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The EU's Framing of the Mediterranean (1990-2002): Building a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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Abstract

This paper looks into what was a defining phase for Euro-Mediterranean relations. In the 1990s the Mediterranean was presented as a source of threat, but also as a need for engagement due to proximity and interdependence. The Mediterranean was also seen as an opportunity and a responsibility. Through its engagement with the Mediterranean the EU emphasized its identity as a transformative actor, linking trade liberalization and political transformation. This contributed to a gradual de-politicization and, above all, the technocratization of Euro-Mediterranean practice. Another constant feature of this period was securitization, particularly after the attacks of September 11. The seeds of existing debates on how the EU should deal with its Southern Neighbourhood were planted in this period. By looking at the institutional, political and intellectual debates of the 1990s, we can trace back some of the conceptualizations that still shape the European vision of the Mediterranean but also of itself.

Introduction

Investigating the processes that led to a particular conceptualization of the Mediterranean in the 1990s may resemble to what one official interviewed described as an "archaeological exercise" (Interviewee 1).[2] Another confessed that it was nostalgic exercise. "Those good old days!" he exclaimed (Interviewee 4). Yet, investigating this period not only help us understand the past, but also the present. Many features of today's EU discourses and practices towards the Mediterranean are deeply rooted in those of the 1990s. It was in the 1990s that the discourse shifted towards a region-building approach whereby the Mediterranean was presented as the optimal perimeter for such an effort, discarding alternative options such as focusing on the Maghreb or opening to the countries of the Gulf. It was also in the 1990s that the EU presented itself as a transformative power.

This paper aims at deconstructing how the EU defines the Mediterranean, and identifying the dichotomies behind this definition (Cebeci and Schumacher 2016). Research for the paper has been based on the identification, codification and discourse analysis of 227 documents. This sample is made up of 43 documents issued by European institutions, 40 from key Member States (Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom), 77 academic articles (priority was given to journals having the Mediterranean as a focus but also to authors who

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2   According to MEDRESET ethical standards interviews are anonymous. Conversations were not recorded and, thus, when quoted, this should be understood as a re-creation based on the notes taken during the interview.

were especially active during this particular period),[3] 33 think-tank reports (with a particular emphasis on those issued by the EuroMeSCo network due to the cooperative relation among this network and between it and the European institutions),[4] 15 documents produced by civil-society organizations[5] and 14 books and articles written by intellectuals who were commonly regarded as salient in discussions on the Mediterranean. Additionally 12 other documents and reports issued by other intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations or NATO have been included in the analysis to verify the extent of coincidence in their conceptualization of the Mediterranean. The authors made a conscious choice to include documents written in European languages other than English, as the policy and academic production on Mediterranean affairs is particularly rich in French, Spanish and Italian.[6] This was complemented with 8 in-depth interviews with actors who were active in that particular period, working for Member States, for European institutions and in civil society organizations.

This collection of sources provides a representative pool of empirical basis to investigate whether and through which processes the EU's discourse on the Mediterranean is constitutive of, and legitimizing, its geopolitical, securitized, depoliticizing and technocratic approach to that space (Cebeci and Schumacher 2016: 3). To provide an answer, this research has systematically followed the debates on the Mediterranean within the political, civil society and epistemic communities in Europe between 1990 and 2002. Through this analysis the paper identifies which conceptualizations and narratives have become dominant or even hegemonic, in which context, and which are the actors or constellations of actors producing and reproducing them. By the same token, it also investigates which were the alternative approaches and when they were marginalized, silenced and even co-opted.

This paper covers the period from 1990 to 2002. This was a period when the EU fixed a geographical understanding of the Mediterranean that has since then been reproduced not only through policy instruments but also by the epistemic community dealing with Mediterranean affairs and European foreign policy at large. It was also during this period that the EU represented itself as a transformative power and, consequently, set up policy instruments to achieve this goal. Finally, it was a period in which securitization processes were palpable, both at the inception of the Barcelona Process but also when, in the early 2000s, migration and terrorism escalated in the agenda.

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3 Five journals were analysed in detail: *Mediterranean Politics, European Foreign Affairs Review, The International Spectator, Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* and *Confluences Méditerranée*.
4 This paper browsed and selected publications from six representative think-tanks (Chatham House, IFRI, CIDOB, IAI, SWP and EUISS) and systematically analysed the papers produced in the framework of EuroMeSCo. The Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission is the main network of research centres on politics and security in the Mediterranean and was set up in 1996 with the goal of fostering research, information and social relations among its members as well as acting as a confidence-building measure in the framework of the Barcelona Process.
5 Particular attention was given to those organizing or participating in Euro-Mediterranean Civil Fora but also alternative conferences.
6 Quotes from non-English sources have been translated by the authors.

1. The EU's Construction of the Mediterranean

As explained by Sally Khalifa Isaac and Haidi Esmat Kares (2017), European economic interests had triggered previous European policies towards the Mediterranean. Yet from 1990 onwards, political and security considerations started to play a greater role, either because new political opportunities arose (mainly the launch of the Middle East Peace Process, but also a short-lived Moroccan-Algerian détente in the early 1990s), new risks became apparent (violence in Algeria since 1991 but also the regional effects of the Gulf War) or, not least, because the newly founded EU wanted to upgrade its foreign policy profile, searching for a role for itself in a world where the Cold War had just ended.

The post-Cold War period was, as put by Federica Bicchi (2007: 129), a period in which "new ideas were circulated, new options were considered". National governments, European institutions, diplomats and members of the research community contributed to the consolidation of four narratives: the Mediterranean as a threat, as a challenge, as an opportunity and as a responsibility.

The Mediterranean was regarded as a threat because of its geographical proximity and because of the growing levels of violence, particularly in Algeria. It is revealing to reread the list of factors that according to the EU could threaten the stability in this region: "population growth, recurrent social crises, large-scale migration, and the growth of religious fundamentalism and integralism" (European Council 1992: 21). Thus, we can observe the employment of a security speech act when tackling demographic trends and religiosity.

A former European minister explained that following a diplomatic tour to the region he realized that it was a "time bomb" and that "Europeans should do something to cushion the destabilizing impact of forthcoming crises" (Interviewee 5). Roberto Aliboni (1991: 17) depicted the situation as one where Europeans were "frightened by […] the growing immigration from these regions". According to Dorothée Schmid (2003), it was in the 1990s that what had been classical economic cooperation became political. According to this French researcher, "in this period relations with the Arab and Muslim world were perceived in confrontational terms" (Schmid 2003: 5). The Mediterranean worried Europeans. It was considered the epicentre of a latent crisis. The Mediterranean, Schmid argues, appeared as a "geographical and conceptual framework to elaborate a European response to this threat" (Ibid.).

Federica Bicchi (2007: 144) considers that in this period "the map of European perceptions vis-à-vis the Mediterranean challenges and threats was redrawn to take in migration (securitised at a low level), Islamic fundamentalism (politicised and even securitised at low levels) and terrorism". Intellectuals also elaborated on the concept of the Mediterranean as a threat. Paul Balta, for instance, argued that the threat resides "in the fact that the Mediterranean is the meeting place and possible confrontation between North and South, the rich and the poor, youth and aged population" (Balta 1992: 36).

A complementary stream of thinking emphasized the idea that *the Mediterranean was a challenge*. From that point of view, it was inevitable and even natural to intensify cooperation between the EU and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The magic word was "interdependence". The European Commission (1994: 2), for instance, listed environment, energy, migration, trade and investment as "areas of Euro-Mediterranean interdependence"

and considered that Europeans had "a vital interest in helping Mediterranean countries meet the challenges they face". The then Italian Prime Minister, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, described the challenge as follows: "tackling and solving problems which are economic, demographic and of coexistence among different civilisations is key for the coming decades. […] We have to be aware of the problem, of its dimension, in order to come to concrete proposals" (Mitterrand et al. 1993). This idea was accepted by all EU Member States. In Essen, in 1994, they affirmed that peace, stability and prosperity in the region were considered amongst the "highest priorities of Europe" (European Council 1994b: 26).

A third narrative developed in this period insists on the fact that cooperating in *the Mediterranean was an economic and political opportunity for the EU*. From that point of view, containing a threat should not satisfy the EU. Several opportunities were to be explored. The Commission (1994: 5), for instance, foresaw that "all Member States would benefit from greater stability and prosperity in the region. This would multiply trade and investment opportunities and reinforce the base for cooperation in political and economic fields".

It was also a political opportunity. Investing in a new Mediterranean initiative was a way of increasing Europe's international profile. A European diplomat affirmed that through the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership the EU was also trying to contribute to peace in the Middle East and, by doing so, to increase its global reputation and be recognized as a player – by regional actors but also by the US (Interviewee 2). In her analysis, Federica Bicchi (2007: 145) went even further, considering that Europe's exclusion from the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) pushed Europeans to establish a "Mediterranean policy as a Middle East policy by proxy". In the case of Spain, which played a leading role in this period, investing in the Mediterranean policy of the EU was perceived as an opportunity for "enhancing Spain's international clout" (Hernando de Larramendi 2009) and also as an instrument to soften bilateral tensions with some Mediterranean neighbours such as Morocco (Interview 2). This is why the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has also been described as a process of successful bottom-up Europeanization as individual Member States elevated their priorities and concerns to the EU level (Barbé et al. 2007: 42).

This narrative and the dynamics that it implies are indicative of a halfway politicization process. Introducing into the Euro-Mediterranean agenda sensitive issues such as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), terrorism, conflict resolution and particularly anything related to the MEPP contributed to the politicization of the agenda. It was far from becoming a purely technical cooperation exercise. As one interviewee explained, several governments from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries pushed hard in that direction, particularly regarding WMD (Interviewee 1). However, by trying to tackle those issues in the framework of a much larger agenda (one that aimed to mitigate an escalation of conflict and to soften initial positions), and specifically when the European Commission took the dominant role in the implementation of the agenda, a depoliticized and technocratic approach started to gain traction. The Commission but also European Affairs departments in some Member States were qualified by one of the officials interviewed as pushing for technocratic responses to political challenges (Interviewee 1). That is, they were acting as depoliticizing agents.

The fourth narrative revolves around the idea that *the Mediterranean was Europe's responsibility*. To a certain extent this approach is reminiscent of an imperial framing (Doty 1996). From that point of view, the EU has no choice but to invest in dialogue and cooperation with Mediterranean

countries for a number of reasons that include proximity and historical considerations but also global trends. This is well reflected in a statement by the European Commission: "at a time of globalisation and reinforced regionalism in North America and in Asia, the Community cannot *renounce the benefits* of integrating its southern neighbours under commonly accepted rules" (European Commission 1994: 6, emphasis added).

These four narratives framed the political, institutional and intellectual discourse on the Mediterranean in discussion of the different initiatives that were on the table. These narratives were not perceived as contradictory visions but rather as a coherent catalogue of arguments justifying a greater European involvement. In this process, as explained by Federica Bicchi (2007), Stephen Calleya (2005), Richard Gillespie (1996, 1997, 1999), Bichara Khader (1997), Esther Barbé (1995) and Hayete Chérigui (2000), we can identify several policy-entrepreneurs. The Commission together with Southern European countries (Spain and France in particular) are seen as playing the most relevant role. Germany was also critical, as it agreed to multiply the resources available for this project (Interviewees 1 and 6). Compared to other Northern European countries Sweden was also exceptionally committed (Interviewee 1, Johansson-Nogués 2015).

In several interviews, the role of specific individuals was also mentioned, particularly relating to the preparation of the Barcelona Process.[7] For them, the Euro-Mediterranean project was not only a national and European endeavour but also a personal bet. Many of those individuals developed a strong ownership of the Euro-Mediterranean idea and remained active in its defence.

2. The EU's Description of the Self

Internally, the European project of regional integration was going through encouraging times, picturing itself as a "role model" for other regional integration experiments. In the 1980s, the European Community (EC) enlarged to three southern countries, Greece, Portugal and Spain, which had overcome decades of authoritarian regimes partly thanks to the "landing platform" that EU membership represented. As part of "democracy's third wave" (Huntington 1991), the effects of future ties with the EC were considered as key drivers for internal political reform and economic development. As one of the officials interviewed underlined, the Spanish transition to democracy was very present in the mindset of the architects of the Barcelona Process. Modernization and attachment to the EC were driving forces of the political transformations in Spain, so a similar process vis-à-vis the Southern Mediterranean partners would prevent "political involution" by means of reform in the framework provided by the Euro-Mediterranean

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7   In relation to 1995, these individuals included Javier Solana, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Antonio Navarro, Gabriel Busquets, José Riera for Spain, Manuel Marín, Eberhard Klein and Michael Webb for the Commission; Vittorio Griffo for the General Secretariat of the Council; and Ambassador Prague from France. In the case of Germany, the name of Chancellor Köhl was mentioned, as he struck a deal with Felipe González that was critical to move the idea forward. In the case of Italy, Gianni De Michelis who was minister from 1999 to 2002 was mentioned as a critical person during the early 1990s and particularly involved in the attempt to launch the CSCM. As for Mediterranean partners, two names were mentioned: Amr Moussa (then Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Amin Kherbi (an Algerian senior official in charge of the coordination of the Arab position). It is worth mentioning that they are all men.

Partnership (EMP) (Interviewee 6).

Secondly, and particularly since the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, the EU was equipping itself with a new set of foreign policy capabilities in the form of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), on which the political aspects of the Barcelona Process were framed (Barbé 1996). As Cardwell (2009) has argued, although the EMP was not conceived following any specific provisions of the Maastricht Treaty or the CFSP, its objective to create a shared area of peace, stability and prosperity relates to the institutionalization of a "system of governance". The aim to project the EU's own system of governance of the CFSP into the EMP puts both experiments on a similar footing regarding the EU's foreign policy agenda. The CFSP, together with the longstanding external relations of the EC, would be based on a particular expansion of Europe's model of integration and soft power, particularly towards its immediate neighbourhood, thus bringing about change in the domestic landscape of partner countries. While the Mediterranean had thus been described as dangerous (see Section 1), this was contrasted by the EU being described as a stable and transformative entity. By constructing the "Mediterranean", "Europe" would simultaneously be constructing itself (Pace 2002: 189). The image projected by the EU would find in the EMP a testing field for the projection of its "civilian power" (Duchêne 1973).

Externally, the mid-1990s also provided an optimistic framework upon which to build the fundamentals of the Barcelona Process. The Process, although never conceived as a substitute for the MEPP but rather as a confidence-building generator (Khader 2015: 43), would accompany a long-lasting solution and facilitate the reconciliation between Arabs and Israelis. Conscious of its role as mediator vis-à-vis the United States, the EU portrayed itself as a "region builder and partnership maker" (Attinà 2004: 141), reflecting its internal evolution as a successful regional integration project and its normative foreign policy. The reference to "normative power" Europe (Manners 2002) is consistent with the attempts of the EU to become a security community builder in the Mediterranean (Adler and Crawford 2006), as suggested in the conceptual framework provided by Cebeci and Schumacher (2016).

3. Drawing the Boundaries of the Mediterranean

We can trace back to the early 1990s the existence of three different conceptions on who is and who is not part of the Mediterranean region and, consequently, who should and who should not be invited to join a regional dialogue.

Thus, from the very beginning it was clear that there was not a commonly accepted vision on who was part of this Mediterranean space. This paper joins the scholarly debate on the European construction of the Mediterranean (Ruel 1991, Henry and Groc 2000, Pace 2002, Bilgin 2004, Pace 2006, Adler et al. 2006, Bicchi 2007), adopting a constructivist approach in line with MEDRESET's theoretical framework (Huber and Paciello 2016, Cebeci and Schumacher 2016). The Mediterranean is a social construction, and as such its meaning as well as the scope of the region have evolved over time.

The very fact that different Mediterranean initiatives were on the table also meant that different perimeters were considered. This was the case for the 5+5 dialogue, which in 1990 set a rather informal and flexible framework for political dialogue and sectorial cooperation between

Southern European countries and the five countries of the Maghreb, that is still operational (Coustillière 2012). Italy and Spain flirted with the idea of launching a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), thus replicating the Helsinki Process in the Mediterranean and opening the scope for a broader geographical understanding.[8] France and Egypt launched a Mediterranean Forum in 1994, bringing together 11 countries in an informal inter-governmental dialogue. NATO also launched its Mediterranean Dialogue in 1994 and the OSCE created the status of "Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation" one year later. The EU as a whole also engaged in a process of reviewing and upgrading its policies towards this region. It all started with the endorsement by the European Council of the Renovated Mediterranean Policy (RMP) in 1990.

As seen in the previous section, some countries were particularly active in fixing the role for the EU in this region. That is why it is also important to see how the Mediterranean was conceptualized in national debates on foreign policy. Authors like Jean-Robert Henry (2009), Hayete Chérigui or Miguel Hernando de Larramendi (2009), Richard Gillespie (1999) or Esther Barbé (1991) have referred to the links between national policies towards the Mediterranean and different conceptions of the national identity in the process that brought both France and Spain to gradually rebrand their traditional "Arab policies" as "Mediterranean". For instance, by adopting this terminology Spaniards attempted to turn the page of Francoist foreign policy. For France, this policy was intimately related to its relationship with its colonial past and the management of its internal diversity.

One of the first dilemmas that these policy-entrepreneurs but also the EU had to face was whether it should have a differentiated approach towards the Maghreb and the Middle East or should adopt an integrated Mediterranean vision. For instance, the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council in 1992 included two separate declarations on relations between Europe and the Maghreb and on the Middle East Peace Process but, even more important, the concept of a partnership was exclusively used to refer to the Maghreb, a region described as "the Union's southern frontier" with whom the EU aimed to establish a "framework of cooperation in all fields, which should gradually lead to an upgraded partnership between the Union and its member States and the Maghreb countries" (European Council 1992: 21). In contrast, the conclusions of the Corfu European Council in 1994 stressed "the value for all Mediterranean partners of jointly examining political, economic and social problems to which solutions may be more effectively sought in the context of regional cooperation" and gave a mandate to the Council and the Commission to evaluate "the global policy of the European Union in the Mediterranean region and possible initiatives to strengthen this policy in the short and medium term, bearing in mind the possibility of convening a conference attended by the European Union and its Mediterranean partners"(European Council 1994a: 13).

Opening the geographical scope to the Eastern Mediterranean region was only possible once Israel and the Palestinians had signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. After that point, European officials considered that launching a Mediterranean initiative involving both Israel and its Arab neighbours was not only conceivable but also desirable (Interviewee 3). François Mitterrand, in a press conference during a French-Italian summit in 1993, also speculated on that possibility

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8 This idea did not materialize due to the lack of support in France and in the US, but the thinking behind it had a long-lasting impact.

but argued that "diplomats and politicians should assess whether the whole Mediterranean or only part of it should be invited to join" (Mitterrand et al. 1993).

Defining who was to be part of this process and how the whole endeavour would be labelled became a border-drawing exercise with clear implications on how the EU was defining itself. Three different approaches coexisted. Yet, the dominant one was the "*institutional vision*". It conceived of the Mediterranean as a group of countries with which the EU already had some level of cooperation in the framework of the existing Global Mediterranean Policy. The idea was to upgrade and complement what already existed. Until then, the limits of the Euro-Mediterranean basin were not clearly defined. As noted by Michelle Pace (2002), the European Commission referred to the Mediterranean as a region of variable membership, at times only mentioning the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, then adding Israel, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta, sometimes including or removing Libya and Mauritania from the list, and even at times expanding it to cover Central and Eastern European countries. On the side of the EU Member States, the definition was not clear either. Interviewed officials clearly depicted different understandings of the Mediterranean by the United Kingdom, "who saw only the Middle East", Spain, "who, in addition to the Maghreb, first focused on the Arab world but then adopted the Mediterranean narrative to include Israel", and France, "who only focused on former colonies" (Interviewees 1 and 2).

The Barcelona Conference drew a fixed boundary of the Mediterranean by virtue of participation and membership in the EMP. Contrary to previous initiatives, the "official" Euro-Mediterranean region was to be formed, from 1995 onwards, by the EU Member States (15 at the time) and the 12 southern Mediterranean countries (eight of them Arab: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon and Syria; in addition to Israel, Turkey, Malta and Cyprus). Participation in Barcelona defined the "ins" and the "outs" of Euro-Mediterranean politics, with Libya being left out of the picture given the sanctions imposed by the UN and Mauritania considered part of the relations of the EU with ACP countries. Together with the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union, these countries were invited as "special guests" (Philippart 2003: 202), although Libya refused to participate. The Balkans and Albania would also be left out. In addition to the instability in the former Yugoslavia, which precluded inclusion (Edis 1998: 95), they were perceived as more appropriately accommodated in the group of Central and Eastern European countries, qualifying neither as Mediterranean or as European (Pace 2002: 201).

One of the peculiarities of the discussion on the scope of the Mediterranean and its meaning is that it often implies a defining Europe's limits and purpose. Although some of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries were to become either members of the EU (Malta and Cyprus) or candidates (Turkey), compared to more ambitious projects such as PHARE and pre-accession strategies, cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries would never be based on their eventual membership in the EU (Barbé 1996, Attinà 2004). This idea became even more clear when official texts (from 1995 onwards) started to use the concept "Euro-Mediterranean" as if this space from Finland to Algeria and from Morocco to Jordan was the juxtaposition of two separate entities (Europe and the Mediterranean).

Thus, it is particularly interesting to identify how different actors used (and reproduced) the categories of "us" and "them". In the interviews conducted in the framework of the MEDRESET project, these terms were not used consistently. Even the same official could give them a

different meaning depending on the issue approached. "Us" was often used to designate the European Union members while "they" were the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. However, on some occasions "us" was used to refer to a group of like-minded countries and institutions and "they" were those to be convinced. Finally, the concept of "us" was used to refer to a group of individuals who shared a common vision, which was not restricted to officials and policy-makers but also included intellectuals, social activists and members of the research community, including also individuals from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

In Barcelona, partner countries also drew a line vis-à-vis external powers. The US expressed interest in the launch of the EMP, although it was never formally invited, due to the willingness to separate the fate of the EMP from the MEPP and the added pressure that the US involvement would put on Arab participants. In addition, US diplomats did not perceive the Mediterranean as a political subject or a geopolitical space but rather a "transit route" towards the Middle East (Interviewee 3). For similar reasons, NATO was never part of the equation. But all representatives who wanted to closely monitor the debates of the first Euro-Mediterranean conference were invited to a "diplomatic tribune", where Central and Eastern European countries, Russia and the US, among others, sat (Barbé 1996: 34).

This "institutional vision" was partially resisted by a "*geopolitical vision*" which contested the perimeter of what the EU had considered the Mediterranean to be. Such was the case for the CSCM project, which covered a space from Mauritania and Portugal in the West to Iran to the East and also aimed at involving the US and Russia, thus including the Black Sea as part of a wider Mediterranean (Barbé 1991: 79). Yet, with this exemption, such a view was mainly voiced among academics and members of think-tanks; Roberto Aliboni (1991: 3) affirmed that, from a geopolitical perspective, the Mediterranean could not be limited to the coastal countries but should comprise parts of the Sahel and the Gulf countries. This statement reflects what nowadays the EU calls the "neighbours of the neighbours". Other authors focused on the idea of a variable geometry approach, ranging from the three sub-regions of southern Europe, the Maghreb and the Mashreq (Calleya 1997), to inclusion of the Balkans (Tanner 1996) and even the Gulf of Arabia if strategic and energy considerations were reflected (Lorca 1996).

Finally, some voices advocated for an "*activist vision*". The Mediterranean was presented as a project, as a call for action. A good example of this is Paul Balta's (1992) proposal to reinvent the Mediterranean. From that perspective, the idea of who could be part of such a project was rather flexible. The Mediterranean was more an idea than a region. Those voices were active in the intellectual debate but had little influence in the policy cycle, at least during this embryonic period.

4. The EMP in Practice and Its Three Big Debates

In the mid-1990s, the seeds planted with previous initiatives materialized in the form of a proper cooperation framework between both shores of the Mediterranean. Several internal and external conditions facilitated the emergence of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP, or the "Barcelona Process") as a multidimensional, multilateral and regional framework for cooperation, mostly driven from Europe. The Barcelona Process emerged as a comprehensive framework of regional cooperation among the 15 EU Member States and the 12 southern

Mediterranean partners. Unlike the previous initiatives, the EMP aimed to establish a "comprehensive cooperation" structured on three baskets: a political and security partnership with the objective to establish a "common area of peace and stability"; an economic and financial partnership aimed at "an area of shared prosperity" and based on a free trade area, in place by 2010; and a social and cultural partnership to foster human development, better cultural understanding and civil society exchanges.

At the Barcelona Conference of 27-28 November 1995, and under the Spanish Presidency of the EU, the participants adopted an executive agreement made up of a Declaration and a Work Programme, both constituting the EMP. The Barcelona Declaration embodied a "spirit of openness and generosity enabling a climate of trust to be created in the region", in the words of Javier Solana, then Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs (Solana 1995). This "Barcelona spirit" was built on the basis of the complementarity between the EMP and other relations that participating partners might have with the EU. The EMP was also accompanied by a flexible implementation programme, not formally institutionalized although represented in a two-level structure: the "Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs" and the "Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process", at a senior official level, which monitored the implementation of the Process (Attinà 2004, Philippart 2003).

The spirit of mutual trust among the Euro-Mediterranean partners survived at least until the following two meetings of the Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers, organized in Valletta (April 1997) and Stuttgart (April 1999). With the election of the new Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu in May 1996, the much-avoided "contamination" of the Barcelona Process by the MEPP became a reality. Arab partners refused to host ministerial meetings of the EMP given the reluctance of Netanyahu's government to follow the commitments of Oslo, so prospects faded for having a review conference for Barcelona in Tunisia or Morocco.

With the feeling that the Barcelona Process was not "getting off the launching-pad" (Edis 1998: 100), the Malta ministerial conference in May 1997 ended with a perceived feeling of failure. Participants were not able to agree on the draft conclusions until a month later, which signals how the increasingly turbulent regional relations had hijacked the EMP and its capacity to move forward. The first failure to endorse a security Charter for peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region as a way to promote peaceful conflict resolution signals the lack of progress in Malta (Calleya 1997).

The *ad hoc* ministerial meeting in Palermo of 3-4 June 1998 paved the way for more in-depth discussions on the economic, financial and cultural baskets, which had been left aside as a consequence of the Valetta failure. A "spirit of Palermo" (Edis 1998: 102) facilitated more constructive discussions in the third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Stuttgart in April 1999, where all members "reaffirmed their resolve to take forward the Partnership into the new millennium" (Council of the European Union 1999). But as the next section will reveal, the opposite occurred. Stuttgart became the "turning point" between the euphoria of 1995-1998 and a phase of frustration (Interviewee 3). From then onwards, the Mediterranean would be characterized by the "mediatization" of conflicts among the partners, which would prevent any kind of dialogue beyond economic cooperation (Aubarell 1999: 78).

During its golden years, albeit with ebbs and flows, the Barcelona Process moved from ontological discussions about the purpose of the project to debates about how to operationalize it. The first such debate focused on the co-ownership of the process versus a patronizing approach to Euro-Mediterranean relations, often on the basis of security interests. The second debate was between a comprehensive agenda and an economic-driven partnership, based on the interests of northern participants. And finally, there was a debate between a multilateral and a bilateral approach to the region.

The first debate put forward by the Barcelona Process was between the ideas of *co-ownership and patronizing relations, on the basis of the North's security interests*. Most voices in the policy-making and epistemic communities put forward the idea that the EMP was built on the basis of co-ownership, bringing together countries from both shores of the Mediterranean under a single framework. The preparatory work of the Barcelona Conference was meant to increase the sense of ownership of the EMP. As one of the officials interviewed recalls, the run-up to Barcelona was characterized by several meetings in Brussels and the different southern capitals between officials and other stakeholders to "conceptualize a new framework for the Mediterranean" (Interviewee 1).

In the Conference, the adhesion to the principles embodied in the Declaration – based on the respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and economic development – signalled the partnership ambition of the "spirit of Barcelona". Political dialogue, also among Arabs and Israelis "even if they did not talk to each other" (Interviewee 1), was meant to institutionalize the contacts between participants on the basis of co-ownership and under a shared umbrella. As the Declaration famously put it, the Barcelona Process was aimed at creating "an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity" (Euro-Mediterranean Conference 1995: 2). However, it can also be argued that by separating the EMP from the Middle East Peace Process (Khader 2015: 43), the Barcelona Process contributed to the depoliticization of the conflict. If, as stated by one of the officials interviewed (Interviewee 1), Arab and Israeli officials sat around the same table during Euro-Mediterranean conferences but preferred not to address each other, the EMP contributed to depoliticizing rather than fostering political dialogue on the conflict.

Contrary to the overall objective to create an area of shared peace and stability, many observers criticized the formalization of an excessively security-based approach to Euro-Mediterranean relations, thus leading to the securitization of the overall process. Through European lenses, Mediterranean partners were considered as a source of insecurity given the instability of the region, the flow of immigrants, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons and Islamic fundamentalism (Biad 1997). No wonder that the major "stumbling block" of the Barcelona Declaration became the division over its first section on the political and security partnership (Barbé 1996: 38), where Northern and Southern participants were divided on the issues of terrorism, de-nuclearization and migration (Interviewees 1 and 7). Quite often divisions could be found among Southern partners themselves. As one of the officials interviewed recalls, Arab countries supported the right of "resistance" of Palestine, Israel did not want to include any reference to the de-nuclearization of the region and migration was not considered a "burning" issue in the agenda, so it could be dealt with separately and at a later stage (Interviewee 1).

In contrast, on migration, the division among Northern and Southern Mediterranean partners became evident with the reluctance of the former to include the free circulation of persons in the Barcelona Declaration, given the perceived, although not officially expressed, link between immigration and insecurity (Interviewee 1 and 6). The securitization of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda became clear when observers of the Barcelona Process started to witness a tendency to promote "order" and "stability" instead of democratic reform (Khader 2015: 48). One of the officials interviewed went so far as to say that the Barcelona Process "was about the security of Europe, not an altruistic gesture" (Interviewee 4).

Other voices also criticized the EMP for providing a "post-colonial reading of the 'region'" (Pace 2002: 202), where European partners considered themselves as superior to Southern participants. The contents of the Barcelona Declaration were criticized for representing an import of Western values, a narrative that permeated some of the debates of the Alternative Mediterranean Conference, held in Barcelona on 24-28 November 1995 (Conferència Mediterrània Alternativa 1996). In this conference, several references were made to the Mediterranean as the "new iron curtain" between the developed North, "holder of the global hegemony", and an exploited "South", a "new enemy as a substitute of the former communist enemy: Muslim countries, Islam and, more specifically, political Islam". In this context, the Mediterranean becomes a "framework of global confrontation" (Conferència Mediterrània Alternativa 1996: 15-16). In this conference, alternative proposals were put forward, such as the end of a "patronizing" notion of cooperation, access to agricultural markets, co-development instruments, social measures to tackle unemployment, debt release, de-securitization of the relations with the Mediterranean and its perception as a threat, demilitarization of the security dimension, etc. (Conferència Mediterrània Alternativa 1996: 31-44).

All in all, these voices argued that, in the framework of the Barcelona Process, the Mediterranean was not read under the premises of a shared "mare nostrum" and the "cradle of civilisation" but as a "frontier" (Nair 1997: 258, Morin 1999), dangerously falling into the narrative of Islam as the new enemy *à la* Huntington (1993). Some officials echoed this vision. In a session of the Spanish Congress, a member – Joaquim Molins i Amat – noted: "we must underline the importance of the situation in the Mediterranean for the security of Europe, once other threats have disappeared, ranging *from underdevelopment to Islamic fundamentalism* in the North of Africa" (Spanish Congress of Deputies 1997: 4932, emphasis added). Similar ideas were expressed at the Italian Congress. For instance, MP Stefano Morselli identified the outbreak of terrorism and fundamentalism in the region as sources of insecurity (Italian Chamber of Deputies 1995: 566). In addition to a securitization discourse, this reveals a mounting sense of "otherness" vis-à-vis Southern Mediterranean partners, undermining the partnership and co-ownership narrative embodied in the Barcelona Process.

The second debate confronted a *comprehensive vision of the EMP versus those who saw it as an economy-driven process.* Contrary to the previous sectorial initiatives for the Mediterranean, the EMP was supposed to establish a comprehensive agenda for Euro-Mediterranean relations. The three baskets (politics and security; economy and finance; and cultural and civil society relations) were complementary to each other and were to be negotiated together. According to one of the officials interviewed, the novelty and success of the EMP was due to the methodological innovation introduced by the inter-linkages between multiple negotiation files. Failure to agree on a set of measures in one of the baskets would mean the failure of the overall Process (Interviewee 5). This method provided as well for a substantial innovation in the

results, which combined social, economic, political and security objectives in a multidimensional manner (Barbé 1996). As Philippart noted, the benefit of the Process came from the fact that "[n]arrowing down the EMP scope would then necessarily mean alienating one of the parties" (Philippart 2003: 206).

Against the multidimensional logic of the EMP, others have argued that the focus since Barcelona has been chiefly economic. Of the three baskets of the Barcelona Declaration, the second, economy and finance, was the most developed, leading to a technocratization of Euro-Mediterranean relations.[9] Specific measures were put forward, including substantial aid commitments, the channelling of loans through the European Investment Bank and the Free Trade Area for 2010. Following the logic of the "theory of markets as a democratizing force" (Kienle 1998: 4), the departing premise was that economic development and free trade would create political dividends and transform Arab societies (with the emergence of a strong middle class), which would result in political reform and which, in turn, would facilitate conflict resolution in the region. Economic reforms and partnership, defined as the "engine" of the Barcelona Process (Edis 1998: 97), would enable Southern Mediterranean countries to foster a "causal chain of developments" by which economic cooperation would lead to prosperity and political reforms (Interviewee 3).[10]

However, the logic did not come free of criticism. Dealing with autocratic regimes in a business-like style facilitated the consolidation of their power, thus technocratizing the newly established framework of cooperation. In addition, the adoption of liberal policies clashed with the reality of imbalances between Northern and Southern Mediterranean economies, characterized by low levels of intra-South trade, a high dependence of Southern economies on their Northern counterparts (with a large trade surplus for the latter) and an "asymmetrical trade interdependence" (Bacaria and Tovias 1999a: 7, 1999b: 16). The neoliberal recipe for economic reform and the reliance on structurally unequal North-South relations was strongly criticized in the framework of the Alternative Mediterranean Conference (Conferència Mediterrània Alternativa 1996). Observers of the Barcelona Process such as Sami Nair argued that good "sentiments" masked "well-intended interests" (Nair 1998: 207). The unwillingness of European partners to open their markets to Southern agricultural products was often mentioned as a relevant case in point.

Criticism of the reliance on economic strategies for political purposes (Kienle 1998: 3) also included a warning sign from the participants in the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum, which gathered over 1,200 Northern and Southern civil society representatives in Barcelona a week after the official Conference. The Euro-Med Civil Forum (Fòrum Civil Euromed 1995) was considered a remarkable innovation of the Barcelona Process, since it put emphasis on the cooperation between civil societies alongside the official gatherings (Attinà 2004: 144).[11]

9   Particularly when compared to the vague language of the political and security chapter, the most controversial one, as previously noted.

10 This causal chain was acknowledged by the European Commission when preparing the Barcelona Process. It affirmed that in order to achieve the EMP goals it would "start with a process of progressive establishment of free trade, supported by substantial financial aid" (European Commission 1994: 2, emphasis added).

11 Another sign of interest in the development of a Euro-Mediterranean civil society was the set-up of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo), a research network on politics and security in the Mediterranean which was launched in Sesimbra (Portugal) in June 1996 (www.euromesco.net). For the socio-economic dimension, a similar network of studies was launched in 1997, the Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences

The Forum met in the margins of the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences, so it was also held in Valletta (11-13 April 1997), Naples (12-14 December 1997) and Stuttgart (13-17 April 1999).[12] Participants however warned against the insufficient efforts in promoting the human and social provisions of the Barcelona Declaration, which they criticized for excessively relying on its economic dimension and for being too state-driven.

The final debate that emerged from the set-up of the Barcelona Process was between the proponents of a *multilateral track for regional relations against traditional bilateral policies.* The EMP was conceived as a multilateral platform for confidence building, although it did not prevent partners from developing bilateral relations. An official interviewed called Barcelona a process based on "multi-bilateral relations" (Interviewee 1). Indeed, for Southern Mediterranean partners, the EMP was no substitute of their bilateral ties with the EU, as reflected by the parallel existence of Association Agreements (at that moment Tunisia, Israel and Morocco had already signed such agreements), nor of the prospect of enlargement of the EU towards the south (as reflected by the later accession of Malta and Cyprus) (Barbé 1996: 37).

Securing a fair balance between multilateralism and bilateralism was of importance for several reasons. First, countries such as Egypt did not want to be left out of the Process even if they lacked the strong links with the EU that an Association Agreement provides, so a multilateral framework was useful. Second, "multi-bilateralism" did not prevent policy-entrepreneurs from the European side from pursuing deeper relations with either former colonies or close Southern Mediterranean partners such as Morocco, as was the case for France and Spain. This also facilitated the "Europeanization" of bilateral relations via a common Euro-Mediterranean umbrella (Interviewees 2 and 3). Thirdly, a country like Germany, whose political focus was on Central and Eastern Europe, was able to influence a multilateral process via a strong involvement in the financial aspects.

In this regard, the understanding and sharing of responsibilities between key personalities such as Felipe González and Helmut Kohl is usually considered to have facilitated the agreement on the EU side for the launch of the EMP (Barbé 1996). The Presidencies of the Council of the EU in Greece, Germany, France and Spain (particularly these two) and Italy from 1994 to 1996 – thus dominated by Southern EU states – made possible progress in European Councils such as Corfu, Essen and Cannes, previous to the Barcelona Conference.[13] The impetus from the Council was reinforced with the position of the Spaniard Manuel Marín as Vice-President of the Commission, who was also part of a powerful leadership constellation during the golden years of the EMP (Interviewees 1 and 5).

Overall, the narratives and debates of the golden years of the Barcelona Process served to establish a new method of cooperation between the Southern and Northern partners of the Mediterranean. 1995 can be considered a signpost of the set-up of a multilateral, regional and

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Économiques (FEMISE, www.femise.org).

12 For a summary of the discussions in each Forum, see Aubarell (1999: 70-72).

13 Some observers link the faltering of the Process from Stuttgart (15-16 April 1999) onwards to the diminished interest of EU Council Presidencies of northern EU members such as Netherlands, Luxembourg, UK or Austria (see for instance Edis 1998: 101, Barbé 1996, and Bicchi 2007: Ch. 5 for a broader perspective). An official interviewed went so far as to say that the fading of the Barcelona Process was due to a European "retreat" and even "abandonment" (Interviewee 3).

multidimensional partnership that, not without problems, has been the building block of Euro-Mediterranean relations to date.

5. The Early 2000s: A Re-Securitized Approach

The Mediterranean has been framed as a current or potential threat since the early 1990s. Thus, the region (as a whole) and particular issues (mainly migration, religion and demography) were systematically securitized. This became even stronger during the early 2000s.

In 2000 the EU adopted a Common Mediterranean Strategy. One of the aims of this exercise was to increase the EU policy coherence (Spencer 2001). The document also acknowledged the need for "reinvigorating" the Barcelona Process and making it "more action oriented and results-driven" (European Council 2000: 6). In this text the Mediterranean is depicted as a region of "*vital* importance" whose stability and prosperity are in "the best *interests* of the EU and Europe as a whole" and which faces many challenges (political, economic, judicial, ecological and social) that "are to be *overcome*" (European Council 2000: 5, emphasis added). It is symptomatic that the heading given to the introductory sections of this strategy was a "Vision of the EU for the Mediterranean region" (Ibid.). The choice of words suggests a rather patronizing and unilateral approach to this particular part of the world which is far away from the partnership philosophy of the Barcelona Process. This is also a vision that does not consider the EU (and the threats and challenges emanating from it) as part of the Mediterranean. Once more, Europe is portrayed as a problem-solver and the region as a problem-incubator.

Taking into account that many of the texts adopted in the previous period were negotiated to a large extent with Mediterranean partners, analysing this specific document is a good testimony to the EU's distinct priorities and perceptions in that very moment. For instance, it is interesting to note that references to democracy (four times) and human rights (ten times) are more abundant than in the commonly agreed texts. It is also worth mentioning the prominence given to migration issues and the fact that this was no longer tackled as an issue pertaining to the cultural and human basket but rather as a justice and home affairs one. This contributed, albeit by osmosis (regular migration under the same heading as smuggling and drug trafficking), to the full securitization of the migration agenda.

Right after the approval of the Common Strategy for the Mediterranean, the MEPP collapsed. The lack of progress since the assassination of Rabin and specifically since the election of Netanyahu had already undermined attempts to upgrade the political and security basket of the EU. However, senior officials and members of the research community (particularly those integrated in the EuroMeSCo network) worked persistently on the project of adopting a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability. The Charter was a non-binding document that, among others, would have set the principles for how to address conflict escalation through a reinforced political dialogue and would have promoted partnership-building initiatives. That is, it would have rebalanced the depoliticized approach of the Barcelona Process agenda.

France pushed for the adoption of this document during its EU Council presidency in the second half of 2000 (Védrine 2000). Yet, the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000 made this impossible. Two countries, Syria and Lebanon, decided not to attend the

Marseille Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and, in the words of a European diplomat, "everyone realized that they had been too ambitious and there was no other option but to put the Charter in the freezer, hoping that one day it would be possible to give it a new life" (Interviewee 8). The Arab-Israeli conflict became not only a threat for the citizens of Palestine, Israel and the neighbouring countries but also a menace to the Barcelona Process.

Muriel Asseburg (2003) considered the situation in the Middle East as the "main obstacle" to the EMP. Jean-François Daguzan (2000) wondered whether this was "the end of the illusions". The deterioration of the situation in Palestine contributed to frustrating those in the academic community who had looked at the EMP as a promising instrument and considered that security building in the Mediterranean was supported "by relevant favourable conditions for multilateral security institutions" (Attinà 2001). As for the officials interviewed, one described it as "the catalyst of a Mediterranean frustration" (Interviewee 4) and another as a "test of the resilience of the initiative" (Interviewee 1).

A few months later the world was shaken by the September 11 attacks. The EMP was not immune to the reverberations. The most visible effect was that terrorism was back in the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. But the impact was broader. As argued by Annette Jünemann (2004: 17), this "had the effect of Europeans solving the 'democratization-stabilization dilemma' increasingly in favour of the latter". It also gave political and security arguments to those advocating for the strengthening of the third basket (cultural and human exchanges) of the Barcelona Process. For instance, it is precisely in this context that the idea emerged of creating a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to promote a dialogue of cultures. This was the embryo for what was to become the Anna Lindh Foundation. According to Stephan Calleya (2005: 106), "the post-9/11 international climate seems much more conducive to providing the political will necessary to see such an ambitious undertaking".

In face of such shocks, actors who once had been policy-entrepreneurs became policy-defenders. Important segments of the policy and research community that had a strong attachment to the Barcelona Process mobilized to preserve and justify its very existence, and to a great extent they succeeded. In fact, the Action Plan of Valencia, approved in 2002, affirmed that "[t]he Barcelona Process is now sufficiently well established and resilient for the participants to be able to engage in an open dialogue on all issues of mutual concern" (Council of the European Union 2002: 5).

During this period the discussion on the geographical scope of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation was not completely settled. The launching of the Barcelona Process contributed to consolidating the concept of "Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries" (SEMC) and drew a bureaucratic line between those who were in and those who had an associate or invited status (Mauritania, Libya) or were deliberately excluded (the Gulf countries, Iraq and Iran), thus reinforcing the institutional vision. However, the geopolitical vision, although not hegemonic, became more prominent. The Mediterranean was increasingly perceived as being part of a broader system of concentric circles. For instance, Romano Prodi, then President of the European Commission, stated that "the Mediterranean in all its diversity [is seen] as a girdle of peace and cooperation, the focal point of a vast political and economic region stretching from Spain to the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf" (Prodi 2002: 3). It was also in this period that Javier Solana and Chris Patten signed a letter entitled "Wider Europe" that is seen as the

seminal document of what was to become the European Neighbourhood Policy (Patten and Solana 2002).

Policy-makers and academics also reflected upon a "fragmented Mediterranean". The then Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs argued that "we should speak candidly and say, that regrettably, the Mediterranean is still a sea that divides rather than a sea that integrates. It's a *sea of division* in many respects: regarding the political systems, regarding the economic situation and also regarding the little integration among different societies" (Spanish Congress of Deputies, 2002: 14444, emphasis added). The breach between Europe and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries was perceived as increasingly problematic and, as this quote reflects, the EU portrayed itself as an actor that would try to bridge this gap.

Think-tanks and members of the research community reproduced the idea that the Mediterranean was not a unity but the meeting place between two or more distinct complexes. In social economic terms the region was seen as divided between a prosperous but aging "North" and a poorer and demographically buoyant "South". This is what Rémy Leveau (2002: 1031) described as "the Mediterranean of the rich and the Mediterranean of the poor". In geopolitical terms, the Mediterranean was portrayed as a complex containing four differentiated sub-regions: Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Maghreb and Mashreq (Sánchez Mateos 2002: 8).

In this period we observe the emergence of a new narrative: *the Mediterranean as a European test*. Both the realization of regional fragmentation but, above all, the degradation of security conditions fed that particular narrative. The then French Minister for Foreign Affairs Hubert Védrine (2000: 166) linked the Mediterranean dimension of the EU with its "willingness to be seen as a global player".

While the collapse of the MEPP had a demobilizing effect, the September 11 attacks were portrayed as a reminder that the EU had to put more attention towards its Mediterranean neighbours and had to revise its agenda of priorities. Those attacks "increased the need for more stability in the South in order to obtain more stability and broad security in Europe and the West", said Roberto Aliboni (2002: 108). He added that "an agenda limited to the extension of economic aid and cooperation cannot be sufficient". The former Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a parliamentary debate, also argued that "in light of September 11, the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had become more important and necessary than ever before" (Spanish Congress of Deputies 2002: 14444).

Following that rationale, the Spanish EU Council Presidency (first half of 2002) worked together with the Commission to revitalize the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and diversify its agenda (Soler i Lecha and Weltner-Puig 2002). Although tension was still high in the Middle East, they managed to approve a five-year Action Plan in the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Valencia and also the endorsement of a general framework leading to a Euro-Mediterranean regional programme on freedom, justice and governance, which had a strong focus on migration and organized crime. Terrorism was also part of the agenda but in Valencia it became impossible to adopt specific measures as partners could not agree on a common definition of terrorism.

Migration figured prominently, and a fourth basket on Justice and Home Affairs was added to the classical tripartite scheme of the Barcelona Process (Gillespie 2003, Wolff 2012). The links between migration, terrorism and criminality were frequent, albeit indirect. That is, documents did not establish a link between the phenomena, but treating them under the same heading reinforced a securitized approach to migration. Academic debates reflected this momentum. Roberto Aliboni (2002: 104) argued that after 11 September and with increasing migration, "Europe's proximity to North Africa and the Middle East, previously neutral in its effects, now has an impact on Western security and requires policies suited to manage such proximity."

In this period we observe a new prominence of the cultural agenda, although from an increasingly securitized approach (Jünemann 2003, Malmvig 2005). Political statements confirm the securitization of the third basket of the Barcelona Process. That is, cooperation in this field was not perceived and promoted as a goal in itself but rather as a way to counter the terrorist threat. For instance, Peter Hain, then UK's minister for Europe, stated that "the events of 11 September have meant that greater consideration should be given to the region's security and to mutual respect in the region for the cultures and civilisations contained within it" (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2002). Similarly, the then Spanish premier José María Aznar, in a joint conference with Abdelaziz Bouteflika mentioned that the attacks of September 11, with such devastating effects, have fostered a spirit of understanding and cooperation among different countries, which, far from being confronted with any clash of civilizations, feel the need to intensify efforts in favour of dialogue between cultures and civilizations and against a common adversary, a common enemy, terrorism (Aznar and Bouteflika 2002).

In fact, one of the most revealing elements of this period is that, after September 11, the concept of "civilization" was used extensively in most political and official texts. Previous formulations referred to the challenge of "mutual understanding among the peoples of the region".[14] This terminological shift reveals that the broader discussion on the risk of a "clash of civilizations" as presented by Samuel Huntington (1993) had entered the Euro-Mediterranean debate. In fact, one diplomat dealing with the Mediterranean dossier in 2002 argued that "the *raison d'être* of the Barcelona Process was [precisely] to show that Huntington and those who bought his ideas were wrong" (Interviewee 4).

The terminology used in the Action Programme for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations approved in 2002 is indicative of this discursive shift, while also being a marker of othering and boundary-drawing. In this text, adopted by Euro-Mediterranean ministers, it is said that that "[t]he ultimate goal of dialogue should not be to change 'the other' but, rather, to coexist peacefully with the other" (European Commission 2002: 1).

The new centrality of security, migration and "civilizational" debates was not at the expense of the traditional EU focus on trade and financial issues. In almost all speeches and official texts, the idea of achieving an area of "shared prosperity" was listed as one of the three main goals of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and there was a boost to the financial instruments through the creation of a reinforced investment facility within the European Investment Bank (EIB) to promote infrastructure and private sector investment. In fact, it can be argued that

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14 In that sense, it is useful to compare the terminology of the Presidency Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Marseille in 2000 with those of the Valencia Conference in 2002.

security was used as an argument to demand more involvement and support in fields that were not previously securitized.

For instance, in the Common Strategy for the Mediterranean adopted in 2000 it is said that the EU will "promote transparency and greater predictability of legal systems in the partners in order to encourage foreign investment, and to encourage lawful migrants to pursue activities in favour of co-development with their countries of origin" (European Council 2000: 8). This reference is to be found under the heading of Justice and Home Affairs, and reflects a securitization process of fields such as investment or development. Greater convergence on the security agenda with third countries also gave a boost to other areas where there had been problems in cooperating. A case in point is Algeria, a country that had been reluctant to further trade liberalization but that signed an association agreement with the EU in 2002 that included provisions on the fight against terrorism.

This evolution was resisted by some highly mobilized actors. Civil society organizations, individually or as part of different networks, contested a securitized and technocratic approach to Euro-Mediterranean relations. It is worth recalling that this period corresponds with the emergence of the anti-globalization movement and massive protests in Seattle in 1999 and in Genoa in 2001. Thus, the emergence of a Mediterranean civil society was somehow linked to the discussion on the existence of a "global civil society" (Feliu 2005). Human rights networks created in the late 1990s were also gaining traction (Van Hüllen 2009). In light of September 11, activists were asking to re-launch the Barcelona Process through "a new social contract for peace and justice in the region" and called for a "more Mediterranean and less atlanticist Europe" (Ravenel 2002: 210). Vocal academics like Jean-Robert Henry (2002) aspired to be as ambitious as possible and referred to this project as a much "needed utopia".

Gradually, for governmental actors it became strategic to channel those voices into more institutional frameworks, as was attempted with the Civil Forum of Valencia (Soler i Lecha 2003). As a result, in this period the third basket became more prominent and yet, the approach and the practices were systematically criticized. Antoni Segura (2001: 6), for instance, argued that the contents of that basket resembled a catalogue of good intentions aimed at correcting the undesired effects of economic liberalization. Annette Jünemann (2002: 96) considered that the Civil Forum was "too far away from the decision-making process to be effective in influencing EMP policies, but too exposed to the political influence of the member states hosting its meetings to fulfil an external, critical 'watchdog function'".

In fact, activist groups would continue to criticize the liberal approach embedded in the association agreements or the violation of human rights in the region, but Brussels and the Member States realized that it was better to engage in a dialogue rather than confronting in the streets (Soler i Lecha 2003). Thus, different initiatives tried to expand the "social basis" of the Barcelona Process: the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum became a permanent interface with the civil society. In Valencia, the partners agreed to transform a previously existing Parliamentary Forum into a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (Montoya and Chikhi 2009). Similarly, local and regional authorities regularly pushed for the creation of a permanent structure for local and regional authorities (Committee of the Regions 2001).

This was a period in which everyone (governments, European institutions but also civil society organizations) faced dilemmas and contradictions that are still alive today. Critical voices were heard but barely anybody contested the need to promote a stronger partnership in the Mediterranean. A Spanish diplomat, Pedro López Aguirrebengoa (2000: 260), summarized this situation in saying that "despite all the challenges the Barcelona Process was still the best option available".

Conclusions

With the end of the Cold War, several policy-entrepreneurs put forward varying narratives on why to invest in the Mediterranean. This region was presented as a source of threat, but engagement was also seen as necessary due to proximity and interdependence. The Mediterranean was viewed as both an opportunity and a responsibility, in light of Europe's growing ambition in international affairs. Once Europeans agreed that the EMP was worth "investing" in, a series of debates emerged on how to do this. These revolved around drawing the boundaries of the Mediterranean, patronalization versus co-ownership, and a technocratic versus a comprehensive approach. However, this fragile architecture was confronted with two shocks beyond Europe's control: the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process and the 9/11 attacks. This was a litmus test not only for the EMP but for the EU as a whole.

This research has scrutinized the extent to which securitization, (de)politicization and technocratization processes were present when the EU actively worked to build a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Through this engagement the EU tried to reaffirm its willingness to become a political player and gradually emphasized its identity as a transformative actor. What was initially incepted as a political project was nevertheless implemented in a rather depoliticized and technocratic way.

Securitization processes had been present since the beginning, with Europe being presented as a solution to threats emanating from the South. After 9/11, the securitization processes became more apparent, particularly when dealing with migration and relations with Islam.

Those ideas were translated into policy instruments. The early days of Euro-Mediterranean relations experimented with a series of initiatives promoted by like-minded states and, even more, like-minded individuals. The Barcelona Process culminated those efforts by offering a comprehensive cooperation framework based on the link between trade liberalization and political transformations, reinforcing a technocratic approach to regional challenges. Facing growing criticism by social activists, the EMP attempted to increase its social support by reaching out to parliamentarians, local authorities and civil society organizations. The instruments put forward in the foundational period of Euro-Mediterranean relations have contributed to solidifying an understanding of the region that holds to this day.

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