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### The European Union, security and the southern dimension

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## The European Union, security and the southern dimension

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With the coming into force of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the European Union (EU) announced what one could term an ‘inclusionist approach’ to security whereby this policy framework was based on supposedly joint commitments by all parties concerned to ‘cooperative security’. However, EU actions on the ground in the south have shown that, despite good intentions, such cooperative security endeavours have, thus far, hardly materialised. The result instead is an ‘exclusionist’ policy, where the reduction of illegal migration from the south takes top priority in EU security discourse. Post-9/11, in the policy area of ‘counter-terrorism’ measures, the EU likewise demarcates ‘liberal zones of civilisation’ from ‘illiberal’ ones, leaving the dirty work of counter terrorism to countries such as Egypt and Morocco. In terms of governmentality, this may be described as a ‘surveillance and control’ approach to security: therefore, it is argued here that the EU, through its governance model, is actually enabling further in-security and in-stability in the south.

**Keywords:** Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; European Neighbourhood Policy; The Union for the Mediterranean; cooperative security; inclusionist policy; exclusionist policy

This article traces the formulation of the European Union’s (EU) security governance vis-à-vis the southern dimension, in European terms, through multilateral/regional (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the more recent Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)) and bilateral policies (the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)). Through the use of discourse analysis, EU documents are thoroughly examined to highlight the EU’s own perceptions on security (and stability) and how, in EU discourse, security in its southern neighbourhood is *prima facie* linked up with security within European borders. The article also draws upon the author’s field research in Brussels, Morocco, Egypt and Palestine. The EU tends to treat the littoral states of the Mediterranean in a monolithic way, making very little differentiation between the states of the southern neighbourhood in terms of their internal politics or susceptibility to EU policies – normative or material (Pace 2006). Put shortly, EU policy towards the south is informed, at least partially, by the idea that ‘our size fits all’. The article therefore discusses the region in the manner in which it is conceived of by the EU.

With the coming into force of the EMP, the EU announced what one could term an ‘inclusionist approach’ to security whereby this policy framework was based on

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supposedly joint commitments by all parties concerned to ‘cooperative security’. However, EU actions on the ground in the south have shown that, despite good intentions, such cooperative security endeavours have, thus far, hardly materialised. What we end up with instead is an ‘exclusionist’ policy, where the reduction of illegal migration from the south takes top priority in EU security discourse. Post-9/11, in the policy area of ‘counter-terrorism’ measures, the EU likewise demarcates ‘liberal zones of civilisation’ from ‘illiberal’ ones, leaving the dirty work of counter terrorism to countries such as Egypt and Morocco. In terms of governmentality, this may be described as a ‘surveillance and control’ approach to security: therefore, it is argued here that the EU, through its governance model, is actually enabling further insecurity and in-stability in the south.

Likewise, within the context of the ENP, the EU’s official discourse is about establishing a ‘ring of well-governed states’ in its southern neighbouring areas, but its actual policies of supporting the status quo – through the continued presence of authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean – indicate a policy in reality of favouring a ‘ring of states governed under the firm grip of these regimes’. The EU thus ignores the growing struggles and protests against regimes in the MENA region with the resulting and increasing local instability and spill over effects into Europe itself, which include the reactions of migrant populations within European countries. Thus, the article highlights how the EU’s framing of its security logic vis-à-vis the south has undermined any potential of it becoming an effective, global, peace and security actor. Any discursive utterance from Brussels in regard to a ‘postmodern’ approach to security increasingly proves to be an empty gesture. The EU cannot possibly be a credible foreign policy actor in the security area. Current EU policy towards the south in the security domain requires a clear vision and a sustainable, forward-looking strategy: radical symbols in the MENA call for radical answers from the EU’s side in terms of bold and decisive moves.

### **Identifying the European Union’s (EU) security logics vis-à-vis the south**

During the 1990s, with the onset of the end of the cold war, the EU sets itself the ambitious goal of establishing a strong Common Foreign Policy to enable it to effectively face the challenges brought about by the new global environment. The collapse of communism at the end of the 1980s, the reunification of Germany, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the threat of international terrorism brought about geopolitical changes that EU leaders could not ignore. The new international context thus prompted the creation and development of EU formal instruments of diplomacy and intervention in the form of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the Amsterdam Treaty (1997). Rather than merely consulting one another with a view to cooperating on major international policy issues as they had done since 1970 under the European Political Cooperation (EPC) framework,<sup>1</sup> member states now had the means to project the EU’s values across the globe as a whole as well as the instruments to respond to crises that confronted the EU at its doorstep. The events that took place in the former Yugoslavia, in such close proximity of the EU, brought about a wake-up call of the EU’s potential security challenges, just in its neighbourhood. The new ‘external relations’ thrust took place along two fronts: the EU’s southern Mediterranean region and the northern region. In the Mediterranean, the EU’s logic underpinning this new enthusiasm in the form

of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)<sup>2</sup> meant that the organisation now had to protect its external borders by keeping out various ‘dangers’ including illegal migration, terrorism and crime emanating from the south. EU relations with the region to the south were thereby framed from the beginning by security concerns. This new policy stance was the inverse of the EU’s integration process which seeks to remove internal borders within the Union.

This securitisation logic was very clearly laid out in the EU’s 1995 policy initiative towards the south, namely the EMP (Barcelona Declaration 1995).<sup>3</sup> In order to achieve its stated objectives of illegal migration management in particular, the EU adopted a strategy that it termed a ‘Partnership’ with the Mediterranean Non-member Countries (MNCs). According to its formulators, this approach sought to provide a framework where the MNCs and the EU could work as full and equal partners towards achieving mutually beneficial goals (an inclusionist approach). Managing illegal migration from the south to the EU meant that the Mediterranean had to be ‘governed’ so as to flourish in terms of trade, prosperity and peace which would in turn create jobs and a sense of security in the south, thus ensuring that migrants would not seek to leave the southern borders for better prospects in Europe (an exclusionist approach).<sup>4</sup>

In order to achieve these stated goals, the EMP was structured along three main pillars: the political and security pillar (for the establishment of a common area of peace and stability, that is, political security), the economic and financial pillar (aimed at the creation of an area of shared prosperity, that is, economic security) and the social, cultural and human pillar (with the objective of developing human resources and understanding between cultures, that is, human and social security). Under the first pillar, an EU–Mediterranean political dialogue was to be established, in order to achieve the specific objectives of fighting organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Under the second, economic pillar, the EU and its southern partners agreed to set-up a Mediterranean Free Trade Area by the year 2010 in order to create job opportunities and prosperity for the people in the southern region. The third social pillar was aimed at developing human resources in the Mediterranean through various exchange programmes between Europe and the south in an effort to reduce migratory pressures via improved educational and training systems, the control of demographic growth rates and a concerted fight against racism, intolerance and xenophobia (Pace 2006).

However, the southern partners have not always met the expectations of the EU to the full and often EU officials have expressed their disappointment and frustration in this respect. This is particularly the case in the area of economic security measures, that is, sub-regional economic integration (see Vasconcelos and Joffe 2000, pp. 3–6, Gillespie 2003, pp. 22–36). There are various reasons that EU officials flag for the lack of economic cooperation between southern partners: first, the lack of diversification in the actual products they produce. In fact, most Mediterranean neighbouring countries compete on very similar agricultural products. Secondly, according to EU officials, and as quoted above, there is a huge lack of mutual trust among Arab Mediterranean partners, which leads to a lack of cohesion, unity and coordination among the different sub-regional groupings in economic integration efforts such as the Agadir Process.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons for this may be that although the concept of *Partnership* calls for joint planning and goal setting, the reality is that objectives and priorities on the part

of Mediterranean neighbours may have been different from those of the EU: in other words, the EMP has not been able to offer southern partners an *equal* voice and in practice they have been largely excluded from decision-making processes. One major concern for the Mediterranean Arab partners is the lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) front where the EU is often criticised for acting as a lame duck: an ineffective, unconvincing and inconsistent external actor.

Southern partners also agree that although the EU is trying hard to offer its Mediterranean neighbours alternatives to EU membership through association agreements and to help them become more stable, secure and prosperous, it does not offer strong enough incentives to its southern neighbouring countries, thus making its policy ineffective. According to one interviewee this could possibly be because the EU remains suspicious of southern partners' real agenda:

There are forces in the south who have their own ideas about how political change can come about here. We have our own development plans and how to attract foreign investments but the EU suffers from a legacy of its colonial period in this region: it remains suspicious of certain groups in the south who are trying to bring about change here. So it sticks to the status quo and continues to support the usual suspects, without offering any incentives for the real shakers and movers in southern neighbouring states. (Dr Saad Eddin Ibrahim, author's interview, 6 March 2008; see also Grabbe 2004)

Another major concern of southern partners is that the EU's discourse about creating a Free Trade Area by 2010 does not grant Mediterranean neighbours greater access to its vast internal market, to include in particular agricultural products as well as easier passage for travellers to cross borders. They also agree that in light of these southern partners' wishes, the EU should set more consistent and clearer conditions for countries wishing to gain such benefits from their relations with the EU (Moroccan Foreign Ministry officials, Rabat, Morocco, April 2002; Palestinian officials from the PLO, Ramallah, Palestine, September 2007 and November 2009 and Egyptian foreign ministry officials, Cairo, Egypt, March 2008 and October 2009).

In fact, the EU's lack of global actorness in the south, particularly in the highly politicised Palestinian issue, has been described by observers in the region as complicit in the making of further insecurity and instability in the Mediterranean.

This furthering of insecurity from the south has been exacerbated following the events of 9/11 and the US led 'counter-terrorism' strategy, which EU member states were quick at adopting. As Ralph (2009) argues, although it is difficult to conclude how far European governments have been complicit in the 'extraordinary rendition' programmes,<sup>6</sup> in terms of surveillance and control mechanisms it can be argued that, just like the USA, the EU, through its involvement in such programmes, ends up demarcating 'liberal zones of civilisation' from 'illiberal' ones, leaving the dirty work of counter terrorism to countries such as Egypt and Morocco. The extent of these 'cooperative security measures' play very well in the hands of authoritarian regimes in the south who use the counter-terrorism discourse to silence their abhorrent violations of human rights against any dissenting voices, critical of their regimes (Ralph 2009).

With the launching of the ENP in 2003–2004, EU security, economic and political interests remained a clear priority in the envisaged relation with its neighbours. With the EU sets to encompass ten new member states from Central and Eastern Europe and the two Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta through the 2004 'big bang' enlargement process, the EU once again sought to externalise its governance structures



by establishing the 2003 ENP as its primary instrument for doing so<sup>7</sup>: the securitisation discourse was thus carried forward in an effort to maintain its neighbouring borders, to the east and to the south, as safe and secure as possible from perceived external threats and risks such as cross-border criminal activity, illegal immigration arising from the new neighbours to the east, environmental degradation and economic crisis (Smith 2005, Gänzle 2006, Johansson-Nogue 2007, Pace (forthcoming)). Thus, at first, the fact that southern Mediterranean countries were not included in this new strategy did not seem odd given that they were not exactly 'new' neighbours (not least in the context of the EMP, which had already been in existence for roughly six years). The ENP's policy formulation process, however, proceeded from late 2001 in the context of 9/11 and the ensuing 'war on terrorism'. Moreover, the outbreak of the second intifada in late 2000 left Europeans soul searching for ways to improve relations with their Mediterranean neighbouring partners. Given the criticisms raised with regard to the EU's Barcelona process, the differentiated logic underpinning the ENP appeared to fit well with the EU's vision for the south 'to work with the partners to reduce poverty and create an area of shared prosperity and values' (Commission of the European Communities 2003, p. 9). Thus, EU policy towards the Mediterranean shifted from what I have referred to as 'normative regionalism' to 'normative bilateralism' (Pace 2007), or, in other words, the EU's security governance shifted towards a preference for bilateral means but collective (that is, democracy promotion) ends.

Thus, within the context of the ENP, the EU's official discourse is about establishing a 'ring of well-governed states' in its southern neighbouring areas but its actual policies of supporting the status quo – through the continued presence of authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean (see Fürtig 2007) – indicate a policy in reality of favouring a 'ring of states governed under the firm grip of these regimes'. President Mubarak of Egypt for instance is an exemplary 'liberalised autocrat' who has developed political tactics which suit external actors such as the USA and the EU in their counter-terrorism efforts.

A good example of such tactics is the regime's handling of bloggers. Wael Abbas, one of Egypt's top bloggers and an anti-torture activist, has published a number of videos on his website revealing the harsh nature of Egyptian police tactics. The government responded by harassing Wael and his family in an effort to force his silence. After he had attended a conference in Beirut in November 2009, Abbas was sentenced to six months in prison in absentia. In February 2010, he was found not guilty by a Cairo court. The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), one of Egypt's leading pro-freedom of expression organisations summarised the regime's tactics as a case that 'strongly bears a manipulation of law' (Mayton 2010). In the case of another Egyptian blogger, Ahmed Mostafa,<sup>8</sup> the ANHRI denounced the court's withholding of relevant evidence and of assigning Mostafa, the first blogger to be tried by a military panel, a team of government-affiliated lawyers. Human Rights Watch insists that writing that exposes corruption is protected under Egypt's international obligations. Article 9 of the African Convention on Human and People's Rights, and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both ratified by Egypt, require Egypt to protect freedom of expression. Egypt has arrested and detained other bloggers for acts protected by freedom of expression. The Egyptian Government had 'made a commitment before parliament to use the emergency law only for terrorism and

drug-related crimes and it has only implemented the rules of the emergency law in these cases' (Human Rights Watch 2010).

The EU thus ignores the growing struggles and protests against regimes in the MENA region with the resulting and increasing local instability and spill over effects into Europe itself, including the reactions of migrant populations within European countries (see Norval and Abdulrahman (forthcoming)).

The ENP is highly focused on bilateral (in sharp contrast to the EMP's multilateral, cooperative and intra-regional) relations. Related to this point is the emphasis in ENP documentation (Commission of the European Communities 2003) on the EU's ambitions to exert more moral influence in world politics and to achieve peaceful change through the export of norms and values (Manners 2002, p. 235). I have already argued elsewhere that the ENP's bilateral, individual, benchmarking approach is problematic as it impacts on other areas of potential EU influence.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the ENP compromises the EU's role as a supposedly even-handed broker in the MEPP. As EU–Israeli relations developed since the launching of the ENP and continue to do so towards a very special partnership falling just short of EU membership, but with Israel's eventual integration into the EU's internal market, the future of EU–Mediterranean bilateral relations at large have become disconnected from the fate of Middle East peacemaking. This is especially so because the EU's other tracks for its involvement in the MEPP such as its role within the Quartet have proven very weak (Pace 2007). According to the Council Joint Action 2005/889/CFSP of 12 December 2005, establishing a EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EU BAM Rafah) (Official Journal of the European Union 2005):

[T]he European Union, as part of the Quartet, is committed to assisting and facilitating the implementation of the Roadmap, which lays out reciprocal steps by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority in the political, security, economic, humanitarian, and institution-building fields, that will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

The Middle East Quartet (EU, UN, Russian Federation and the USA) represents the EU's attempt at conflict resolution within a multilateral context. The EU's border assistance role in the context of the EU BAM Rafah has been overshadowed by the realities on the ground. Although the EU's deployment was rapid and set a precedent in terms of EU involvement in a highly sensitive area, and following an initial period of monitoring, the mission has been relatively stuck in the face of the closure of the border crossing point from June 2006 by the Israelis (see Bulut 2009, EU Council Secretariat 2009). Moreover, since Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the EU's mission has been left on standby. The case of the EUBAM Rafah calls for a thorough examination of the EU's limitations in fulfilling one of its key roles as part of the Quartet, in this case of its mission's mandate and raises questions about the EU's third party role in this conflict. In practice, the mission's deployment and arrangements have further fractured the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Palestinian body politic. Under the Agreed Principles for Rafah Crossing Point (APRC), the crossing cannot be opened without the consent of the Israelis, even though, according to Javier Solana, it is 'not controlled by the Israelis' (Morrison

2008). Although the EU's efforts carry symbolic importance, its operational impact remains void as long as it continues to treat Israel differently and unless the EU reinforces international legal obligations on the occupying force particularly in this instance which entails the free movement of people across crossings.

Moreover, the Quartet's special envoy, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his role as mediator, not only lacks authority but also accesses to the key protagonists in the Middle East context: the EU has consciously decided to cut-off official ties with the elected Hamas government since it came to power following the January 2006 Palestinian elections. Now that EU policy-makers are themselves questioning the EU's approach to the conflict particularly since 2006, they are finding themselves in a very difficult position to engage in a dialogue with an organisation which only a short while ago, they condemned as dangerous (and Hamas is still on the EU list of terrorist organisations).

On the issue of the Quartet conditions imposed on Hamas, EU officials now agree, albeit in private, that it is high time for a re-evaluation, especially in regard to the recognition of Israel:

Well, I mean, in the next few weeks/months perhaps there will be another Palestinian Unity Government. Hamas will be present somehow or other, whether directly or indirectly. I think this time, we will find that the EU wants to be more pragmatic – Well, not unconditionally. There will be some conditions perhaps but I think there will be – again this is my personal view – but I think there will be some more flexibility, there will be a more practical approach. And it will also be as a result of the recognition of the fact that there was a failure in our past approach – we did impose an unnecessary obstacle on ourselves. . . (EU official from the Policy Unit of the High Representative, Task Force Middle East & Mediterranean, Council of the European Union, author's interview, 2 April 2009, Brussels)

Overall, however, the EU's role within the Quartet remains highly questionable given that the Quartet, thus far, led by the USA, does not seem ready to impose a solution on the parties to the conflict.

In terms of governance of the south, the main step for implementation of the objectives set by the ENP partners was laid out through Action Plans: key political documents for the further development of the EU's relations with its neighbours on a bilateral basis. Rhetorically, these Action Plans seek to address previous criticisms in regard to the lack of ownership of southern partners of the EMP which was offered to them as a *fait accompli* by the EU. Thus, at the surface, the ENP is yet another inclusionist strategy. In practice, the challenge for the EU, however, remains how to put pressure on Mediterranean governments to aim for 'common values' (in particular democratic reforms) when these governments view such norms as threatening their own hold on power. It is notable that ENP Action Plans lack clear strategies, procedures and timetables required to entice these governments to develop domestic institutions and their own will and commitment towards the enhancement of their people's economic, social and political lives. The EU remains somewhat trapped between its emphasis on 'intensified political and cultural relations, enhanced cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention between the EU and its neighbours' (Commission of the European Communities 2003, p. 9) and the ideal of associating southern partners in their own time. The lack of vision on the *finalité* of the ENP project is particularly noteworthy, as well as the regatta-type of



competition that the ENP created where each neighbouring country goes it alone to try and get as special a deal as possible with the EU in terms of closer relations stopping short of EU membership (Pace 2007). The ENP has thus alienated any idea of cooperative efforts from the part of the southern partners and is in practice yet another exclusionist policy. In attempting to 'normalise' EU–Mediterranean relations through various references to shared norms and values in ENP documents, power is at play. In Gramscian terms, a normative power/hegemon defines what is normal as well as those that must be 'normed' (Forgacs 2000). Although the EU does not have the capability to affect domestic constitutional outcomes in the southern periphery, the logic behind the EU's new ENP strategy may be read as an attempt by the EU to encourage its neighbours to come to understand and emulate the ideas underlying its structural power (Caporaso 1978, Galtung 1989), or in other words, to have the EU as a model of the norms and values that should be emulated. The EU is therefore not engaged in questioning what a shared interpretation of 'common values' entails. The strong belief held amongst EU actors that southern neighbours can emulate the EU's norms is in turn dressed up in the ENP's proclaimed ambitions with regard to conflict resolution and political change in autocratic regimes. The power of discourse on the role of norms is understood to do the job. It is assumed that if partners can become more like the EU (in terms of the norms it supposedly upholds), then they can empower their domestic agents and institutions to move along the pace of reforms as they deem appropriate. Thus, the capabilities of neighbouring states are presumed to develop through (EU) norm emulation. The EU remains the exclusive generator of norms and the sole agent who defines and maintains this norm structure in EU–Mediterranean relations (Pace 2007). Reality has shown that over seven years since the launching of the ENP, the situation in terms of norm emulation is far from a developed one in the southern neighbourhood of the EU. Moreover, there is a danger that the EU ends up with a quagmire: if it acts too assertively in exporting its norms it is condemned for neo-colonialism rather than applauded for spreading European norms of governance.

In 2007, President Sarkozy of France acknowledged that the EMP/Barcelona Process had failed in its main objective of bringing about prosperity, security and political reform as outlined in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995. Sarkozy went further arguing that although the EMP and the ENP must be continued, he insisted that these two EU policies for the southern region were not sufficient mechanisms to construct a strong Mediterranean neighbourhood for the EU.

Although EU and Mediterranean officials agree that there is now a sporadic spread of fora on Euro-Mediterranean relations, they insist that what is needed is rather less fora, less frequent meetings (at high level) and more concentrated encounters on a specific theme with the involvement of specific European and Mediterranean actors (European and Mediterranean officials, interviews in Palestine, September 2007, Egypt in March 2008, Brussels during March and April 2009 and Malta during April 2009).

Thus, the 'Mediterranean Union' was launched by France in 2008 during the French Presidency of the EU making it the most recent attempt by the EU at 'securing' its southern Mediterranean neighbourhood. It was eventually called the UfM.<sup>10</sup> The logic behind the UfM appears to be what one author refers to as a strategy of 'rational pragmatism' – an acknowledgement of the realities, obstacles, constraints and challenges in the Mediterranean and a reflection of policy learning from the part of the French President (Chater 2009). However, there remained a

major concern. In light of the increasing securitisation of the Mediterranean especially since the events of 9/11, the creation of the Barcelona Process: UfM overshadowed principled issues of the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy in the Southern Mediterranean. Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism legislation had, since 9/11 intensified at the expense of civic liberties (Schumacher 2008).

In a seemingly response to this criticism, yet another new club of regional and local officials from European, North African and Middle Eastern countries called 'Arlem' (The Association Regionale et Locale Euro-Méditerranée) was launched (as part of the more grand Mediterranean Union) on 21 January 2010 in Barcelona. This project is designed to build bridges with Maghreb and Mashreq people (thus broadening EU policy towards its southern neighbourhood) and to foster cooperation between local authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea by offering members access to EU funds for 'democracy-building' projects, as well as energy and environmental projects. The Spanish Presidency of 2010 was very keen to have Arlem as an instrument to boost the EU–Mediterranean regional dimension, as originally envisioned within the Barcelona Process (EMP), and also keen to win back the EU's positive image in the south, via some tangible results from the organisation's efforts: 'The Euro-Mediterranean Union is a great priority of the Spanish presidency. But if we want practical and tangible results, we must take into account regional and local authorities when constructing this space' (quoted in Pop 2010).

Thus, Arlem has even more ambitious ideas such as tackling international problems but particularly those emanating from the south, namely the Israeli-Palestinian dispute as well as that between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, in terms of governmentality, one can detect an acknowledgement over the decades of EU–Mediterranean relations of the need to focus on concrete projects, and more importantly on actions rather than rhetoric. Yet, although the UfM, rooted in the idea of a union of projects, may respond to the expectations of some Mediterranean partner governments, especially those who desire closer bilateral relations with the EU (including Israel, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia), it fails to address the hopes for change of the people in the Mediterranean (Driss 2009). Challenges also remain amongst Mediterranean partners with the emergence of 'negotiated self-governance'. The structure of the UfM is based on a shared presidency between EU member states and southern partners, the aim being to increase co-ownership of the process (inclusionist approach) and to give it more political authority via regular summits to be held every two years (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, EurActiv 2009). While this is routine work for EU member states which have existing mechanisms that allow for a coordinated position of all 27 (the EU President is appointed by rotation), Southern Mediterranean partners do not have a similar facility at their disposal (the non-EU President is selected by consensus). There is therefore always the possibility that such ideals are disrupted by Arab partners' refusal to have an Israeli President or Arab opposition to a particular non-EU President representing all the southern members. Furthermore, the prescribed summits have been stalled since the Israeli incursion into Gaza of December 2008–January 2009 (so-called Operation Cast Lead). The EU has since been struggling to elaborate an effective and joint response to a vicious conflict which erupted on its southern periphery. This event raised sobering questions about the EU's supposed global actorness in conflict management (Emerson *et al.* 2009).

Egypt, the southern partner sharing the co-presidency with France at the time, deferred all UfM activities – rather than taking a leadership role and availing Arab states from an institutional opportunity offered by the UfM policy. Moreover, the government of President Hosni Mubarak was highly criticised across the Arab Mediterranean region in regard to its handling of the Gaza crisis. Egypt kept its Rafah border with Gaza mostly closed from late December 2008 (when Israel launched its 22-day incursion into Gaza that killed about 1300 Palestinians). Thus, although UfM summits are supposed to have more clout because of the presence of heads of state and government, at a very high, political level, these fora are very far away from the realities experienced by Mediterranean societies.

### Conclusion

This article has attempted to briefly cover EU security governance of its southern neighbourhood since the launching of its regional project in the form of the EMP in 1995, through to the bilateral framework of the ENP launched in 2003 and its more recent governance structure in the form of the UfM.

With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, the establishment of a European External Action Service (EEAS) is well under way, but not without any challenges. The key objective of the EEAS was declared in the Presidency Report of October 2009 which stipulates that:

The scope of the EEAS should allow the HR (the Union's First High Representative) to fully carry out his/her mandate as defined in the Treaty. To ensure the consistency and better coordination of the Union's external action, the EEAS should also assist the President of the European Council and the President as well as the Members of the Commission in their respective functions in the area of external relations as well as closely cooperate with the Member States. (See Council of the European Union 2009)

The EEAS is thereby intended as a diplomatic corps that will oversee not only the EU's huge aid and humanitarian budget but also relations with countries around the world. With the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy (who is also a European Commission Vice-President) at its head, the EEAS is aimed at providing the EU with a unique institution which facilitates coordination between all the various EU foreign policy actors. Catherine Ashton was named the first High Representative shortly before the Treaty came into force and it is one of her main tasks to draw up the structure of the new institution. Following the recent Haiti earthquake Ashton chaired a meeting of foreign policy actors across the Commission, Council and member states with the aim of having a coordinated EU response to the disaster. Observers have noted this meeting as the first act of the external action service (Rettman 2010).

However, there have already been some worrying signals from some member states who are keener in taking a leadership role in certain foreign and security policy/external relations areas than focus on effectiveness of the EU as a whole when implementing the Treaty. For example, in an attempt to set-up a Secretariat General for the UfM, the French Government called an ad hoc meeting of a selection of Foreign Ministers from this structure – namely those from France, Spain and Egypt – thereby pre-empting any action by the new, post-Lisbon EU Foreign Policy authorities (Agence Europe 16 December 2009). Thus, member states' national

self-interests remain triumphant over notions such as merit or efficiency of the EU as a whole. Thus, there is little reason to expect the EU, now almost armed with its new post-Lisbon institutions, to be a more coherent and effective global actor. On matters of Foreign and Security Policy, the Council and the Commission remain at odds with each other and it will be very difficult for one person alone, in the role of High Representative of the EEAS, to bridge the gap between these two institutions (Menon 2010). Similarly, Catherine Ashton cannot simply ensure a unified EU position for a political solution backed by the required political will on enduring conflicts in the Middle East, such as the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The irony is that while all member states wish the EU to gain a solid reputation and strong international role, they do not seem willing to work through the EU to enjoy such a designation as a collective. If Lisbon is to deliver any substantial results than all current 27 member states need to take on their own individual responsibility to enable the EU to truly have a say in international politics, especially in challenging contexts such as those in the southern neighbourhood. Mediterranean partners, on their part, cannot take the EU seriously before it starts acting as a collective, united and credible global partner. If the EU wants to be taken seriously in the southern neighbourhood and to have a tangible impact, it needs to learn that discursive practices about the right things or in normative language are no substitute for taking the right kind of action (which may include tough decisions on sanctions, for example, in cases of violations of human rights or state terrorism). No policy area better illustrates this EU preference for such discursive practices over action than the EU's security governance of the south thus far! Any discursive utterance from Brussels in regard to a 'postmodern' approach to security therefore increasingly proves to be an empty gesture. The EU does face a set of conflicting goals – normative and material – that resist a clear rank ordering but it cannot possibly be a credible foreign policy actor in the security area if it continues with the status quo. Current EU policy towards the south in the security domain requires a clear vision and a sustainable, forward-looking strategy: radical symbols in the MENA call for radical answers from the EU's side in terms of bold and decisive moves.

## Notes

1. The EPC was introduced in 1970 and was the synonym for *EU* foreign policy coordination until it was superseded by the *CFSP* in the *Maastricht Treaty* (November 1993).
2. The *CFSP* was established under the 1992 *Maastricht Treaty*, which entered into force in 1993, and was strengthened under the 1997 *Amsterdam Treaty*, which entered into force in 1999.
3. The Euro-Mediterranean Conference was held on 27–28 November 1995 in Barcelona.
4. This does not, however, imply any contradiction since, if borders are to have any meaning, the EU should be able to differentiate between legal and illegal immigration. So the EU seeks to eradicate borders within the EU (ever closer union) while preserving the integrity of external borders.
5. The Agadir Declaration was signed in May 2001 and the Agadir Agreement was concluded on 25 February 2004. This Free Trade Agreement between Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco has been envisaged as a crucial step towards the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area by 2010 (see European Union 2006).
6. Extraordinary rendition and/or irregular rendition programmes are terms used to describe the apprehension and extrajudicial transfer of a person from one state to another. Some critics use the concept 'torture by proxy' to describe situations in which the USA has purportedly transferred suspected terrorists to countries known to employ harsh



interrogation techniques that may rise to the level of torture. The US programmes prompted several official investigations in Europe into alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers involving Council of Europe member states. A June 2006 report from the Council of Europe (2006) estimated that approximately 100 people had been kidnapped by the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on EU territory (with the cooperation of Council of Europe members), and rendered to other countries, often after having transited through secret detention centres (black sites) used by the CIA, some sited in Europe. According to a separate European Parliament (2007) report, the CIA has conducted 1245 flights, many of them to destinations where suspects could face torture, in violation of Article 3 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture (1984). A large majority of the European Parliament endorsed the report's conclusion that many member states tolerated illegal actions of the CIA and criticised several European governments and intelligence agencies for their unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation. Within days of his inauguration, President Obama signed an Executive Order opposing rendition torture and establishing a task force to provide recommendations about processes to prevent rendition torture (see Johnston 2009).

7. Initially aimed at the new neighbours to the east of the EU's enlarged borders, the ENP eventually incorporated the Mediterranean neighbours to the south (Commission of the European Communities 2003).
8. Ahmed Mostafa is a 20-year-old engineering student at Kafr el-Sheikh University. He posted a blog entry about an alleged corruption case at a military school in February 2009, in which a student was arbitrarily dismissed in order to make room for another applicant. On 25 February, Ahmed Mostafa was arrested in front of his university on the orders of Egypt's Military Prosecutor and was detained for four days before being sent to trial at a military court on 1 March. He has been charged under Law 113/1956 of the Penal Code, which prohibits the publication of secret information concerning the Armed Forces (see Attalah 2010).
9. This is not to say that the EU's assumption that improvement in each country will produce improvement in the region is wrong. According to the EU, the desired changes are 'internal' to these states 'domestic constitutional system/s while these states are exclusionist in the sense of jealousy guarding their sovereignty'. This makes it difficult for the EU to have a basis upon which to reward or punish these states in terms of aid or for assessing the impact of its policies in the region.
10. The change in title signifies the intermittent yet intense negotiations that led to serious modifications to Sarkozy's original intentions (see Pace forthcoming in Wunderlich and Bailey).
11. Not that the EU, USA, UN and Russia have much leverage over the key players in these conflicts.

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