Promoting Security Dialogue in the Mediterranean: The Hellenic Presidency and Beyond

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RÉSUMÉ

Les problèmes de securité en Méditerrannée sont examinés dans le cadre des intérêts de l'Union européenne. L'approfondissement et l'élargissement de l'UE sont supposés affecter ses politiques étrangères de securité et de défense aussi bien que l'orientation normative et institutionnelle de sa politique méditerranéenne. Pour le développement de la dimension méditerrannéenne de la politique européenne de défense et de sécurité il fait état des mécanismes afin d'alléger la complexité régionale, absorber les vibrations de la construction de l'ordre européen et promouvoir un sens d'appartenance commun des peuples de la région. Cet article examine le rôle joué par la dernière présidence hellénique de l'Union Européenne en clarifiant et en mettant en évidence la dimension Européenne des visions stratégiques de l'UE.

ABSTRACT

Issues of Mediterranean security are examined in the context of broader EU concerns and intentions. The deepening and widening of the European Union is bound to affect its foreign, security and defence policies as well as the normative and institutional orientation of *Euromediterranean* policy. For the development of the Mediterranean dimension of the European Defence and Security Policy mechanisms are needed to alleviate regional complexity, absorb order-building vibrations and promote a common sense of belonging among the peoples of the region. This article examines the role played by the last EU Hellenic presidency in clarifying and promoting the Mediterranean dimension of EU strategic intentions.

Introduction

The terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, ushered in a new era in international politics. Among the areas affected by

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the epoch-marking events are the priorities of international relations, the nature of regional politics, the shape of political alliances, the driving purpose of US foreign policy, the nature of international cleavages, the evolving role of military forces and the risks of weapons of mass destruction.[1] The latter have also altered the Western strategic threshold but have not really challenged the American position in the world, although the impact on American strategy debate is profound. Likewise, the overall international security paradigm remained reasonably clearcut, with the US dominating the post-Cold War international system, especially those aspects of the system dealing with security issues.

Given a turbulent and unpredictable international environment of which clear manifestations are the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, analysts were quick to point out that the Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable within the emerging global security setting. After all, it has traditionally been a zone of strategic and socio-economic instability, migration flows, violent religious and cultural conflicts, varying forms of political institutions, differing security perceptions and, above all, divergent worldviews. Today, three major issues dominate Euro-Mediterranean affairs: the widening socio-economic gap between the 'booming' but still underdeveloped South and the 'growing old' but wealthy North; the redefinition of Euro-Arab relations; and the 'power deficit' between the European Union (EU) and its southern Mediterranean partners. The latter has been escalating steadily since the signing of the Schengen Treaty, which many perceive as the forerunner of a fortress Europe.

Issues of Mediterranean stability are old themes in the study of international relations, let alone of European diplomacy. Yet, they still rest on considerable variation. The extent to which the Mediterranean can be seen as a distinct region complicates further the discussion about the appropriate scope and level of a common European policy towards this part of the world. Partly as a result of the Community's Mediterranean enlargements in the 1980s, and partly due to the changing conditions post-1989, Mediterranean affairs have come to occupy a significant amount of EUROPE'S external relations. But important questions are raised as to whether the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* (EMP) will be crowned with success; whether the EU can further political and economic liberalisation in the partner-states; which norms are likely to emerge in the security-building

aspects of the EMP; whether a more equitable regime of economic exchange will be established in the region; and what the prospects of regional institutionalisation are, given the levels of complexity, heterogeneity and fragmentation that for centuries now shape the physiognomy of this 'unique body of water'. Added to the above are questions of good governance, civil society, multiculturalism and inter-faith dialogue.

But Euro-Mediterranean relations are also affected by a new regional strategic variable: the EU's nascent *European Security and Defence Policy* (ESDP). This crisis-management tool directs attention to a set of developments that enhance the EU's role in international security affairs. Arguably though, ESDP is but one aspect of a broader and far more ambitious goal linked with the future of Europe, and particularly the elaboration of a common European defence policy, leading eventually to a common defence (composed of a mutual assistance clause and assorted solidarity provisions). Such developments reflect the desire of EU members to advance the pace of the regional arrangements in the fields of security and defence. Ultimately, the aim is to 'communitarize' the EU's second pillar - the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) - so as to bestow the larger polity with the necessary decision-making structure for effective responses to actual crises. The consolidation of the CFSP is a platform from which the EU can make its voice heard in international affairs, adding to its - already acknowledged - economic might. The perceived added value from this process of deepening European integration, points at the formation of an independent political entity able to face the new global and regional challenges and to promote the fundamental norms of good governance. Such aims are to be supported by a nascent ESDP in dealing with crisis management operations, humanitarian and emergency rescue missions, as well as with peacekeeping and peacemaking tasks, including peace-enforcement; what in recent strategic parlance amounts to the so-called 'Petersberg tasks'. It is necessary to make clear that the ESDP, apart from being an incipient step towards the making of an EU military force 'proper',[2] it is also a point of strategic convergence among different national aspirations, as well as a medium between the strategic preferences of the transatlantic partners themselves.

The EU may well be firmly enough established as a collective polity, albeit with a considerable degree of 'inventiveness' and institutional sophistication,

but has no historical precedent. This exacerbates the prospect of contextualising our expectations in relation to its global 'actorness' with enhanced military capabilities. Even though the EU's transformation into a collective defence system remains a rather distant possibility, it is clear that, today, extraordinary opportunities arise for a substantive redefinition of its future international role, given that it already represents a global symbol of political stability and economic prosperity. To give an example, the EU has been actively involved in the process of democratising Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the promotion of change in North Africa. But the vision of an EU that contributes to global security management entails more than the consolidation of a regional role, especially one based on economic power. It requires the emergence of a commonality of interests among its members and, hence, a single voice in world affairs, which in turn implies that EU members will have to sacrifice some of the gains stemming from the formulation of their foreign policies on the altar of a defence-based CFSP.

Doubtless, the deeper integration of EU foreign, security and defence policies is bound to affect Mediterranean governance, and with it the normative and institutional orientation of the EMP. For one thing, an autonomous European defence capability should not lead to a 'fortress' Europe, but rather, precisely because the ESDP is better equipped to dealing with crisis-management operations, it can complement the EMP by endowing Mediterranean security with a more pluralist and transparent vision. Here, it is important for both settings to arrive at common definitions of their respective security anxieties, especially those related to asymmetrical threats, as well as to pertaining asymmetries in issues of justice, tolerance, information-flow and trust-building. Thus, all strategic perceptions in the Mediterranean should be reconsidered and clarified so that the EMP bears practical political achievements.

Euro-Mediterranean Formations

The Mediterranean is a composite of different civilizations, each reflecting a distinctive sense of being and belonging. However, the extent to which old images are replaced by new in the region's cultural tapestry remains unclear. Mythical constructs aside, in the light of current constellations, the Mediterranean reveals a pluricausal dynamism towards a new social, cultural

and political mapping. Elements of convergence and divergence are reformulated through a dialectic of old stereotypes, novel ways of thinking, modified security perceptions, and an ascending pluralism in its emerging governance structures. Against this background, the EU agenda has been reshaped to accommodate regional transformations in its periphery.

Since the launching of the EMP, the EU's Mediterranean policy has gained both in strategic importance and, as compared with previous policy regimes, internal cohesion. By putting an institutional face to a more balanced and comprehensive approach, the EMP became key to Mediterranean order-building through a principled policy orientation. Arguably, developments in the region have always been part of the EU's agenda. Europe's external relations with southern Mediterranean countries have become politicized as a result of the geographical proximity, the level of interdependence, and the role previous EU Mediterranean policies have come to play. Signs of enhanced European interest were first recorded as early as 1975, at the beginning of the Euro-Arab Dialogue, then in the early and mid-1980s with the accession of Greece and the Iberian nations to the then Community, and again after the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf crisis of 1990/91. Since the mid-1990s, however, the EU's Mediterranean policy has become multilateral in nature. The EMP, by forging new co-operative policies in the region has become a focal point of attention. Hence a new phase of openness, dialogue and work in common from policy-design to implementation.

Before 1989, Mediterranean security became increasingly indivisible, often regardless of diverse sub-regional features. More recently, some analysts have tried to project, both before and after September 11, 2001, a historical Mediterranean fragmentation, by perceiving the dominant conflict in the region as one between 'occidental' and 'oriental' values. This narrowly framed hypothesis, favours security's cultural dimension, prophesising an inevitable clash of civilizations. Yet, others focus on so-called new security threats and risks, including international terrorism, emergent forms of transnational criminalities, nuclear smuggling, drug-trafficking, uncontrolled refugee movements, illegal migration, socio-economic asymmetries, environmental risks, and the like. Since the post-bipolar world has lent both greater fluidity and instability to the Mediterranean, what is most needed is a structured political dialogue on the root-causes of conflict,

the *prolepsis* of immediate crises through a long-term strategy within multilateral institutions, a renewed focus on institutional response adaptation, and the development of a 'common strategic language' to redefine security issues.

In this sense, the comparative advantage of the EU in developing an ESDP Mediterranean dimension is that the EMP was not intended to serve as a conflict-manager, peacekeeper, or an instrument of conflict resolution. For all its ambition to bring about an 'area of peace and stability', the Barcelona Declaration emerged as a loose framework for conflict prevention. The ESDP's is better equipped to act as an institution able to carry out crisis-management missions, offering complementary security framework for the elaboration of guidelines towards a 'common Mediterranean security space'. In that sense, an ESDP-led security dialogue in the region will bear positive cumulative effects in the EMP, opening up new possibilities for critical security issues to be discussed such as interoperability and 'constructive duplication', doctrinal convergence on conflict prevention, intelligence-sharing and information exchange practices, export control regimes, civilian emergency planning and, moreover, a redefinition of defence mechanisms with a view to embracing civilian capabilities and achieving operational cohesion. Such an extended political dialogue could thus enhance security's 'human' dimension, including civilian engagement in crisis-management missions, compatibility of prescribed actions with human rights norms, civil society input, and so on.

Yet we could say that the EMP is epitomized by the emphasis it places on respect for democracy and human rights, political dialogue, economic liberalisation, as well as financial and technical assistance for the southern Mediterranean partners. The Barcelona Declaration includes numerous norms on rule-governed interstate relations and global disarmament, as well as provisions for combating terrorism, drug-trafficking, and illegal immigration. It also provides for increased arms control - renunciation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Accordingly, one could argue that the EMP, for all its shortfalls, has infused a greater political (security) bias to Euro-Mediterranean relations, while encompassing an ambitious economic plan for an (industrially inspired) Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by the year 2010, and a 'human dimension' similar to the one introduced by the Helsinki Process in 1975.[3]

The EMP may prove instrumental in fostering a new co-operative culture, even a new ethos, among the partner-states. For instance, interest-convergence around economic tasks could contribute to a relaxation of tensions in areas where controversy is more likely to arise, such as military security and human rights. It is on that premise that a more easily discernible Euro-Mediterranean regime may come into being.[4] The composite nature of the EMP offers a range of opportunities for the actors' functionalist expectations to reach decisions that are beneficial to systemic stability. In its eight years of existence, however, the EMP has not fulfilled its high ambitions, but has experienced significant constrains. First, it has not helped in the resolution of any major security problem in the region - all three 'baskets' of co-operation have suffered from the proliferation of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, low-level investment, illegal immigration, violation of human rights, and the regional 'ticking bomb' called demography. Second, all the optimism that the Oslo Process produced in the early 1990s turned into a devastating violent cycle of suicidal terrorist attacks and excessive use of military force. It is lamentable that since the second *Intifada* in 2000, the EMP has failed continuously to free itself from the failures of the Middle East Peace Process.

It is fair to say that the EU exhibits difficulties in dealing with Middle East security, in contrast to dealing with other transformative regions. Equally true is that it faces significant challenges as a result of the presence of the US and the latter's continuing reluctance to share its 'co-operative hegemony' in the region. Post-September 11, the US-sponsored counter-terrorism campaign and the recent war over Iraq highlighted the profound divisions not only between transatlantic partners, but also within the EMP. Also, the latter's status has been seriously affected by the inadequacy of the EU's intervention in the 2002 Middle East crisis, not only in terms of security co-operation but also in relation to the Partnership's multilateral nature. It is no secret that the EU has to make considerable efforts to keep Israel in the Peace Process, whilst continuing to co-operate with the Arab countries. The EU has to contribute something concretely positive to regional peace in accordance with the reasonable demands of its Arab partners, whilst dealing with Israel's hostile attitude toward any EU-led intervention.

Of importance in the years to come will be the institutional format chosen to transcend the peculiarities of a rapidly evolving Euro-Mediterranean

space. However, institutionalizing the EMP alone will not be sufficient to manage an increasingly complex and expanding security agenda. Can the EMP meet its prescribed ends without transforming itself from a loose association of states into a system of patterned behaviour with a particular notion of rules of the game? Put differently, can the co-operative ethos embedded in the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 go beyond the level of contractual interstate obligations and closer to a meaningful partnership?[5] A plausible answer is that new rules and norms on how to handle change will have to be created, given that behaviour, not just proclamations, will determine the outcome of Mediterranean order-building. EU strategic choices will thus be of great importance, along with the promotion of norms of good governance, given the tensions arising from different conceptions of democracy and political liberalisation. Equally crucial are the socio-cultural barriers in promoting an open inter-civilisational dialogue, keeping in mind the recent re-embrace of religious radicalism in parts of the Arab world. Whatever the legitimising ethos of the prevailing worldviews, a structured political dialogue based on the principles of transparency and symbiotic association is central to the cross-fertilisation of distinct politically organized and culturally defined units, as well as to alleviate historically rooted prejudices, whilst endowing the EMP with a new sense of process and purpose.

The Hellenic Presidency of the ESDP

Greece, a country located at the eastern hub of a strategic theatre lying at the crossroads of three continents, is well anchored to the European zone of peace and stability. Being at the centre of a volatile regional triangle comprising Southeastern Europe, the Middle East and the Caucasus, the Mediterranean plays a pivotal role in the country's history, politics and society. Greece is also an integral part of the Balkan state system, whilst the Aegean passage constitutes an important shipping route for the transportation of energy products to Europe. In general, Greece's position enhances its strategic significance for the EU, as the Mediterranean constitutes a crucial fault-line between the rich Christian North and the poor Islamic South. In brief, the challenges facing contemporary Greece is to safeguard its territorial integrity, whilst projecting its civilian values in its oft-troubled peripheries, especially in the Balkans. With Greek politics being

formulated in relation to an ever globalising, if not already globalized, world, the time is ripe for the country to redefine its identity in the new multicultural settings.

Greece exhibits a firm European orientation, maintaining at the same time particular Mediterranean concerns that relate to both internal and external security. Its 'principled' Mediterranean policy is guided by respect of internationally recognized borders, stability, peace, and security. Despite the many complex problems faced by the littoral countries, Greek foreign policy aims to develop multilevel and multilateral links with these countries based on historical and cultural ties and affinities, as well as on common economic and commercial experience. Greece has intensified its efforts to foster links with its southern EMP partners, by acting as a factor of stability throughout their transitional phase of economic and political liberalisation. Building further on an ESDP Mediterranean dimension, the new regional space becomes a rediscovered land of opportunity and belonging for Greek policy-makers.

With this in mind, let us recall that the successive crises in the Balkans during the 1990s increased the need for developing reliable ESDP machinery to support European foreign policy objectives. ESDP was formally launched at the June 1999 Cologne European Council. Since then, it developed itself through a series of political decisions taken at Helsinki (December 1999), Feira (June 2000), Nice (December 2000), Geteborg (June 2001), Laeken (December 2001), Seville (June 2002), Brussels (October 2002), Copenhagen (December 2002), Athens (April 2003) and, more recently, the expanded General Affairs Council (with the participation of the member states' Defence Ministers) in Brussels in May 2003, where the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) was declared fully operational. Each of these decisions gave substance to the EU's desire to enhance its capacity for autonomous action.

After the Saint-Malo Agreement and the Cologne European Council, it was decided that the EU should achieve an autonomous capability for the deployment of humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in accordance with the UN Charter. The decisions taken at Helsinki reformed the policy frame and made the ESDP a reality, at least as far as the implementation process of the Headline Goal is concerned. The Helsinki text underlined that the proposed action plan had to take into consideration that 'the most

demanding part of the missions will take place in and around the Mediterranean', without, however, separating the latter from the Balkans. The political and military institutions for EU crisis management were established at the December 2000 Nice European Council. Later on, at Laeken, the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) was adopted, providing general guidelines for the shortfalls regarding the specifications of the ERRF. The so-called 'Brussels text', adopted by the homonymous European Council, was key in developing a real ESDP 'operational capability', by ensuring EU autonomy beyond NATO's means. Recognizing NATO's fundamental role in European security, and given that it remains the sole agent for collective European defence, the development of EU crisis-management tools was discussed at the Washington Summit in April 1999,[6] where it became imperative for both partners to reach a co-operation agreement.[7]

Finally, following the efforts of the Hellenic Presidency during the Informal Conference of EU Defence Ministers at Rethymnon on 4-5 October 2002, the ESDP has been set on a more stable basis. The basic priority set out by the Presidency was the completion of all outstanding issues that would allow for the utilisation of the EU's operational capability in crisis management operations within 2003, through the advancement of civil-military networks. Greece has held the Presidency of the ESDP since July 1st, 2002 (due to Denmark's opt-out from defence issues). In its twelve-month Presidency, too many issues have arisen in the international agenda such as the intensification of the global war against terrorism, the escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the increasing emphasis on illegal immigration, and the US-led war in Iraq. Reasonable claims point to the danger of setting aside EU expectations to strengthen south-south co-operation within the EMP *vis-à-vis* the new security priorities.

Most analysts, in the light of the negative experience with Eurofor and Euromarfor, have underlined the need of complementary measures to support the ESDP. Given the low level of information about the ESDP in the Arab world, the EU decided to pay greater attention to the misperceptions and fears of its Mediterranean partners regarding the strengthening of its military capabilities. Thus the ESDP acquired its own Mediterranean dimension, courtesy of the initiative taken by the Spanish Presidency during the first half of 2002.[8] The Hellenic Presidency that

followed, played a decisive role to that end. Its proposals on transparency, trust-building and the institutionalisation of security dialogue will allow EMP partners to gain better access in the making of a co-operative regional space and to reduce the existing levels of regional asymmetry. Thus the Hellenic Presidency's seminars on the Mediterranean Dimension of the ESDP, held in Rhodes on 1-2 November 2002 and in Corfu on 9-10 May 2003, were meant to act as platforms for an open exchange of views to clarify EU strategic intentions and to alleviate any possible misperceptions, thus promoting mutual understanding.

Rethinking Threat Perceptions

Euro-Mediterranean politics are full of misunderstandings about distorted perceptions and images of Islam, as they are about the threat of terrorism used by transnational extremist groups, especially post-September 11th. Other misperceptions stem from the appropriation of Islam for political ends and the tensions arising from questions of universal values and norms of human rights. Such misunderstandings emanate as much from mutual ignorance, as they do from intended confusion. One should also guard against the simplification often suggested in the media that 'Islamic fundamentalism' is a violent and merciless force orchestrated by radical regimes in the Middle East. The creation of a meaningful (security) partnership in the Mediterranean is no easy task, given the tendency to exploit or fuel traditional prejudices that would perpetuate the EMP's stance between order and disorder, making the development of co-operative politics an 'essentially contested project'. Thus there is urgent need to (re)define terms that reduce inter-civilisation dialogue to a series of parallel monologues. The aim is for a reciprocal exchange that does away with any subjectivist view that wants the 'West' to act as a universal civilising force based on an almost metaphysical obligation to humanity. It is, then, of great value that any meaningful debate about Islam should dispel the clouds of deliberate myth-making and revengeful rhetoric that are detrimental to a security dialogue.

Any security dialogue in the Mediterranean implies a realistic assessment of security risks and threats, at both northern and southern fronts. It is true that the Arab partners do not present Europe with any major military threat,

as the growing militarisation in the South is mainly intended for use on a south-south scale or for 'internal interventions'.[9] Nor do southern Mediterranean states perceive any direct threat from the North, for they associate 'security' mainly with domestic concerns and internal policing. Still though, even talking about the (neo-colonial) international management of domestic crises the West has exhibited post-1989 exacerbates general anti-Western feelings. A neutral assessment of the risks undermining regional stability would not perceive Europe as a threat to the South, as well as Europe's perception over the Islamic danger as an exaggeration. However, it is the threat itself, as much as the dominant perceptions of such threat that guide national policy-makers.

It is commonplace that state behaviour is largely influenced, even determined, by perceptions. Perceptual influence and mental constructs in political interaction becomes visible when actors decide to extend their co-operation into new areas of collective action. Although terrorist activity is endemic in the Mediterranean, most would agree that the new US-sponsored doctrine focusing on asymmetrical threats and preventive wars has impacted on EMP affairs; namely, the re-enforcement of policing in national security affairs, an increase in restrictions regarding the free movement of people, and the alienation between Mediterranean publics. It has also affected the course of Euro-Mediterranean politics, by increasing 'internal pressures' in some southern Mediterranean societies, and by redirecting attention to issues of military security at the cost of investing in economic growth and stabilisation projects. In particular, there is a dominant perception in the Arab world that the US-sponsored antiterrorist campaign in Afghanistan, Iraq and possibly in other parts of the Middle East is the beginning of Huntington's 'clashing' era. This perception stems from a chain of events that have fuelled the Arab world with a deep sense of insecurity. The first Gulf War, the international isolation imposed on Iraq and Libya, the overwhelming US preoccupation with Israeli security, and the 'neo-hegemonic' stance of the US before and after the recent war in Iraq have convinced the Arabs that the West will not hesitate to strike out against them should its interests, geopolitical or other, require so. The development of ESDP military capabilities has also led many Arabs to the erroneous conclusion that the EU shares NATO's strategic plan for the Mediterranean, focusing primarily on how to combat the new asymmetrical threats. All the above endanger the empowerment of radical religious segments that perceive

Europe as a potential enemy. Hence the need for including southern EMP partners into ESDP processes.

Besides the growing feeling that in the Arab world there is a negative predisposition towards the ESDP, questions about the properties of a Mediterranean security system further complicate discussion about the objectives and the level of the EU's strategic involvement in the region. The EU's official documents such as the Common Strategy for the Mediterranean are general descriptions lacking prioritisation over the EU's strategic intentions.[10] But in the process of consolidating a common European defence identity with operational capabilities, the conceptions, intentions, planning, political goals, individual national interests of EU states and their attempt to maintain a relative diplomatic freedom in the region remain vague. 'In the absence of a clear range of goals, deriving from a joint strategic plan for the Mediterranean', the EuroMeSCo's report argues that 'a certain level of vagueness is inevitable'.[11] The development of EU military capabilities is a reaction to previous European interventions in the successive Yugoslav crises. But the fact that the main geographical target of the ESDP is to maintain peace and stability within the European continent, does not exclude the possibility of the EU to undertake humanitarian and crisis-management operations in the Mediterranean.

The essential point is that the ESDP represents a new regional strategic variable, not a threat. Thus the EU's Mediterranean partners should not perceive it in hostile terms. Immigration is not on the ESDP agenda, and the EU's military force is certainly not intended to act as a police force for the Mediterranean peoples. Accordingly, the southern partners should not view the deeper motives of the ESDP as the creation of a Schengen-type force to guard the Mediterranean, or as some sort of EU military imposition or even as an orchestrated western control over them. A solid EU position towards the Middle East could act as a confidence-building measure in Euro-Mediterranean relations, and the ESDP can be taken by the Mediterranean partners as a new opportunity to strengthen strategic co-operation.

Conclusion

Current global transformations are sharing and reshaping the terms of political and economic governance, reactivating basic questions of

multilateral co-operation. Deep-seated changes in the conditions of institutionalized rule pose new challenges to the search for viable political orders based on stable patterns of authority not only within but also between states and societies. Such challenges offer the broader context within which the integration of domestic and international politics takes place. At the same time, the struggle for social and political equality, the ever widening chasm berween rich and poor, and the displacement of bipolarity by deep divisions of cultural values point in the belief that defining elements of separateness proceeds hand in hand with the need to identify degrees of common understanding among actors that increasingly operate under conditions of complex interdependence.

Against this swiftly changing international scene, whose intellecrual outcome has been the ascendance of 'identity politics' and non-territorial, even post-national, forms of governance, the Mediterranean refers to a heterarchical regional space, which continues to spark the interest of international scholarship. Such composite mosaic of self-images, belief-systems and identities results, as nored earlier, in a composite system of partial regimes, each reflecting a particular sense of being and belonging. The relationship between complexity and reality in the region can be understood as having developed from a uniquely Mediterranean context. The above views are testimony to the enduring influence of cultural distinctiveness in the politics of regional order-building, with the Mediterranean remaining a divided (social) construct. But this renewed interest in Euro-Mediterranean politics post-1995 may not necessarily result in a substantive agreement on many good governance issues, including transparent policy-making, economic security-building, respect for human rights, co-operative conflict management and intra-regional reconciliation. Partnership-building and a shared, but credible, commitment to mutually rewarding outcomes can feed into this process, constituting a crucial adjunct ro the emergence of a sense of security at the grassroots. Central to the above is the institutionalisation of the EMP through the setting up of co-operative practices, norms and rules. All the more so, given the need for an open political dialogue to do away with the subjectivist approach that wants the West to act as a universal civilising force based on fixed notions of democracy and a predominantly liberal understanding of political order.

The Mediterranean has been a crossroads of civilisations as well as a hotbed of tension. Today, against the background of unprecedented global

changes, both its shores are groping for change. At macro-level, although the EMP cannot but go ahead through trial and error, it should keep a fundamental direction: designing efficient systems of institutionalized rule requires maximum 'capacity for governance'. The EMP is presently lacking such a capacity, not only due to various institutional weaknesses, but also due to the absence of credible commitments by the partners to make effective use of existing arrangements.[12] Notwithstanding the Middle East crisis, steps in the right direction include the infusion of greater transparency in its structures and a clear focus on strategic co-operation. Most of the EU's southern partners do not oppose the strengthening of regional defence co-operation and their involvement in joint military exercises, as well as strategic and training activities. Their participation in future ESDP exercises is a valuable confidence-building measure that needs to be encouraged by the EU. The reinforcement of scientific as well as military co-operation in emergency rescue missions and the handling of natural disasters are good cases in point.

New mechanisms for bilateral security and defence co-operation should not be excluded from the agenda, initially at the level information exchange or even intelligence sharing at sub-regional level, where security is a clear issue. Such forms of co-operation could then be extended at EMP level for the promotion of regional contacts over ESDP matters. Even though southern EMP partners seem to appreciate security and defence co-operation at a selective bilateral level, the holding of frequent meetings at Defence Ministerial level is desirable by all partners. This was made clear at both seminars organized by the Hellenic Presidency of the ESDP that helped to revive the interest over the initiation and regularisation of a Mediterranean security dialogue. The Greek proposals for the regularisation of such dialogue could lead to the institutionalisation of the Mediterranean dimension of the ESDP.

Limited as it may be at present, the potential for organising Mediterranean security awaits utilisation. Because crises in the region are endemic, they know no borders: they have a tendency to ignore passport procedures and spill over very rapidly, opening a wide range of possibilities for crucial strategic issues to be brought to the fore. The search for a new legitimacy in EMP security structures depends heavily on the partners' capacity to resist the forces of polarisation and segmentation, as well as on the credibility of

their commitment to a mutually reinforcing dialogue. The flexibility of the EMP and the means through which its constitutive norms can facilitate agreement on security and defence issues will no doubt affect its potential to adjust itself to a highly interdependent region. What is urgently needed is a set of system-transforming mechanisms to alleviate regional complexity, absorb order-building vibrations and preserve the same sense of being and belonging that for centuries now binds the peoples of the region in an almost mystical, all-Mediterranean fashion.

However, to break down Mediterranean complexity, one has to grasp the importance of diversity as an essentialistic principle as the system itself is constituted in the clash of different sub-systems. A heterarchical order minimizes homogeneity as the principal referent for sub-systemic co-operation. This form of enhanced particularity through a reflexive appropriation of difference becomes the basic normative unit of the system itself. This resonates with a broader aspiration of partnership that transcends any mono-dimensional configuration of power, stressing the complex nature of a common vocation. This is where a heterarchical regime like the EMP is better equipped to manage the existing levels of regional complexity. The plausibility of this claim to the importance of reflexivity, as opposed to co-ordinated hierarchy, rests on a systemic perspective, whereby the various segments form 'instances of a totality'. Although some hierarchy of norms may prove necessary, this should also reflect the necessity for respect for the 'other'. The aim is for 'others' to be brought into the EMP framework, and for regional diversity to transform itself from a self-referential property of distinct units into an identifiable pluralist order composed of intertwined states and societies.

NOTES

1. D. N. Chryssochoou, M. J. Tsinisizelis, S. Stavridis and K. Ifantis, *Theory and reform in the European Union*, second revised edition, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.

2. In the military aspects of ESDP, the EU has committed itself to setting up a force of 60.000 men, deployable within two months and sustained on the ground for 12 months. But this embryonic military structure is not meant

to be a standing force. Hence, the term 'Euro-Army', which has been in inflationary use for some time now, does not describe accurately, at least for the time being, the nature of the EU's crisis-management apparatus.

3. D. K. Xenakis, 'The Barcelona Process in the Light of the Helsinki Paradigm: Patterns of Complexity and Order-Building', Themata: Policy and Defence, No. 18, Defence Analysis Institute, Athens, 2003.

4. D. K. Xenakis, 'From Policy to Regime: Trends in Euro-Mediterranean Governance', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Autumn/Winter1999, pp. 254-70.

5. See further on this in D. K. Xenakis and D. N. Chryssochoou, *The emerging Euro-Mediterranean system*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2001.

6. During this Summit, the guidelines of the ESDP-NATO co-operation in the field of strategic management were defined so that EU operations be conducted either through NATO means and capabilities or independently.

7. The means for an effective and workable ESDP-NATO relationship are not in the focus of this article. Yet, such issues include, among others, the harmonisation of national defence policies and strategies, as well as of different group memberships; the presently limited ESDP financial resources; and the problem of defining the weight of different groups of countries in the decision-making process.

8. Spain plays a leading role in the EU's Mediterranean policy. Naturally, the promotion of the Barcelona Process and the Mediterranean Dimension of the ESDP were high priorities for the Spanish Presidency.

9. T. Dokos, 'Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Mediterranean', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 2000.

10. The *Common Strategy for the Mediterranean* was adopted by the Feira European Council and constitutes a means for accommodating Mediterranean issues to European foreign policy aspirations, as well as a mechanism for implementing CFSP objectives according to the provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty.

11. First Year Report of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo) Working Group, 'European Defence: Perceptions vs. Realities', *EuroMeSCo Papers*, No 16, 2002, p. 14.

12. D. N. Chryssochoou and D. K. Xenakis, 'Prospects for Euro-Mediterranean Governance', *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2003, pp. 47-70.