions in the Mediterranean that are seen as the true sources of insecurity to the EU. By aiding and encouraging democratisation and liberalisation the EU can seemingly tackle these challenges by the root, and hence provide for its own security and strategic interest. Yet, liberal reforms are not only portrayed as a means to protect the EU from the instability and chaos prevailing in the South, but also as an altruistic policy, which will benefit the peoples of the region, and which in the end will create liberal democracies based on the same political and economic characteristics as those of the Union's member states.

### **Implications of the EU's Conflicting Mediterranean Discourses**

The two discourses analysed above have been equally present in EU documents ever since the launch of the Barcelona Process. Hence, neither of the two discourses has gained a dominant or hegemonic position. Moreover, one will not find that some EU documents are based on the "cooperative security discourse" while others are based on the "liberal reform discourse". Rather one will find a simultaneous presence and intermingling of both of these conflicting discourses in EU declarations and policy statements.

This has in effect meant that the EU has followed two contradictory and incompatible security strategies with regard to the Mediterranean states. At one and the same time, EU documents delineate two different versions of what constitutes a threat to the EU, how such threats are to be tackled, which interest is to be served, and what the Mediterranean is in relation to the EU. Simultaneously the Mediterranean is constructed as a threat and as a partner, as an inferior and undeveloped subject that is to be reformed, and as an equal partner with whom the EU shares security perceptions and interest. Thus, although both discourses can be seen as liberal-idealistic security discourses, in the sense that they both are based on broad conceptualisations of security and favour institutional and non-military responses to threats, they each operate with very different constructions of threats, strategies, interest and identity.

Given these conflicting security discourses, it is perhaps less surprising that the Barcelona Process has achieved only modest results, both in terms of creating cooperative security and in terms of creating democratisation and political liberalisation. The point is, however, not that the EU necessarily is insincere when it comes to the goal of either democratisation or partnership, but rather that EU documents outline a difficult - if not impossible - balancing act between two conflicting security logics. As Youngs argues along somewhat similar lines:

“Critics of the constructivist turn in international relations might contend that it [the EU's wavering and consensual approach] reflected pure unwillingness to

adopt any real democracy promotion policies. [But] it would seem unduly glib to dismiss the discursive approach as a purely ingenious façade” (Gillespie & Youngs, 2002:49)

Thus, rather than explaining the Barcelona Process’ lack of progress, as a result of EU hypocrisy and preoccupation with security concerns, it can be seen as a result of the simultaneous presence of two security discourses, where the EU has tried to follow different strategies and conceptualisations of security at the same time. Again, the point is not that one discourse is about security and the other about democratisation, both discourses deal with security. Neither is the point that the EU is unwilling or reluctant when it comes to the aims of e.g. democracy promotion and proliferation of human rights, but that EU documents simultaneously outline different conceptualisations of security. EU documents, in short, speak in two languages and according to two logics.

This may also partly account for the Mediterranean governments’ mistrust and suspicions about the “real” motives and agenda of the Barcelona Process. The EMP is largely perceived as a security arrangement invented by the EU in order to counter a diffuse threat from the South. Invocations of partnership, dialogue and mutual consultations are, as a consequence, often discarded as mere EU rhetoric, which is to hide that the partnership is defined and “owned” by the EU; in reality serving the security interest of the EU. Mediterranean governments, moreover, fear that the Barcelona Process is used as a means to impose European values and political systems on the Mediterranean or even as a pretext for outright intervention. They fear that calls for economic and political liberalisation will exacerbate social and political unrest; ultimately undermining their power bases and control of governmental institutions. (Hollis, 2000:114, EuroMeSCo Paper no.16, 2002, Spencer, 1998, Joffé, 1999). In contrast many civil society organisations in the Mediterranean are doubtful about the sincerity of the EU’s goal of democratisation and reform, fearing that the main goal of the EU’s efforts in the region primarily is to work with the incumbent regimes on countering terrorism and radicalism (Jünnemann, 2004:14, Gillespie & Youngs, 2002). The simultaneous presence of two contradicting Mediterranean discourses have therefore not only spurred an inconsistent and conflicting EU policy, but the EU’s conflicting “messages” as to how security is to be reached, which threats are to be tackled and what the Mediterranean is, have in turn caused mistrust and disappointment in the Southern Mediterranean. The absence of one consistent strategy has, in short, given rise to “fearful” interpretations about the underlying aims and motives of the Barcelona Process.

## **The EU's Neighbourhood Policy and Strategic Partnership Initiative**

The stalemate of the Barcelona Process and the lack of tangible results have for long been a concern of the EU, and references have repeatedly been made to the need for reinvigoration and revitalisation of the EMP. The new proposals for a neighbourhood policy and a strategic partnership with the Mediterranean and Middle East can therefore be seen as explicit attempts to bring new life to the Process, while also trying to furnish a more coherent and effective approach. However, the two new EU initiatives do not mark a turn away from the “double-discursive approach”, analysed in this paper. The two initiatives are, just as previous ones, based on both the cooperative security discourse and the liberal reform discourse.

In the new Neighbourhood policy proposed by the Commission last year, one can find elements of the cooperative security discourse and the liberal reform discourse. Yet as a whole the document should primarily be seen as an expression of the latter discourse. Democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights are defined as “essential prerequisites for political stability” while the Mediterranean is identified as a region which has “a history of autocratic and non-democratic governance and poor records in protecting human rights and freedom of the individual” (COM(2003)104 final:7). In order for the EU to enhance stability in its immediate neighbourhood and create a ring of friends along its borders, it is accordingly proposed that a wide ranging number of political and economic reforms should be undertaken in the Mediterranean. To guarantee that these reforms are pushed forward, positive conditionality and yearly evaluations are to be applied. The EU will work out individual action plans that set clear targets and benchmarks for reform, and in return for progress on what is described as shared values and alignment with the EU's *acquis*, the Mediterranean states will gradually be offered a stake in the EU's internal market (COM(2003)104 final:16). Thus, although the new neighbourhood policy also invokes notions of security interdependence, mutual security interests and the importance of cooperation, the document is largely based on the logic of the liberal reform discourse (see e.g. COM(2003)104 final:6).

The first draft to a Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean was proposed in December 2003, and a revised version appeared in March, 2004. Here one can equally find both discourses, but in contrast to the Neighbourhood policy, this document can in particular be seen as an expression of the cooperative security discourse. The overarching objective of the partnership is described as “the creation of a common zone of peace, prosperity and progress through partnership” (7498/1/04 REV 1:10) and partnership and cooperation are identified as “a cornerstone of the strategy” (7498/1/04 REV: 4). The two sides of the Mediterranean have, it is noted: “a shared interest” in building a common zone of peace, due to the fact that “Europe and the region are joined by history and geography. The Mediterranean sea has



linked our peoples for centuries” (ibid). Fighting common challenges will therefore “be of mutual benefit to Europe and the region” (7498/1/04 REV: 15). The need for political and economic reforms is also mentioned in the report, but here it is emphasised several times – in sharp contrast to the Neighbourhood Policy - that such reforms “cannot be imposed from the outside. They must be generated from within” (7498/1/04 REV:5, 15).

The EU’s new initiatives for the Mediterranean region are hence, just as previous policies, caught between conflicting constructions of interest, strategies, threats and identity. Taken together the two initiatives at the same time propose a harsh agenda on democratisation, economic liberalisation and human rights based on conditionality and yearly evaluations by the EU, while also proposing a partnership based on shared security understandings and mutual interest. Simultaneously, the Mediterranean is constructed an autocratic and conflict-ridden region that threatens the security of the EU and as a partner, with whom we share security perceptions, identity and historical roots.

As this paper has attempted to demonstrate, such two discourses are difficult - if not impossible - to combine. By trying to adopt both logics at the same time, the EU does not only make prioritizations and implementation difficult, but also incite confusion, suspicion and mistrust in the region about the EU’s underlying aims and motives. Thus, although the two new initiatives are intended to spark new life to EU’s relationship with the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern states, the result may well be - just as in the case of the ten year old Barcelona Process - that that the EU achieves neither cooperation nor democratisation.

## Conclusion

This paper has argued that discourse analysis can offer new insights to studies on the Barcelona Process, in particular in terms of the often cited dilemma between security and democratisation. Predominantly, the Barcelona Process' modest results and the EU's inconsistent policies towards the region have been explained with reference to the EU's prioritizations of security concerns. The EU's Mediterranean strategy is seemingly caught in a dilemma between democratisation and security, and when pushed to choose between the two, democratisation is most often subsumed to the larger goal of security. In other words, there is a tendency to analyse the EU's democratisation agenda as either insincere; only paying lip service to the need for promoting political reforms in the region, or as necessarily less expedient when confronted with immediate security concerns; security always running prior to other political goals.

On the basis of a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis this paper has, however, argued that the EU's Mediterranean policies, rather than 'merely' being trapped by the familiar dilemma between security and democracy, these policies are caught between two conflicting security discourses. These discourses each give a different meaning to what the Mediterranean is, which threatens the Union face, and how these should be tackled. The "discursive battle", within the EU, it can be argued, is hence not primarily over realist security interest versus idealistic concerns for democracy, but rather over two different versions of identity, interest and threats.

The simultaneous presence and intertwining of these two conflicting discourses in EU policy statements are obviously not without political consequences. Not only do they powerfully construct different narratives of who "we" are, what "we" fear, and how "we" should respond to such fears, the conflicting discourses also cause confusion and distrust on part of the Southern Mediterranean states about the EU's real intentions in the region; giving ample room for fearful and hypersensitive interpretations of what the EU's "true" agenda is.

From a poststructuralist perspective the presence of several discourses and meanings are, however, often valued, because it is taken to connote the fact that no single discourse has gained a hegemonic position, thereby making room for counter-interventions and marginal voices (see e.g. Campbell, 1998b, Shapiro & Alker, 1996, Edkins, 1999, Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Yet given the analysis of this paper, it may also be worth investigating the less positive effects of competing representations. Multiple discourses, it may be argued, do not only allow

for “Politics” and counter-interventions, they may also cause suspicions and confusion on part of the very peoples they are supposed to target and speak to.

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