Explaining Foreign Policy: Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom in Times of French-Inspired Euro-Mediterranean Initiatives

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RÉSUMÉ

L'accord atteint au sommet du Conseil Européen de mars 2008 d'établir une Union pour la Méditerranée n'est pas le resultat d'une évaluation collective du Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen et, par conséquent, ne repose pas sur une véritable évaluation des besoins. En revanche, il est la conséquence d'un réseau complexe des processus d'interactions inter-étatiques et de l'opposition conjointe, orchestrée de façon informelle par de gouvernements non méditerranéens de l'Union Européenne aux efforts unilateraux de la France d'établir un cadre de coopération exclusif. En allant au-delà du concept statique d'analyse traditionelle de la politique étrangère et en s'appuyant sur des arguments inspirés de la théorie constructiviste, d'une interdépendance complexe et des éléments de théories intergouvenmentalistes, cet article vise à analyser d'un angle basé sur les théories de l'information, les politiques étrangères de l'Allemagne, de la Pologne et du Royaume Uni face à la région de la Méditerranée en général et le plan original du président Français Nicolas Sarkozy de créer une Union méditerranéenne en particulier. L'analyse ne montre pas seulement que le resultat de cette lutte entre la France et principalement l'Allemagne et les pays membres non-méditerranéens, tels la Pologne et le Royaume Uni, a généré des résultats contreproductifs et a considérablement érodé les fondements des relations euro-méditerranéennes. Il démontre également l'utilité de recourir à la théorie de l'information pour analyser la politique Euro-méditerranéenne.

ABSTRACT

The agreement reached at the European Council summit of March 2008 to establish a Union for the Mediterranean is not the result of a collective evaluation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and thus not based on a true needs assessment. Instead, it is

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the consequence of a complex web of interstate interaction processes and of the joint, informally orchestrated opposition of non-Mediterranean EU governments to unilateral French efforts to establish an exclusive cooperation framework. By going beyond the static concept of traditional foreign policy analysis and drawing on constructivist-inspired arguments, complex interdependence and elements of intergovernmentalist theories, this article aims at analysing from a theory-informed angle the foreign policies of Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom vis-à-vis the Mediterranean region in general and French President Nicolas Sarkozy's original plan to create a Mediterranean Union in particular. The analysis does not only show that the outcome of this struggle between France and mainly Germany and non-Mediterranean EU member states, such as Poland and the United Kingdom, generated counter-productive results and considerably eroded the foundations of Euro-Mediterranean relations. It also demonstrates the usefulness of bringing IR theory to the analysis of Euro-Mediterranean politics.

Introduction

One of the key features of Euro-Mediterranean relations has always been their high degree of intergovernmentalism, which allows governmental actors, be they in the southern Mediterranean or within the European Union (EU), to exert a strong and predominating influence on the shaping, making and implementation of policies. Undoubtedly, intergovernmentalism – here understood as a complex process of decision-making by the participating governmental actors with the aim of reaching consensus – in the Euro-Mediterranean context is neither a new phenomenon nor an exception, but rather the rule. Already in the early seventies, the then European Community (EC) member states and their counterparts in the southern Mediterranean were instrumental in initiating and eventually institutionalising Euro-Mediterranean relations and contributing to the adoption of what then became known as the EC's "Global Mediterranean Policy". In spite of further steps towards greater integration and thus an expansion in the Union's supranational characteristics, EU member states were still crucially involved in the adoption of the Renovated Mediterranean Policy, which replaced the "approche globale", and the Euro-Maghreb Partnership, as well as in the creation of the Barcelona Process in 1995. Also, in the fourteen years since then, in spite of the complex three-basket structure of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), supranational features have remained subordinate to intergovernmentalism – a trend that is likely to increase within the framework of the newly established Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). In other words, the extent to which national interests are

being pursued has a very strong impact on the development of relations, thus generating a dilemma for the smooth evolution of Euro-Mediterranean relations. On the one hand, intergovernmentalism has proved crucial in advancing the EU's relations with its southern neighbours in general; on the other hand, due to member states' formal and informal veto powers, it has turned out to be detrimental to the full and proper implementation of objectives, as laid out, for example, in the Barcelona Declaration and the Association Agreements. Most importantly, the holding on to the retention of intergovernmental practices and the all too frequent refusal to compromise on questions of putative national interest have contributed to repeated crises and, ultimately, stagnation of the Barcelona Process.

Against this background, this article argues that the decision to transform the Barcelona Process and thus the EMP into the UfM was not the result of a collective and deliberate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the former, by all actors involved, but rather the consequence of a complex web of interstate interaction processes and of the joint, informally orchestrated opposition of non-Mediterranean EU governments to the relentless unilateral French efforts to establish an exclusive policy framework, supposedly led by France. While this has undoubtedly prevented the duplication of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation frameworks and at least a formal degradation of the Barcelona Process, it will be shown that the outcome of this struggle between France and mainly non-Mediterranean EU member states, has generated even greater counter-productive results and considerably eroded the foundations of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

By going beyond the somewhat static concept of traditional foreign policy analysis (FPA) and drawing on constructivist-inspired arguments, complex interdependence, and elements of the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism, as put forward by Moravcsik and others, it is the objective of this article to shed light on the position and foreign policies of non-Mediterranean EU member states and their governments vis-à-vis the Mediterranean region in general and French President Nicolas Sarkozy's original plan to create a Mediterranean Union (UM) in particular. This will contribute to a better comprehension of the final compromise reached at the Brussels European Council summit of 13/14 March 2008, where the 27 EU heads of state and government formally approved the UfM. With this in view, the article reflects the assumption that there is a strained relationship in the competing pursuit of national agendas and the Barcelona and UfM agenda, the results of which are flawed decisions based on the lowest common denominator and adopted at the expense of a

further deepening of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The article is structured as follows: Section 1 provides the elements of a possible framework for an analysis of non-Mediterranean EU member states' foreign policies in general and of the role of the Mediterranean space and hence Euro-Mediterranean relations in their foreign policy agendas in particular. This will include a brief discussion of the relevance of incorporating into the analysis a multi-faceted complex of intervening variables such as power, autonomy, (inter-)dependence, domestic and external constraints, or the role of personalities and perceptions. To a greater or lesser extent, all of these influence a foreign policy decision, or its omission, and thus underpin a government's action or inaction.

On the basis of this framework, Section 2 will then analyse the extent to which the Mediterranean features in the foreign policy agenda of non-Mediterranean EU member states, thereby explaining their position vis-à-vis the Barcelona Process and the UM and the UfM. In this vein, three EU member states have been chosen as case studies – Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom. This choice is justified not only by the fact that their governments were among the main critics of the UM, but also because they share a similar geographical distance from the Mediterranean, are located in different geographical and political environments, i.e. Central Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Europe, and have been EC/EU members for varying periods of time. Moreover, while Germany and the United Kingdom belong to the "big four" and thus have a greater 'voice opportunity'[1] than others, as exemplified in their 29 votes in the EU Council, Poland can be said to be the leading actor in its regional environment and its actions and positions often serve as rallying point for its smaller neighbours.

Section 3 will briefly discuss the initial twelve months of the UfM and point to some of the inherent problems of the project, linking them to the original policy supply and interstate interaction. It is based on the assumption that the UfM is not a palliative to address the numerous political and economic problems in Europe's southern neighbourhood, but rather perpetuates the flaws of the Barcelona Process and, what is worse, has led, to date, to a complete standstill in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, even on the working level.

Section 4 summarises the findings and links them to some of the elements that could underpin a conceptual framework for a foreign policy analysis, as presented in Section 1.

Explaining Non-Mediterranean EU Member States' Foreign Policy: Elements of a Conceptual Framework

The widespread opposition of EU governments to the UfM cannot just be considered as accidental or the result of a collective plot against France's original plans to establish a Mediterranean Union that would have excluded the majority of EU member states. While it can be assumed that some EU member states might even have been in favour of an institutional Mediterranean cooperation framework that would not have required their participation, many shared the concern that the creation of a non-EU Mediterranean project had the potential of triggering gravitational forces and a process that could be leading to erosion of the somewhat fragile consensus to maintain a collective policy on the Mediterranean. Yet, the (op)position of each one of them was grounded on a complex, multi-level and multi-causal web of intervening factors, all of which, ultimately, determine their individual foreign policy behaviour.

In principle, FPA would be the obvious starting point in relation to (non-Mediterranean) EU member states and the relevance of the Mediterranean to them. A number of factors do however speak in favour of a more holistic approach that is capable of taking into account the above-mentioned multi-level and multi-causal characteristics, which underpinned the European Council's eventual decision to downgrade the idea of a UM into a UfM. First, traditional FPA rests strictly on the (neo-)realist paradigm and is preoccupied with security issues at the expense of other, equally important policy fields. Both realism and neo-realism share a preoccupation with power and anarchy and, broadly speaking, consider states as monolithic actors.[2] Whereas in the case of realism the behaviour of states can be explained by their inherent desire to accumulate power, in the case of neo-realism, their ambitions for power are derived from the anarchic structure of the international system. Undoubtedly, while power is indeed a considerable driving force for states, both assumptions have proved to be insufficient, not least on account of their simplistic approach.[3] Second, FPA is based on the assumption that states are the main and most important actors in the international system, whereas the consensus is that the international system, as a matter of fact, is a mixed-actor system increasingly marked by complex interdependence and transnational structures.[4]

To date, in spite of the development of numerous strands in FPA, no single theory of foreign policy exists that could fully bypass the restricted state-as-actor focus. Certainly, in recent years valuable studies, usually associated with

FPA, have tried to de-construct the monolithic state-as-actor focus by introducing the importance of the decision-making system and, somewhat more importantly, the role of cognitive factors such as perceptions or the importance of the information-processing of individual policy-makers. This follows up on Holsti's seminal study of 1970, which introduced the sociological concept of role into FPA.[5] Yet, they have not abandoned the neo-realist outlook inherent in FPA. Almost hand in hand with this overdue expansion of the principal focus of FPA, however, another important and highly noteworthy addition was introduced into the field by the "constructivist turn in international relations theory"[6]. This pointed out the importance of ideational aspects and thus the impact that socially constructed meanings have on foreign policy decisions. Although their reference to structures fails to offer a sufficient explanation of sudden and major changes in the foreign policy of a given country, and the often Marx-inspired discourse of dependency does not always appear to be in touch with current political realities, the importance of constructivist arguments to the ability to draw a more complete picture of the explanatory factors of a given country's foreign policy cannot be underestimated. Hence, for the purpose of analysing the foreign policy of the three case studies in this article and the (relative) importance they attach to the Mediterranean and thus to the UM and UfM, it is essential to underline the role and perceptions – and misperceptions – of individual personalities and leaders, and their interpretation of their environment, as well as the meaning of symbolic power and its repercussion on negotiated configurations. As stated elsewhere, "perceptions, at a collective as well as individual level, are likely themselves in turn to help shape the nature of the regional and international systems these states operate in".[7]

It is against this backdrop that it is also being suggested here to incorporate certain aspects of the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism into the analysis presented in the subsequent section. While the theory is in fact a mixture of theories developed by various scholars, originally to explain the process of European integration, Moravcsik's and Putnam's insights in particular seem to be useful in our context, as they link the domestic with the international level.[8] What Moravcsik defines as "domestic preference formation" and Putnam as the linkage between "diplomacy and domestic politics" is nothing less than the acknowledgement that governmental actors absorb "policy demands" from the domestic space and aim at implementing them in the international arena, thereby reneging as little as possible on these demands. The domestic space is marked by a vast number of actors with a variety of

interests and preferences who attempt to influence both the legislature and the executive. Moravcsik places particular emphasis on their economic interests, whereas Putnam refrains from ascribing more importance to either economic or political issues. In this framework, governmental actors, in order to be successful, need to identify the intersection – if it exists at all – between their domestic constituencies' interests and attitudes and that of their international counterparts with which they are engaged in bargaining and/or interaction processes. In a best-case scenario, the final outcome of these processes – during which recourse can be made to practices such as the threat of using alternative unilateral policies, the threat of building exclusive alternative coalitions, compromise and, if need be, issue linkage[9] – leads to an overlapping of the concerns and interests of the actors involved and creates what Putnam coins "win-sets".

To some extent, with their study on complex interdependence, Keohane and Nye paved the way for this work, as they linked foreign policy to autonomy, the growing interconnectedness of states, and the processes of trans-nationalisation, all of which have a non-negligible effect on foreign policy formulation. Of course, they did not criticize the explanatory power of a number of realist assumptions *per se*, but rather questioned the extent to which they were all still capable of capturing changed realities without taking into consideration co-operational aspects. Picking up on liberal institutionalism and class theory, they expanded our understanding of IR, and thus foreign policy, in the area of the relationship between power and interdependence and the issue of mutual dependence at both a regional and international level.[10] They also pointed to the almost unavoidable pressure on governments to adjust their individual policies to one another's policy ideas if discord and conflict, as a result of unsuccessful attempts to shift individual costs of adjustments onto the relevant (other) government, were to be avoided.[11]

As rightly pointed out by Nonneman, "Europe's presence on the northern shores of the Mediterranean"[12] and the engagement of EU Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean member states in a collective cooperation framework such as the EMP, must form a major part of the explanatory mosaic. In turn, this implies that the very existence of the EU as a level of intermediation, offers its Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean members an arena to either increase or even decrease their autonomy in foreign and Mediterranean policy matters and for some, even a chance to raise their potentially underdeveloped "voice opportunity".

In a simplifying fashion, the numerous variables presented in this section can be subsumed under the term "contextuality", as – taken altogether – they literally form the context in which states generate and conduct their foreign policy. Whether and to what extent these variables have impacted upon the three cases selected in this article and their foreign policies vis-à-vis the Mediterranean, their engagement in the EMP and, finally, their position on the UM/UfM will be analysed in the next section.

Non-Mediterranean EU Member States: The Mediterranean and Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation

In recent years, much has been written about Mediterranean EU member states' foreign policy and the extent to which the Mediterranean features in their respective foreign policy agendas.[13] In contrast, not least thanks to the nowadays widespread interest of the scientific community in the various facets of Euro-Mediterranean relations, the number of studies on non-Mediterranean EU member states foreign policies vis-à-vis the southern Mediterranean is certainly increasing, yet it is still comparatively sparse.[14] This is certainly surprising in view of the long-standing existence of the Barcelona Process and the EU's Mediterranean policy and the political and financial pressures it has placed on EU member states. It is even more incomprehensible that a systematic analysis of the role of Germany, the United Kingdom and Poland in Euro-Mediterranean dynamics and of the potential impact of the latter on the former has been neglected, given that the three countries can be considered the most important non-Mediterranean EU member states, possessing considerable influence on the shaping and making of EU Mediterranean policies. This fact came to the fore again only recently, in the wake of the discourse on the UfM.

Germany

The fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989 and Germany's subsequent unification process had a tremendous impact on its foreign policy, its international outlook and, thus, its perceptions of the southern Mediterranean. Naturally, as a divided and non-sovereign state on the front line in the East-West conflict, one that "imported" its security from the United States, while simultaneously guaranteeing it through NATO membership, its autonomy in foreign policy matters was heavily constrained for more than four decades. As a result of this limited room for manoeuvre,

which was even more restricted due to stipulations in Germany's Basic Law, specifying the 'civilian' nature of the state, German foreign policy was underpinned by three major determining factors, i.e. its Western orientation, embedding in multi-lateral structures and Euro-centrism. In conjunction with a broad domestic consensus on the societal and political levels of this orientation, both of which grew considerably after the Social Democrats adopted their Godesberg Programme in 1959, German foreign policy confined itself for many years to issues "very close to home"[15]. As a consequence, the southern Mediterranean was mainly perceived by the political elite from a developmental perspective. It was only seen from a strategic angle within the larger NATO and hence Cold War context, if at all. While, for domestic economic actors, the (non-Arab) Mediterranean was for many years mainly a source of cheap labour, the interest of German society in the area was by and large limited to tourism and cultural aspects. Hence, domestic constituencies' demands on the executive to adopt active policies towards the southern Mediterranean were negligible.

Hand in hand with the changes in Germany's internal and external environment and the erosion of its external foreign policy rationale at the beginning of the 1990s came a gradual reformulation of the country's *Selbstverständnis* in foreign policy, initiated in particular by the conservative-liberal government under the leadership of Helmut Kohl and the subsequent red-green coalition led by Gerhard Schroeder – a process whose end result can best be summarised as a modern form of revisionism. Interestingly, in the framework of the so-called out-of-area debate that took place in the early nineties, there was a widespread consensus among the country's political left to oppose the governing parties' vehement support in favour of engaging Germany in peace-keeping and peace-building operations outside Germany, with a view to its assuming greater and, most of all, global responsibilities. Gradually, heavily influenced by their party leaders, who had finally understood the growing international demands, the Social Democrats changed their position in 1992. The constitutional court's ruling of 1994, considering out-of-area missions legitimate provided they were preceded by a parliamentary decision, prepared the ground for the political left's U-turn after it assumed power in 1998 and after Chancellor Schroeder risked a vote of confidence in November 2001 as part of his eventually successful efforts to obtain parliamentary support for Germany's and thus the *Bundeswehr's* participation in the US-led military action "Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan".[16]

This shift from externally imposed foreign policy navel-gazing to global activism was the result of both external and domestic demands and intertwined with the gradual build-up of the EU's common foreign and security policy, but it was also undeniably used by Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schroeder, as well as former Foreign Minister Fischer, in their aspirations to sharpen and increase their own political profile beyond the realm of domestic politics.[17] Along with the growing pressure in the EU, mainly initiated by Spain and the European Commission, to make the Mediterranean an area of strategic importance, the developments mentioned above were not without consequences for the Mediterranean itself and for the extent to which it increasingly became an issue of post-unification German foreign policy. Undoubtedly, the numerous terror attacks in various southern Mediterranean cities over recent years, some of which claimed the lives of German citizens, the civil war in Algeria from 1991 to 2000, the failure of the Madrid Peace Process, and the learning process among parts of the German foreign policy establishment as a result of its membership of the EMP contributed to this. Nonetheless, as exemplified by the programmes of the German EU presidencies in 1999 and 2007, which hardly mentioned the Mediterranean at all, the relevance of this contextuality did not generate a single German "Mediterranean policy" as such. Moreover, in spite of Germany's participation in the Schengen agreement, which provides for the removal of border controls between the participating countries, thus supposedly triggering greater sensitivity for developments in the south, "neighbourhood" in Germany, both on the societal and political level, is still mainly associated with Central and Eastern Europe and the EU member states bordering Germany. Moreover, the Mediterranean as a foreign policy arena is also subordinate to Germany's virtual political, economic and socio-cultural neighbourhood that extends even to the US, owing to more than sixty years' close bilateral cooperation and the German foreign policy elite's structural decision to participate pro-actively in the international community's stabilisation efforts in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Indeed, the German government played a crucial role in upgrading Euro-Mediterranean relations in the run-up to the Barcelona Conference in 1995. This engagement was, however, rather the result of an intensive bargaining process, involving recourse to the practice of issue-linkage, mainly between Spanish Prime Minister Gonzalez and Chancellor Kohl, at the end of which Germany accepted the initiation of the EMP in exchange for Spain's support for German-inspired plans to start the EU accession process for the Central

and Eastern European reform states.[18] Kohl's principal position at the time, i.e. to give free trade priority over political cooperation and prevent both the closer association of southern Mediterranean partners with the EU and greater financial assistance, has somewhat represented a consistent stance of all German governments ever since. Using the instrument of coalition-building, in particular with governments of other non-Mediterranean states, e.g. that of the United Kingdom in 1992 in the context of the Edinburgh European Council Summit and Poland before the Brussels European Council Summit of early 2008, Germany has not only been just partly successful in ensuring this line, but occasionally even displayed a contradictory attitude in the wake of free trade negotiations by acting in a highly protectionist fashion.[19] While Kohl and his British counterpart Major were instrumental in ensuring acceptance of the Delors II package in 1992, which in turn prevented even greater financial assistance under the MEDA I programme three years later, and while Chancellor Angela Merkel successfully orchestrated an anti-UM coalition in the early months of 2008, German governments could neither prevent the incorporation of the southern Mediterranean into the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and increased financial assistance within the framework of the latter, nor the granting of advanced status to Morocco in the autumn of 2008.[20]

Overall, in addition to Germany's long-standing commitments in the area of development assistance to the southern Mediterranean, two policy areas stand out – trade and Germany's special relationship with Israel and, thus, its interest in contributing to conflict resolution in the Middle East. Soon after the second world war, as a consequence of its division and the absence of sovereignty, the governing elite, with the support of the Western bloc, was already focusing on the creation of a market economy and the pursuit of a liberal export-oriented trade policy to generate a network of interdependence, which was also to be used in the context of (West) German governmental efforts to overcome the partition of Germany. This rationale and the end of the colonial period led to the gradual establishment of diplomatic relations and an intensification of bilateral trade relations with all southern Mediterranean countries. As part of this development, German industry, represented by the Federation of German Industries (BDI), along with the German-Arab Association and subsequent German-Arab economic forums, became highly instrumental over the years in intensifying these trade links and, through their policy demands, contributed to the fact that nowadays Germany is among the most important trading partners of all southern Mediterranean countries.[21] In conjunction with the

fact that existing Euro-Mediterranean association agreements predominantly contained trade stipulations, their consistent lobbying impacted seriously on the actions of all German governments in the field of the promotion of political reform. In effect, such issues as the strengthening of human rights, good governance and democratization in the south – in purely practical political terms – became subordinate to well-defined trade interests.[22]

The role of personalities in foreign policy-making was particularly obvious in the context of Germany's[23] recent pro-active engagement in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as former Foreign Minister Fischer – driven by personal ambition, the moral imperative of Germany's past, and demands by many Arab governments to contribute to a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict – made the issue a priority in German foreign policy. His seven-point "Idea Paper" of April 2002 and his second four-page Middle East peace initiative of late 2002, albeit unsuccessful, left a very visible German imprint on the road map for peace, as well as all subsequent efforts by the international Middle East Quartet. In the person of Foreign Minister Steinmeier, though somewhat less prominently, the Foreign Ministry has continued along Mr. Fischer's path. In contrast, picking up on demands from various Jewish communities in Germany and the previous Israeli government itself, under Prime Minister Olmert, Chancellor Merkel has displayed a more Israel-friendly position, thereby jeopardizing the present more balanced perception in the southern Mediterranean and Arab world of Germany as an impartial negotiator in the conflict. In view of the supremacy of the Chancellery over the Foreign Ministry, it is thus hardly surprising that Germany has been highly influential in the current negotiations between the EU and Israeli government with respect to the establishment of a privileged partnership.[24]

As far as the UM/UfM is concerned, it is worth pointing out that Merkel's opposition to a project that was originally destined to adopt the form of a non-EU cooperation framework, excluding the majority of EU member states, was not rooted in any societal demands or pressures. Nor was the German government informally tasked by other EU member states' governments to take the lead in opposing French President Sarkozy. Interestingly, German industry also kept a rather low profile during the months preceding the Brussels summit of 13/14 March 2008 in spite of the fact that German business would have lost a potential opportunity to expand its market share in the south if the original French plans had been successful. One explanation of the low degree to which the BDI was influencing the Chancellery in its efforts to oppose the original idea of a UM that would exclude Germany is the fact

that the vast majority of both medium-sized and large industries are lukewarm about expanding their investment activities in the southern Mediterranean in view of the inadequate regulation underpinning the free flow of capital. Nonetheless, some interest manifested itself among German businesses operating in the field of solar energy – one of the six areas for enhanced cooperation under the UfM – as they adopted a joint Franco-German plan which foresees the construction of new electricity-generating capacities around the entire Mediterranean by 2020 and, arguably, the generation of substantial revenue.[25] Only after Merkel had finally managed to convince Sarkozy, at their bilateral meeting in Hanover in early March 2008, to abandon his exclusionary plans and it had been guaranteed that the new project would include all EU member states and even all non-EU Mediterranean riparians did the BDI publish a position paper. In this document the BDI generally welcomed the new initiative, considering the Mediterranean "an interesting market thanks to a growing dynamism and much untapped potential" but, even so, points to ten major challenges that the UfM would need to address in order to become an economic success.[26]

Interestingly, in the run-up to the Brussels summit, none of these concerns were ever raised by Chancellor Merkel or Foreign Minister Steinmeier, who was considerably less outspoken in his criticism of a UM. Instead, the point of departure for the Chancellery's criticism of the Sarkozy initiative, which grew considerably throughout 2007 and reached a climax in December 2007, was a carefully chosen argument intended to shift the focus to the EU level and thus away from, what were in fact, purely power-oriented considerations: after months of deliberate restraint and silence, providing the Elysée with ample space to abandon the idea of a UM at a very early stage, Merkel argued that the creation of a UM that included only Mediterranean riparians had the potential to set in motion gravitational forces within the EU that in turn could generate a process of fragmentation and, eventually, disintegration. Furthermore, she reminded Sarkozy, and hence all other EU governments, that the use of EU funding for the exclusive pursuit of national interests could not be justified.[27] Fully aware that these arguments would raise concern among the governments of other EU member states, e.g. the United Kingdom and Poland, she hardly missed an occasion to make her message heard, with the aim of bringing potentially diverse perceptions in line with one another. Irrespective of the degree to which her putative concerns were serious and justified, it can be argued that the strategy was intended to portray her as acting in defence of the "common good", i.e. the very existence of European

integration and EU-European commonality. On the other hand, the rationale underlying this strategy was to prevent France from becoming 'primus inter pares' in European foreign policy matters and thereby undermining Germany's role as the leading actor within the EU, and to preclude a resurgence of French colonial ambitions. Another layer was added to this multi-level game by the incorporation of the growing concern among the German foreign policy elite that French President Sarkozy's ignorance of long-standing bilateral communication and coordination channels had the potential of seriously affecting the Franco-German alliance – after all, a cornerstone of post-war German foreign policy and, due to the deep degree of mutual interdependence, almost a domestic issue.

In a way, even before the French-German meeting in Hanover, the "Appel de Rome"[28], adopted by the Prime Ministers of Italy and Spain and the French President on 20 December 2007, gave a good indication of the first impact that Merkel's warnings had had in other EU capitals. It also showed that the informal German-led coalition-building that had already started in the background finally had begun to bear fruit. By downgrading the proposal from a Mediterranean Union to merely a Union *for the* Mediterranean and by suggesting that all EU member states should attend the Paris summit of July 2008, the dynamics had changed and the Chancellery was using this momentum to play its cards one after the other, thereby gradually increasing the pressure on the Elysée. In this sense, it was almost a logical step for Merkel to go beyond her repeatedly raised concerns and open yet another front that would make it impossible for Sarkozy to push through his exclusive plans. Encouraged by Merkel, this front was opened in the form of a policy speech by the newly elected Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on 23 November 2007, in which he mentioned that Poland should "participate in shaping the Eastern dimension of the EU through the development of relations with Ukraine and Russia"[29]. From the Chancellery's perspective, the beginning of an intra-EU discourse, emerging simultaneously, on the possible need to establish an "Eastern European Union" and the linkage of two possibly emerging policy frameworks for Europe's most sensitive neighbourhoods finally ensured the attention of all EU governments and, last but not least, opened new avenues for Merkel to score another foreign policy success and achieve what she had already announced in her speech before the European Parliament on 17 January 2007, namely that she would pay more attention to Eastern Europe.[30]

Poland

Undoubtedly, the defining moment for current Polish foreign policy was the fall of the Berlin wall and the subsequent collapse of the Warsaw Pact. Forced by the "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" to surrender its autonomy in the field of foreign policy to the Soviet Union, the termination of the Pact in July 1991 led to a situation in which Polish society and the political elite – old and new – had to embark on a discourse over the future course of the country's foreign policy. With the election of Lech Walesa in December 1990 to serve as President of the Third Polish Republic, after decades of totalitarianism, it soon became obvious that this discourse was less about whether Poland should or should not develop a Western orientation than about the extent to which this general orientation was synonymous with full or just partial integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.[31] Eventually, societal and political consensus emerged in favour of full integration into both NATO and the EU. Although this process was repeatedly exposed to setbacks, as exemplified by the developments in late 1994 and early 1995, culminating in the resignation of Foreign Minister Olechowski over the refusal of the Pawlak government to adopt an active pro-Western stance,[32] Poland became a member of NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004.

Participation in Euro-Atlantic structures and the process of European integration set in motion the internationalization of Polish post-Cold War Foreign Policy, embedding the country in new cooperation structures and thus increasing the degree of interdependence between it and its partners in this newly evolving cooperation. This development occurred, however, at the expense of the relations with (Mediterranean) countries that Poland had developed in the context of the Cold War, not least for ideological reasons. While bilateral relations were established and maintained in particular with Syria, Algeria and Libya, the relative importance of these relationships declined as a consequence of the diversification of Polish foreign policy and the growing concern among both governmental and societal actors about Poland's mainly non-democratic Eastern neighbourhood. Unsurprisingly, this development passed almost unnoticed and was never the subject of domestic debate among the political elite, the media or other constituencies and lobby groups, e.g. Polish Industry, the Poland Import Export Chamber of Commerce, the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency or the Polish agricultural lobby. The absence of specific policy demands generated by domestic actors with respect to the southern Mediterranean region, noteworthy since the creation of the Third Republic, is thus even more blatant in Poland than in Germany.[33]

This situation, i.e. the absence of domestic Mediterranean-related policy supplies and thus domestic preference formation, remains almost unchanged in spite of Poland's EU membership and its corresponding participation in the EU's Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework. At government level, however, the Europeanization of Polish foreign policy is discernible to the extent that every single Polish government, in the context of EU membership, has officially committed itself to the EMP, now the UfM, and supports the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. Moreover, the government under Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz has even ensured Poland's active participation in the FRONTEX operations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the summer of 2006 with a view to combating illegal migration. Certainly, as in the case of Germany, exposure to Euro-Med practices and participation in sectoral cooperation programmes has led to greater, albeit still underdeveloped, sensitivity among Polish decision-makers as well as increased awareness of the socio-economic and political developments in the southern Mediterranean. In recent years, as a result of this socialization process and an increasingly firm grasp of the market potential of southern Mediterranean countries, as well as an awareness of the need to diversify energy supplies, Polish governments, in particular those of Prime Ministers Kaczyinski and Tusk, have gradually started to reinvigorate their relationships with some of the country's former ideological allies in the Mediterranean. The leading government actor in this regard is the Ministry of the Economy: as a result of both a visit by a Polish government delegation to Algeria in 2006 and a bilateral meeting between the Minister of the Economy Piotr Grzegorz and the Algerian Minister of Energy and Mines in January 2007 in Warsaw, it initiated a Memorandum on Cooperation, supposedly leading to the strengthening of bilateral economic relations, particularly in the field of energy, mining, telecommunications, transport and construction.[34] In the light of Algeria's being the third most important market for Polish exports in Africa and its vast energy resources, the re-intensification of relations is quite a natural development.

Such an explanation, however, does not apply to Syria. Yet, on 5 March 2009, for the first time in 20 years, the Ministry of the Economy, under the leadership of Deputy Minister of the Economy, Adam Szejnfeld, together with the Polish Chamber of Commerce, held a Polish-Syrian business forum in Warsaw to identify areas of future cooperation. It was preceded by bilateral negotiations and the conclusion of an agreement to set up a Poland-Syria Business Board. As the meetings mainly revolved around issues such as the

operation of special economic zones in Poland, cooperation in the field of food processing, construction, infrastructure and utilities, their underlying rationale is simply related to the government's objective to explore new markets at a time when the European single market is in recession, and thus increase the bilateral trade balance, currently amounting to approximately USD 82 million.[35] However, sensitive issues pertaining to Syria's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its relations with Hamas and Hezbollah, and its special relationship with Iran – all of which are of utmost concern to the EU and among the reasons why the EU-Syria association agreement already initialled in October 2004 has still not been signed and ratified – were never addressed by the Polish government during the meetings. On the one hand, this can be explained by the fact that Polish government actors' perceptions of political developments in the southern Mediterranean are by and large simplified and all too often inaccurate. On the other hand, this attitude of benign neglect and the decision to attribute more importance to economic interests mirrors a widespread feature of EU foreign policy vis-à-vis its southern neighbourhood in general.[36] Since 1989, Polish foreign policy has officially been committed to the protection of fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy but, apart from being the cornerstones of Poland's policy in international frameworks, these principles have been addressed in the context of Poland's relations with its Eastern neighbours and most recently of the Georgia-Russia war in 2008, but have never been the subject of any direct intergovernmental encounter with any of the EMP's southern partners.

The formation of government actors' interest in the southern Mediterranean is furthermore only discernible to the extent that the "Strategy for Poland's Development Cooperation" [37], adopted by the Polish government in October 2003, singles out the Palestinian Territories as recipients of Polish ODA to be transferred either directly via the Polish Representation Office opened in 2004 in Ramallah or via UNRWA. Polish aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) increased from EUR 130.000 in 2005 to EUR 500.000 in 2007, owing mainly to a decision taken by the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council in April 2006 to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian population and address the deteriorating humanitarian situation.[38] It is however questionable whether Poland's development assistance towards the PA can be considered a sign of Polish ambitions to assume a political role in the region. As is argued elsewhere, the position prevailing among government officials seems to be that "development aid grants visibility" and thus is not a direct result of a normative and sustainable policy, but rather a

vehicle through which other political objectives not related to the Palestinian Territories and/or the Israeli Palestinian conflict can be achieved.[39] Undoubtedly, it is in this light that the "Polish Strategy Towards Non-European Developing Countries", containing one chapter on North Africa and the Middle East, has to be read and, secondly, it is against this background that Poland has strengthened its military presence as part of UNIFIL II. Polish engagement in the southern Mediterranean, be it in the context of development assistance or in peacekeeping missions, does not stem from an explicit "Mediterranean agenda" but is rather the result of Polish governmental and societal desires to secure the country's political and economic interests, along with its obligation to respond to the new responsibilities imposed upon it by EU membership.[40]

When, in late November 2007, Prime Minister Tusk declared that Poland should adopt an even more pro-active stance within the EU to facilitate, in particular, the latter's relations with Russia and the Ukraine,[41] this announcement was in line with Poland's post-Communist foreign policy objectives, long-standing considerations regarding regional stability and interdependence, various demands from domestic economic actors and, given Poland's recent history and geographical location, the country's broad societal attitudes. Having been in office for just seven days at the time of the speech, Donald Tusk refrained from making any reference to the UM/UfM, as positive and negative comments alike would have generated criticism either at home or in France – the latter being one of Poland's key strategic partners in the EU and a member of the Weimar Triangle. Instead, the newly formed Polish government, already aware of the gradually surfacing differences within the EU over the future course of the EMP, very quickly identified the intersection of interests and attitudes between the Polish and German (and other non-Mediterranean EU member states') domestic constituencies and, without stressing the fact explicitly, sided with the German Chancellery in its opposition towards the creation of a UM. Although the creation of a UM/UfM was never the subject of public debate in Poland, or even discussed in Parliament, Tusk picked up on the general sentiment that such a union of sorts would possibly require greater financial and political involvement by all EU member states, which in turn was perceived as a development that could have negative repercussions on the further development of EU policy towards Eastern Europe and thus on Poland and Germany's ambitions in Eastern Europe.

The existence of overlapping concerns and interests between Germany and

Poland did eventually allow governments of other non-Mediterranean EU member states to formulate, albeit indirectly, their unease with the French initiative and gradually position themselves ahead of the Brussels European Council of March 2008. The Swedish government, particularly in the person of Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, subscribed to Tusk and Merkel's principal argument that the stabilization and democratization of Eastern Europe must not be forgotten in the debate over a UM/UfM and, though avoiding any official remarks in that regard, he had recourse to the practice of issue-linkage by linking Poland and Sweden's approval of an inclusive and cost-neutral UM/UfM to the creation of an Eastern Partnership.[42] Undoubtedly, from the perspective of the newly elected Polish government, the declared intention to propose an Eastern Partnership at the Brussels European Council in May 2008 generated a multi-faceted win-set in that it would guarantee broad domestic support for a major policy initiative, potentially destined to reflect Poland's growing influence within the EU, guarantee that Poland's most pressing foreign policy concern would be elevated to EU level, guarantee that the UM/UfM could not arouse unwelcome distributional consequences in financial terms and hence ensure that the newly elected government would simultaneously achieve a number of objectives without having directly offended any of its EU partners.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom contrasts with Germany and Poland in that it had a long history of colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa and, even today, is present in the Mediterranean given its Gibraltar outpost and its sovereign base areas in Cyprus. The repercussions of both the signing of the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 and the adoption of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 have left a considerable historical legacy for the United Kingdom's relations with the countries of the region. It is precisely its colonial past that can be identified as an intervening variable responsible for its dense web of rather close and well-developed bilateral relations with the majority of countries in the southern Mediterranean. The special role the United Kingdom played, in particular, in the political development of both Jordan and Egypt in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century helps explain its present ties with both countries and, in addition to important British trade interests and an inclination, growing in particular after 9/11 and the London bombings in July 2005, towards close anti-terrorism cooperation, this role can be considered the key explanatory factor.[43]

As far as Jordan is concerned, cooperation in the defence area is particularly noteworthy, dating back to the inception of Transjordan in 1921: The United Kingdom provided support first for the establishment and later the modernization of the Jordanian defence forces. In the early 1990s the British Defence Ministry, under the direction of Sir Malcolm Rifkind, made an agreement with the Jordanian Royal Palace and the local defence elite to initiate joint military exercises, which started in 1993 and have taken place on an annual basis ever since.[44] While, politically, this cooperation follows the tradition of the United Kingdom's past engagement, economically it has proven to be extremely profitable, mainly for the British defence industry. Over the years, the multinational BAE Systems have turned out to be the most important domestic actor formulating concrete policy demands and thus generating concrete policy supply, much of which has been taken up by the various governments. This has created a situation in which it has become the almost exclusive beneficiary in financial terms of British-Jordanian defence cooperation.[45]

Apart from BAE systems, the British government's trade development arm, UK Trade & Investment, has established itself over the years as one of the key actors in the exploitation of the United Kingdom's export potential, in turn absorbing policy demands from the United Kingdom's export industry, particularly in areas such as telecommunications equipment, pharmaceutical products, machinery, transport equipment, textiles and yarn, and scientific instruments. By 2008, its lobbying had led to a large bilateral trade imbalance, with the United Kingdom exporting goods in the amount of £210 million and importing goods in the amount of £21 million. To compensate for this asymmetric development, in view of Jordan's considerable foreign debt, and not least in order to secure the Jordanian regime's support in the field of anti-terrorism cooperation, Prime Minister Tony Blair agreed with Jordanian requests in early 2002 and supported a debt rescheduling agreement. It came into force in July 2002 as a result of the Paris Club discussions. However, this agreement proved unsustainable and, in January 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown agreed to yet another, this time more comprehensive, debt settlement of over USD 2 billion.[46]

Since late 2004, on Tony Blair's personal insistence, the British government has introduced the fight against terrorism into its bilateral relations with the countries of the southern Mediterranean and has been actively seeking Memoranda of Understanding, facilitating the deportation of terror suspects from the region. In response to US practices and pressures, a highly important

external variable influencing British foreign policy-making from 2000-2008, the first such agreement was concluded with Jordan in August 2005 and another one with Libya just two months later, and negotiations were initiated with other southern Mediterranean regimes. As in the case of Germany and Poland, respect for and the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms has become, in principle, a cornerstone of British foreign policy, owing in particular to the personal efforts and conviction of the former foreign secretary Robin Cook.[47] Yet, the memorandum of understanding with Jordan generated criticism precisely for not being in line with human rights norms, as it omits stipulations on the effective protection of returnees' rights. The question was even raised whether any British court, when confronted with a deportation request, would accept assurances from the Jordanian authorities, knowing that they make repeated use of torture.[48]

Clearly, relations with Egypt and other Arab southern Mediterranean partners were temporarily affected by Tony Blair's vehement support for the US-led invasion of Iraq. The ultimate implementation of his doctrine of interventionism, as presented in his Chicago speech in 1999 and exemplified by Britain's participation in "Operation Iraqi Freedom",[49] was a clear break with Cook's more pacifist notion of human rights and democracy promotion, for it was rooted in Blair's personal belief that the spreading of democracy could serve as a legitimate basis for military intervention. While the Jordanian regime, not least due to its multi-faceted dependence on British aid, abstained from criticising Tony Blair too strongly over the coherence of his pro-US policies, the Egyptian regime was much more critical of the Blair-Bush approach and, particularly before the war, anti-British/American sentiment all too often came to the fore in the context of major demonstrations in Cairo.[50] Very soon after the fall of Saddam Hussein, bilateral relations normalized again. Indeed, British investment in Egypt and external trade throughout 2003 were largely unaffected. Since then regular 'travel diplomacy' has resumed and the already close cultural relations, with British Council representation in both Cairo and Alexandria, have been intensified, as have British investment activities. Nowadays the United Kingdom is the largest foreign investor in Egypt. Domestic actors such as the British Confederation of Industry, Trade Partners UK, British Trade International and the British-Egyptian Business Association (BEBA) have proven to be highly instrumental in that regard, as they have consistently transmitted their policy preferences to the government and so must be considered the most important non-governmental source of policy supply.

Undoubtedly, the absence of other influential domestic constituencies trying to exert pressure on the government is one of the main reasons explaining the latter's silence – *grosso modo* – as regards criticizing the Egyptian and, in fact, other regimes in the region for the repeated violation of human rights and the perpetuation of authoritarianism. In the past, the British government under Tony Blair has indeed raised sensitive issues with the Egyptian regime, e.g. the persecution of Egyptian Copts or the imprisonment of opposition leader Ayman Nour, and must even be considered more outspoken and critical than most other EU governments. In practical terms, however, British criticism has not had any major impact on the ground and was even questioned by the regimes concerned themselves, given Britain's participation in the US-led coalition and thus Blair's dubious ideological notion of democracy promotion by force.

In the recent past, the approximately 2.4 million-strong Muslim community in Britain has undoubtedly come to be considered a not insignificant domestic constituency capable of exerting considerable pressure on the government. In particular the Muslim Council of Britain, the biggest umbrella organisation of Muslims in Britain with more than 400 affiliates, has repeatedly attacked the government, most visibly in early 2009, in the context of a public campaign against the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears, and Prime Minister Brown's offer to send peacekeeping naval forces to monitor arms-smuggling between Egypt and Gaza.[51] Whereas the Council proved to be an important source of policy input on domestic issues, such as the Equality Act in 2007, and a repeated critic of British foreign policy in Iraq, it has hitherto failed to leave its imprint on any of the government's bilateral relations with southern Mediterranean regimes or on the EU's Mediterranean Policy and the related British position.

Following Tony Blair's Chicago speech, democracy promotion in general and in the Middle East and North Africa in particular, was given a prominent place on the United Kingdom's foreign policy agenda, even leading to intra-governmental disputes between the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) during the year that preceded the US-led invasion of Iraq. The development minister Claire Short opposed the foreign secretary Jack Straw, arguing that capacity-building was more important than the hasty introduction of democratic structures, but was not successful in pushing through her views. On 12 May 2003 she finally resigned in protest at the war in Iraq.[52] Whereas her successors adopted a much more coherent stance with Downing Street,

this change hardly affected the southern Mediterranean. Undoubtedly, in the early 2000s, Prime Minister Blair was instrumental, on a personal level, in the matter of the Libyan regime's decision to abandon its arms programme and its reintegration into the international community and, before the invasion of Iraq, he tried to convince Syrian President Bashar of the need to introduce political and economic reforms. These overtures, underpinned by a newly established budget line specifically targeting reform projects in the Middle East, did not contribute to processes of political liberalization either in Libya or Syria and it is indeed questionable whether Blair's efforts were seriously intended to induce democratic change or were simply born of strategic and economic need/considerations.

The issue of counter-terrorism was one of the key drivers and decisive variables behind the FCO's decision to establish both a UK-Morocco Ministerial Dialogue Forum in February 2006 and the creation of a UK-Algeria Joint Committee on Bilateral Relations just a few months later, the latter of which led to the conclusion of four treaties of judicial cooperation. As far as Israel is concerned, relations go beyond anti-terrorism cooperation and are multi-faceted, and the British executive has been investing great effort in ensuring that it is not antagonizing the influential British Jewish community and jeopardizing Israeli investment in the UK.[53] The governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have been repeatedly criticized for displaying pro-Israeli attitudes and pursuing a biased policy within the framework of international efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[54] Indeed, both the FCO and Downing Street regularly exert pressure on the PA to detain anti-Israeli militants and implement both institutional and security-sector reform. Moreover, following Hamas' election victory in early 2006, they froze contacts with what they called the "terrorist Palestinian Authority".[55] Yet, this did not prevent the Blair government from providing large-scale financial assistance to the PA at a time when other EU governments were much more lukewarm about similar aid packages.[56]

The United Kingdom's well-developed interest in the Middle East never translated into an equally visible role within the EMP, not least due to the notorious Euro-scepticism of the British political elite since the days of Margaret Thatcher. In the first half of the nineties, according to Gillespie, the Tory government, in combination with the Kohl administration, was arguably responsible for the shaping and adoption of "Barcelona's" neo-liberal doctrine in the context of the second basket.[57] Over the years, as a consequence of Blair's new-found ideological interest in democracy promotion, the various British

governments also developed a growing interest in political dialogue with the Blair administration, having shown strong support for stricter and more coherent benchmarking measures within the EMP. Nonetheless, as in Germany and Poland, even today the political class in the United Kingdom does not perceive the EMP, and now the UfM, as a priority. After the British government organized the informal ad-hoc meeting of Euro-Mediterranean foreign ministers in June 1998, which proved to be a relative success thanks to Foreign Secretary Cook's skilful mediation between Arab and Israeli partners and the final decision to introduce the principle of partnership-building measures into the EMP, Prime Minister Blair put his political weight behind the 2005 Barcelona II summit that was supposed to celebrate the tenth birthday of the Barcelona Process. Criticised already in the run-up to the November conference for the lack of commitment and poor organisational skills, Blair published a joint article with Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero in the Spanish daily El País on 28 November 2005. In the article, they tried to induce a positive spirit and present a number of areas where cooperation should be intensified.[58] But these efforts came too late. They did not prevent a boycott of the summit by the majority of political leaders from the south, and the summit itself did not go beyond the adoption of a five-year work programme and an unspecific and intensely disputed code of conduct on countering terrorism.[59]

Unlike German Chancellor Merkel, British Prime Minister Brown and Foreign secretary Miliband did not make their criticism of the UM public, but rather opted for a more subtle way. They joined Merkel and Tusk in their principal assessment of such a union of sorts and shared their opposition towards any project that excludes EU member states but depends on EU funds. While the common denominator in British alignment with German and Polish resistance was the sensation of having been ignored by Sarkozy's original proposal, as well as a general preference for closer ties with Eastern Europe – a position also favoured by a large number of domestic export-oriented interest groups – another rather different motivation was the widely held perception that the project could end up as a replacement for Turkish EU membership.[60] As Britain proved to be a staunch supporter of Turkey's accession to the EU for a long time, and there was no domestic constituency formulating explicit and relevant policy demands, the government indicated to Merkel before the Brussels summit of March 2008 that the United Kingdom would also oppose the UM if it was to remain a project based on exclusion. In addition, it was transmitted both to Warsaw and Berlin that the idea of

creating an Eastern Partnership would be favoured by the British government as part of a wider issue-linkage process – a sign that finally convinced Polish Prime Minister Tusk and Foreign Minister Sikorski to seek the endorsement of EU member states' governments on a formal level as well. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the British government, like its German and Polish counterparts, did not undertake any specific action to generate interest formation among domestic constituencies once it was agreed to establish an inclusive and all-encompassing UfM. After the Paris summit of 2008, all Brown did was to praise the Mediterranean solar plan, supposedly with a view to both gaining domestic support for his approval of the UfM and provoking at least some interest among the British businesses operating in the field.[61]

The Union for the Mediterranean: A Prelude to the End of Euro-Mediterranean Relations?

According to the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, the UfM is the expression of a "strategic ambition for the Mediterranean" and destined to be a "multilateral partnership with a view to increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion", increasing "co-ownership […], setting "governance on the basis of equal footing" and translating "it into concrete projects".[62] In conjunction with the formulated objective of making Euro-Mediterranean relations more relevant and visible for citizens, the UfM seems to take many of the shortcomings of the EMP into account, in particular in the areas of co-ownership and European Commission-dominated day-to-day management. The struggle between mainly non-Mediterranean EU member states and France over the principles of exclusion and inclusion and the deepening of the Barcelona *acquis*, has however generated a situation in which the practical implementation of these objectives faces an almost insurmountable impasse.

With respect to inclusion, the final decision by the European Council on 13 March and thus the preference of Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom to include all EU member states, all Mediterranean riparians and the Arab League, the latter of which was not granted any formal voting power, has naturally increased the number of players with a veto. A pre-taste of what enlargement would mean in practice in the absence of congruent foreign policy interests among EU and southern Mediterranean members was provided in the discussions revolving around the creation of a UfM secretariat. While the governments of Germany, Poland and Britain, together with a

number of governments from other northern EU member states expressed their support for a small-scale structure, France, Spain, Italy and some Arab governments voted in favour of a large-scale institution with a broad portfolio.[63] By choosing Barcelona, the 43 partners did manage to reach agreement on the future location of the secretariat, though they have hitherto failed to adopt the secretariat's statutes. Moreover, complex and difficult bargaining processes have taken place with regard to the position of the secretary-general. For months the threat of deadlock loomed high, with a number of members expressing their desire to fill the post, both Israel and Arab partners opposing each other's demands, and Turkey claiming one deputy post – a claim opposed by the Greek and Cypriot governments. It took until the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers meeting in early November 2008 for at least a partial solution to be found, although its sustainability remains highly questionable in the light of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fact that Turkey's claim will only be dealt with further along in the run-up to the adoption of the secretariat's statutes.[64]

Enlargement of UfM membership and "governance on an equal footing" also turned out to be detrimental to the advancement of the newly created framework in general and, thus, progress on sectoral cooperation in particular. Pressured by the Arab League, Arab Mediterranean regimes used Israel's military attack on Gaza in December 2008 to suspend their participation in the UfM. They argued that, unless the Israeli government formally committed itself to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, meetings on all levels would be boycotted. Since then, no sectoral meeting, even on a working level, has taken place, turning the UfM into an entirely dysfunctional project. Although the EMP was occasionally also exposed to boycotts, particularly by Syria and Lebanon, it always kept a certain degree of momentum, even at the time of the second Intifada, Israel's military assault on Arafat's headquarters and the July War in 2006.

With this in view, plus the experience of the EMP's failure to set a process of intra-southern Mediterranean cooperation in motion, and the persistence of authoritarianism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the chances of increasing "the potential for regional integration and cohesion" are minimal. Similarly, project-specific cooperation in the four domains stipulated by the Paris joint declaration, i.e. solar energy, transportation, infrastructure and environmental protection, remains a distant prospect. And even if the current deadlock is overcome – a rather unlikely prospect as long as the territorial occupation in the Middle East endures – the type of project-based cooperation planned will

not be sufficient to transform the southern Mediterranean into a viable economic space that is fully integrated into the world economic system. This is simply because the UfM underestimates local socio-economic specificities and ignores a vast number of more relevant problems in the political and economic realm, all of which are ultimately related to inequality, the lack of public participation, and the distribution of wealth.

Conclusions

The three cases analysed in this study share a number of commonalities with respect to the role of the Mediterranean in their foreign policy agendas. Similarly, the attitudes and perceptions of the three current heads of government coincide in that they have all opposed the original idea of a French-led UM that would be based on the exclusion of non-Mediterranean EU member states. This opposition is all the more noteworthy in the light of the low importance current and past governments in Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom have attributed to the Mediterranean region as such and the relatively low profile they displayed in the context of the EMP. While – partly due to a shared common history and long-standing economic and trade ties – both Germany and the United Kingdom have a dense web of bilateral relations with a large number of southern Mediterranean countries, relations that have even been intensified lately as a result of mutual interests in intensifying anti-terrorism cooperation, Poland's relations with countries in Europe's southern neighbourhood are much less intense and hence less developed. Moreover, whereas Germany and the United Kingdom both have a global foreign policy agenda, Poland reached a broad consensus on the societal and political level in the early 1990s, in an environment of new-found sovereignty, which led its decision-makers to emphasize the importance of developing and pursuing a regional (foreign) policy embedded in Euro-Atlantic structures.

Interestingly, both Germany and the United Kingdom's close ties with at least parts of the southern Mediterranean have never been used in the context of Euro-Mediterranean politics, yet the governments of both countries have repeatedly used their bargaining power and well developed 'voice opportunity' within the EU to defend their national interests. In this vein, they do not differ from Poland and this commonality came particularly to the fore in the joint opposition of the three governments to the UM. Of course, German Chancellor Merkel was most outspoken in her criticism and, to a certain degree, the leading actor. But her opposition was facilitated by overlapping

concerns and joint recourse to the practice of issue-linkage, both of which eventually generated a win-set that ensured the downgrading and Europeanization of the French initiative, as well as greater and more institutionalized sensitivity within the EU towards Eastern Europe. This process was rooted not only in the absence of concrete policy demands from the respective domestic societal and economic constituencies in favour of greater engagement in the Mediterranean region, but also an equally shared domestic political consensus that any negotiated configuration needed to respect and guarantee at least some degree of cohesion within the overall ambit of European Security and Defence Policy. Furthermore, the three governments managed to identify the intersection between one another's domestic spaces' interests and attitudes – a development which turned out to be crucial for the success of their efforts. As a consequence of these dynamics and the French President's unsuccessful attempts to shift the individual costs that the UM was supposed to generate onto the EU level and thereby Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom as well, a non-negligible degree of pressure was exerted on Nicolas Sarkozy to adjust his original policy plan to the preferences of the three.

In addition to these intervening variables, other drivers were instrumental in the rejection of the UM and creation of a UfM. It is worth pointing out that, although the degree to which they mattered in the personal considerations of the actors involved differed, they were underpinning the decision-shaping in each of the capitals. The three governments were preoccupied with notions – inspired by realism – of power, status and the preservation of exclusive spheres of influence. Whereas the German foreign policy elite feared that approval of a UM could alter the balance of power within the EU, damage the Franco-German alliance and diminish Germany's recently achieved status as a potentially additional mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, British government concerns focused on the potential repercussions that an exclusive French-led project in the Mediterranean would have on the United Kingdom's role in the Mashreq; Polish decision-makers, in turn, sharing German concerns about the effects on the distribution of power within the EU, interpreted the UM, in its original form, as a threat to Poland's own interests in its Eastern neighbourhood, as it would have potentially implied the diversion of substantial Community funds away from the area and the triggering of a dynamic that could result in Eastern Europe's loss of its strategic relevance to the EU's common foreign policy agenda.

If they, and the French government, had focused instead on the reasons for

the EMP's lengthy record of failures, disappointments and misgivings, and admitted that the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and authoritarianism in the southern Mediterranean will continue to obstruct Euro-Mediterranean dynamics, they could have avoided the current deadlock that has hit the UfM only six months after its fancy inauguration. That the deadlock is likely to continue unless a just solution is found is nowadays a commonly held view in European capitals and was even confirmed by the French Foreign Minister in May 2009.[65] In the light of the foreign policy interests of the three case studies analysed, this may however be seen as a welcome development for many in Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom.

NOTES

1. The term "voice opportunity" was introduced by Joseph Grieco, "The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary Union, and the Neorealist Research Programme", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1995, pp. 21-40.
2. See David A. Baldwin (ed.) *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, New York, Columbia UP, 1993; Charles W. Kegley (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory. Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995.
3. See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Mass, Addison Wesley, 1979.
4. See Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence. World Politics in Transition*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co, 1977.
5. See Kalevi Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1970. See also John Vazquez, *The Power of Power Politics: From Classical Realism to Neotraditionalism*, Cambridge, CUP, 1998; Jakov Vertzberger, *The World in their Minds: Information-Processing and Cognition and Perception in Foreign-Policy Decision-Making*, Stanford, SUP, 1990; and Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co, 1971.
6. Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2, 1998, pp. 324-348.
7. Gerd Nonneman, "Analyzing the Foreign Policies of the Middle East and North Africa: A Conceptual Framework", in Gerd Nonneman (ed.), *Analyzing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationship with Europe*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 9.

8. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1993, pp. 473-524, and Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1988, pp. 427-460.
9. See Moravcsik "Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach", *op.cit.,* pp. 499-506. According to Moravcsik, issue-linkage is faced with the risk of domestic opposition and potentially important domestic distributional consequences.
10. See Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence. World Politics in Transition*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co, 1977.
11. See Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony, Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, PUP, 1984, p. 243.
12. Nonneman, "Analyzing the Foreign Policies of the Middle East and North Africa: A Conceptual Framework", *op.cit.*, p. 11.
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25. See Handelsblatt, 13 July 2008. In response to a request for information from the Liberal Party (FDP) in December 2008, the German government stated that the German Aerospace Centre had drafted a number of assessment studies with respect to a potential Mediterranean solar plan. See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, February 16, 2009.
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30. See Tobias Schumacher, "The German EU Presidency and the Southern Mediterranean", *EuroMeSCo e-news*, No. 11, January 2008.
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32. See International Herald Tribune, "Poland's Foreign Minister, His Overtures to West Impeded, Resigns", June 15, 1995.

33. On Poland and the Mediterranean, see also Beata Wojna, *Poland and the Mediterranean*, unpublished manuscript, October 2008.

34. See http://www.mg.gov.pl/English/News/Polish-Algerian+talks+on+economy.htm

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37. Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, *Strategia Polskiej Współpracy na rzecz rozwoju*, Przyjeta przez Rade Ministrów w dniu 21 pa´zdziernika 2003 r.

38. See Lena Kolarska-Bobinska and Magdalena Mughrabi, "New EU Member States' Policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: the Case of Poland", *EuroMeSCo Papers*, No. 69, 2008.

39. *Ibid.,* p. 15.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

41. See http://www.kprm.gov.pl/english/s.php?id=1413

42. For more on the Eastern Partnership, see Natalia Shapovalova, "The EU's Eastern Partnership: still-born?", *FRIDE Policy Brief*, No. 11, 2009, and Leszek Jesien et al., "Eastern Partnership – Strengthened ENP Cooperation with Willing Neighbours", *PISM Strategic Files*, 3 June 2008. See also http://cria-online.org/7_3.html

43. See for example E.W. Polson Newman, *Great Britain in Egypt*, London, Cassell, 1928, and Mary C. Wilson, King Abdullah, *Britain and the Making of Jordan*, Cambridge, CUP, 1990.

44. According to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office the two British Infantry Battalions based on Cyprus exercise together with Jordanian troops every year during August to October and similar training is carried out by both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters of the Royal Air Forces of both countries.

45. Just in June 2009, BAE Systems received a $43.3 million contract to upgrade 300 M113A1 Armored Personnel Carriers for the Jordan Armed Forces. See http://www.defenceworld.net

46. See also Agreement between the government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and, in order to implement the recommendations of the Paris Club Agreement on the Early Repayment of the debt of th Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

47. See the speech of Rt. Hon. Robin Cook MP, "Human Rights into a New Century", June 17, 1997.

48. See House of Lords, House of Commons, "Joint Committee on Human Rights, Counter-Terrorism Policy and Human Rights: Terrorism Bill and related matters", Third Report of Session 2005-06.

49. See the speech of Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP, "Doctrine of the International Community", Chicago, April 24,1999.

50. See for example Al Bawaba, April 30, 2003.

51. See The Guardian, 25 March 2009, and Haaretz, January 18, 2009.

52. See Richard Youngs (ed.), *Survey of European Democracy Promotion Policies 2000-2006*, Madrid, FRIDE, 2006.

53. According to UK Trade & Investment, Israel is among the twenty leading countries investing in the United Kingdom. See http://www.globes.co.il

54. See for example Haaretz, 24 February 2009. For a detailed analysis of British attitudes and policies in the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, see Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 1948-51, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1988.

55. See The Guardian, February 20, 2006.

56. In 2003 the Blair government agreed to a EUR 50 million aid package for the PA.

57. See Richard Gillespie, "Northern European Perceptions of the Barcelona Process", *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, No. 37, 1997.

58. See Tony Blair and José Luis Zapatero, "Una cumbre para el futuro", *El País*, November 28, 2008.

59. See George Joffé, "The British Presidency of the European Union and the Mediterranean in 2005" in IEMed and Fundaci_ Cidob (eds.), *Med.2006 Mediterranean Yearbook*, IEMed, Barcelona, 2006, pp. 95-97.

60. See http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1210773722.26/

61. See http://www.desertec.org/downloads/solarplan.pdf

62. Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, Paris, 13 July 2008.

63. Interestingly, German and Italian positions are symmetric with respect to the creation of the post of a "powerful" deputy secretary-general which in their view should have horizontal responsibilities, including matters such as budget and staff.

64. It was decided to give the post of secretary-general to an Arab southern Mediterranean country, whereas the deputy posts will rotate between three European members and two southern ones; they will initially be held by Greece, Malta, Italy, the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

65. See Financial Times Deutschland, 27 April 2009, and Bernard Kouchner, “C'est la vie...heureusement qu'il est là Nanard”, *AFP*, Paris, May 20, 2009.