

Making sense of Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean

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President Sarkozy's proposed Union for the Mediterranean (or UMed) has so far been poorly conceived and, to say the least, awkwardly presented politically. However this does not mean that nothing good can come of it. The Barcelona process and its confusing combination with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) have neither been a disaster nor a brilliant success. There is a case for streamlining a single European Mediterranean policy, rationalising and properly integrating Barcelona, the ENP and new ideas that the UMed initiative may produce. Both Italy and Spain as well as the South Mediterranean states themselves appear concerned not to undermine the existing structures (Barcelona and ENP). Steps could be made to lighten the overweight participation of the EU and all its 27 member states in too many meetings with too many participants and too few results, drawing on models that have emerged in the EU's Northern maritime regions. However, the EU as a whole will not agree to delegate the essential initiative on strategic matters to just its Southern coastal states – as has been made clear in recent exchanges between President Sarkozy and Chancellor Merkel. In addition the EU will also want to maintain a balance between its Northern and Southern priorities, and if the UMed becomes a new impetus for the South, an equivalent but different policy move can be contemplated for the EU's East European neighbours

1. A very rough start

President Sarkozy originally advanced the idea of a 'Union of the Mediterranean'¹ during his election night press conference on 6 May 2007. He later developed the idea at a speech in Tangier on 23 October 2007, according to which just the coastal states of the Mediterranean would aim at a "political, economic and cultural union" ... "of which our children will be proud."² The proposal is thus presented as something of strategic and historical importance. Followed through operationally, and taking Sarkozy's words at face value, it seems that the project would have implied marginalising the EU's major policy investments in the region (Barcelona Process and European Neighbourhood Policy – ENP), while 'privatising' the essential initiative for this sphere of EU policy for a sub-set of member states.

The proposal encountered criticism at the highest levels.

First, Turkey immediately rejected the idea that this might be considered an alternative to acceding to the European Union, supposing that this was at least partly the intention.

¹ The initiative was first called "Union of (rather than for) the Mediterranean", the change apparently signalling that a less ambitious institutionalisation is now envisaged.

² http://www.elysee.fr/documents/index.php?lang=fr&mod=e=view&cat_id=7&press_id=572

Michael Emerson is Associate Senior Research Fellow at CEPS, and is indebted to Natalie Tocci, Jose Ignacio Torreblanca, Hakim Darbouche, Guadalupe Perez Garcia and Agnieszka Malyszko for their comments and help. This paper was completed on 7 March 2008.

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Second, on 5 December 2007, Chancellor Merkel rejected the idea that policy for the Mediterranean should be restricted to the coastal states:

This would create a situation I would qualify as dangerous. A situation could be created where Germany would be drawn to Central and Eastern Europe and France to the Mediterranean. This would create tension that I would not like.³

Third, even the Slovenian Presidency in office followed on 17 January 2008 with:

We do not need a duplication of institutions that would compete with EU institutions, and that would cover part of the EU and part of the neighbourhood.⁴

The model of the early days of the European Communities was invoked in Sarkozy's Tangier speech, advocating Jean Monnet's 'functionalism' of the European Coal and Steel Community that led on to greater political constructions. But Monnet was starting from scratch. The Mediterranean has over ten years of the Euro-Mediterranean policy and systemic development, which was implicitly being written off as being of little significance or value.

This is not the only occasion when President Sarkozy has made an impulsive and ill-defined proposal on a subject of strategic importance of the EU, his proposal to dilute the independence of the European Central Bank having been another one. Both propositions put France's most important diplomatic asset at risk, namely its alliance with Germany.

At least France's secretary of state for European affairs, Jean-Pierre Jouyet, understands why any ambitious and exclusive version of Sarkozy's Union would be a strategic mistake of the first order, as he stated in *Le Figaro* on 25 January 2008 (our translation):

The great project of civilisation, it is European. If we want another one, we must say so. If on the occasion of our meeting on the Mediterranean, which will be organised on 13-14 July in Paris, we give the impression to our partners, notably German, of wanting to privilege one union alongside

another, we will have great difficulty to preserve the credibility of the French presidency. We are placed before a strategic choice: either privilege an ambitious French presidency, assuring continuity of the European dossiers, while giving them all necessary impulsions. Or we consider that the Mediterranean Union, as such, is more important than the rest. But at that moment our partners could ask us to choose.

On 31 January, there was another exchange between Sarkozy and Merkel. Sarkozy was reported as saying:

All EU member states should be able to participate, but that those countries which wish to move faster should not be prevented from doing so by those moving at a slower place.⁵

These remarks hardly helped. What does moving faster or slower mean? Moving where? To a new political, economic and cultural Union of the Mediterranean? Would some EU member states be members of this Union before others, but catch up later? The political criticisms can be coupled to criticisms regarding a lack of technical professionalism. After over half a year the proposal had still not taken any professionally recognisable shape, other than the fact that it would be a 'project of projects' with a long list of technical agencies in such fields as environment, energy, transport etc. (French note of 19 January 2008, see Box 2 below).

On 3 March 2008, President Sarkozy and Chancellor Merkel met and announced that they had resolved their differences, and that the subject would be discussed at the forthcoming European Council meeting of 13-14 March. While details are not available, it is reported that the proposal is now for the UMed initiative to be a project of the EU, which will, according to Chancellor Merkel "carry the Barcelona process to a higher level."⁶ References have been made to the model of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in which the coastal states are full members and other states observers, but there still seems to be uncertainty over whether the non-Mediterranean EU states will have equal participation or not.⁷ Moreover on 6 March it was reported that Sarkozy asserted that the Presidency of

³ Speech before Konvent für Deutschland, 5 December 2007.

⁴ Slovene Prime Minister Janez Jansa speaking before the European Parliament, 17 January 2008.

⁵ Financial Times, 31 January 2008.

⁶ Agence France Press, 4 March 2008.

⁷ EurActiv.com, 4 March 2008.

the UMed would be shared by one Coastal Mediterranean state of the EU and one South Mediterranean state, which poses issues of compatibility with EU practice, if indeed the UMed is to be fully integrated into EU policy.⁸

The Italians and Spanish have also expressed concerns been that the project should not undermine the Barcelona process, but strengthen it.

Of the South Mediterranean states, the Heads of State of Algeria and Morocco have made public statements on the Union of the Mediterranean in speeches before President Sarkozy on the occasion of his visits to their countries. Decoding diplomatic language, the King of Morocco first stressed the importance for his country of making a new advanced agreement with the EU in the framework of the ENP and then the need for the new initiative to be in “perfect articulation with the desired consolidation of the Barcelona process.” President Bouteflika of Algeria said he would not be “insensitive” to the project to the extent that its contours and objectives were defined alongside the organisms already in place (i.e. Barcelona process), but stressed that there were obstacles to be overcome, notably the resolution of the Israel-Palestinian and Western Sahara conflicts.

The general message coming from the South Mediterranean is that the UMed project remains to be specified before there could be clear responses, but in any case it should not undermine positive aspects of the Barcelona process and/or of the ENP. The idea that the UMed might be the leading strategic project for the region, undertaken by just the coastal states, wins no apparent support, while the need for a proper articulation with the Barcelona process and the ENP is an explicit concern.⁹

2. Expectations and results

The French Ambassador to the EU, Pierre Sellal, recently explained to the Assemblée nationale that:

The reflection of the President of the Republic on the Union of the Mediterranean is inspired by the insufficiencies of the Mediterranean policy undertaken so far. We all observe that the actions undertaken in the

⁸ Le Monde, 6 March 2008.

⁹ See, for example, Gonzalo Escribano and Alejandro Lorca, “La Union Mediterranea: una union en busca de proyecto”, Working Paper No. 13/2008, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid.

framework of the neighbourhood policy and the Barcelona process have not yet produced the expected results.¹⁰

But what results should have been expected, in proportion to the strength of the policy contributions made by the Southern states themselves and then by the EU as a whole? And how should the results be assessed?

A very high standard of achievement would be for the South Mediterranean countries to have matched the political and economic transformation observed in Central and Eastern Europe since the collapse of the Berlin Wall; or the economic performance of much of Asia in recent decades. Alternatively, a very low standard would be for the region to have just done better than its close neighbours, notably in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.

Politically it is evident that the South Mediterranean has not been progressing towards European democratic standards in the same way as Central and Eastern Europe – as the ratings regarding political freedoms, civil liberties and press freedoms in Table 1 demonstrate. On the contrary its record on political freedoms is as bad as sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand the South Mediterranean has avoided several other really black political scenarios: the radical Islamic republic model of Iran, or the ultra-repressive Islamic monarchical conservatism of Saudi Arabia. Its authoritarian regimes have at least avoided the tragic cocktail of the failed state, anarchy, civil war and the genocide now observed in so many states of sub-Saharan Africa

The South Mediterranean has not at all been a region of failed states, but become rather one of smarter authoritarianism, co-opting elites with business interests, allowing some token political pluralism while repressing any potentially serious opposition movement. A recent report argues that “Arab regimes have become proficient at containing and disarming democracy promotion.”¹¹

¹⁰ Assemblée nationale, Commission des affaires étrangères, « Audition, commune avec la délégation pour l’Union européenne, de M. Pierre Sellal, représentant permanent de la France auprès de l’Union européenne, sur la présidence française de l’Union européenne », 29 janvier 2008, Compte rendu n° 34 (*our translation*).

¹¹ Steven Heydemann, “Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World”, Analysis Paper No. 13, Brookings Institution, October 2007

Table 1. Political performance of Mediterranean countries

	Political rights*	Civil liberties*	Corruption**	Press freedom***
Mediterranean	5.4	4.8	6.4	4.6
Central & Eastern Europe	2.3	2.2	5.9	1.6
Asia	3.9	3.5	6.4	4.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.3	4.9	7.2	3.4

Sources:

* Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2008*, (1-most free, 7-least free).

** Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index 2007*, 0-highly clean, 10-highly corrupt. The original source rated with the reverse order, with 0 as the most corrupt. Here the ratings have been reversed so as to be comparable to the other data shown.

*** Reporters without Borders, *Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2007*, (0-free, the highest number - the least free).

Table 2. Economic performance – % GDP growth% of Mediterranean countries and other regions*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Mediterranean**	2.2	1.8	3.6	5.6	4.6	4.5
Central & Eastern Europe***	4.3	4.5	5.2	6.6	5.9	6.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.7	3.4	4.1	5.5	5.7	5.6
South Asia	4.6	3.7	7.6	8.0	8.6	8.6
East Asia & Pacific	6.6	7.9	8.8	9.0	9.0	9.4

Sources:

*Data based on World Bank database.

**Mediterranean: Barcelona process countries.

***Central & Eastern Europe: new EU members (without Cyprus, Malta) + Balkans + Belarus +Ukraine.

Economically the region has been achieving moderate growth rates, while categorically less than the performance of the Asian tigers, with many of them sustaining near double-digit growth rates, their record is also significantly less than that of the Central and East European countries, and even marginally less than that of the average of sub-Saharan Africa (Table 2). The South Mediterranean was only a few years ago not much poorer than Central and Eastern Europe, but has now been left way behind. But the Mediterranean has not experienced economic disasters, except in the case of Palestine.

This moderate performance, neither brilliant nor disastrous, seems understandable when one looks at the big picture. The South Mediterranean's proximity to Europe translates into a certain socialisation effect in relation to the political and economic models of modern Europe. Have the legacies of history been on balance a factor for partial convergence, with the ebb and flow of European and Islamic empires over the centuries, even if the most recent colonisation episode leaves still bitter traces? Has the depth of Europe's current engagement with the region, including the important population linkages through the diasporas present in Europe, positively influenced social attitudes and aspirations? These linkages seem to have been important enough to have prevented contamination by the worse political fates prevalent in its neighbouring regions in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. These propositions are hard to prove, but would seem not implausible. In which case the EU's Mediterranean policies have not been in vain, even if improvements need to be sought.

Do the policy-makers have the right to have expected a much higher standard of results?

On the political side the EU and its member states have not really tried to push for political reforms, except in the most timid, technical or just declaratory ways, and have hardly reacted at all to the manifest abuse of human rights and political repression observed in much of the region. The mainly authoritarian regimes have themselves given priority to retaining control, frequently repressing opposition movements. The EU and member states are criticised by democratic Islamist movements in the region for ignoring their claims to greater political participation.¹² Who could really have expected better results from these status quo

¹² M. Emerson and R. Youngs (eds), *Political Islam and European Foreign Policy – Perspectives from Muslim Democrats of the Mediterranean*, CEPS Paperback, 2007.

policies, leaving aside idle wishful thinking? The EU's policies of 'benign neglect' may in fact be contributing to something less benign, leaving frustrated Islamic moderates under pressure from forces pushing for renewed Islamic radicalisation.

On the economic side the Southern Mediterranean countries are mostly still locked in closed systems of economic privilege, with pervasive links between major corporations and the personal interests of government leaders. Economic potential is still being stifled at home. For its part the EU has refused to include agriculture in its free trade agreements, thus excluding the sector where the South Mediterranean has real comparative advantages, whereas the industrial and service sectors — where the EU has overwhelming strengths is being opened for free trade.

Might an action of the coastal states of the Mediterranean be expected to overcome these fundamental constraints on effective reform processes? It has to be observed that the Southern EU member states are among the most cautious about raising political reform issues, and they are also the most protective lobby in the EU in limiting the liberalisation of agricultural trade. Moreover the formulation of the Sarkozy proposal as a 'project of projects', with its low level technical content, seems to minimise concern for either political or economic policy reform.

3. Institutional & organisational issues

A plausible architecture of the EU's cooperation in the Mediterranean can be based on two non-controversial and entirely constructive propositions:

- There are intrinsic reasons for the coastal states of enclosed seas to cooperate on many matters linked to their common geography.
- Where such maritime regions are on the periphery of the EU, there is a need for multi-tiered cooperation at the three levels – coastal regions, coastal states and the EU as a whole.

For the Mediterranean much has been achieved along these lines. However a common critique is that the system of the Barcelona process (or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – EMP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) have become too cumbersome and bureaucratic. These critiques have to be confronted.

The Barcelona process has, since its inception in 1995, led to the signing of Association Agreements between the EU and the Southern partner states, including agreements for the progressive introduction of free trade and a wide-ranging

agenda for looser cooperation. At the multilateral level the Barcelona process has seen the convening of ministerial meetings under no less than 14 headings (Box 1).

Box 1. Domains of policy in which there have been ministerial meetings at the level of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

1. Foreign affairs
2. Economic and financial affairs
3. Environment
4. Energy
5. Transport
6. Industry
7. Agriculture
8. Trade
9. Water
10. Employment
11. Culture
12. Migration
13. Tourism
14. Health

Each of these ministerial meetings will nowadays involve 39 delegations: 27 EU member states, 11 partner states of the Mediterranean¹³ and the Commission. Ministerial meetings will usually be prepared by meetings of senior officials in the same format. There are too many meetings with too many participants that achieve too little.

In addition the ENP has deepened bilateral cooperation with most of the Southern partner states since 2004, with detailed Action Plans setting out political, economic and security agendas. It is envisaged that this process will lead in the case of the most advanced partner states to the negotiation of new 'Advanced Agreements', for which Morocco is already identified as the first candidate. However for the time being the Action Plans of the ENP are overloaded with too many thin prescriptions.

For the Summit meetings in July to launch the UMed the invitations are apparently going to be sent to an even wider set of Mediterranean countries, including all the coastal states of the Adriatic Sea (Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania). This means bringing four Balkan states that are engaged in implementing or negotiating Stabilisation and Association Agreements, which

¹³ Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestinian Territory, Lebanon, Syria. To these founding partner states Albania and Mauritania have recently been added, but not to the European Neighbourhood Policy, which adds a new confusion to the geography of the EU's Mediterranean policy. Libya could become the 12th Barcelona state.

are premised on the perspective of full membership with the EU, into a common project with the Barcelona states. This enlarged Mediterranean concept seem very puzzling, since it will mean meetings encumbered with even more seats around the table and additional confusions over its political purpose in relation to the Barcelona process and ENP.

There is surely a case for rationalisations and improvements to what has become an exceedingly complex construction already with EMP, ENP and other initiatives such as the 5+5 grouping.¹⁴ The Sarkozy initiative could translate into a push for a single rationalised system and name ('Union for the Mediterranean' is entirely positive), and scrapping the confusing terminology of EMP and ENP. The UMed could be a multi-tiered structure, in which all parties – regions, coastal and other member states and the EU institutions – find their place according to rational principles of subsidiarity (to which we return below).

In so doing the Eastern and Southern branches of the European Neighbourhood Policy could be each allowed to see increased differentiation, albeit building upon the assets they have in common by way of the system of contractual relations between the EU and the partner states. The Arab Mediterranean states have little in common by way of geography, history, religion, culture, economic structures, political tendencies or basic identity with the European states of the former Soviet Union. Except that they are all 'neighbours', it might be said. But even this is not accepted by the Eastern countries, who object: 'we are not neighbours of Europe, we are Europe'. The EU's decision of 2004 to place both groups in the same basket has been unwelcome for both groups.

Given the extensive and complex *acquis* in Euro-Mediterranean affairs, a rationalisation and improvement would require a painstaking and delicate effort. The Summit meetings in Paris on 13-14 July 2008, could be the occasion for all ideas to be aired. Thereafter the European Commission could draw up a proposal, as would be normal for a project of the EU, and in particular taking into account the Commission's thorough institutional knowledge.

What functions should be addressed by the Union, and how should these functions be distributed between the three levels – coastal regions, coastal

¹⁴ 5 EU member states (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta) meeting with 5 Southern states (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya).

states, other EU member states and the EU institutions? In the complex reality of the EU many functions have become shared competences, with the EU setting out framework directives and contributing funding, with member states responsible for implementation. The same pattern emerges increasingly in the EU's external relations, especially in its close neighbourhood relations. What therefore should be the model for shared competences in the UMed?

The EU has actually been making progress in adapting its working methods for external policies that should not be needlessly encumbered with the attendance of all 27 member states.

The Northern Dimension provides examples. The full members of the Northern Dimension Policy are now the EU (institutions), Norway, Iceland and Russia. The EU Baltic states are not themselves full members any more. However when meetings of officials and ministers take place, the EU is represented by the Presidency, the Commission and – on a voluntary basis – interested member states. This format is at times now being referred to as the ‘open troika’, although this is only an informal term of art in the institutions. In practice at the most recent meetings of senior officials about six or seven member states were interested enough to attend, and these were mainly the Baltic member states. The principle remains that any member state may attend, and France has been among the participating non-Baltic states. At the next ministerial meeting of the Northern Dimension, the same formula will apply, and it may be that a larger number of member states will attend.

At the same time there is a set of regional institutions – the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Barents-Euro Arctic Council – which belong to the coastal states alone, except that the European Commission is also now a member as the sole representative of the EU itself. However in the CBSS, in addition to the 11 full members,¹⁵ there are 7 further observer states that attend some meetings.¹⁶ This is suggesting that when the functions in question are relatively technical and strongly connected to EU competences, pragmatic consensus can be found among the member states for this limited EU presence.

¹⁵The full member states are Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany as the coastal states, plus Iceland, Norway and the European Commission.

¹⁶ The observer states are France, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, the UK and the US.

The Black Sea sees comparable developments. The BSEC organisation has adopted a generous definition of Black Sea geography in taking in all three South Caucasus states and expanding more recently into the Balkans, with 12 full members.¹⁷ As a result of its Black Sea Synergy initiative the European Commission has now become an observer, joining 9 EU member states, Tunisia, Israel and the US, which are already observers.¹⁸ At the first ministerial meeting between the EU and the BSEC states in Kiev on 14 February 2008, the EU was represented by the Presidency, the Commission, and all member states; but in the future the EU might resort to something analogous to the open Troika model, with the two Black Sea states (Bulgaria, Romania), the Commission and other interested member states.

The ‘open Troika’ method could be of considerable importance in filling out the steps taken in the Lisbon Treaty to adapt the EU's institutions to a much enlarged membership, and in particular to facilitate the development of foreign and security policies. The EU laboured greatly over necessary reforms of the Commission (number of members), the Council (voting rules, presidency) and the double-hatted High Representative. But there remain congestion problems of huge numbers of meetings at the levels of ministers, officials and experts. Useful developments such as the ‘open Troika’ method could be introduced without treaty changes. A further development of the ‘open Troika’ formula could see arrangements devised for informal constituency representation (e.g. for Baltic or Visegrad states in Mediterranean affairs).

It seems that the Troika itself is going to be largely scrapped as a result of the imminent double-hatting of the High Representative and his/her chairmanship of the Council as well as Vice-Presidency of the Commission. The Lisbon Treaty says that the “The President of the European Council shall, *at his level and in that capacity [our italics]*, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative ...” (Article 9 B). Implicitly at sub-summit level meetings the EU will be represented by the High Representative on

¹⁷ Full BSEC member states are the coastal states Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, plus Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece and Serbia.

¹⁸ BSEC observers are Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Tunisia, the US and the European Commission.

behalf of both Council and Commission, but it remains to be seen whether the rotating Council Presidency will also be present in meetings that today see the Troika.

‘Reinforced cooperation’ is a technique that exists for some time on paper in the treaties, but which has never been used. The key principles here are that there must be at least 9 member states, and that participation has to be open, with the Lisbon Treaty adding language to prevent ‘spoilers’ from participating. The text allows for the authorising decision to lay down conditions for participation, such as the capacity to be an effective contributor. In principle the financing of Reinforced Cooperation is to be borne by participating states rather than the EU budget.

Finally, the confusing complexity of this EMP+ENP policy is already a serious communications problem for the EU’s public diplomacy. This was the product of the French-led position within the EU Council of Ministers in 2004 in response to the initially proposed Wider Europe initiative for the new Eastern neighbours. It was argued that new favours extended to these Eastern neighbours should not relatively depreciate the existing EMP regime. Hence it was decided that the new neighbourhood policy should be a single ENP to serve both East and South. All concerned have been struggling to explain how EMP and ENP relate to each other ever since. There are explanations, namely that the ENP plausibly adds bilateral matter to the largely multilateral EMP, but this is only understood by small circles of officials, leaving the public uninformed or confused. But now the UMed would be stuck on top (or below), apparently without any rationalisation of the triptych: ‘EMP+ENP+UMed’. The confusion and credibility problems for EU communications policy towards the Mediterranean would be further worsened, unless the occasion was taken to rationalise and unify the EU’s Mediterranean policy into a single integrated whole.

4. The distribution of competences around the Mediterranean region

Sarkozy’s proposal for a political, economic and cultural union of (or for) the coastal states of the Mediterranean raised fundamental questions as to how this would fit with the competences of the European Union. While the design of this long-term political, economic and cultural union remains completely unspecified, the paper of 19 January 2008, distributed by France to its EU partners, set out ideas for the possible initial content of the UMed. This corresponded to the earlier indications

that a ‘project of projects’ is envisaged, with a listing of 15 regional agencies or similar initiatives (see Box 2).

However there seems to have been no apparent attempt to analyse how these would fit with the existing competences of the EU, or how various existing sectoral policies and arrangements in these fields are actually functioning.

Box 2. Projects suggested in a French note of 19 January 2008

1. Environment agency
2. Energy office
3. Transport agency
4. University cooperation agency
5. Research centre
6. Culture office
7. Agriculture office
8. Public health centre
9. SME development agency
10. Infrastructure fund
11. Financial innovation instrument
12. Economic cooperation agency
13. Migration office
14. Judicial cooperation
15. Civil protection centre

The EU now has considerable experience in the organisation of multi-tier governance between itself, the member states and their regions, and increasingly also in the extension of this system beyond its frontiers in the regions and states of its periphery. The structures that have evolved involve some *exclusive* legal and executive competences of the EU, and many *shared* competencies. These shared competences have relatively strong EU responsibilities under Pillar I headings for the old EC competencies and Pillar III for the newer freedom, justice and security competences, which are now brought together under the Lisbon Reform Treaty. Under Pillar II for foreign and security policies, the decision-making procedures are more inter-governmental and dependent on unanimity, but the executive responsibilities of the EU as a whole are also substantial.

It so happens that almost all of the technical projects being advanced by France for the UMed (as in Box 2) involve shared competencies of the EU and member states. However we start from a more strategic and comprehensive perspective.

Three strategic issues. There are three strategic issues of politics, economics and security, which are inescapably matters of concern for the EU as a whole, rather than just for the coastal states. These are strikingly absent from the list of technical projects proposed, but nonetheless implicitly

covered in any meaningful idea of a political and economic union. It is difficult to conceive of any plan of strategic importance for the Mediterranean region without addressing these issues. The Sarkozy initiative may leave these domains of policy in the hand of the EU institutions for the time being, but there remains the double ambiguity: what substantive positions are being advocated on three inescapable issues? And what is the idea for their later inclusion in a political and economic union of (or for) the Mediterranean?

A. The EU's position on matters of *political democracy and human rights* lies at the heart of the EU's ambition to be a normative foreign policy power and to project its values into its neighbourhood. For some member states to take these issues seriously but for others to neglect them is the recipe for total ineffectiveness. While the EU is very cautious in this domain in its current Mediterranean policy, the issue of recalibrating this aspect of foreign policy transcends the national level. Several Northern member states (both 'old' member states with considerable professional resources, and 'new' member states with recent experience of democratic transition processes) have been far more pro-active in this field than the Southern member states.

Since 2004 there is already a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, attached to the Barcelona process, with 240 parliamentarians, half from the European parliament and half from the South Mediterranean states. In addition, since 2006 there is a Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) bringing together parliamentarians of the coastal Mediterranean states, including those of the Adriatic: thus a quite striking duplication of effort. The list of PAM participants is virtually identical to that of the coastal states originally proposed for the UMed, but there is no mention of the body in the French proposal.

B. The *economic policy thrust* of the EU's Mediterranean policy is centred around the deepening of the existing free trade agreements, with increasing extension of the EU's regulatory norms into the service sectors, and more broadly into the reform of economic governance. To which might be added on the EU side further liberalisation of its trade policies in the field of agriculture. In addition the EU's financial instruments have been undergoing significant development, with the FEMIP window of the European Investment Bank and the new Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) of the Commission's budgetary instrument (ENPI). These are areas of strong EU competences, in some cases exclusive.

C. The main *strategic security concern* shared by the EU and its Mediterranean partners today is that of radical Islamic terrorism. This is certainly a matter for deep cooperation between the security services of member states, and notably for France, Italy and Spain in relation to the Al Qaeda franchise networks that are increasingly active in the Maghreb. But this also is a matter of strategic concern for the EU ministers of justice and interior affairs, just as the issue of reconciling European society with its new Muslim minorities is a matter of continental proportions. Related issues are the unresolved conflicts of the Mediterranean region. This concerns Palestine-Israel where the EU's major effort has not been successful, but where scattered efforts of individual member states (or sub-groups) are even less likely to be effective; and the Western Sahara, where France and Spain might conceivably have developed a pro-active conflict resolution position, but they have so far left the initiative to the US and the UN, and the issue is absent from the current French proposal.

Many technical issues. Here we comment briefly on how the 15 technical proposals relate to existing EU policies in these fields, with Euro-Mediterranean ministers having been active on almost all of these topics at the policy level (as listed above). In addition the EU has in recent years greatly expanded the number of its own agencies, which now are 30 in number.¹⁹ The Commission has recently comprehensively reviewed the practical possibilities for these agencies to be opened progressively in ENP partner states, and the Council has agreed that negotiations should begin along these lines. A variant to creating new Mediterranean agencies could be the opening of regional 'windows' or operating programmes involving the most interested states (analogous to the 'open troika' method).

1. *Environment agency.* There is already a multiplicity of major initiatives – the UN-sponsored 'Barcelona Convention' of coastal states, not to be confused with the environmental content of the EU-sponsored 'Barcelona process', and bilateral action programmes under the ENP, all of which are now being better brought together under the 'Horizon 2020' strategy adopted by the EU and South Mediterranean states in 2005. The idea of a new technical agency is not what is needed at this stage.

¹⁹ European Commission, "On the general approach to enable ENP partner states to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes", COM(2006)724 final, 4 December 2006.

2. *Energy office.* Euro-Med ministers of energy have adopted a work plan for 2008-2013, identifying 17 priority gas, oil and electricity infrastructure projects, as well as programmes for regulatory convergence.

3. *Transport agency.* Euro-Med ministers have endorsed a list of 44 priority projects for the Mediterranean region for the years 2007-2013, as well as programmes for regulatory convergence. The international financial institutions are closely associated with these projects.

4. *University cooperation agency.* In 2006 ministers adopted a declaration aiming at a Euro-Mediterranean area of education, advanced training and research by 2010. The Bologna process developed by the Council of Europe, and implemented in the EU, is also now serving as a guideline for reforms of higher education in the Maghreb; the related Tempus programme of the EU was opened to South-Mediterranean countries in 2003.

5. *Research centre.* There are established EU-funded networks of research institutes of the EU and South Mediterranean countries in the political (Euromesco) and economic (Femise) sciences, as well as provisions for South Mediterranean countries to be associated with the EU's main Framework Programmes for research funding.

6. *Culture office.* The Anna Lindh Foundation and Alexandria Library initiatives are promoting activity in this field, with substantial inputs from Northern EU member states.

7. *Agriculture office.* There is substantial technical assistance being provided by the EU and bilateral programmes to aid the modernisation and convergence on EU regulatory standards of South Mediterranean agriculture.

8. *Public health centre.* The ENP Action Plans involve cooperation over public health issues, including HIV/AIDS. Euro-Med foreign ministers envisage activity on the surveillance and control of communicable diseases, possibly to be guided by a ministerial meeting on public health.

9. *SME development agency*, 10. *Infrastructure fund*, 11. *Financial innovation instrument.* These domains are explicitly covered by the substantial operations of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and partnership (FEMIP) administered by the European Investment Bank, and operations of the Bank itself.

12. *Economic cooperation agency.* Economic analysis for the region is presently undertaken by

the FEMISE network of research institutes (see point 5 above).

13. *Migration office.* At the policy level the EU becomes inescapably concerned with immigration policy, since in the Schengen area especially purely national policies can no longer be effective. At the operational level, the EU Frontex agency brings resources from all member states to cope with 'boat people' emergencies of the Mediterranean region.

14. *Judicial cooperation.* This is a growing field of cooperation bilaterally between the EU and individual South Mediterranean states within the framework of the Action Plans of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and for cooperation with EU bodies such as Europol and Eurojust.

15. *Civil protection centre.* The Commission has developed a European Civil Protection function to facilitate EU solidarity in the face of civil emergencies such as forest fires and maritime disasters, of obvious relevance to the Mediterranean while needing to be able to call in resources from all the EU.

In conclusion, there is already significant activity in the case of each one of the 15 initiatives proposed for the UMed, with the EU involved in all of them. Under the Sarkozy proposal it is indeed envisaged that the Commission would be fully associated with specific actions. However, given the extent of existing activities, it would seem advisable that there should be no broad-ranging political decision, such as simple endorsement of the list of agencies in Box 2 at Summit level, without a prior review on a case-by-case basis of existing projects and of the nature of weaknesses in the status quo. Each case would best be the subject of a report prepared by one or more independent experts, which should be published. Recommendations could consider the option of embedding new Mediterranean initiatives in existing EU agencies, as well as evaluation of the case for new stand-alone initiatives.

5. The EU's North-South balance of interests

There is also the matter of the strategic understanding within the EU and between the EU member states over the importance and character of the two branches of its present neighbourhood policy – East and South. Tensions over the relative priority between the two are a structural feature of EU politics, and these are naturally matters of vital interest. The overwhelming lesson of experience is that the EU has to maintain a balance between the interests of its Northern and Southern member states.

Whether this balance is to be achieved by seeking to apply the same strategy towards both regions is however questionable. The regions are very different in so many respects, and neither of them wants to co-habit the same EU policy box together. This was made very clear at the first and so far only plenary ministerial meeting of all neighbourhood countries convened by the Commission in September 2007.

Sarkozy has proposed a new deal for the Mediterranean, raising the level of ambition for the EU's coastal states present there. This proposal encountered objections from Northern member states, which do not wish their countries and the EU as a whole to be excluded from essential political initiatives and responsibilities in the region; nor do they wish the balance of EU priorities to be tilted towards the South. The first concern has, it seems, been met at least in part through recent meetings between Sarkozy and Merkel.

On the second point there could be a strategic deal to be done within the EU, with a greater differentiation between the two branches of the neighbourhood policy.

On the one hand, there could be a rationalisation of its Barcelona process and ENP with some enhancement of the role of the regional states within an ordered EU framework.

On the other hand, with regard to the Eastern neighbours, there could be an enhancement of the EU's strategy there, with a shift from neighbourhood without membership perspective, to a fresh approach that began to open up, at least initially for Ukraine and Moldova, precisely this membership perspective for the long-run, and in conformity with the standard Copenhagen criteria. This is what several European neighbours are persistently asking for, and what several Northern states are also advocating, and which could crucially enhance the incentive for these countries to converge more strongly on European values and standards. The balance between Northern and Southern interests would be further respected as the Black Sea and Northern Dimension regions also favour particular roles for the regional member states, anchored however in an EU policy framework and procedures.

6. Conclusions

The Sarkozy initiative has raised two distinct sets of issues: on the one hand the political and economic performance of the South Mediterranean states, and on the other hand matters of political and institutional organisation on the EU side.

These issues are of course not totally unrelated. However the relatively modest achievements of the EU's Mediterranean policies so far should not be attributed essentially to difficulties in the institutional architecture of the Barcelona process and the ENP, but rather to the weakness of the policy input by the member states (both bilaterally and through EU policies), and to the stubborn obstacles to political and economic reforms in the Arab partner states.

Weaknesses in present EU policies include extreme caution over issues of desirable democratic political reforms and respect for human rights, remaining restrictions in market access, especially for agricultural produce, greater mobility of persons and greater involvement in conflict resolution. On these issues the Mediterranean coastal states of the EU have been among the most conservative of member states. It would be an illusion to suppose that to pass the initiative to a sub-set of member states would achieve decisively better results, especially having regard to the list of very technical projects so far advanced for the UMed, and the lack of mention of strategic issues of politics.

However the Sarkozy initiative could be taken up as an opportunity to rationalise and revitalize the EU's present set of policies towards the Mediterranean, which is stuck in a condition of laborious lethargy. Elements of this rationalisation could be the following:

- (a) *A single European Mediterranean policy.* The present overlay of the Barcelona Process and the Southern branch of the European Neighbourhood Policy, to which might be added the UMed, is a hugely confusing handicap for the EU's public diplomacy efforts to explain its policy towards the region. The 'Union for the Mediterranean' could be used as the name and symbol of a single overarching framework for EU relations with the Mediterranean, with a rationalisation and integration of the Barcelona process, the Southern branch of the European Neighbourhood Policy and new ideas arising from the UMed initiative.
- (b) *Clarification of competences.* Before presuming any kind of union of Mediterranean coastal states there should be a systematic review of the actual and most advisable distribution of competences on the EU side for policies towards this region - between the EU institutions and its 27 member states, its 8 coastal member states of the region, and individual member states acting bilaterally.

- (c) *Strategic domains for the EU as a whole.* There is first of all a set of policy domains that are strategic for the EU as a whole, which therefore can hardly be delegated to the coastal states. These include the promotion of its political values of democracy and human rights, its main mechanisms of economic integration with the Euro-Mediterranean region (free trade, regulatory convergence, and financial mechanisms for budgetary grants and investments), migration policy and border management, and key security issues including the unresolved conflicts, radicalisation and terrorism. These major domains are for the EU a mix of exclusive and shared (with member states) competences. These could not revert to being exclusive competences of a sub-set of member states without seriously undermining the EU's foreign and security policies.
- (d) *Matters based on regional geography.* The tasks that could most plausibly devolved to coastal regional bodies would be relatively technical matters aspects of transport, environment, fisheries, border management and energy networks. But in all these cases there are already significant EU policy inputs already in the case of the Mediterranean, both by way of the EU's framework legislation and its funding mechanisms, which means that there is very little policy matter to be devolved collectively to the coastal states.
- (e) *New regional agencies?* There would also have to be a careful review of which (if any) of the 15 technical agencies proposed for the UMed would fill a real gap, and which would be duplicative and might be integrated into existing agencies. The Commission has recently set out a comprehensive review of its existing EU agencies with a view to their possible opening to participation by neighbouring countries, and the Council has welcomed this.
- (f) *Lightening of EU procedures.* There is certainly a case for slimming down some of the heavy procedures of the Barcelona process with too many meetings now involving all 27 EU member states, as well as the 12 Barcelona partner states. There is now a menu of alternative procedures, on the basis of which some lightening of the present mix of procedures could be sought. The menu consists of i) the regular format of the EU institutions and the 27 member states, ii) the so-called 'open Troika' method, in which the EU is represented by the Presidency and Commission, accompanied by those member states that are most seriously interested, iii) cases where there may be full participation by some member states and the Commission, with observer or associate status for some others, and iv) the most technical cases where the Commission alone may represent the EU. The EU has in fact been developing sophisticated arrangements for its representation in other maritime regions on its periphery (for the Baltic and Barents Seas for years, and now also beginning for the Black Sea). However the choice of procedures has to respect graduations in intensity of political interests from the strategic to the purely technical.
- (g) *'Reinforced cooperation'?* Another possible technique would be to use the 'reinforced cooperation' procedure now inscribed in the Lisbon Treaty. A key principle here is that the club has to be open to any seriously interested member state. This procedure, which has not yet been used in practice, may present some disadvantages of institutional and legal rigidity compared to a more supply 'open Troika' method.
- (h) *Extension to the Adriatic?* The present French proposal to extend participation in the UMed beyond the existing 'Barcelona' states to include also the Adriatic states seems a questionable idea, since it would add to the congestion of meetings and to the political heterogeneity of participants. The Adriatic states are a sub-group of the Stabilisation and Association process for the Western Balkans (the French proposal is for the UMed to include Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia, but not Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo).
- (i) *Balancing Southern and Eastern neighbourhood interests.* With a rationalisation and integration of the EU's Mediterranean policies, there could be a greater differentiation of the present content of the Eastern and Southern branches of the European Neighbourhood Policy, with each to evolve in accordance with its respective priorities and contexts, while no doubt retaining much in common. The balance between the regional interests of Northern and Southern member states of the EU will need to be respected in any enhancement of the level of ambition of the its Mediterranean policies and/or of the role of the Southern

member states. This could be satisfied by an enhancement of the existing neighbourhood policy towards the East European partner states (e.g. by granting long-run membership perspectives to countries such as Ukraine and Moldova). This could form the basis to a strategic deal between the member states, permitting advances in EU policy towards both East and South at the same time, but in a differentiated manner.

How to proceed. It would seem that the Summit meetings convened for 13-14 July 2008 should best be the occasion for an open debate on all ideas for rationalising and strengthening Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. If the conclusion were broadly to integrate Barcelona, ENP South and new UMed ideas in a single European Mediterranean policy, it would be a normal next step for the Commission to be invited to draw up a fully specified proposal on the basis of the Summit conclusions.

Annex A

Positions taken by leaders of Mediterranean partner states

His Majesty the King of Morocco, 23 October 2007, speech before President Sarkozy [extract, our translation]

....

“The neighbourhood policy of the European Union has reinforced the aspirations of Morocco to achieve an “Advanced Status”, giving its relations with the European Union the strategic dimension that is its due. This ambitious project will consecrate the pioneering role of my country in the rapprochement of the two sides of the Mediterranean.

“This legitimate ambition has always been supported by the constant engagement of France in the workings of the European Union. We are convinced that the forthcoming French presidency of the European Union will bring an active contribution to the realisation of this objective.

“You have, Mr President, taken the initiative to launch a visionary and audacious project, that of the Union of the Mediterranean. We are resolved to explore with you all the opportunities seeking to promote a novel and progressive partnership as envisaged, and an innovative and solidaristic taking in hand of the multiple challenges of our Mediterranean space.

“The multiple challenges of globalisation call effectively the Mediterranean region to achieve a greater harmonisation of policies of collective security, sustainable development, and the management of cultures and faiths, in perfect articulation with the desired consolidation of the Barcelona process. The initiative of the Union of the Mediterranean will lay down, without doubt, the markers for a new pact between Europe and Africa, for which the Mediterranean will be the axis and pivot”.

President Bouteflika of Algeria, 4 December 2007, speech before President Sarkozy [extract, our translation]

....

“Mr President, I know that you promote the project for the Union of the Mediterranean to which you are particularly devoted and which you advocate with such energy and optimism. We have already discussed it, and I do not hide that I have not remained insensitive to your enthusiasm and that, in Algeria, we are disposed to contribute to its realisation to the extent that we will have to specify its contours and objectives, as well as the place it will take alongside the organisms that are already in place and which bring together the countries of the two sides of the Mediterranean.

....

“It is clear that the North and South share the same aspirations for security, stability and prosperity. These aspirations can be satisfied in a climate of solidarity based on our unity in our diversity. But one cannot ignore the obstacles and the crises that will have to be overcome.

“The most important of these crises is evidently that of the Middle East, where it becomes more urgent than ever to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territory and to permit the Palestinian people to have the entire sovereignty of a viable state and recognition of its frontiers.

“I believe that France in this context has always supported the respect of international law and the right of all peoples to self-determination. This has been so on several occasions and in particular for us directly, since after eight years of war of liberation that was costly in human lives, the Algerian people achieved independence in exercising their right to self-determination.

“This explains without doubt our entire solidarity with all peoples under foreign domination and who struggle for their right to self-determination. This is particularly the case of the people of the Western Sahara whose right to self-determination is recognised internationally and must be exercised freely and without restrictions”.

Annex B

Notes on the present organisation of some sectoral policies in the Mediterranean

Environment

The Mediterranean has come to see a plurality of frameworks and instruments attempting to address its environmental challenges. The oldest, since 1978, has been a system of cooperation of Mediterranean coastal states based on the *Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean against Pollution*, supported by the UN. Parties to this Convention and its protocols include all EU coastal member states (Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia and Spain) and the EU itself, as well as all non-EU coastal states. However more recently, within the framework *Barcelona process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership - EMP)* programmes have been devised at the regional and bilateral level to help the South Mediterranean states progress in line with the protocols, and major EU laws and projects such as Water Framework Directive of 2000. In 2005 the Barcelona summit of the EMP adopted the *Horizon 2020* document aiming at tackling all major sources of pollution of the Mediterranean by that date. While the Barcelona Convention and Barcelona process were for years largely uncoordinated, this seems now to be changing for the better.²⁰ A detailed review of priority areas has recently been published by the European Environment Agency and the UN Environment Programme and its Mediterranean Action Plan.²¹ The EU has been implementing the obligations flowing from the Barcelona Convention protocols through successive Council Decisions.²² However the EEA-ENUP report noted that “regrettably the environment has not been consistently set out as a top priority by all partner states in development of these national programmes.”²³

Transport

Strategic planning for the Euro-Mediterranean region’s transport system is well developed in initiatives of the European Commission, as set out for example in the ‘High Level Group report of 2005 chaired by Loyola de Palacio’²⁴, and more recently in a Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region for the years 2007-2013.²⁵ These list 44 priority projects for the Mediterranean region, for ports, roads, railways, inland waterways, airports and inter-modal connections. The plan has been endorsed by Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference. The major international financial institutions, especially the EIB and World Bank are fully associated with these planning activities, and therefore positioned to follow through with investment financing. However the accent is on institutional and regulatory reform, as well as infrastructure projects. The regulatory issues involve a substantial degree of approximation by the Southern partner states on EU or international maritime, road, port and airline standards.

Energy

Energy cooperation is institutionalised through the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Energy, which held its fifth conference in December 2007. This adopted a detailed declaration, summarised under three priorities for 2008-2013:

- harmonisation of energy markets and legislations and to pursue the integration of energy markets in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- sustainable development in the energy sector;
- infrastructure extension, investment financing and research and development.

²⁰ Oriol Costa Fernandez, “Dos Barcelonas para un Mar – la transformacion de la cooperacion ambiental en el Mediterraneo”, CIDOB, Barcelona, January 2008.

²¹ EEA, UNEP, “Priority Issues in the Mediterranean Environment”, EEA, Copenhagen, 2006

²² As listed in EEA op cit, Table 10.1.

²³ EEA op.cit. p.69.

²⁴ High Level Group (chaired by Loyola de Palacio), ‘Extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions’, November 2007.

²⁵ European Commission, ‘Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region for the years 2007-2013’, October 2007²⁵.

In particular the 2008-2013 plan identifies 17 energy infrastructure projects, including gas pipelines and interconnections, electricity interconnections and oil pipelines, which will be eligible for EIB financing. The various pipelines and interconnections are both south-south and south-north in nature.

There is an existing association called MEDENER of energy management agencies of five EU Mediterranean states (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) and six Southern states (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority and Tunisia).

Fisheries

The FAO's General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), whose initial agreement entered into force in 1952, brings together all coastal state of the region together with the European Commission, and can adopt binding recommendations on conservation and the management of living maritime resources. For the case of tuna fish the Mediterranean is covered by International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which sets quantitative limits for allowable catches. The EU for its part, through the Common Fisheries Policy, has exclusive competence to negotiate fisheries agreements with third countries and represent the EU in regional fisheries bodies. The EU adopted in 2002 an Action Plan for the sustainability of fisheries in the Mediterranean, which concerns protection zones, and improvement of fishing techniques to reduce adverse impact on stocks²⁶. Recently the European Commissioner for fisheries drew attention to the mounting pressure on fisheries stocks in the Mediterranean, arguing that the GFCM was not functioning adequately ("has to be re-vitalised"), and that the EU's legal framework is needed on matters such as trawling techniques and a reduction in fishing fleet capacities in both EU and non-EU member states. This is a clear case where there has to be a combination of EU measures (setting of norms, negotiations with non-EU states) and national implementation by the coastal states.

Border management & migration

All the coastal Mediterranean member states are in the front line facing huge migratory pressures, including the spectacular and often tragic trafficking of 'boat people' into the EU's southern islands – Canary islands, Lampedusa, Malta, the Aegean islands, Cyprus. Given the realities of the completely open Schengen area, responsibility for both practical border management and more strategic issues of migration policy have gravitated towards a significant EU role in cooperation with member states. Border management is a regular chapter in the EU's bilateral relations with the Mediterranean states (e.g. Action Plans of the ENP). The Frontex agency of the EU is operational, and since 2005 it has been responsible for 30 joint operations at the EU's external borders, including 9 operations consisting of countermeasures against illegal immigration flows at the EU's Southern maritime borders. Resources in support of these operations are scarce, and the operating teams for southern operations include participation from several Northern member states.

Financial institutions

Three headings in Box 2 (SME development agency, an infrastructure fund and a financial innovation instrument) heavily overlap with the work of the European Investment Bank and its special window for the Mediterranean, the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP), which joins EU budget funds with the loan and investment resources of the Bank. These operations are on a large scale, with total EIB operations in the region of over €14 billion, and FEMIP financing amounting to €6 billion since its inception in 2002. In 2006 FEMIP funded projects in the fields of energy, environment, industry and SMEs, health and private equity. Some of Sarkozy's earlier speeches have raised the question of a Mediterranean Investment Bank, presumably separate from the European Investment Bank. This is an idea already considered by the EU in the past, which resulted in a preference to develop the FEMIP special window at the EIB, rather than a new institution. There remain concerns that the EIB and FEMIP are too passive in their operations with regard to issues of economic policy and corporate governance. Here the example of the EBRD is cited, as a bank that has become skilled in blending its financial intervention with active concern for related policy issues. Given the declining need for EBRD operations in the most advanced transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe, there is a case for mandating the EBRD to open up activity in the Mediterranean.

Civil emergencies

The European Commission environment services has developed a European Civil Protection function designed to facilitate EU solidarity in the face of civil emergencies, of which for the Mediterranean region the problems of forest

²⁶ "Communication laying down an Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean Sea under the Common Fisheries Policy", COM(2002) final, 9.10.2002

fires and maritime disasters and pollution are of special relevance. A Monitoring and Information Centre has been established, to serve as information hub and coordinating mechanism.

Maritime policy

The European Commission published in June 2007 a Green Paper proposal for a Community Maritime Policy, which would seek to integrate all elements of EU policy bearing upon the seas and coastal regions and ports.²⁷ This led in to a formal proposal to the Council and Parliament for an Integrated Maritime Policy,²⁸ which the European Council adopted in December 2007. The priority domains of sectoral policy which the Action Plan seeks to integrate are:

- A European maritime transport space without barriers
- A European strategy for maritime research
- National integrated maritime policies of member states
- A roadmap towards maritime spatial planning by member states
- A strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change on coastal regions
- Reduction of CO2 emission and pollution by shipping
- Elimination of pirate fishing and destructive bottom trawling
- A European network of maritime clusters
- A review of EU labour law exemptions for shipping and fishing sectors

Presumably, as and when this maritime policy develops in practice, it will be applied explicitly to individual seas – the Mediterranean, Black Sea, etc.

²⁷ “Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: a European vision for the oceans and seas”, COM(2006)275 final, 7 June 2007.

²⁸ “An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union”, COM(2007)575 final, 10 October 2007.

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