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**The Impact of Enlargement on the  
Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EN'IP)**

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1) GENERAL:

European integration has been, from the outset, a two-speed, three-speed or multi-speed process. Over the years, European integration was a cumulative and incremental enterprise, both in terms of membership and of the rate and range of integration. It started as the Europe of six with coal and steel, then the EEC and EUI2ATOM, later the Europe of nine, 12 and, as late as 1995, the Europe of 15.

Even when it came of age and then matured, Europe accepted a two-speed integration. Today, three ELI member states are out of the European Monetary Union (EMU); some members have recorded reservations on one or more topics of the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice treaties (the Irish referendum results are the latest in the series); people in two west European countries have refused through two referenda in each to join the European Union.

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is still far from being 'common' or 'secure'. Nevertheless, European integration remains as a paragon of excellence difficult to emulate anywhere else on our planet.

With the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Warsaw Pact, a new phase, rather a new era of Pan-European integration began to unfold. At the beginning, the pace was rather fast because it was the Eastern European countries themselves who were yearning and had sought accession to both the European Union and NATO membership. The euphoria experienced and shown by several EU member states at the beginning was later offset by realism, pragmatism, and the realisation by all EU member states of the formidable task and unforeseen burdens and requirements involved. So, the accession negotiations were very tough and I did hear complaints from almost all the 8 East and Central European states about some rigid negotiation positions by the Commission.

Therefore, the Copenhagen criteria and "The Acquis communautaire" for accession were drawn up and the potential Eastern European candidates were classified in categories or batches. Again, multi-speed European integration remained the norm and was applied to the East. However, for various security and stability reasons, which originally triggered the project of the integration of the East, the collective political will of EU member states leaned towards enlargement and the admission of the new comers within its ranks once they have met the criteria. Similarly, NATO managed to entice Eastern European countries through Partnership for Peace (PFP) as a step towards full membership, which has been completed by 3 and 7 East, Central European and Baltic states have signed accession protocols.

The sheer number of applicants and the very large differences in economic and social development, which they will bring with them, will present the Union with institutional and political challenges far greater than ever before. In spite of the enormous efforts undertaken by these countries, their integration into existing programmes and structures will be a very

delicate task. The enlargement process will also require careful management in the Union's relations with other partners in Europe and beyond in order to ensure that it contributes to the overall objectives of strengthening international security and cooperation.

Mediterranean reactions to the EU enlargement process have so far been moderate and not very articulate - which is not so strange if one takes into account that lately these countries have had other, more immediate worries before them, such as the worsening state of the Middle East conflict and more recently the war on Iraq. However, looking closely, one can detect some discrete opinions about the EU enlargement in the southern Mediterranean. What one detects is that there is a degree of uncertainty among southern Mediterranean countries about what will happen beyond 2004. One can say that Mediterranean expectations are a mixture of hope and concern of what the EU enlargement will bring.

Whereas East and Central European states were the ones who sought accession and/or partnership to the EU and NATO, it was the EU, WEU, NATO, and OSCE that had proposed to Mediterranean countries the initiation of bilateral/ bi-multilateral dialogue. Therefore, Mediterranean countries do not perceive 'East-West' partnership as equal to 'North-South' cooperation. They do not claim membership of the EU or NATO. Nor did they expect, for instance, equal financial aid packages or appropriations to MEDA as to PHARE and TACIS programmes.

The Southern Mediterranean countries have full understanding of the "special" treatment of the candidate, now acceding, countries of the East and do not consider it to be to the detriment of the South. From a conceptual outlook, they do not perceive negative consequences for enlargement on Euro-Med relations, at least from this angle. In the same vein, they do not expect the EU to present them with lists of criteria identical or even similar to the Copenhagen criteria or other conditionalities for partnership although they have occasionally seen a bit of those in their interactions with the EU. Another drawback is that most vital decisions on the Mediterranean are normally taken by the European side outside the Barcelona framework, within EU or NATO. A third remark is the slow redtape decision-making process and lengthy procedures of several EU bodies in programming and implementation capacities.

## 2) IMPACT: HOPES AND CONCERNS

### A) Political and Security:

There is a frequently expressed expectation among EU neighbours that once finalized the EU enlargement process, which has basically monopolized the European agenda for a decade now, the Union will be able to pay more attention to Mediterranean problems. Although the EU launched in 1995 the Barcelona Process and several other minor Mediterranean projects have been undertaken in the past decade, these cannot compare to the attention which has been devoted to the Central and Eastern European countries in the framework of the EU enlargement process. Not only has the EU agenda been almost exclusively consumed by Central and Eastern European issues but also the quantity of technical and financial aid dedicated to the CEECs have been unparalleled in EU foreign policy. Now, this is to a certain extent perfectly natural, given that the Central and Eastern European countries are going to become EU members and have to undertake difficult and costly domestic reforms and hence need EU help. However, the Central and Eastern European countries are far from being the only countries in EU's periphery which suffer from

a need of economic and social reform. There are many southern Mediterranean countries which also would need urgent reform. Therefore, the expectations among some southern Mediterranean analysts are that - once concluded the EU accession process - perhaps the Union will be able to dedicate more attention and resources towards helping its non-candidate neighbours the same way that it has assisted the Central and Eastern European countries in the past decade. The hope is that the Barcelona Process, especially the economic basket, could be revived and accelerated.

A second Mediterranean source of hope is that, once enlarged, the European Union will obviously be a much more heavy weight actor on the global stage, being one of the largest, if not *the* largest, regional bloc in the world. This growing international importance might be used in a number of ways, which directly or indirectly will benefit southern Mediterranean countries. Foremost in mind, however, - illustrating the absolute priority of this issue for the Union's Arab neighbours - is the need to find a permanent solution to the Middle East conflict. The Bush administration's focus on the "war of terrorism" and on invading Iraq over the past year has left a vacuum in the Middle East conflict, which no other actor so far has managed to fill. There is thus hope that EU will press for the announcement and implementation of the Road Map, shelved since 20 December 2002.

A third source of Mediterranean hope, although already much further down the list is the expectations that perhaps the new Mediterranean EU members (Malta, Cyprus in the first round, and Turkey in a later) could help return some of the importance of other Mediterranean issues on the EU agenda.

As for the concerns which the enlargement generates among southern Mediterranean countries some are closely related to the hopes, and thus shows how the enlargement is an event which produces highly contradictory feelings in the southern Mediterranean. One of the most pressing concerns which the EU enlargement generates is the inevitable feeling of exclusion, of being refused to join the European Union. Some southern Mediterranean countries (notably Morocco, but also a few others) would also like to join the European Union in that they feel that this could be the easy solution to a majority of their socioeconomic problems. And hence, not being accepted as an eligible country for EU membership, causes certain frustration. The exclusion and felt marginalization is even the more hurting since the refusal of membership is allegedly only based on geography - the simple fact of being located on the "wrong" side of the Mediterranean. The feeling of exclusion is dangerous in that it in turn produces hostility and the almost inevitable pursuit of alternative explanations for being left out (like "we are being discriminated against due to our religion, culture and/or race" etc.). Such feelings are unfortunate for Europe in that they generate a lot of friction in the relationship with these countries and fuel social discontent and radical groups in these societies, a dangerous mix put in the perspective by the events of the 11 September and the war on Iraq.

A second Mediterranean concern is the alarm which the European security and defence policy (ESDP) is generating outside the EU. While prior to the 11 of September it did not look very likely that the ESDP would be ready in time for EU's self-imposed time-limit of 2003, as a consequence of the US Afghanistan intervention, the ESDP has been considerably accelerated. Although the development of an ESDP is positive for Europe, in that it will lead a degree of independence to European activity at the military level and reduce European dependence on the US for security, as the ESDP comes closer to be made reality, EU's neighbours have been suspicious. The ESDP produces, in the same way as the enlargement, contradictory feelings: it is desired and yet feared. In the Mediterranean, although some sectors would wish the ESDP to represent an assertion of Europe's power to provide peace enforcement forces in the Mediterranean area under a UN mandate, the ESDP is at the same

time feared among EU's southern Mediterranean neighbours in that their particular country might become the involuntary target of a EU military intervention some day in the future. To remove the existing lack of information, or even outright misinformation, among EU neighbours regarding the ESDP, there has been a large scale information campaign explaining the ESDP to EU's neighbours during the regular meetings of the Senior Officials of the Barcelona Process. This has been going on to reassure southern Mediterranean countries through regular Euro-Mediterranean defence and security dialogue within the framework of the Barcelona Process.

Political and security dialogue is the most stagnant area of the partnership. And it will continue to be so until the European Union becomes more clearly involved in the resolution of urgent conflicts, mainly the Middle East crisis, which have prevented, to date, the approval of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability. The war on Iraq and the split within the European Union into pro-war and anti-war camps will certainly have an additional detrimental effect on the Euro-Med Partnership. So, it will require more than cosmetic efforts on the part of the EU to re-instill new confidence in southern Mediterranean countries, not only towards governments but, equally important, towards the peoples of those countries.

One form of imbalance is to be found in the level of integration on the two sides of the Mediterranean. European countries operate as a group through the EU, while countries from Eastern and Southern Mediterranean come to the process one by one, either to negotiate or sign association agreements or to discuss security matters with NATO. This is a case of what is called "bi-multilateralism": unified on one side, individualised on the other. This procedure was there before Barcelona and the Barcelona process did not produce a new, more balanced formula even with its multilateral dimension.

The Barcelona Process has been somehow victim, in its very conceptualisation, of the Helsinki process' success. In the Helsinki process, what we had were basically two blocs of countries opposed by ideological and strategic issues. What was needed was to build confidence between these two blocs as the pre-condition for further cooperation between them. Hence the vital importance played by confidence-building measures (CBMs) on both sides of the Helsinki divide. The almost natural, spontaneous, attitude among Europeans was to transpose this Helsinki paradigm into the Mediterranean, and it does not work. Why? Because basically across the Mediterranean, we do not have two opposing blocs. The major threat to security in the Mediterranean is not one bloc facing the other or threatening the other, or deploying a nuclear arsenal, as was the case on the two sides of the Berlin wall.

The very basic threat in the Mediterranean is the result of a number of unresolved conflicts on one side of the Mediterranean, that is the Eastern region, that need to be resolved, but they are not South versus North conflicts, as was the case in East versus West conflicts. Hence, the Helsinki paradigm is not operational and we do not really need confidence-building measures across the Mediterranean. What we need are processes of conflict resolution and crisis management and the list is very long: the Arab-Israeli conflict of course, the Greek-Turkish, now the Turkish-Cypriot, and other conflicts.

The defining issue is Europe's ability and willingness to be an active and efficient party in these conflicts' resolution or, on the contrary, to choose to protect itself, to isolate itself from the overflow of violence related to these conflicts. That is the basic issue and it is extremely different from what the situation had been in Europe before 1990. Therefore, we are not here in a process where partnership in the Barcelona process means something like a step towards

the long, full integration process of Southern shore countries into the European Union or into NATO like what is now happening in Europe.

## B) Economic, Trade and Financial:

A third concern which the EU enlargement is also generating is the tremendous economic regional bloc which EU will become as a result of enlargement. The concern over EU becoming a big, closed economic and trade bloc is that this fact could increase the economic pressure most southern Mediterranean countries feel already from the forces of economic globalization, unless thoroughly dealt with. The preoccupations stem from the disappointing performance of the Barcelona Process - a Process which was launched with the explicit objective to lessen the economic plight of the Mediterranean Partners. However, real advances towards a free-trade area in the 8 years since the launching of the Partnership have been scarce. Rather than closing the economic gap between the northern and southern shores, and notwithstanding the Barcelona Process, differences are thus alarmingly increasing in some areas. Some troubles behind the Euro-Med Partnership have been that, for example, South-South trade has not increased and the levels of EU investment in the region remain low and well below the flows of investment to other parts of the world. Agricultural products, the southern Mediterranean most competitive produce, do not have free access to European markets due to tough non-tariff barriers applied by the EU. Other technical problems hindering the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership lies in the diversity of rules, absence of cumulation of origin, inadequate physical and administrative infrastructure etc. Finally, implementation of the MEDA financial aid program has been hampered by complicated procedures both in the EU and in partner countries. Much hope is not pinned on the Europe Aid which has been established to decentralize a heavily bureaucratic set-up and procedures at the European Commission.

Closely related to these economic concerns is another fear among EU neighbours: the fear that the Union will become a "Fortress Europe" and close its borders to migrants from the South and the East seeking a better future for themselves. Such mass migration, however, creates serious political problems for the European country receiving them, as is evident from the successes which anti-immigrant parties have had across national elections in Europe in recent years. In this sense, the European Council in Seville in June 2002 provoked grave concerns among southern Mediterranean countries in that the Fifteen showed such a strong determination to strengthen border controls and stem out immigration. Some suggestions in the run-up to the Seville European Council, notably those made by the British Prime Minister (Tony Blair) and later leaked into British press, even called for the British Royal Navy and gun boats to be used to counter illegal immigration in the Mediterranean.

The free trade area is the target, but the objective incites many fears on the southern shore because it entices radical fiscal reforms and real threats to local, vulnerable industries. The volume of aid promised by Europe for the next 6 years is minimal when compared to what was disbursed in Eastern and Central Europe after 1989. A spillover from enlargement will be the negative effect of the preferential treatment that Central and East European candidate countries (CEECs) will enjoy when they become full members of the EU on Mediterranean countries' exports to the EU. For example, competitors from the CEECs would gravely affect Egyptian agricultural exports to the EU and consequently its share. In other words, Mediterranean countries' export access and market share in the EU will be adversely affected because of enlargement.

## C) Social, Human and Cultural:

The present international crisis has once again demonstrated the lack of mutual understanding that exists between cultures in the same region and the weight still carried by stereotypes. Therefore, it is more necessary than ever to activate dialogue and cooperation processes between persons and cultures.

The objective of this reactivation of the third "pillar" must avoid the monopolisation of the Barcelona Process by governments and elites, and its encapsulation in inter-governmental relations. The reactivation of decentralised cooperation is one way of achieving this, given that it favours contact between societies and allows programmes related to democracy and human rights to be approached more decisively. *"People must meet people"* is a phrase that picks up on the need for a new orientation destined to achieving a greater involvement of the societies of the TMC in the Barcelona Process.

However, I am afraid the war on Iraq has created a new tense environment where a few countries in the West seem to play into the hands of people like Samuel Huntington who advocates the inevitable clash of civilisations. Others now, like James Woosley, former CIA Director, stated on 3<sup>rd</sup> April that the West should proceed after Iraq to countries like Iran and Syria to establish democracy. He added that pressure should be brought to bear on other countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia "to keep them nervous". With opinions like these, it is no wonder that instead of one Bin Laden, the West is creating a hundred, if not hundred, Bin Ladens.

The international situation has demonstrated the importance of mutual understanding and cultural dialogue to reject conflicts and foster cooperation. It has revealed the necessity for imaginative proposals to develop the third pillar of the Barcelona Process relative to the social and cultural dimension of the association project. This can be considered, for the moment, as the unresolved issue of Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

Principally, these proposals must involve those responsible for creation, communication and education, as well as the leaders of the religions present in the Mediterranean. The objective of this dialogue is to banish the existing stereotypes of the "image of the other" in all the countries, and to share the defence of human rights, democratic values, the condemnation of any form of xenophobia, and the rejection of terrorism, but: Should that be implemented by the bayonet, i.e. through military hostilities and strategies like "pre-emptive strikes"?

The Action Programme for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations, adopted by the Valencia Ministerial Meeting in April 2002 enumerated the principles that should govern the dialogue, namely:

1. respect for pluralism, diversity and cultural specificities;
2. equality and mutual respect;
3. avoidance of prejudices and stereotypes;
4. the Dialogue should aim to achieve, not only a better understanding of "the other", but also solutions for persistent problems;
5. the ultimate goal of Dialogue, should not be to change "the other" but, rather, to live peacefully with "the other".

### 3) CONCLUSION:

The Barcelona process has been an ambitious and innovative initiative but it is not in its best shape. Its implementation has proved to be much more complex than expected. Based on tremendous results achieved on the European continent, thanks to the Helsinki process and, later, to the multifaceted West-European involvement in the transition of Central and

Eastern European countries to pluralistic democracy and market economy, the Barcelona process was primarily meant to extend that helpful, accompanying, hand in the direction of the Mediterranean. The Barcelona Process was meant to alleviate genuine fears in Europe of a number of recent phenomena, such as the development of illegal migration into the EU or the overflow of widespread forms of violence in the Middle East and North Africa into the European countries. Among its objectives was the re-structuring of national economics on the Southern shore so that these economies become more receptive to flows of investments and commodities from the North and, therefore, to partly fill the gap in terms of development and growth between the two sides of our common sea.

The EU enlargement is bound to have a significant impact in and beyond the European continent, and it will, as well, have repercussions for the international community at large. It is thus imperative for the Union and its member states that they, in the run-up to 2004, will, make good use of this time to meet with its neighboring non-candidate countries, listen to their concerns and inform fully and frankly about the motives and possible outcomes of the current enlargement process.

Member States have important political and economic goals for the relationship with Mediterranean countries. It is important for them to send signals to the southern neighbours of the Union that the MED region remains important for Europe, also in facing Eastern enlargement. Member States have ambitions of playing a more important role in the Middle East Peace Process; and of supporting national processes towards good governance, democratisation, rule of law and respect for human rights without trying to impose the western model, parts of which do not fit in with cultural, social and political specificities. "One size fits all" is an unrealistic and impractical paradigm. Controlling immigration, crime and drugs are yet other very important objectives. The aid relationship therefore have wider aims than the traditional financial and technical support to economic development.

We know that a different political status is attached to enlargement than to Euro-Mediterranean co-operation. It is a different type of process. The enlargement project is about integration, about the complete incorporation of the established laws and practices of the European Community, the *acquis communautaire*. The Mediterranean project is about developing and intensifying co-operation. The full integration of twelve new Member States makes quite different demands of all parties than the creation of a free-trade area.

On 11 March 2003, the European Commission issued a Communication entitled "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: proposed new framework for relations with the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbours".

The prospects and potential of the Barcelona Process are great. Once the hurdles and problems I have referred to are overcome, EU and Mediterranean partners could forge ahead to implement the objectives enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration namely, establishing a common area of peace and stability, creating an area of shared prosperity, and promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies. We would also be approaching the ultimate objective of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Free-Trade Area to form, together with EFTA and Central and Eastern European acceding countries for EU enlargement, a zone including some 40 states and about 800 million consumers, i.e. one of the world's most important trade entities. That is why we believe that enlargement and Euro-Med partnership are not opposed but, on the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing and complementary.