EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FORMATIONS AND THE EMERGING EUROPEAN SYSTEM: THE CASE OF CYPRUS

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Abstract

The European Union's (EU) post-Cold War agenda has been reshaped to accommodate regional transformations in its periphery, whilst preserving the symbiotic relationship with its members. The 1989 shift of the European international system resulted in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE) to aspire becoming part of the European zone of democracy, stability and prosperity as currently embodied by the EU. Yet, it is also no secret that the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region is of great importance to Europe in general, and the EU in particular. In view of the massive prospective enlargement towards the CCEE, it was necessary for the EU to strengthen its relations with the Mediterranean south. The accession of Cyprus would correct this geographical imbalance by adding another Mediterranean member, and by extending the Union's boundaries offshore to the Middle East. Yet, the Cyprus relations with the EU, besides the economic development of the island and the resolution of the long-standing national problem, extend to issues of stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean. In fact, the latter is the arena within which Cyprus has to live and flourish. The fact that Mediterranean issues feature rather low in the EU's policy priorities is arguably against the fundamental Cypriot interest for greater European involvement in the development of the region. It is questionable how the Cypriot priorities in the Mediterranean would fit those of the eastwards enlarged EU. The twin foci of this paper are directed both on the implications arising from the changing European international system, as well as on those stemming from the new Euro-Mediterranean politics for Cyprus, a 'small' island-state in the Eastern Mediterranean. The crucial question concerns the role Cyprus could play as a member of the Union (once in), as *well as an actor in the emerging management structures of the Euro-Mediterranean space.*

System-Change and the Dynamics of New Europe

The transformation in world politics since the end of the Cold War has led Europe to a state of unpredictable change and disorder. Despite the violent break-up of the pre-1989 order has not (as yet) been replaced by new structures and ways of establishing a system of international relations founded upon stronger and more efficient institutions. Some of the latter, which function in Europe's overlapping security structure such as the European Union, the Western European Union (WEU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), are adapting themselves to the realities of the new era.[1] But this also means that security in Europe will remain in a state of flux for the foreseeable future.

Prophecies of radical regressions have not yet been fulfilled, but as we are now entering firmly into a multidirectional and more complex international system, its genesis is creating a considerable 'power vacuum'. Regional/international organisations - like the EU - can therefore make their own mark. The vast number of applicants committed themselves to joining the Union reflects general perceptions of the EU as an international actor. Yet, the volatile situations in its peripheries require complex governance. Considering the widely acknowledged importance of regional and world trading-blocs in the new pan-European landscape, the EU has one more chance to consolidate its international position as the strongest economic union of states. Indeed, as Buchan has argued, the Union has now an additional advantage in world politics, because economic problems are at the top of the agenda.[2] In short, as the EU has become the centre of gravity for its eastern and southern peripheries, one may legitimately expect that its leadership potential will face up to its growing international responsibilities, including the application of 'good governance' in the management of the Euro-Mediterranean space.[3]

Therefore, the crucial point remains on the two symbiotic directions that figure prominently in the EU's current political considerations for the architecture of Europe itself. The first direction of systemic change that is currently underway is the Union's enlargement with the intent of projecting security eastwards in the *Mitteleuropa,* but also southwards in the *Mare Nostrum.* The second direction takes the form of deepening the integration process - the new Treaty of Amsterdam being but a relatively modest step[4] and creating solid institutional structures for the Union to play an effective international role in world politics.

The shifts in Europe's international system, not only raise questions about the Union's ability to function effectively as one player in the global arena, but also, by redefining the EU's borders, it promises to introduce new issues and new tasks into the scope of its foreign and security policy. After all previous enlargements, the EU

remained essential the same, the only material difference being that there were more members, and more special interests to accommodate. But the new, larger Union will be different from the old, in at least two fundamental ways: in its diversity, and in the geo-strategic implications of its changing topology. This becomes clear- er when one considers the fact that the complexities of a further Mediterranean enlargement are not particularly well conceived in Brussels, or at least they sound differently from those of the CCEE. In this context, it was originally perceived that the accession of Cyprus and Malta to the EU would somewhat redress the imbal- ance by forcing the latter to reconsider its Mediterranean priorities. Moreover, the rest of the Mediterranean countries that are not presently considered for EU mem- bership loom in the comprehensive framework of the EMP, which replaced the largely uncoordinated previous policies and initiatives of the EU and its members towards the Mediterranean.

Currently, the EU faces major challenges in relation to a southern enlargement with countries like Cyprus, Malta and even with the problematic, yet established regional power-actor, Turkey. Today, it seems evident that the EU's next wave of enlargement will not include Malta, although the new Nationalist/Conservative gov- ernment is very much in favour of EU membership. On the other hand, Turkey will most certainly not make it in the next EU enlargement, not least due to its failure to establish a viable democratic regime, its grim human rights record, and the long standing dispute with another EU member, Greece. However, Turkey's accession to the Union also seems highly unlikely due to the fact that the Central and Eastern European applicants had emerged as likelier future EU members. Finally, Cyprus first applied for full EU membership in 1990 and since then its application has been examined twice for eligibility; in 1993 (with Malta), and again in the European Commission's 1997 'Agenda 2000' Report (along with 11 more CCEE). Both Reports were in favour of Cyprus's accession to the EU, with no insurmountable problems for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire,* including the country's capacity to participate in the Economic and Monetary Union and the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP).[5]

Although the Cyprus application has not been finalised yet, new issues and questions have arisen tor the country's policy-makers. For, whenever Cyprus joins the EU, it will be in a much wider Union, composed of, say, 21 or even 27 states, whose main characteristic will be the non-uniformity of its members in terms of eco- nomic development, political and legal systems, defence and foreign policy orien- tations and priorities. In other words, the EU will be approximating most closely to a 'regional regime',[6] where the dominant logic will be that of differentiation or, in recent EU parlance, flexibility. The increasing diversity within the Union will no doubt influence the future of the EMP, especially now that the EU has made considerable progress in re-approaching the Mediterranean. But the intergovernmental nature of

the Union itself ensures that the pursuit of national interests in the region will remain dominant in the foreseeable future. Having said that, the main challenge for Cyprus after its accession to the EU and, by extension its participation to the common institutions, will be to redress the internal balance of the enlarged Union in the light of promoting its Medirerranean interests. The latter would only be achieved through coalition-building and alliance-formation not only with the other EU Mediterranean states, but also with other littoral countries, as both regional constellations share the anxieties posed by the post-Cold War era.[7]

Europe's Mediterranean Dimension

It is a common secret that the cataclysmic change which took place post-1989 in the end the prospects of integrating the CCEE into the new (Pan-)European system has led the EU to employ a dynamic policy towards its eastern periphery, which by no way can be compared with its Mediterranean policies. The replacement of the threat of communism by multilevel and pluri-dimensional threats has lent great fluidity and instability to the Euro-Mediterranean system, which was not well equipped in terms of policies, competencies and institutions to deal with it. But as EU foreign policy-architects directed their *foci* in the East, the response to the growing scale of conflicts and serious disputes in the wider Mediterranean region has been largely left to the EU's southern member-states to deal with.

Hence, in order to redress the Union's overall imbalance, the EU's southern members along with some Mediterranean countries put forward multilateral schemes,[8] generally incapable of dealing with the complex array of security challenges in the region. European ambitions for a stabilised and prosperous Mediterranean have mainly promoted from EU southern members in the form of uncoordinated initiatives and also outside the Union's Mediterranean policy. The answer, however, to the question of why these initiatives launched in region after 1989 outside the EC/EU's Mediterranean policies, a satisfactory answer can be found to the inability of European Political Co-operation - to co-ordinate the diversified national perspectives of the southern European countries. This proved to be a very ineffective process, sometimes even causing friction among southern EU member and applicant states.[9] However, these initiatives, which applied on parts of the Mediterranean rather than to the whole of the regional system, seem to have created more tensions among the southern EU members than any positive results in terms of co-operation. These differences illustrated that the EU's Mediterranean states have not yet found a reliable *modus operandi* for utilising their common membership to promote their interests in the region.

In particular, France, Spain and Italy bring Mediterranean issues to the fore of the EU's agenda, for they traditionally maintain a plethora of economic and political ties

with the region. France, however, has displayed a distinctive and rather 'inchoate strategy'[10] towards parts of the Mediterranean, thus making it hard for the Union to accept a French leadership in its Mediterranean policy-making. The problem is further compounded by the fact that other EU members have also expressed their own distinct preferences to the EU's Mediterranean policy, most notably Spain, but also, and to some extend, Italy.[11] It should be considered yet another Mediterranean contradiction that, while those three southern European countries play an essential role in the setting of the EU's Mediterranean agenda, smaller countries like Greece, Portugal and Cyprus reflect the constraints confronting peripheral but relatively less-developed regions in their southern shores.[12] In addition, the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries worried that the massive transfer of resources to the southern EU members as part of the single market initiative and, subsequently, of the effort to achieve Monetary Union, would further the divide between the Mediterranean shores.

Security, Complexity and Interdependence

The Mediterranean basin encompasses at least two international regions (Western Europe and the Middle East), and three sub-regional groupings, Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta), the Mashreq (Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority) and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.). Seeing through the analytical lenses of international regionalism, existing Mediterranean considerations need a complex re-conceptualisation of both their regional and sub-regional dynamics.[13] There is no doubt that, operationally at least, it is more important to pay attention to specific problems; yet, there is some utility in thinking about the Mediterranean region as a whole. The latter could also be seen as a dense network of diversities and dividing lines between different socio-economic systems, political cultures and regimes, languages, forms of expression, and religions. The Mediterranean has always been a crossing point for conflict and co-operation, antagonism and coexistence. Thus, its sub-regional groupings do not share the features traditionally found in international regionalism, as they have never formed a 'common co-operation space'.[14] Yet, Braudel writes: 'as the Mediterranean regions are open to influences and exchanges they form a large-scale unity, whose history could only be understood by looking at the factors that tied them together and changed only over very long periods of time'.[15] In defence of that, Aliboni asserts that cooperation and security across the Mediterranen are possible but cannot be taken for granted, as they require an effort of will and specific management.[16]

From the Second World War until 1989, the European landscape served as the primary international theatre for the long-standing bipolar confrontation between East and West, while developments in other regions of the globe were considered

of secondary importance. This tradition significantly affected European threat perceptions for more than half a century. This attitude has changed since the collapse of the 'communist threat' and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Now that the once fearsome Soviet threat has actually vanished, the post-Cold War European challenge is confronted by instability deriving from socio-political and economic disparities, together with localised instability and the risk of regional conflicts. Arguably, the most alarming source of insecurity for the New Europe is the wider Mediterranean regional complex. Although no longer a feature of the East-West confrontation, the region represents a potential source of destabilisation with significant economic and political consequences for Europe as a whole.

During the Cold War, the Mediterranean represented a crucial area in strategic terms, encompassing many possible seats of conflict as well as a series of unresolved disputes with a strong historical background (for example the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflict). Syria, Libya and the Balkan countries were supported by the former USSR, while US support was directed toward Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, with both the US and the former USSR competing to support Egypt and Algeria. It is worth remem- bering that in the bipolar distribution of power in the region, the European Community (EU) was supporting Turkey, Malta and Cyprus. The fact that the Mediterranean served as a regional security chessboard for the strategic policies of the two dominant military blocks - NATO and the Warsaw Pact - has introduced fragility in the regional security balance which persists even after the collapse of the Eastern pole in the European international system.

From a macro-historical perspective, the political fragmentation of this regional complex and its often clashing diversity - itself founded upon long-standing nationalist and ethnic tensions - constitute important obstacles to any substantive regional co-operation. The paradox is that unity and diversity have been co-existing elements in the Mediterranean. Many of the present issues of Euro-Mediterranean diplomacy have their roots in history. Colonialisation was first practised by the South on the North and later on *vice versa.* The Egyptian, Greek and Persian civilisations, the Roman Empire, and the successive waves of Slavs, Arabs and Turks, have all found their way in the region and sought to use it so as to extend their range of cultural influence, economic activity, and political domination. Actually, the Mediterranean has always been a crossing point for conflict and co-operation, antagonism and coexistence. However, the questions currently involved are new, in that they are products of the new world (dis)order, especially since the Gulf crisis in the summer of 1990. From an international relations perspective, the latter signalled a re-arrangement of world order, reducing the East-West confrontation to a minimum, whilst re-emphasising, in however complex terms, the Orient-Occident and North-South gaps. These events also appeared to have offered useful ammunition

to those supporting the idea that the dominant conflict post-Cold War is between Occidental and Oriental values.[17] But even before the Gulf crisis, a theory started to take shape, that is was not Communism that constituted the major threat for the West, but rather 'Islamic fundamentalism'.[18]

It is more appropriate then to emphasise the importance of the North-South dichotomy in the region, linked to the rich-poor gap in the basin. The North is afflu- ent, and becoming ever more so, in spite of the current recession setback. Today, the Mediterranean offers a most dramatic illustration of complex inequality, as for example the total GDP of EU Mediterranean states in the North is eleven times greater than its southern littoral counterparts.[19] Cyprus is also a good case in point, with a population of 700,000 and a per capita income of nearly $10,000, while Egypt, with 58 million people, is below $800 per capita. Unequal economic development, the plurality of political regimes, the divergent perceptions of security threats, and a quite strong demographic growth are the major exacerbating factors affecting the Mediterranean North-South divide. One can hardly select a better example for the Mediterranean region within which there is a clear dividing line between a rich(er) North and a poor(er) South.

The Gulf incident at the beginning of the 1990s has also served as a reminder of the Mediterranean region's potential to fall victim to a plethora of similar disputes over regional hegemony and an associated trend towards over-armament. It height- ened alertness of the social, demographic, economic and political challenges ('low politics'), as well as traditional military security anxieties ('high politics'). This is not to say that the Europeans, while often speaking of multidimensional challenges, actually perceive any distinct, direct threat from northern Africa. A military threat to Europe from the Mediterranean is rather unlikely, as the Mediterranean countries attach more importance to threats coming from the Arab world.[20] Neither are there any military threats-from Europe perceived in the southern Mediterranean countries, where the term 'security' is usually associated with internal problems. Nevertheless, most of the southern Mediterranean countries view the development of a European Security and Defence Identity with suspicion.

It is still important to note the difficulty on the part of the Union to deal with security issues in the Mediterranean in contrast to dealing with other regions like Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, the EU has to anticipate possible hostility in the Mediterranean without provoking it (similar to the way it is 'handling' Russia).[21] In addition, the majority of the south Mediterranean countries are sceptical of the US's alleged unwillingness to undertake a decisive role in the Mediterranean; something they also perceive as one of the causes of the regional arms races.[22] Through this inertia, patterns that have developed in regional politics remain there. Even when policy attempts are made in a different direction, the old patterns tend to become

convenient tailback positions when the new efforts are faced with setbacks. It is equally true, however, that the EU faces significant difficulties in assuming a substantive security role in the Mediterranean as a result of the presence of the American 'factor' in the region and the reluctance of the latter to share its regional initiatives - e.g., the Middle East Peace Process.

In recent decades we have witnessed in the Mediterranean the break out and prosecution of diverse armed conflicts (both within and between nations), and the appearance of shaky political dynamics. These phenomena have as their origin the particular characteristics of the region itself, an area where the existence of diverse types of conflict signals the eventual appearance of others. In addition, although the European countries of the Mediterranean have reached a high level of political stability and participate in common institutional(ised) structures - the existence of which prevents the appearance and the escalation of both internal and external disputes - in contrast, the rest of the littoral countries are confronted with acute clashes. In light of the above, the establishment of adequate institutional machinery in the region is deemed necessary given the endemic nature of its actual and potential tensions. As long as the Mediterranean continues to serve as a border between a wealthy, developed, and stable Europe on the one hand, and a fragmented South on the other, the EU could realistically hope to 'keep the fire under control without trying to extinguish it'. The EU, however, has first to resist to the temptation of becoming a *parlicipant* rather than an *intermediary* in potential conflict situations in this unique 'body of water'.[23]

The Euro-Mediterranean regional complex combines both power politics and interdependence, in that bilateral relations are concluded on realist principles, whereas at a multilateral/regional level it has become clear that interdependence is increasing. The tendency for the littoral states to act unilaterally in an effort to solve their emerging security anxieties is self-defeating, and needs to be replaced by a more balanced and comprehensive 'security regime' founded upon substantive regional co-operation for both the management and resolution of potential conflicts. This recommendation is based on the idea of enhancing national security through the *prolepsis* of immediate violent crises, but also through a long-term process of transparency and peace-building. For, preventing conflicts before they arise is much more effective and cheaper than responding militarily if and when they do.[24] This applies especially if on takes into account the possibility of Mediterranean challenges to becoming direct European threats. It could be argued that, the most crucial security challenge facing Europe and more particular the EU in the Mediterranean today rests on the need to establish a set of complementary and overlapping security structures and mechanisms in the Mediterranean hotbeds of tension. It remains, however, unclear whether these can effectively impact on the choice made by the participating states when it comes to issues where national

interests are, or appear to be, at stake. However, in order to achieve a relaxation of North-South tensions any regime should aim at creating a symbiotic relationship between all parties.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

An increased anxiety for the developments in the region has been recorded, first in 1975 at the beginning of the Euro-Arab dialogue, then in mid and late 1980s, and again after the Gulf war, where signs of an enhanced European interest in the Mediterranean emerged. Actually, the European Community developed conventional relations with the littoral countries from the early 1960s, while it has also participated - through the mechanisms of European Political Co-operation - in both major political issues of the region, namely the Middle East Peace Process and the Cypriot dispute. It could be argued that the Community was anxious from early on to open up both its membership and markets to Mediterranean countries, as it represents the biggest economic partner for the latter.[25] Hence, its Mediterranean relations were governed by bilateral agreements, although most of them were of similar, if not often identical, content. Such a fragmented approach resulted in two types of association agreements: those concerning its prospective members (Turkey, Malta and Cyprus) and those concerning the rest of the littoral states (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and the Palestine Authority).

It should be noted that, although the pre-1995 EU Mediterranean policies strengthened to some extent the intercourse of economic and political co-operation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, they failed to establish a comprehensive co-operative security regime. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, by reconsidering the security anxieties of Europe, the dilemma for the Community was to allow wider gaps in socio-economic development between itself and its Mediterranean neighbours, or 'to minimise the danger of instability on its proximity'.[26] Finally, in November 1995, the EU decided to pass from the stasis of its previous Mediterranean policies to a new strategy aiming at correcting the imbalance created by its previous monolithic bilateral (trade) relations within a more coherent policy framework that would secure stability and the prosperity.

Epitomising the essence of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration is the emphasis put on respect for democracy and human rights, political dialogue, economic liberalisation, as well as financial and technical assistance for the Mediterranean partners in their adjustment processes.[27] The Declaration merely recalls the numerous international norms and values on inter-state relations and global disarmament agreements. It also included - albeit in the circumlocutions of diplomacy - cooperation on combating terrorism and drug-trafficking as well as on increasing arms control, par-

ticularly regional renunciation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and issues of illegal immigration. The 1995 Barcelona document infused a greater political and security bias to Euro-Mediterranean relations, whilst encompassing an ambitious economic plan for the creation of an industrially inspired free trade area by the year 2010. However, free access to industrial exports does not mean a great deal if there is little to export, as is the present case for most of the Mediterranean partners.[28] Moreover, the MEFTA objective, which is to be achieved through a series of economic reforms, also hide security risks, since accelerated market liberalisation in the southern Mediterranean rim could produce greater waves of instability in this sensitive region. But the EMP does not yet involve any ingenious mechanisms to sustain regional political co-operation, something, which might be vital in the possible case of further economic recession and political instability in the southern Mediterranean rim.

The EMP did address the post-Cold War Mediterranean reality: an overlap of different regions integrating different dimensions, including the socio-cultural one - something that apparently was missing from previous Mediterranean initiatives.[29] Actually, the rationale of this Mediterranean initiative was to lock the EU with the 12 Mediterranean countries in a process with common framework through co-operation in all three political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. To be sure, as Attinà has asserted, the EMP is a case of 'diffusion effect', reflecting the EU's model for co-operation.[30] Although the three baskets agreed in Barcelona in 1995 involved some well-known topics of Euro-Mediterranean diplomacy, they aimed at accommodating *ad integro* both emerging and establised regional convolutions. They also encompassed a set of policy components whose roots lie in the concepts of both the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union and the Confer-ence/Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe (C/OSCE).[31]

Crucially, the inclusion of a follow-up mechanism constitutes the dynamic element that provides assurance for the 'continuity' of the 'Euro-Med project', placing the EMP in a position to be considered as a pragmatic mechanism: a major forum for international co-operation, as well as a procedure applying to various sectors (at both Ministerial and Senior Officials level). The Barcelona Process established a Euro-Mediterranean Committee consisting of officials from the EU Troika (the current, previous and next Council Presidencies) and from all twelve southern Mediterranean countries. It was decided that the Committee should meet regularly and report to the Foreign Ministers. It was also decided that Foreign Ministers of all partner-countries will meet periodically to review progress in implementing the principles of the Barcelona Declaration and to agree upon actions that would promote its objectives. This was a substantial advance compared to earlier European policies and initiatives, with ill-defined follow-up provisions depending on constant ministerial action. The EMP has also the advantage of elevating the status of the EU's

Mediterranean policy to a genuinely common European policy, rather than one con-fined to its southern European countries and their largely uncoordinated initiatives in the region.

In practice, after 1995 the Barcelona Process was moved forward by a series of new Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, which updated and enhanced the previous individual agreement between the EU and the southern Mediterranean contries. Still, the idea of using the EMP as a springboard for strengthening the co-operation between the 12 Mediterranean states has not been profitable, and thus trade among the southern Mediterranean partners still remains on a very limited level. This has also been associated with the worsening of the Arab-Israeli relations late in 1995 and the consequent upheaval among the southern partner-countries. The results of the second Ministerial Meeting held on the island of Malta in 1997 provided a reality check of what were the main issues at stake in the first two years of the Barcelona Process.[32] The EMP's detachment from the - US dominated - Middle East Peace Process was a manipulation by the Europeans to avoid the obstacles posed by the complex relations of the Eastern Mediterranean. But the exclusion of the US from the EMP - something that gave the EU a predominant role in the EMP - brought about in turn reluctance on the part of the US to share its Middle East initiative. Keep the US out of the EMP on the one hand was of great importance to the Euro-African Mediterranean region, especially if seen in connec- tion to the previous experience of containing the US presence in Europe, e.g. in Bosnia. But, on the other hand this mutual exclusion between EU and the US should be regarded as a major problem obstructing the Barcelona from bearing full fruit. This is seen in the negative results noted in the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Malta in April 1997, underlined by the existence of a causal relation- ship between progress in the Middle East peace process and progress in the Barcelona Process. It was hoped from the beginning of the formation of the EMP that these two separate processes would be complementary but not linked to one another. The Barcelona Declaration was adopted after the signing of the Oslo Accords. Today we are in a rather different political atmosphere in the Middle East. The next meeting in Stuttgart will be crucial, tor it will be held three weeks before the end of the five-year period of the Oslo Accords.

Grosso modo, the EMP was the result of a successful effort by the EU to re-innovate and reinforce its Mediterranean policy. The Barcelona Process has been described as a political gesture aiming at correcting the problems that were created from the inadequacy of its previous narrow-minded policies towards the region.[33] The Barcelona Process should be conceived in Gillespie's words as 'emblematic of a process' being constituted from a dynamic set of international exchanges, but still one which leaves much to be desired before it becomes a meaningful partnership between the two Mediterranean shores.[34] Although there is evidence to suggest that

the EMP is moving in the right direction, it does so at a relatively moderate pace. The new elements embedded in the Barcelona Process, especially when compared with the pre-1995 EU Mediterranean policies, may animate some confident expectations about its future, but realistically, the development of the Euro-Mediterranean relationship depends both upon the willingness of the Union to extend its cooperation further and the readiness of the Mediterranean south to respond effectively.

A Patchwork of Regimes

From a systemic point of view, the EMP is a multi-dimensional regional/international regime that established the linkages between political (security/politics), economic (MEFTA) and socio-cultural (human rights/civil society) security arenas. The Partnership has a rather innovative system of arrangements (regimes) in terms of flexibility for both the Union and its Mediterranean partners. One should not forget that the substantial differentiation of the ratio with the financial budget of the Union for the reconstruction of Eastern European economies and policies, was the major reason for attracting the interest of the southern Mediterranean countries in the first place.[35] Indeed, the partnership is propelled by a certain economism whose financial implications are particularly favourable to the non-EU partner states. In return to the above, the Union linked the issue of economic liberalisation to the set of political principles ratified in 1995 in Barcelona.

The entire EMP was a collective European attempt to redefine its threat perceptions from the Mediterranean and, rather than detecting an Arab military threat, it addressed the danger of social unrest and economic underdevelopment. The European consensus on traditionally sensitive issues such as human rights, democracy, self-determination, religious tolerance, together with the initiation of economic and financial co-operation among the Mediterranean states, constitutes the space of regional/international relations where the expectations of the actors converge, and thus, an international regime. Overall, it could be argued that the EMP presen- ts a balance of European and non-European interests, rather than a genuinely com- mon Euro-Mediterranean interest *per se.*

Furthermore, the establishment of a minimum of Euro-Mediterranean institutions may indeed transform the EU's policy towards an international regime *in statu nascendi.*[36] It is maybe useful to remember that regional security regimes would continue to play an important role in the new European security architecture. But what has really changed with the end of the Cold War is not their relevance to security but 'the nature of the functions that must be performed by the types of regimes that have been implemented to secure stability'.[37] What is relevant here is that, by recognising the linkages between political, security, economic and socio-cultural regimes, the security approach adopted in the context of the EMP put it in

a position to be considered as a regional regime in the making. All the more so, when thinking of the new functions that the post-Cold War era has imposed on international organisations and institutions, it is questionable how far the EMP can realise its objectives under its currently weak institutional machinery.

Certain alterations need to be made if the EMP has to prove a real partnership that will accommodate solutions to the many security complexities of the region. The prospective Stability Pact (to be signed in the third Ministerial Conference of the EMP in Stuttgart in April 1999) will be for the Mediterranean an exercise in pre- emptive diplomacy and, above all, an institutionalised alliance within the EMP. It can enhance the transparency required for an ongoing dialogue and the establishment of mechanisms to manage crises so as to prevent them from deteriorating into conflicts. Indeed, the creation of Partnership Building Measures will ensure security and stability in the region. Also, the emerging inter-parliamentary co-operation through the parliamentary Forum (inaugurated in autumn 1998) provides the EMP with a legitimising forum to promote peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean space. In this Forum, the regular dialogue will engender the awareness of common Mediterranean interests and will provide the necessary mutual support for regional co-operation.

Concluding on the new Mediterranean politics, whether the EMP will be capable of playing a dynamic role in the political, economic and security arenas of the Mediterranean, depends also on the process of adjusting its own institutional structure to fit the Mediterranean peculiarities. If the EMP is to become a more effective Euro-Mediterranean approach, then the creation of institutions and mechanisms for political and security co-operation should be considered as a 'safe way' to put itself on a more permanent footing. In this case, the creation of adequate mechanisms - similar to those used in the Helsinki Process - should be regarded as a prototype for the utilisation of the EMP.[38] There is an urgent need for innovative thinking, which would not only take into account the experience from the past, but would also keep in mind the specificity and systemic complexity of the Mediterranean. The adoption of such mechanisms will formalise the whole process and will guide much more effectively the changes needed in the Mediterranean, as inspired in the Barcelona Accords.

Cyprus between Membership and Partnership

A strategically located island at the cross-roads of three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa), a place where civilisations clashed and blended, Cyprus has always been a part of the West and a bridge to ttie Middle East and the Orient.[39] The strategic location has destined Cyprus to act as the gateway from Europe to the Middle East and *vice versa.* For Cyprus, the Mediterranean is not simply the only

frontier with neighbouring countries; it is a shared area of common interest and activity with these states, where all major and most minor events have a direct and intimate bearing on Cyprus's national life, in terms both of security and prosperity. In the midst of all the destabilising factors described earlier in this article, and by looking beyond the Cyprus question itself, Cyprus's foreign policy is dictated by its particular geo-strategic position, by the political situation prevailing in the Mediterranean, and by the pattern and orientation of its commercial relations. Today Cyprus asprires to maintain and enhance its position as an economic and financial centre, a communications and transport hub, and a meeting point for diverse peoples and cultures.[40]

Despite the smallness of its size, ever since its establishment in 1960, Cyprus has traditionally played a disproportional to its size role in regional and world politics. Its strategic position, not only in terms of geography but also vis-à-vis relations with Mediterranean states having different world views, has given Cyprus the opportunity to execute functions far beyond its actual dimension. It is worth noting that, soon after its independence, the Republic of Cyprus joined the Council of Europe (1961) and has been an active member ever since. Although there are still British sovereign bases on the island and the three guarantor powers of Cyprus's independence (United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey) are all members of NATO, Cyprus has pursued in the Cold War era a neutral policy and still is an active partner of the Non-Aligned Movement. But in the Mediterranean region, Cyprus has special relations with both its Arab neighbours and Israel, and has strongly supported the Middle East peace process. Yet, the island's efforts to join the EU were at all times receiving top priority reflecting its strong political, cultural and historic ties to Europe.

From an international relations perspective, the aim of Cyprus' 'European Orientation' policy is closely linked with the systemic ineffectuality of small states in world politics.[41] But after its full accession to the EU, Cyprus will have additional institutions and mechanisms, through which it will try to shift policies and politics to its own strategic benefits. Cyprus, as a small state that lacks power in the international system, coupled with its neutral past, can serve as a extenuating and moderating influence in the EU's CFSP. Full membership will give Cyprus the opportunity to play a disproportionate - to its size - role by equally participating in the policy-making processes of one of the world's most advanced regional organisations. Nevertheless, Cyprus should also consider the option of joining NATO's Mediterranean initiative, which will not only strengthen the country's role, but may in the long run help reduce the North-South misunderstandings in the region.[42] Being a state that does not constitute a threat to anyone, Cyprus can serve as a reliable interlocutor, a 'political bridge' between the two Mediterranean shores.

The geographic proximity of the island to the unstable environment of the Middle East implies that Cyprus has a strong interest in the utilisation of the EMP. Firmly committed to the principles and objectives of the Partnership, Cyprus is determined to contribute actively to the joint Euro-Mediterranean task of turning the region into an area of peace and stability. As the Cypriot Foreign Minister emphasised: 'In order to maximise the results of our efforts, we will not hesitate to make full use of all of our assets, that is, our central geographic location in the Mediterranean, our good relations with our neighbours in the Eastern Mediterranean, our infrastructure and human resources, as well as our prospect for membership to the European Union'.[43] The prospect of accession does not diminish the importance that Cyprus places in the EMP. Rather, it increases its willingness and capability to promote co-operation among the countries of the Mediterranean.[44]

Nevertheless, the official position of the Cypriot government has always been that the peaceful and just solution of the long-standing division constitutes its first priority.[45] It should be stressed that both the Union and the UN consider that the accession process and the achievement of accession itself will facilitate a solution to the Cyprus question.[46] A role that the EU is expected to play is to support the efforts for a viable solution and, in parallel, to provide its knowledge in the stage of negotiations in order for this solution to be in line with the *acquis communautaire.* Although the EU would ideally prefer a solution before opening its membership to the island, even in the absence of a settlement, Cyprus could still become a full member. The Commission has made it clear that if progress towards the Cyprus problem was not reached before the accession negotiations, then the latter should proceed with the legitimate government of the Republic, the one recognised by international law. However succesfull, these negotiations entail risks,[47] as they could signal the end of attempts to re-unite the island and deteriorate further EU-Turkey relations. Yet, the past experience of Turkish foreign policy reveals that such a sce-nario may create further instability in the Mediterranean, as this problematic power-actor tends to use regional turbulence to push for its own accession to the EU.

If the primary objective for the creation of the Community was to secure peace, stability and prosperity in the European continent, and the motivation for enlarge-ment is to extend these goals to a Pan-European Union, then the accession of Cyprus to the EU should be seen as a positive step in this direction. On the other hand, a complicating factor in this context is the level of instability exported from Turkey, which in turn undermines the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean and, hence, of the region as a whole. Here, one might ask whether, by excluding Cyprus from entry to the EU, the latter would be cloistering itself from the problem. The answer is in the negative since Greece - itself immediately affected - is also an EU member. Thus, the latter cannot ignore this phenomenon, but should deal with it independently of Cyprus's application.

The peaceful resolution of the Cyprus question may also improve the Greek-Turkish relations. However, the easing of tensions in the Aegean Archipelago will relieve subsequently some congestion in the wider Mediterranean Sea security complex. On the other hand, considering that all past efforts towards a settlement of the Cyprus question have failed, the EU will have made a great step to adopting a new role in international affairs if it is succesfull in contributing towards a peaceful solution. In this context, the solution of the Cyprus problem and the accession of Cyprus to the EU would affirm the latter's commitment to be decisively involved in the security challenges confronting the Mediterranean. On the contrary, the EU's failure to follow an assertive policy based on its own declarations for the preservation of peace and prosperity of the wider Mediterranean, will further expose the many difficulties involved in the making of a genuinely common European foreign and security policy.[48]

As Cyprus's accession gathers momentum, it is important that the island be included in the enlarged regional organisation for the benefit both of itself and the EU. Cyprus, with its central geographical position in the Eastern Mediterranean, offers to Europe possibilities for enhancing its political, economic, cultural and strategic interests in the Mediterranean region. The Middle East, an area of enormous significance to Europe, and whose resources are currently wasted in exhaustive antagonisms, is a good case in point. A stable, prosperous and democratic Cyprus has an ideal geographical position to become a springboard to this important market. Cyprus's proximity to the Middle East and its dense economic relations with the Mediterranean countries also imply a great economic interest on the part of Cyprus for the completion of the MEFTA, as was originally inspired by the Barcelona Declaration. The geographical proximity could also become a factor in creating a mutual partnership in the Eastern Mediterranean. The enlargement of the EU to the Eastern Mediterranean would increase its influence and elevate its role to a stabilising player, without extending its external borders to the mainland of Asia.[49] Thus with the full accession of Cyprus to the EU, the island becomes a valuable asset for Europe.

Stability should be considered a pre-requisite for progress and development. This is applicable for countries both large and small. All the more so in the case of Cyprus, which has been living a contradiction between its size and its strategic rel- evance throughout its millennia of history. The geographic proximity of the island to the eastern and more unstable Mediterranean environment means that, in case of serious instability, Cyprus will be the most vulnerable of all EU states. It is rather supererogatory to retrieve the negative effects of the second Gulf war on the high-ly sensitive economic sector of tourism, which today has become one of the poten-tial sources of income not only for Cyprus, but also for the majority of Mediterranean countries. In short, being at the outer-edge of the EU's zone of stability, the acces-

sion of Cyprus will sensitise the major actors in European foreign policy to the challenging problems affecting the Mediterranean region.[50]

Drawing Conclusion(s)

The European landscape has undoubtedly transformed after the removal of the bipolar 'overlay'. The role and performance of small countries like Cyprus will be much depended on how well its policy-architects will understand the implications of the tidal waves for both their domestic and external security and economic policies, in the light of the EU's eastward enlargement. One of the shortcomings of this process for the developing countries is a projection of the benefits that European integration - and its the laboriously evolving *acquis* - offers to its prospective members.

Joining the EU, Cyprus will not only support the puzzling out of its compound security problem but will also unbosom the vast account of regional challengers. However, it will have the opportunity after its accession and its special regional status to play a strategic role in Euro-Mediterranean affairs. By strengthening the Mediterranean dimension of the EU, especially after its prospective eastward enlargement, and by participating in the EU policy process, Cyprus will attempt to influence EU decisions to its own benefit and play an important role in the collective efforts for peace and stability in the Mediterranean. In addition, full EU membership and the peaceful solution of the Cyprus question both challenge the EU declared commitment of 1995 in Barcelona for an unhesitating engagement in the preservation of peace and prosperity of the wider Mediterranean region. The accession of Cyprus to the EU does not diminish the importance that the Republic places in promoting further co-operation in the Mediterranean, based on the values of peace, stability and the peaceful resolution of disputes; values that the EU supports as well.

The Union, a symbol of economic success, political democracy and societal stability, has assumed a controversial, yet pivotal, role during the post-Cold War transition processes of the Mediterranean countries. As long as the latter serve as a border between a wealthy, developed, and stable Europe on the one hand, and a fragmented South on the other, the EU could at best hope to 'keep the fire under control without trying to extinguish it'. But the international role of the Union should aim even higher. Namely, to resist the temptation of remaining an apathetic observer as opposed to a constructive intermediary and, ideally, an effective international problem-solver, should any tidal waves of instability threaten this unique 'body of water'.[51]

The serious challenges arising from the southern Mediterranean rim demand a unitary and coherent response. Currently, the complexity of the Mediterranean

region are such that it is becoming all the more difficult to be confronted, let alone resolved, on an individual basis and, hence, by states acting in isolation from others. Interestingly though, the active engagement of multiple actors in the regional politics may well exacerbate the possibilities for reaching substantive interstate agreement on a number of highly sensitive issues such as immigration, economic aspects of security, external protection of citizens, respect for human rights, and the resolution of protracted conflicts. The engagement/isolation divide thus points in the direction of a 'unitary trap' where certain problems cannot be ignored, but cannot also be solved separately by each partner acting alone. Both strategic orientation and co-ordinated action will prove vital if the fragile stability of the region is to be secured. The adequate institutionalisation of the EMP is expected to provide with the long-needed international setting to manage issues of regional complexity, shape and strengthen the robustness of the nascent Euro-Mediterranean regime and finally, avail the fruition of the Union's new Mediterranean approach.

There are also important implications for Cyprus stemming from the future structure of the EMP. Indeed, the institutionalisation of the EMP will give Cyprus the opportunity of equal participation in international settings and legitimate bodies to decide on the nature and functions of the emerging Mediterranean regime. This may have an impact on the question of agenda-identification (the inclusion of a legitimate claim of a participating member) and, at a latter stage, to that of agenda-setting itself. The latter is achieved through the institutional interaction between the new parliamentary Forum and the dominant decision-making body. There is a normative implication of this dynamic, if not asymmetrical interrelationship, between the newly institutionalised Forum (still of an advisory nature) and pre-existing inter-governmental structures that set up the institutional machinery of the EU. Be that as it may, there is evidence to suggest that the proliferation of legitimate arenas will have an equally important domestic impact on the policy-making strategy of the state concern, in that it would now have to formulate a multifarious strategy to pursue what itself considers to be its legitimate claims. In any event, it would be interesting for the student of international politics to evaluate the endorsement of an additional parliamentary structure to the workings of a nascent regional regime like the EMP, and assess the extent to which its mechanisms are capable of striking a balance between its declared objectives and particular national interests which, in the case of Cyprus, may take the form of non-bargainable ones.

Cyprus is most likely to be burdened by the historic division of the island, even after its accession to the EU. Participation in the anticipated institutionalised structures of the EMP increases the number of international settings and, subsequently, upgrades Cyprus's role in the regional arena. It will also increase the capacity of the country to build alternative coalitions and alliances, not only with the other EU Mediterranean members, but also with the rest of the littoral countries, as both

share the concerns of the increasing Mediterranean challenges. The institutionali-sation of the EMP should provide Cyprus an additional platform from which to pro-mote its legitimate claims and utilise the regional Partnership so as to find a viable solution to the present division of the island. Such instruments will help to the elim-ination of misunderstandings and the regularisation of relations between the two Cypriot communities, something that becomes very important in view of the free trade area that the EMP declared to create by the year 2010. The adoption of ade-quate mechanisms and institutionalised machinery for co-operative conflict reso-lution that have been successfully used in the past (C/OSCE) will avail the fruition of the Barcelona Process objectives, by offering an operationally meaningful political capability. Moreover, the creation of a permanent institutional mechanism to help prevent regional tensions and disputes suit Cyprus's foreign policy priorities and should thus become shared objectives within the EU, not only for the benefit of Cyprus but also for its Mediterranean partners.

Notes

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11.   See respectively Gillespie, R. (1997), 'Spanish Protagonismo and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership', *Mediterranean Politics* 2/1, pp. 33-48; and, Holmes, J.W. (1997), 'Italy in the Mediterranean, but ofit?', *Mediterranean Politics,* 2/1, pp. 176-192.

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38. I have recently tried to develop this argument in Xenakis, D.K. (1998), *op.cit.,* p.19.

39. Cyprus lies 380 km from Greece (east of Rhodes), 385 km north of Egypt, 98 km west of Syria and 65 km sguth of Turkey.

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42. Pace, Roderick (1998), 'Enlargement and the Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union: The Role of Cyprus', paper presented at the conference *A symposium on Cyprus and the European Union,* Research and Development Centre, Intercollege, Nicosia, 7-9 May 1998, p. 11.

43. Address by the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus Yiannakis Kasoulides at the second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, Valletta, Malta, 15 April 1997.

44. Yiannakis, Kasoulides, *op.cit.*

45. *'I want to repeat that our dream is to be a member of the Union. But our desperate wish and agony is to see an end to the division of our country and our peo- ple. To bring peace, security and prosperity for all the people of Cyprus in a united Cyprus'.* Michaelides, A.P., 'Cyprus Accession to the European Union: A Vision and a Challenge for Today', Public Lecture by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus on the occasion of the Conference *Cyprus in the European Union,* organised by the European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science, 30 October, 1996.

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47. On this point see, Nugent, N. (1997), *op. cit.,* especially pages 57-62.

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