

Current situation of co-operation and dialogue in the Mediterranean area

Intervenção da Itália

Resumo

A presente intervenção relaciona-se com uma avaliação actual das diversas iniciativas sobre o diálogo e cooperação no Mediterrâneo. A mesma refere-se ainda aos objectivos alcançados, resultados das medidas de confiança concretizadas e futuras iniciativas de cooperação naquela área.

Abstract

This paper presents an evaluation of the multiple projects currently taken on the domain of cooperation and dialogue initiatives. It also discusses the results of implemented measures as well as the future ones to be developed.

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1. The scenario

As a previous consideration to any presentation about mediterranean security policy and co-operation agreements among this area comprised countries, it's necessary to analyze which are the main problems that affect them. That's the reason because we are going now to study the most significant.

a. Demographic problems

EU countries, and more concretely those by the north coast line of the mediterranean, are living a speed up process of reduction of their demographic rate with the logical effect upon the pyramiding of the living population, that shows a remarkable getting old. Oppositely, mediterranean south coastline countries are living an accelerated demographic rate process, that is seen in its high percentage of less than 25 years old population. This circumstance, together with the economy globalization process and access to the media, brings about huge migratory movements affecting all EU countries and more specially those of the north coastline of this sea.

Besides, countryside to city migration movements take place in the south area without any chance that urban centres may absorb those population exceedings, what emphasizes the said problems.

b. Maghreb countries economic development

The best measure to stabilize the population in their home countries should be their own economic development by means of an industrialization and promotion of their productive activity process, which should commit not only the northern coastal governments but developed countries entrepreneurs as well.

In order to give to this scenario some appearance of progress, within a free market economy frame, the only opportunity to carry it out should be the creation of a frame of economic security to stimulate the enterprises of the northern coastline. This frame should affect the transaction security, taxation, assets warrants and really steady investment regulations.

In other order of ideas, it should be necessary to mind north area mediterranean societies about the possible competence that these productions may affect their own markets affecting significantly adherence agreements of the southern countries.

c. Co-operation scope among the south mediterranean coastline countries

Other arising problem is that of the lack of understanding and uniform reasoning from the part of the mediterranean coastal countries, the incorporation of Libya to the international scenario and the better understanding among maghreb countries should make this objective easy, to accomplish; it had to start from bilateral agreements and encouraging of their commercial exchanges (it's worthy to underline that, as a sample of this lack of co-operation, less than 4% of a commercial exchanges is made among the south mediterranean coastal countries whereas more than 55% is made with EU countries).

d. Narcotraffic

Drugs consume in western societies and production of those substances in southern coast countries generates, not only health problems, but economic, social and, in a great deal, security problems as well, as drug traffic and consume is reflected in most of criminal activities.

e. Immigrants incorporation

Massive flowage of immigrants not absorbed as workmanship at the recipient country makes a marginality effect and, as consequence delinquency, affecting countries that suffer it more specially with conducts of xenofoby, racism, etc.

On the other hand, we should be aware about the specific way that migration from northern african countries use to live in Europe by their own cultures showing some difficulties in having a social integration.

f. Eastern mediterranean stability

While arab-israeli conflict related to Palestine is not overcome, any process of collaboration between EU and arabic world that allows the stability of the area should be very difficult.

g. Greek-turkish tensions

The ending of the conflict, as it affects cyprus, is other factor to make into account to complete the co-operation among mediterranean countries.

h. Black sea coastal countries integration

These countries incorporation to mediterranean dialogue will cooperate to widen mediterranean policy consensus in north-south dialogue.

Moreover, EU must be aware not to import the specific peripheral problems (including terrorism) such as caucasian conflicts, kurds struggle in Turkey, Irak and Syria, etc.

i. Grade of mistrust end

The end of the mistrust grade as it concerns to the constitution of multinational forces by the north coastline countries will only be possible if maghreb's leaders are persuaded that these forces don't constitute a potential threat but a stability element in the zone.

2. Actions carried out so far

The numerous important initiatives launched so far for security and co-operation in the mediterranean area have not been so successful as they deserved. It seems appropriate, however, to start this study with an overview of the various actions carried out by different international organisations and groups of countries.

Parliamentary diplomacy initiatives, supported by the Inter-parliamentary Union, as well as NATO, the European Union and OSCE political initiatives are particularly significant.

a. Interparliamentarian Conferences about security and co-operation in the Mediterranean (Malaga, 1992, Valletta, 1995, Marseille, 2000 and Cairo, 2002)

The 1st Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) was organized in Malaga (Spain) in the period 15-22 June 1992 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Established in 1889 by initiative of two parliamentarians and men of peace, William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom) and Frédéric Passy (France), the Inter-Parliamentary Union was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations. The IPU has transformed itself from an association of individual parliamentarians into the international organisation of the Parliaments of sovereign States. It is a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main

political learnings in the world, constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world.

IPU statutory conferences and specialized meetings serve as a testing ground for new ideas and initiatives leading to important breakthroughs in the search for peace and advancing international co-operation. There are currently 142 Members and five Associate Members (Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

This framework for the Mediterranean was designed to mirror the three-basket approach of the Helsinki process and imitate CSCE decision-making mechanism. On the basis of conclusions and recommendations at the end of the Malaga Conference, the IPU set up a permanent mechanism for dialogue and negotiation among all the Mediterranean partners in the form of twice-yearly meetings held during statutory Inter-Parliamentary Conferences. The CSCM faced several important obstacles and was never officially approved.

The first obstacle was the difficulty of devising a dialogue with several States from a vast and diverse area (membership would have been open to countries from Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf).

The second obstacle was American fears that the CSCM would derail the peace process and curtail U.S. freedom of action in the Mediterranean.

The third was the complex nature of the planned CSCM decision-making process, which was also considered to be overly burdensome.

Although the CSCM as a framework is not politically viable and unlikely to be resuscitated, its principle of linking military security to an overall strategy of co-operation and partnership has been enshrined in the Barcelona process and in the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS).

After Malaga other three Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean were organized (Valletta - Malta in 1995, Marseille - France in 2000 and Cairo, Egypt, 2002).

The last meeting is of paramount importance as it is the most recent (12 April 2002) and as the issues addressed are related to the present dramatic crisis in the Middle East.

Its final declaration confirms the equality of all casualties and expresses strong concern about the continuing armed occupation by Israel of tens of Palestinian towns and villages. In compliance with UN Security Council's resolutions, Israeli

troops are requested to immediately withdraw from Palestinian towns, including Ramallah, where the Palestinian President, Mr. Yasser Arafat, has been besieged for months in his headquarters. Moreover, the final declaration condemns all kinds of terrorism and violence against the innocent victims of both peoples and it insists on the absolute respect for the Holy Sites of all religions, as is the case for the Church of the Nativity, also besieged.

The Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Pierferdinando Casini, has underlined the insufficiency of international initiatives, first of all by Europe and the United Nations but also by the United States, to solve the Middle East crisis. After the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments' Speakers in Cairo, Mr. Casini went to Tel Aviv, where he requested the Speaker of the Israeli Knesset that Israel immediately withdraw from occupied territories ("... otherwise we will manage to get what Bin Laden did not on September 11: triggering off a spiral of hatred and revenge which will not lead to any good for anybody"). Casini also went to Jerusalem, where he met the Chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council, AL AA.

b. Euromediterranean Barcelona Conference (Malta, Stuttgart)

(1) General

The importance of the Mediterranean, which is normally considered as a very large and deep internal sea, derives not so much from its extent but from its peculiar location amid three continents (Europe, Africa and Asia).

It represents the main maritime line of communication between the Atlantic Ocean, the Northern Sea and the Indian Ocean and the only route for commercial traffic between European countries and North Africa, the Persian Gulf, India, Australia and Far East.

Currently, 1/3 of energy resources and 1/6 of world trade cross the Mediterranean.

For more than one thousand years, the history of this region has been characterised by alternate fights to get supremacy over the sea and those fights have given the Mediterranean a strategic value far above its geographical dimensions.

The countries bordering the Mediterranean are 23 (with a population of about 400 million people). Among them, six countries are NATO members (Greece,

France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey), five countries belong to the Central European and Balkan area (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia), five are African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), four are Middle East countries (Palestinian Authority, Israel, Lebanon and Syria) and two countries are islands (Malta and Cyprus).

Besides, there are countries indirectly related to the area (such as Mauritania, Jordan, Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, etc.), or having strong interests there while being geographically remote (Russia, U.S.A., United Kingdom, etc...).

The region is very rich in natural resources. It has a number of ports, connected to inland countries through a wide railway network and considerable commercial and industrial capabilities. But it is also a very complex region because military, diplomatic, financial and cultural issues overlap and intersect there. Furthermore, there is friction between two very different political systems: liberalism and democracy in Europe, which is developed and well off and the Middle East and North Africa, where there are countries ruled by authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, affected by internal instability and struggling for economic development.

Therefore, to fully understand the economic, political and cultural importance of the Mediterranean, it is necessary to consider not only the area within its conventional geographical boundaries but also those territories and seas closely linked to it.

That perspective has led to the concept of the so-called "enlarged Mediterranean" which includes the geopolitical whole of the Mediterranean area, the two connected seas (the Black Sea and the Red Sea) and all the coastal countries; in Italy's perspective, the "enlarged Mediterranean" also includes countries bordering the Gulf as well as the Horn of Africa.

The European Union and especially the countries along the Mediterranean coast have several reasons to be interested in the region: dependence on their energy sources, mass immigration, islamic fundamentalism, and last but not least, terrorism.

Oil and gas supplies from North Africa and the Middle East, which many European countries depend on for their energy supplies, arrive in the Mediterranean by tankers from the Persian Gulf via the Red Sea and by pipelines.

All of Italy's and Greece's energy supplies pass through the Mediterranean just like half the oil supplies of Spain, France and Germany. Italy imports oil from Libya like France, Greece and Turkey, which, however, import lesser quantities. Spain and Portugal receive about 40% of their gas supplies from North Africa via Morocco. Therefore, it is evident that energy security in European countries and stability in the Mediterranean are intertwined.

Western European countries have, therefore, to define a comprehensive common approach to the wide variety of issues in the Mediterranean scenario. In the recent past, their attention was mainly focused on the economic aspects of their relations with the countries facing the basin, but they are now becoming aware of the importance of political and cultural aspects.

(2) The Barcelona Conference (27th-28th November 1995)

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona tried to reach a balance between the political, economic, cultural and human relations in the Mediterranean area. It can be rightfully considered as the first important step to remedy the unjustified carelessness of Europe about an area which is considered as the "world crossroads" and should become a zone of peace and stability.

In particular, within the framework of the Barcelona Conference, the fifteen countries of the European Union have officially started their new Mediterranean policy laying the foundations for solid co-operation with Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority.

- Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The Conference ended with the unanimous adoption of the Declaration and the annexed work programme, which set out the purposes and scope of the Partnership between the EU and the Mediterranean Countries. The programme has three aspects:

- political and security partnership: establishing a common area of peace and stability, strengthening political dialogue on security;
- Economic and financial partnership: creating an area of shared prosperity;
- partnership in social, cultural and human affairs: developing human resources, promoting understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies.

Two complementary approaches have been chosen for the implementation of the EMP: a bilateral one, including partnership agreements between the Union and the individual Mediterranean States and a multilateral one, including actions to be carried out thanks to regional, regular and comprehensive dialogue on political, economic and social issues.

At the multilateral level a central role is played by the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona process (Barcelona Committee), initially composed of a representative of each Mediterranean Partner and of the EU Troika and later extended to include the 15.

The Barcelona Committee takes stock of and evaluates the activities in the various fields of co-operation, updates the work programme and prepares the meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The initiatives proposed by Member States or by the Commission need to be approved by the Barcelona Committee in order to be considered as "Euromed Initiatives". The political dialogue and the development of a EMP security component are the responsibility of a group of senior officials.

Four partnership agreements are currently (April 2002) in force with Tunisia, the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Morocco.

Partnership agreements have been concluded with Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Algeria which will hopefully become effective as of 2002/2003.

Negotiations are underway with Syria and Libya (a EMP observer country) to conclude similar agreements.

The current partnership agreements show some significant differences compared with the first generation association agreements between Europe and Maghreb and Mashrek Countries still governing relations between Europe and those Mediterranean Countries that have not concluded a partnership agreement yet or still have to ratify it. Unlike the 1st generation agreements, the new ones reflect the political, economic and socio-cultural purposes set out in the Barcelona Declaration and call for co-operation based not only on loans but also on financial assistance.

Specific supplementary measures are aimed at facilitating the access of the Mediterranean partners to the free trade area and enhancing cultural dialogue and political co-operation for promotion of democracy and human rights. As in the past, a Partnership Council composed of representatives of the European Union and of the government of each signatory Partner Country oversees the

implementation of the agreements. These are intended to promote free movement of goods, persons, services and capitals and the right of establishment, which were not covered by the 1st generation agreements. However, all that concerns companies only and not professionals. Agreements may be reviewed for further liberalisation of service supply.

- The MEDA programme

The MEDA programme was adopted by the Cannes European Council (26-27 June 1995). It is the principal financial instrument of the EU for the implementation of the EMP. It provides for grants from the community budget and substantial lending from the European Investment Bank.

The MEDA system will progressively supersede the previous financial protocols. MEDA works at two different but complementary level: 90% of its allocated resources are channelled bilaterally to the partners to finance the activities included in the national indicative programmes, reference papers that set priority areas of action agreed by the EU and Mediterranean partners authorities; the remaining 10% are used to fund multilateral activities open to all partners and included in the regional indicative programme. The MEDA financial commitments went to four main types of operations: support to structural adjustment, private sector development, improvement of social and economic standards and strengthening of civil society. The beneficiaries of support measures may also include public agencies, private operators, NGOs and professional associations.

The innovative flexibility of the programme makes it possible to take into account the different priorities established and facilitates its implementation. The mechanism is designed to reconcile the allocation of funds on an annual basis with the long duration of projects and their related measures.

The Barcelona Committee, however, can only provide advice and coordination; it is the EU Council that decides the annual budget allocation for MEDA.

At present the only way for Mediterranean partners to participate in decision making is to be recognised the right to audit the funds allocated. That option, still under consideration, seems to be supported by the 27 Euro-Mediterranean countries and its prompt adoption is called for.

(3) The Valletta summit (Malta, April 1997)

The decision of all Countries to take part in the Malta Summit in a period when Arab-Israeli relations were deteriorating has shown the importance of the Barcelona Conference; the crisis in the peace process, however, has impeded any progress in co-operation. The Malta summit has started the process for the preparation of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for peace and stability. Since then, the EU and Mediterranean partners representatives have met every three months to draft the Charter.

(4) The Palermo Conference (3rd-4th June 1998)

At the Palermo Conference, the need was confirmed for the creation of an area of shared prosperity which involves three main elements: the establishment of free trade, structural reforms and action to encourage private investments. The following confidence-building measures, called Partnership-Building measures, have been agreed:

- Training and information workshops for diplomats;
- Exchange between institutes of political-strategic studies;
- Co-operation between civil protection organisations;
- Record of bilateral agreements;
- Exchange of information on human rights and disarmament.

(5) The Stuttgart Conference (15th-16th April 1999)

At the Stuttgart Conference an ambitious political goal was set: to have the Charter for peace and stability in the Mediterranean signed following the Foreign Ministers' approval of the global security concept expressed at the Palermo Conference. The Charter's main elements are:

- It will be politically but not legally binding;
- Decisions made upon consensus;
- Focus on security and stability issues, including those economic, cultural and human factors that can affect security and stability;
- Promotion of human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual understanding;
- Co-operation to fight organised crime, terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- Conflict prevention, crisis management, post-war reconstruction.

As for Libya becoming a further partner, Italy is committed to support Tripoli's request for dialogue provided that Libya accepts the full terms of the Barcelona Declaration and the related actions. Italy believes that Libya's integration into the Barcelona process is in the interest of Europe and a great help to the stabilisation of the Mediterranean area.

(6) The Marseille Conference (2000)

The outbreak of violence between Israelis and Arabs has changed the scenario of the Marseilles Euro-Mediterranean Conference. The agenda of the fourth Euromed meeting had to be reviewed when the first EU MEDA programme was concluded five years after its launch in 1995.

France has given up presenting a draft Charter for Stability and Security which had been under consideration for years and was aimed at establishing a mechanism for political dialogue and crisis prevention involving the 15 EU countries as well as the 12 partners.

The representatives of Syria and Lebanon failed to keep the appointment with Europe as in Marseilles they could not obtain a statement condemning Israel. Thus, the Euro-Mediterranean process has come to a standstill. It is to be noted, however, that Libya and Mauritania have shown their interest participating as observers. Libya's foreign policy seems to be ready for a change. Since the embargo has come to an end, Libya is reshaping its role on the international scene thanks to its relations with Italy.

The 15 EU countries have offered their Mediterranean partners concrete help to encourage their economic development: the new aid programme, MEDA 2, which is endowed with 5.35 million euros for the 2000-2006 period. The EU Commission and Italy had proposed the allocation of 6.7 and 6 billion euros respectively. That amount is however higher than that allocated to the first MEDA programme for the 1995-1999 period.

The MEDA 1 granted 3.5 million euros, however, were not satisfactorily used. Data show that only 890 million euros, equal to 26% of MEDA 1 funds, were spent. Syria and Lebanon spent almost 0% while 48.6% and 42.5% were spent in the Palestinian territories and Jordan respectively.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partners need to develop a new approach to planning in order to take full advantage of MEDA opportunities. The following table provides figures concerning MEDA 1:

**Table Commitments/Payments per Partner in the 1995-1999 period
(Million euros)**

Country	Commitments	Payments	Implementation rate
Morocco	656	127	19,4
Algeria	154	30	18,2
Tunisia	428	168	39,3
Egypt	686	157	22,9
Jordan	254	108	42,5
Lebanon	182	1	0,5
Syria	99	0	0,0
Turkey	375	15	4,0
Palestine (Cisjordan/Gaza)	111	54	48,6
Regional	480	230	48,0
TOTAL	3435	890	26

Source: COM (2000) "Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament" – Reinforcing the Barcelona Process".

c. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue

With the end of the Cold War and the resulting change in the geopolitical environment, NATO has had to adjust its goals and structure to the new political situation requirements without renouncing to its fundamental role of guarantor of the security of member countries.

In view of the necessity to redefine its own purposes, the Alliance has thought it important to open a dialogue with a certain number of countries on the Southern coast of the Mediterranean, a region considered as a possible source of instability for European security in general and for NATO's southern countries in particular.

The NATO's Mediterranean initiative, i.e. the Mediterranean Dialogue, is the natural consequence of this real situation and it must be considered within the framework of the co-operation policy pursued by the Alliance on security, especially in respect of neighbouring countries to the East as well as to the North.

The first guidelines on this matter are contained in the Athens Declaration of June 1993, in which the Ministries of the then sixteen NATO Member Countries stated the correlation between security in Europe and security in the Mediterranean and encouraged the efforts for co-operation and dialogue. Later, during their meeting in

Brussels on January 1994, the Heads of State and Government of Member Countries stated that the positive development then under way in the Middle East peace process had paved the way for "taking into consideration measures aimed at promoting dialogue, understanding and strengthening of confidence between countries in the region".

On the occasion of the following Ministerial meeting held in Brussels in December 1994, the then sixteen Members of the Alliance committed themselves to pay greater attention to the situation in the Mediterranean and to promote dialogue between the Alliance and the individual non-member countries. In February 1995, the opening of a direct dialogue with Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia was officially announced and it was later extended to Jordan (November 1995) and Algeria (March 2000).

Presently, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue includes the nineteen countries of the Alliance and the above mentioned seven countries of the Mediterranean region which are not NATO Members.

The main purpose of this initiative is to contribute to security and stability in the Mediterranean and to achieve a better mutual understanding between NATO - which is still perceived by many countries of the region as a military organisation inherited from the Cold War - and the Mediterranean partners. The aim of the Dialogue is to establish closer ties between the parties in order to enhance co-operation in security related matters. This initiative, however, is different from NATO Partnership for Peace with Central-Eastern European Countries. The Mediterranean Dialogue is a political dialogue based on bilateral relations between each participating country and NATO. The countries have been invited to participate in specific activities such as information, civil emergency planning, crisis management, scientific and military co-operation.

The first steps of this initiative were concentrated on reaching better understanding and mutual confidence between NATO and the countries of the southern coast of the Mediterranean, by exchanging information on NATO's role and goals and its interests in security in this region.

- How the Dialogue works

The Dialogue is based on five basic principles:

- First, the Dialogue is progressive in terms of participation and scope. Its flexibility made it possible for new participants (Jordan and Algeria) to join it

some time after it was launched and other countries may participate in the future as appropriate. NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue has evolved since it was launched and keeps evolving.

- Second, the Dialogue is based on bilateral relations between each participating country and NATO (i.e. 19+1) because Arab countries are reluctant to take part in meetings where Israel is also present. This principle is extremely important. It makes the Dialogue less subject to interruptions due to the political developments in the region. However, it allows for multilateral meetings on a case-by-case basis.
 - Third, the Dialogue offers all Mediterranean partners the same basis for discussion and joint activities. Such an approach is the key for its success. Partners are free to choose the extent and the scope of their participation: what is offered to a partner is offered to all the other partners in the Dialogue.
 - Fourth, the Dialogue aims to reinforce other international efforts for establishing and enhancing co-operation with the Mediterranean Countries: the peace process in the Middle East, the Barcelona Process and the efforts made by other organisations such as the OSCE and - until some time ago - the WEU are complementary to the Dialogue; the 19 NATO nations attach great importance to the principle of complementarity and mutual reinforcement; they do not intend to duplicate efforts nor to create a division of labour. That, however, does not rule out any closer co-ordination between the various initiatives.
 - Fifth, the participation in the Mediterranean Dialogue activities is on a self-funding basis. There are, however, some exceptions to this general rule.
- The scope of the Dialogue

The Mediterranean Dialogue consists of a political dialogue combined with the participation in specific activities.

In the beginning, the political dialogue took the form of regular bilateral discussion on political issues between the NATO International Staff and the Ambassadors of the participating Mediterranean countries. Those meetings provided an opportunity for extensive briefings on NATO's activities, including its internal adaptation after the end of the Cold War. In turn, the Mediterranean Dialogue countries have been invited to express their views on security issues in the region.

In July 1997, on the occasion of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the then sixteen Member nations held in Madrid, NATO established a

Mediterranean Co-operation Group. This is responsible for the Dialogue in general and for the political discussions with the individual partners (MCG+1). That formula is essential to increase the Dialogue political visibility and to facilitate direct involvement of all allied countries in the dialogue with the Mediterranean countries. The first series of meetings took place in November 1997. The most recent one was held in October 2000.

Beside the political dialogue, Mediterranean countries can participate, if they so wish, in specific activities envisaged by a work programme agreed every year. For example, they can participate as observers in NATO exercises as well as in meetings, workshops and conferences on issues of common interest. They can also visit NATO structures, participate in specific NATO activities such as science and civil emergency planning. They may also be invited to take part in courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, and the NATO Defence College in Rome. Such courses cover peace-keeping issues, arms control, European security, crisis management and civil emergency planning. Recently, some limited military co-operation activities have been included.

Some Mediterranean Dialogue countries have already started military co-operation with NATO by participating in IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco) and KFOR in Kosovo (Jordan, Morocco).

The Mediterranean countries involved in the initiative might soon be invited to participate in specific activities in the field of soft security (search and rescue, security at sea, medical evacuation, humanitarian relief) not to mention their possible involvement in NATO PK operations and exercises.

d. OSCE initiative (& others)

(1) Overview

Aside from the Barcelona process and NATO's Mediterranean Initiative, several other Mediterranean co-operation initiatives exist – some were sponsored by a number of States, others by multilateral institutions. The earliest post-Cold War efforts were crafted by groupings of States on the Mediterranean littoral – the “Five plus Five” Dialogue and the CSCM, for instance, were first floated in 1990. Initiatives involving several countries were also devised in the field of arms control with the work Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS) being the most significant. More recently, a series of U.S. – sponsored

conferences – called MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Economic Summits – have been held yearly since 1994 to promote investment in the region.

The first multilateral institution to set up a Mediterranean dialogue was the WEU in 1992. The WEU was followed by the OSCE, NATO and the EU's Barcelona process in later years. These organisations have become involved in the region to complement State-sponsored initiatives as well to compensate for the lack of success of some early efforts, such as the "Five plus Five" and the CSCM.

(2) The OSCE's Mediterranean Contact Group

The OSCE began its Mediterranean outreach program at the 1994 Budapest Review Conference. Italy, Spain and France took the lead in proposing that the OSCE establish an informal contact group with experts from Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia. As part of the OSCE effort, a seminar was organized in Cairo in 1995 on OSCE's experience in the field of confidence-building measures. Mediterranean partners can benefit from learning how OSCE operates, as the Organisation's activities and routines provide useful models of how confidence-building measures can be implemented in their region. In fact, OSCE mechanisms have been taken up by several Mediterranean initiatives such as the ACRS and the Barcelona process. These better endowed and regionally – focused frameworks, however, will most likely limit OSCE's direct role in the Mediterranean to information sharing and experts meetings.

(3) The "Five plus Five" Dialogue

The creation of the "Five plus Five" Dialogue in July 1990 was spurred by the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989 and French reluctance to fully support the CSCM plan. This dialogue intended to develop co-operation between Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Malta, on the one hand, and Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania on the other.

Discussion topics included natural resource management, economic links and financial assistance, immigration and culture.

The "Five plus Five" Dialogue very soon encountered serious obstacles, the most important of which was the international embargo on Libya. The absence of Egypt, friction between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara and Algeria's internal instability also undermined the initiative.

The “Five plus Five” excluded military security discussion from the agenda; in that regard it presented a unique approach and may have generated greater interest in Arab countries keen to simulate their economic development. The fundamental flaws of the “Five plus Five” lay in its “convoy” approach to decision-making, which allowed the pace of the discussion to be determined by the most reluctant partner and the related problems of Libya’s pariah *status*.

(4) The Forum for Dialogue and Co-operation in the Mediterranean

Having been excluded from the “Five plus Five” Dialogue, in 1991, Egypt proposed the organisation of the Forum for Dialogue and Co-operation in the Mediterranean or Mediterranean Forum.

France co-sponsored the initiative and subsequently the Forum won the endorsement of Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal before being launched in Alexandria in July 1994. In Alexandria the 10 founding members – Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey – admitted Malta as an eleventh member.

The participating states set up three working groups on political dialogue, dialogue between cultures and civilizations and economic and social co-operation. Unlike the “Five plus Five”, the Mediterranean Forum focuses in part on security issues.

The major problem with the Forum is the fact that the Barcelona process is overtaking most of its functions. This need not imply the end of the Forum’s usefulness as long as Member States find a way of differentiating its activities from the EU’s framework. The Forum, for instance, could exploit the special relationship North African countries have with Southern Europe to discuss issues that are too sensitive for high-profile multilateral discussion.

(5) The Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS)

The ACRS was established during the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 as part of the multilateral track of the peace process negotiations and is composed of Israel and twelve Arab countries (with the notable exception of Syria, Libya, Iraq and Iran).

Work is divided into conceptual and operational baskets and progress in each has been considerable. Negotiations in 1993 and 1994 produced a first draft of a

declaration of principles of peace and security in the Middle East modelled on the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Progress in the operational basket focused on proposals for joint rescue-at-sea exercises, the establishment of a regional security center in Amman and a regional communication center in Egypt. The last meeting of the ACRS took place in Tunis in December 1994 and left the declaration of principles and specific items in the operational basket without formal approval.

The lack of formal document belies the actual progress made in ACRS discussions; the flurry of activities discussed in this forum was unprecedented for the Mediterranean and Middle East. Moreover, the mere fact that Israeli and Arab officials interacted and exchanged views on security issues was in and of itself a confidence-building measure.

However, the ACRS depends on voluntary and therefore easily revocable commitments. Several key countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq and Iran have refused to join the ACRS; Syria and Lebanon will continue to remain outside this framework until a breakthrough in their bilateral negotiations with Israel. The most significant problem, however, has been the disagreement over the nuclear issue, which has led to an impasse in the talks.

(6) The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Summits

The World Economic Forum and the Council on Foreign Relations jointly organized in October 1994 a Middle East/North Africa Economic Conference in Casablanca. The Summit's objective was to create partnerships between the public and private sector and focus on immediate commercial opportunities and projects in the Middle East and North Africa. MENA Summits take place yearly. The creation of the MENA Development Bank (MENADB), one of the key institutions related to this initiative, was approved during the 1995 Amman Summit.

Though MENA Conferences are viewed by several participants as too closely associated with United States policy, they contribute to making the Mediterranean an economically coherent and integrated region. The MENA framework would encounter major opposition from European states if it sought a more substantive role in shaping regional economic policy. EU countries fear that the MENADB's activities would be dominated by the U.S. and would be biased towards Middle East projects to the detriment of North African investment needs. As a result, EU

States, including Germany, France and United Kingdom, have maintained that they will not participate in the MENA Bank.

3. Current situation of co-operation and dialogue in the mediterranean area

a. Aims obtained and confidence-building measures achieved

The multiple and diversified initiatives that were launched by various originators, sometimes in overlapping fields, have yielded results that need to be referred to their general and specific context in order to be thoroughly understood.

This is considered to be the most appropriate way to identify the driving and orienting indicators that will allow, in the medium-to-long term, to overcome the evident slackening which was recorded when the generally shared principles founding the initiatives were put into effect.

It is also to be noticed that a relatively short period of time has sometimes elapsed between the conception of the initiatives (i.e. both the EU's PEM and NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue were conceived in 1995). There are two reasons for this: in the first place initiatives are to be developed within the context of international relationships between sovereign States sometimes lacking institutional stability; secondly, the parties to co-operation and dialogue may have a different cultural approach to the issue. The pace of the results expected undoubtedly varies depending on the actors involved and should be compared with this different approach and implementation of the measures.

The slackening or the slow take off of the initiatives can be due to either structural or contingency factors:

Structural factors should be corrected through an organisational review requiring a long execution; these are the factors that most influence the successful accomplishment of the programme. Their resolution requires the approval and full agreement of all the parties involved.

Contingency factors, provided that they are not radicalised as a result of negligence or underestimation can be removed with specific and timely actions through the natural evolution of the situation or by temporarily setting aside subjects and aspects that are liable to have a negative impact on co-operation and dialogue. The development of the Arab-Israeli crisis is considered to be a primary contingency

factor influencing co-operation and dialogue due to its multiple consequences, namely political and religious. Any time this conflict/confrontation wanes, a change of trend in co-operation and dialogue in the Mediterranean area is recorded.

The main structural factors confining, limiting the scope of and sometimes restraining co-operation and dialogue are:

- Western approach to co-operation and dialogue

The West, and namely its highest-level institutions (OSCE, NATO, EU), has “discovered” the Southern coast of the Mediterranean quite recently (some 10 years ago) due to the considerable change of the geostrategic scenario. This marked a change in the course as opposed to the four previous decades. Besides, in the beginning, the initiative was unilateral (from north to south) and presented as an offer from those who had more interest in it. Only after a long time, a few signs of response could be seen. Any sense of subjection or dependence should disappear from relations between sovereign States. We must not forget the need felt by countries linked to the Southern Mediterranean area for the certainty that Western countries act without ulterior motives.

Bilateral relations with some countries are very good thanks to historical reasons and long-established contacts in specific sectors such as energy (Algeria, Libya, Tunisia). An initiative worth to be mentioned is the Symposium of Mediterranean and Black Sea Navies held every two years in Venice and hosted by the Italian Navy. There have been three such meetings and it deals with soft security: reduction of mutual interferences, rescue at sea, archaeological underwater research, improvement of lighthouse and maritime signalling system.

- Features of international and inter/trans-state organisations in Southern Mediterranean countries

Organisations such as NATO and the EU have undergone a long evolution. Similar organisations involving African countries, especially in the economic and mutual assistance sectors, do exist but for geopolitical and geostrategic reasons they are not so efficient and effective. Relations between their Member States are not so stable. Therefore, many initiatives underway are not successful and proceed at an irregular pace.

- Different perception of primary interests

Co-operation and dialogue partners may have different interests and priorities, therefore it is essential to identify common goals.

The peoples involved have different cultural and historical traditions as well as different living standards and markets. Market globalisation has different consequences in different parts of the world. As countries develop at different pace, interests are different. Therefore, structural reforms are needed on both sides.

- Co-operation and dialogue tasks are shared by the different actors
Tasks are shared among Western actors involved in co-operation and dialogue and they have different areas of action; that reflects the Western concept of specialisation which is at the basis of the development of organisations having specific tasks (for example NATO has great experience in the field of military organisation and planning, the EU has great experience in the economic, financial and free-trade field, etc.)

It is difficult to apply organisational models and procedures typical of some organisations to other organisations dealing with different contexts:

- Diversity
Euro-Atlantic organisations are composed of countries with similar but also different traditions and cultures and therefore having different perceptions and sensitivities. However, they have succeeded in developing successful mechanisms and strategies (in practical terms, they do not have a bi-multilateral approach but a common, collective approach).
- Influence of the US on Mediterranean affairs
The US, because of its importance on the world scene, does have an influence on Mediterranean affairs. The idea that the US may influence European decisions is a hindrance for the achievement of some important objectives of the Mediterranean dialogue and co-operation.

Despite the factors mentioned above, co-operation and dialogue have led to remarkable achievements and mutual confidence in the following fields:

- mutual understanding
This has been achieved thanks to joint regular meetings, exchange of visits and experiences, joint examination of issues of mutual interest.
- Education and training of personnel
This is the area where positive effects can be seen in the short and medium term.

- Joint and integrated participation in low intensity operations
Participation is still very limited but it is important. Conceptual interoperability must not be an obstacle to action and suitable operational assets are to be identified.
- Exchange of visits
- Soft-security activities
The results achieved so far are satisfactory.
- Granting of material and advice
Good results have been obtained. They have shown that both parties have been cooperative in order to achieve common goals.
- Economy
The resources made available by the EU have been only partially used. Measures are to be taken by donors and beneficiaries to improve the use of funds made available.
Within the context of co-operation and dialogue in the Mediterranean, initiatives where actors with a high degree of theoretical primacy are not involved are more likely to be successful. The actions undertaken need to be expanded.

b. Areas to be improved

In the light of the considerations above, the following areas have been identified where progress has to be made:

- Economy and finance (this is the first one to be considered as economic development. Is, in fact, a prerequisite for complete development).
Southern Mediterranean countries should be co-opted to become full partners in a free-trade zone. Its establishment, however, requires a change in the attitude of European and international decision-makers as well as of public opinions, which have to overcome taboos and stereotypes. Some examples are provided for clarification.
The substantial funds allocated to the MEDA programme were not meant to encourage European Investment Bank loans but to create an environment conducive to investments by private operators and private banks, to enhance confidence and to improve mutual understanding between Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries. In the early phases of the European initiative, many actions were started but, with time, progress has become less rapid than expected. Since the beginning,

the EU has imposed European technocratic rules and criteria which do not fit the purposes of a genuine partnership.

As an immediate consequence, banks, financial institutes, capital insurance companies, private companies, scientific and technological research institutes, academies and scholars have not been in the condition of playing an active role. On the grounds of transparency, equal opportunities, equal treatment and other things, they have been replaced by European multinational teams of advisors, experts, and specialists anxious about compliance with rules. Rules are certainly important, however, they must not be the aim but the means to make the Mediterranean basin an area of stability and shared prosperity.

If we look at economic and social indicators, we can conclude that the EuroMediterranean Partnership has had no real impact on the main trends. As a matter of fact European investments in the area amount to just about 1% of the total. Besides, only 5% of the total investments in the developing countries concern the Mediterranean. Just 8% of the foreign trade of the Southern Mediterranean countries concerns the area. Insurance companies continue to limit the ceiling of loans to insurable exports and to impose burdensome interests, while banks put aside up to 25% of their loans to Southern Mediterranean countries for lending at terms longer than 18 months. That trend will have to be reversed to let the initiative take off.

European authorities are considering the setting up of a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank as well as financial facilities to provide a stimulus to investments and activities enhancing mutual confidence and understanding:

- Mobilisation of civil society

Entrepreneurs, scholars, intellectuals and scientists have to exercise their influence on government actions;

- Legislation

The legislation of all partners, especially EU legislation, will have to be examined by all parties and reviewed to fit the targets to be achieved;

- Armed forces organisation and their control by civilian authorities

NATO's long experience in this field may be a valuable reference;

- Exchanges at cultural, educational and scientific level

Despite significant achievements, much progress has still to be done. Activities in this field are of great consequence for the future. Partnership in social,

cultural and human affairs should be virtually unlimited. The costs of those activities should be borne by those parties having the greatest interest in exchanges, education and training;

- Exchange of regular visits

These activities have to be increased as they help overcoming cultural barriers and wrong beliefs due to lack of mutual understanding;

- Joint participation in PSO/CRO and actions against terrorism and fundamentalism
The participation of military and non military units of Southern Mediterranean countries in PK operations has been fully successful. These activities should be increased as they contribute to mutual confidence and understanding and represent a valuable experience for those involved;

- Mitigation of the negative impact of globalisation on non-Western countries
This is something difficult to achieve. It demands joint action and participation by the entire Western world. Some fear that the US would be assigned a leading role, but that would not necessarily be the case. Considering the amount of Euro-African GNPs, other options are possible. There are no ready solutions. Therefore, the issue remains on the table for further consideration;

- Greater visibility of equal opportunities for co-operation

It is self-explaining;

- Countering illegal financial transactions

The European relevant organisation has received great impetus from factor "911" and has become very reliable and effective. The operational connection and real-time interchange with its Mediterranean counterparts is a key factor for success;

- Evolution to a partnership based on the model of the NATO PfP

There aren't relevant conceptual and practical obstacles to the evolution of the dialogue into a partnership with certain Mediterranean Countries;

- Extension of co-operation and dialogue to neighbouring areas

This is a sensitive issue which may cause friction and slow down the pace of certain activities. It is, however, essential, otherwise the political effects would be limited in scope;

- Equal treatment of all participants

All actors of co-operation and dialogue have to participate on an equal basis.

4. Future, possible co-operation initiatives

To conclude, EuroMediterranean co-operation is continuing but more progress can be made in many areas. Co-operation initiatives originated at diplomatic, economic, social, cultural and military level should be more focused in order to optimize resources and better achieve the defined goals. Some co-operation activities are also possible in the military field.

a. No competition between EU and NATO

Two risks exist: the first one is an unwelcome competition between the Barcelona process and the NATO mediterranean dialogue. The goal and the scope of each are not the same (twelve countries vs seven, global approach vs security). The second risk being that the Southern Mediterranean Partners take advantage of a dual process, competing each other in the exploitation of the process deemed more effective. It is essential that governments take this into account and emphasize the fact that the two processes have to be complementary.

Moreover, a “short step by short step” approach is mandatory to avoid backlashes from the international situation (e.g. the Middle East peace process). This will allow a bottom-up building of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. The general european attitude must be of pragmatism, flexibility, modesty and perseverance.

b. Encouraging mutual understanding

Europe has a reductive perception of herself: Europe believes she has reduced military assets and is lacking an effective and clear Common Foreign and Security Policy. The reason for that feeling is that the US is generally its term of comparison. On the other hand, EU diplomatic strategy still has some difficulties in electing the Maghreb conflict as of high priority to soften dialogue and co-operation within this region.

It is to be considered, however, that Southern Mediterranean countries see Europe just like how Europe sees the US. During the recent meeting between the Italian CASD and its Tunisian counterpart held in TUNIS it was evident that in the perspective of Southern Mediterranean countries there is a wide gap between the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries: Northern countries are rich,

advanced, equipped with modern weapons and well organised while Southern countries are poor, backward, unarmed and disorganised.

It was also clear that southern countries do not like being considered as “producers of illegal immigrants”. They feel they are accused of being responsible for drug trafficking, illegal trafficking and illegal immigration; but they also ask: where is drug consumed? Who launders illegal money? Who exploits illegal labour? Briefly, trafficking requires at least two parties.

It is also time to draft the EuroMediterranean Charter for Rights and Security that has long been called for. In the meantime, it is possible and mandatory to improve mutual understanding even in the military field. For this purpose, the attendance of courses in military training institutes is very important.

It appears necessary that our southern partners be aware of their lack of collective organisation on security matters. A south to south dialogue would be most helpful and effective. In other words, a NEPAD-type spirit (the New Partnership for African Development created by a common continental-size african initiative) has to be fostered.

In this regard, initiatives and proposals coming from our southern partners should be stimulated and encouraged.

EU should start joint approaches to Maghreb countries in order to establish bilateral agreements, with a medium term perspective, aimed to the construction of a legal frame for South-North migrations, based on Northern capacities and Southern possibilities.

c. Encouraging the participation of MENA countries in CRO

PK and CR operations are likely to be frequent in the foreseeable future, not only in the Balkans but also anywhere necessary also to face the new challenges posed by terrorism. In that perspective, it is important to encourage the participation of Middle-Eastern and North-African military contingents in the response to crises that will be managed by the European Union, as is the case of Operation “Amber Fox” in Macedonia.

d. Co-operation in the field of Euroforces

Our four countries established some years ago two successful Euroforces: a land one (Eurofor) and a naval one (Euromarfor). Those two multinational organisations

might also be employed in co-operation with North-African and Middle-Eastern countries. Any joint exercises with troops or command post exercises, exchange of visits and similar activities might help mutual understanding and acquiring common procedures. It would be helpful to go beyond the mere participation of southern observers. Systematic invitation of southern forces at unit level (company, naval unit, ...) should be sought after, for mutual knowledge and understanding purposes.

e. Exporting the multinational force formula

Multinational forces help to reduce conflictuality and to normalize relations between countries which have not always been in good relations. It is proved that if two countries have a common military training it is very unlikely that they come to fight. Considering the success of those initiatives, that are multiplying in Europe, why not exporting this successful formula to North Africa and the Middle East where there are no such forces? The creation of units including forces of MENA countries and of Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries would certainly strengthen confidence building measures and improve relations.

f. Intensifying co-operation between study institutes

Success can also be obtained in the co-operation between the Institutes of High Defence Studies (like ours) of Northern Mediterranean countries with their Southern Mediterranean counterparts, at bilateral and multilateral level.

g. Contribution to the resolution of the Middle East crisis

One last thing about the Middle East crisis. Although the solution to the crisis can only be political, military institutions could also contribute to the success of political and diplomatic efforts using those tools (meetings, visits, conferences, workshops, courses, etc.) that enhance confidence among parties.