

Why the Euro-Med Partnership? Explaining the EU's Strategies in the Mediterranean Region

Beverly Crawford  
Institute of European Studies  
UC Berkeley

## **Introduction:**

The Mediterranean is the world's most volatile region. In the area that ties together southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, the cultural cleavages between the West and Islam and the economic gap between North and South collide. From this collision between the "Clash of Civilizations" and extreme economic inequality emerge the central threats of the post-Cold War era: militant religious fundamentalism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, migration, drug trade, instability in energy supplies, and interstate military conflict.

The EU strategy to create stability in the Mediterranean has been a strategy of interregionalism—the pursuit of formalized relationships between the EU and a distinct Mediterranean region that both overlaps with the territory of the European Union and extends beyond it. The EU was moved to create this set of relationships because its members feared immigration and security threats arising from North Africa and the Middle East. EU foreign ministers also recognized a need to respond to "new" security issues emanating from the region, such as drug trafficking, human rights violations, and environmental degradation (Joffe 1998). Furthermore, many EU officials regarded the building of a region and the creation of interregional relationships as a strategy to compete with other trade blocks, without having to invite non-European Mediterranean countries to join the EU. Finally, EU ministers believed that interregionalism would "add another layer in a comprehensive European effort to help settle the Arab-Israeli conflict." (Solingen 2002, p. )

This paper describes this set of relationships, called the "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" or EMP. It demonstrates that, while the goal of creating a region and establishing interregional relationships in terms of "partnership," the results in the last eight years have been dependency relationships shaped by inequalities in power. While its liberal goals expressed new ideas about power, cooperative security, community building, and regional identity, disappointments emerged because of asymmetries in power and the threat to ruling coalitions and interest groups posed by the establishment of a region governed by liberal principles.

In 1992, the European Council Summit recognized for the first time that "The southern and eastern shores of Mediterranean and the Middle East are both areas of interest to the Union, in terms of security and social stability." In November, 1995, the Spanish presidency of the EU organized a conference in Barcelona, with the 15 members of the EU and 12 countries of the South Mediterranean. The outcome was the Barcelona Declaration or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative. Backed by the largest EU financial commitment ever made outside the Union, the Declaration launched a set of economic, political, cultural, and social initiatives, intended to reinforce one another in an open-ended process of regional integration with the assistance of the EU. The stated purpose of this process was to extend southward the European area of stability. It relied on the notion of "partnership" to signal the intent to create more interdependence between the EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries, and it saw that partnership leading to a distinct

Mediterranean region..

The Barcelona Declaration explicitly used the language of regional community building to express its goals, and it treated security as an ‘organic’ and intrinsic aspect of regional development. (Spencer 2002) The Declaration asserted that the best way to achieve security, political stability and economic welfare in the Mediterranean was neither by an elaborate system of alliances, collective security systems, or mere functional economic integration schemes. Rather, it asserted that security and prosperity would be achieved by inventing a region that pools its resources and offers a shared social identity that could be a partner to the European Union.

From the vantage point of 2003, eight years after the signing of the Barcelona Declaration, progress toward these goals has been disappointing. At best, the arrangement can be described as one of hybrid interregionalism, a spattering of agreements between the EU and a group of countries defined by their proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. And although the scope of the Euro-Med partnership is wide and the developmental focus clear, the interregional Euro-Med regime is weak. Lofty multilateral intentions have resulted in only a handful of bilateral agreements, a hub-and-spoke relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean non EU member countries (MNMCS); instability has increased in the region, liberalization and democracy have not been able to thrive, and regional development is disappointing.

Furthermore, the economic gap between the the EU and the MNMCS is widening at an alarming rate. The trade dependence of the MNMCS on the EU has increased in recent years to 52 percent, while Europe’s trade dependence on the NMCS is negligible and consists primarily of dependence on energy supplies. Even that dependence is likely to weaken as the EU enlarges and begins to look eastward to the former Soviet Union to fill its energy requirements.

Why has the Barcelona Process stalled? Why has little progress been made toward a shared regional identity, toward multilateralism, and toward development and toward a more pure form of interregionalism? I address these questions in three parts. I begin with a description of the EMP, its evolution and its current state. In particular, I examine the strength of the partnership, its nature, and the EU’s commercial treatment of the non-EU member Mediterranean countries, I then turn to an examination of the the MNMCS and their inability to be a true “partner” in the region-building process. Finally, I explain the emergence of the EMP and its lack of progress.

## **Description of the Dependent Variable: The Euro-Med Partnership as an Interregional Regime**

### ***Background: Evolution of the Euro-Med Partnership***

In the 1970s, concerns over terrorism and oil defined the European Community’s key interest in the stability of the Mediterranean region. Terrorism had been on the rise in Europe, spilling over from the Arab-Israeli conflict, and all member states began to tighten immigration controls in order to prevent terrorist networks from taking root in European soil. The oil shock of 1973 jarred Europeans into a reconsideration of their dependence on Arab oil, and the need

for secure supplies and the maintenance of good relations with Arab countries. Driven by these two concerns, the EC launched the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP). (Bicci 2002 p. 4-5) The GMP offered trade concessions for the NMNCs in their economic relations with the EC, aid, and social provisions for migrants from the Maghreb in Europe. It also offered agricultural concessions and eliminated its own tariffs on industrial imports originating from the MNMCs while allowing them to retain their own tariff barriers.

Driven by the concern over terrorism, and the need for regional stability, the CSCE (now the OSCE) identified a Mediterranean component to its program, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it called together regional experts in economics, science, culture, and the environment to explore transregional cooperative that would build mutual trust and contribute to regional stability; the meetings accomplished little, however, and did not attract the attention of the United States, who was focused primarily on the East-West conflict.

In 1974, European energy concerns gave birth to the Euro-Arab Dialogue between the European Community and the Arab League, a form of weak interregionalism. The Action Plan for the Mediterranean—the creation of a “mini-region” around a specific narrow issue—was formulated within the framework of the Barcelona Convention of 1976 to combat pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. As a transregional arrangement, it was indeed successful, but the focus of cooperation remained limited to technical environmental issues, without “spillover” effects on other areas of concern (Haas 1990).

In short, all of these efforts remained limited in the context of the Cold War and by the insistence of the Arab League that the Palestinian issue be placed on the agenda, a condition that was then unacceptable to the Europeans. In a post-war world dominated by East-West confrontation, the creation of an interregional regime—a Mediterranean area of cooperation and stability was clearly a low priority for the world’s powerful states.

The end of the Cold War, however, promised to eliminate the obstacles to inter-regional cooperation, and in 1990, the CSCE initiated the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM). Like earlier efforts, the aim was to boost regional economic development through cooperation, and to increase regional trust and transparency. The WEU and the Council of Europe were involved in inter-regional trust promoting activities. In addition, the French put forward in 1990-1991 a plan for a Western Mediterranean CSCM, and NATO formulated a Mediterranean policy in 1994, promising to work with non-members to strengthen regional stability.

In the immediate post-cold war period, the EU actively participated in the Middle East Peace process, underwriting the emerging Palestinian economy. (Solingen 2002). Between 1994 and 1996 the Middle East/North Africa Economic Conferences provided a forum for discussions about economic development within the region.. These discussions raised expectations that privatization would draw in FDI, which would, in turn lead to industrialization and development.

Encouraged by success in these efforts and progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process, the European Union became formally involved in the project of creating regional stability in the

Mediterranean. The Euro-Med Partnership was established in 1994, and in 1995, a Euro-Mediterranean Conference was convened in Barcelona to establish a framework for cooperation in the Mediterranean region, encompassing a population of 700 million in 27 countries on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. In addition to the 15 EU states, the EMP includes Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority.<sup>1</sup>

The basic premise of Barcelona was that the Euro-Mediterranean area constituted a “common space,” or at least that it possessed enough of the precursor elements of a region (geographic contiguity, common values, traditions, or interests) to make regional building a possibility. Stephen Calleya writes that “from this premise flowed two other assumptions: that the member-states or regimes were equally committed to the goal of regional cooperation as a tool to promote peace, stability and prosperity; and that they were also receptive to the kinds of political, economic and social liberalization that makes transnational (as opposed to inter-governmental) cooperation possible” (Calleya, 2002, p. 7)..

The political element of the Barcelona declaration includes a list of principles concerning respect for democracy and the rule of law, human rights, the rights of self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. It also contains cooperative measures for fighting terrorism. On the economic front, the Barcelona document provides for a regional partnership to promote economic development by means of a free trade zone to be created by the year 2010.

In the period since the EMP was initiated, however, the development, integration, and security gap between the EU and the non-member Mediterranean states has grown. The EU has undertaken two major constitutional reforms, successfully introduced a common currency, opened a constitutional convention that promises a common security policy, and has successfully completed the creation of the single market. The EU is also proceeding with its fifth enlargement, to be completed in 2004. Yet during this same period, the non-member Mediterranean states have experienced growing poverty and decreased security. There has been little effort toward increased integration, and there have been precious few successes in the effort to liberalize their economic and political systems.

Furthermore, little has come of the five ministerial conferences since the initial one in Barcelona. The objectives of the Barcelona Declaration were slated to be confirmed by twenty-seven Mediterranean states in Malta in 1997. But the stalled Middle East peace process and ensuing tensions overshadowed the meeting and cast grave doubts on the partnership’s success. Subsequent meetings, including at Stuttgart and Marseille did very little to get the EMP out of its failing path, or, worst, irrelevance. True, some economic agreements were signed, and the idea of

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<sup>1</sup> In 1999, at the Euro-Med III meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Stuttgart, Germany, participants agreed to accept Libya as a partner once it agreed to the terms of the Barcelona Declaration and once UN sanctions were lifted.

having a free-trade area by the year 2010 still stands. Moreover, there has been activity at the level of civil society in the region, i.e. the promotion of common cultural and security understandings, including EuroMeSCo, a security think-tank, which has become an important example of "track two diplomacy" in the region. In April 2002, the Euro-Med partners adopted the Valencia Action Plan, making sustainable development the guiding principle of the Euro-Med Process. The action plan includes reinforced credit facilities for Mediterranean partner countries through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to promote cultural exchange.<sup>2</sup> However, the conference made no progress in other areas such as trade liberalization in agriculture, and tying European aid to the progress made by aid recipients in the fields of democracy and human rights, one of the key aspects of tying security to political and economic liberalism, expressed in the Barcelona Declaration.

### **Coding the Dependent Variable**

In short, progress toward the creation of a strong interregional partnership between the EU and the non-member countries of the Mediterranean region has been disappointing. In this section, I gauge the level of that disappointment by looking at the strength and nature of the partnership and the commercial relations that have developed, measuring these realities against the goals set forth in the Barcelona Declaration.

#### ***The strength of the Partnership***

The Barcelona Declaration established an equal "partnership" between the EU and the MNMCs in the project of region-building and interregionalism. But the reality is one of EU control over the pace and content of the Barcelona process. Coordination and management of all EMP activities takes place in Brussels. The EMP has no independent secretariat, and those in Brussels responsible for Euro-Med issues are scattered throughout the Commission.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the management of the EMP by the Commission perpetuates and recreates an asymmetry between EU member states and the rest; there is no equivalent management structure among the non-member partners of the EMP. The Euromesco Joint Report of 1997-98 suggested that while the Commission should retain this role, stopping short of the creation of a Secretariat, a 'ProMed' group of civil servants from the MNMCs could be constituted to act in a management capacity as a partner of the Commission. However this form of institutionalization has yet to be implemented or discussed. (Vasconcellos 2002 p. 2) Furthermore, as we shall see below, there is little counterpart coherence among the MNMCs. With regard to the economic basket, all decisions are in the hands of the EU,

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<sup>2</sup> The plan aims for 2 billion euros (1.8 billion dollars) per year in EIB loans by 2006. The economic and financial provisions of the EMP seek to achieve a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by 2010 and to promote regional development by attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with EU officials not for attribution

where decisions on trade and aid are reached through compromises among the 15 members.

There is no voting mechanism for EMP decisions. Although the European Parliament's proposed the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly at the Valencia meeting (Gillespie 2002 p. 12), no concrete decisions have been taken to create one. Decisions in the EMP on political and cultural issues are made by consensus. There is no formal voting. Veto power by any of the 27 EMP members is the rule (Lannon et al.2001, pp.117-8). Before any EMP ministerial summit, each EMP member country prepares its national position on the different items on the agenda. Positions are shaped by a combination of business lobbies and member state conceptions of the national interest. While each state fashions its own position, the position of the EU member states is coordinated by the Commission; member states are represented by their own ministers at the EMP bi-annual intergovernmental Summit. There is almost no leeway for a state to negotiate its position once in the Summit (Tovias 2002).

The association agreements between the EU and MNMCs lack credibility. Because there is no judicial review mechanism; either side can backtrack from the agreement with impunity. Without oversight, EU commitments are weak—for example, the EU commits itself to “exploring” an issue, then explores it for years without making a formal commitment. When the EU does make a commitment, it is often reversible (Tovias 2002, p. 12.) There is no dispute settlement mechanism to redress grievances in case association agreements are not fulfilled. In many cases these agreements link progress in political and economic reform in the MNMCs to trade concessions. But there is no oversight mechanism to ensure that these aspects of the agreements' conditionality are being fulfilled. In short, without a secretariat, without a parliament, without judicial review of the association agreements, without oversight and a dispute settlement mechanism, without a voting mechanism among the 27, and with essential economic decisions imposed on the MNMCs by the EU, the “partnership” can be characterized as weak.

### ***The Nature of the Regime: Scope and Focus***

The scope of the EMP is in inverse relationship to its strength. Following the CSCE model of the Helsinki Accords, the Barcelona Declaration consists of three pillars (called “baskets”) on which a partner states would construct a peaceful Mediterranean region : economic reform, adherence to common political principles, and cultural cooperation.

Economic proposals in the Barcelona Declaration included the establishment of a Free Trade Area between the Union and MNM countries by 2010. The EU would provide Economic aid to benefit the MNMCs private sector and to encourage structural reform and privatization. The underlying objective of this economic pillar was an effort to help adapt MNM countries to an increasingly freer and globalized economy in the belief that such transformation would also help resolve political crises, undermine rent seeking authoritarian regimes, and provide an economic basis for social stability in the region.

The political element of the Barcelona declaration emulates the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, in its adoption of a “code of peace” (Jones 1991) -- i.e. a set of principles that set the normative guidelines around which the prospective region is supposed to be constituted. These principles

include respect for international law and human rights, non-intervention, respect of the territorial integrity of states, cooperative measures for countering terrorism, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. The EMP also adopted “soft” security practices, such as regular political and security dialogues, security expert meetings, and “seminar diplomacy,” and Partnership Building Measures with the aim of creating trust and collective security understandings between EU members and partner states. One of the most important initiatives in the security field has been the drafting of a “Charter for Peace and Stability,” which, modeled after the 1993 “European Stability Pact” in Central and Eastern Europe, aims to increase regional security and stability by means enhanced political dialogue, preventive diplomacy, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation measures.

The third pillar is contained in the cultural basket, intended to break the barriers between cultures around the Mediterranean, and promote a dialogue between civilizations. High on the negotiation agenda of the EMP is a “Declaration of principles of the Dialogue of Cultures and Civilizations” and the establishment of a Foundation for the Dialogue of Cultures.” Based primarily on civil society networks of academicians, students, religious authorities, this basket aims at building the long-term conditions for the future development of Mediterranean social stability based on transnational social links intended to reinforce the economic and political pillars.

The central focus of the EMP is its economic pillar. As Alfred Tovias has argued, two principles were behind the construction of the economic program. First, the improvement of the economic conditions in the MNMCs was seen as crucial in order to deter migration to the North. Second, the MNMCs would have to be “anchored” in a relationship with the EU through the deepening of economic interdependence between the EU and the countries of the region. (Tovias 2002 , p. 2).

As noted above, the two principles contained in this basket were the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone, and an increase in EU financial assistance to MNMCs.<sup>4</sup> The creation of a free trade zone was intended to shift the adjustment costs of trade to the MNMCs, after 20 years of EC/EU trade concessions enshrined in the GMP. Through the agreement to create a Free Trade Zone, the Keynesian ideas of development contained in the GMP gave way to the neo-liberal ideas of the Washington Consensus (Tovias 2002: 3).

Nonetheless, the economic pillar contained an aid component. Because the creation of a free trade zone will erode tariff revenues and trigger a rise in unemployment in the non-member Mediterranean countries, their budget deficits will grow. To ease the transition to free trade by financing budget deficits, the EC’s Council of Ministers, in 1996, approved a new EC Regulation called MEDA (Measures d’Accompagnement) dealing with all MNMCs under a unified framework, doubling its pre-Barcelona Declaration aid to non-member countries in the region.

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<sup>4</sup> For early assessments of the economic basket of the EMP see Marks (1996), Alonso-Gamo et al.(1997), Aghrout and Alexander(1997), Havrylyshyn, O.(1997), Lawrence (1997) and Galal and Hoekman(1997).

Approximately 1 Billion Euros per year would be distributed from the EU budget to 8 of the 12 MNMCs (including the Palestinian Authority) on a bilateral basis. All 8 belonged to the Arab world.<sup>5</sup> To the annual one billion euro of aid drawn from the EU budget, another one billion euro was put at the disposal of the same 8 countries by the European Investment Bank in the form of loans. (Tovias, 2002, p. 2).

### **Commercial Treatment: degree of uniformity and treatment type**

What are the guidelines by which this aid is disbursed and association agreements negotiated? Does the EU treat all of the MNMCs equally? The EU's treatment of the non-member Euro-Med partners is not fully uniform, but rather mixed, and movement towards uniform treatment is stalled. Treatment differs primarily in terms of conditionality requirements: aid and trade concessions are tied to the pace of economic reform in the non-member countries. Cyprus, Malta, Israel, and Turkey have all geared their internal policies toward the accession criteria for EU membership. Cyprus and Malta are slated to join the EU by 2005 and are thus striving to meet the strict terms of the Copenhagen criteria; Turkey has completed its customs union with the EU and is attempting to accelerate its economic and political reforms in order to fully meet the Copenhagen criteria. Israel strengthened its links with the EU during the peace process of the 1990s, while those links weakened as the peace process stalled.

All association agreements with the remaining non-member MENA (Middle East-North African countries (MENA)) are bilateral—between individual EU member governments and governments of the non-member countries, negotiated under the umbrella of the EMP. Intended to “anchor” domestic economic reform in the non-member countries to their external economic relations with the member states of the EU, they vary greatly in their uniformity depending on the issue at stake, e.g. trade in goods and services or migration and labor, and the stage of economic liberalization that the country has reached.. Association agreements stipulate steps in the liberalization of the economies of individual countries. Since the MNMCs vary in terms of their degree of liberalization, the association agreements are tailored to each country.

The most uniform treatment is in the agreements reached over trade in goods. Trade policy of the member states is almost exclusively in the hands of the Commission and thus trade concessions offered by the EU and the rules of access to the European market are uniform. This means that the degree of “politicization” and possibility of variation in interpretation of EC laws is limited. (Tovias, 2002 p. 9). Presumably, with the completion of the Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010, this uniformity will increase, and the scope of uniformity will expand.

The agreements themselves do not call for any “adjustment” on the part of the EU. For example, as Tovias writes,

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<sup>5</sup> Turkey, Cyprus and Malta, all three candidate countries, although also beneficiaries of some MEDA funds, were to receive much pre-accession aid through other channels, whereas Israel was not supposed to receive any bilateral aid from the EU, in view of its own development level. See Tovias (2002), p. 2.

“none of the agreements signed provide for the automatic removal of significant technical barriers faced by MNMCs exports to the EU, such as obligatory testing or certification of conformity by local EU authorities for many goods, because mutual recognition agreements (MRA) are not part of the present deals. MRAs on standards are not even contemplated. There is some talk of future standards harmonization, but in fact the idea is that MNMCs shall accept the acquis as far as standards are concerned. Participation in European standards institutions is a privilege reserved apparently to present and future EEA (European Economic Area) members only. This and other second-generation issues are not only important for Israel or Turkey (as one is tempted to think *a priori*), but for Maghreb and Mashrek countries. Take for instance norms and standards relating to fish canning or relating to fishing methods. It is well known that Portugal, Spain and Morocco compete in the same canning products and in the same markets. Whereas Portugal and Spain are key-decision makers in the EU in these matters, Morocco is not even consulted.” (Tovias 2002, p. 7)

In other economic areas, however, the association agreements vary significantly among countries, and that variance is partly due to the erosion of agreements over time. Indeed, as Tovias (2002 p.9) argues “preference erosion” has been invoked frequently by MNMCs to justify their deviation from commitments throughout the life of Europe’s economic relations with the region. For example, in 1963, the EC negotiated an Association agreement with Turkey, stipulating the free movement of labor between Turkey and the EC. Migration, however, was (and still is) the reserved domain of member states. Thus Germany vetoed the part of the association agreement in 1986 that stipulated liberal migration of labor. Turkey used this issue—in which the EC did not hold to its association commitment—to backtrack from its own commitments under the agreement.

Aid is disbursed directly from the EU budget on a bi-lateral EU—individual MNMC basis. Tovias notes that the term “bilateral” is perhaps a misnomer because all aid is given on a unilateral basis from the EU to the MNMCs. There have been no negotiations between the EU and MNMCs within an EMP forum over how that aid is disbursed or how much aid will be offered to each MNMC. Before the Valencia meeting in April 2002, Spain advocated the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Bank that would place EU members and non-members on an equal footing, a suggestion which found favor in several countries of the Maghreb. But because of opposition from the northern European countries, the idea was diluted into increased credit provision via the European Investment Bank, where decisions on aid would continue to be made unilaterally by the EU (Gillispie 2002, p. 12)

The amount of aid and means of disbursement is negotiated among the 15 EU members. There is no contractual obligation with each of the Arab MNMCs to disburse a given amount. MEDA is an EC regulation, not part of the bilateral association agreements. In trade, the negotiations can be considered bi-lateral between the EU and the MNMCs. The Commission stated from the beginning that it was prepared to engage in constant dialogue with the MNMCs on a wide range of trade- and investment-related matters such as indirect taxation, standards and customs

procedures, but little progress in a change in pre-Barcelona procedures has been made. (Tovias, 2002, p.3).

### **Counterpart Characteristics**

The lack of uniformity in treatment, the bilateral nature of the association agreements, and the unilateral EU decisions on aid can all be partially explained by the characteristics of the non-EU member partners to the EMP. There is no overarching self-definition of the region that encompasses the non-EU member countries; while most of the MNMC trade is conducted with Europe, most of Europe's external trade is conducted with other regions of the world. The entire North African market is only equivalent to the internal Portuguese market. And the Maghreb market is fragmented into a number of even smaller markets, and internal transaction costs remain very high. Stephen Calleya writes that "the cost of shipping a container from Tunisia to Marseilles is higher than the cost of sending the same container from Marseilles to Asia" (Calleya 2002, p. 10). Intra-regional trade in the Maghreb represents only 5 per cent of the Maghreb's total external trade. Intra-regional trade in the Mashreq<sup>6</sup> is only slightly higher at 7 per cent. These small and fragmented markets go a long way in explaining why the MENA countries have managed to attract only 2 per cent of international FDI (Calleya, p. 10-11).

Weak and non-institutionalized regimes govern the various sub regions, offering little in the way of a regional negotiating partner for the EU or an institutional structure that would reduce the transaction costs of intra-regional trade. Conflict has hindered closer cooperation between countries in the Balkans, the Maghreb and the Mashreq. Both the Balkans and the Mashreq include countries that do not border on the Mediterranean and are not members of the EMP. Relations among countries in these sub-regions are largely confined to the intergovernmental level, with cross-border interaction limited to the issues of energy, Islam, and agriculture (Calleya 2002, p. 6). A handful of specialized sub-regional NGOs exist, such as AARINENA, the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa. Each of these sub-regions follows its own trajectory, and there is little indication that they are on a path toward integration into a single region.

Relations among the MNMCs of the EMP are both multilateral and bi-lateral. The Gulf Cooperation Council, in existence since 1981, is the most effective of the multilateral regimes. It is comprehensive, covering issues from trade to education, to foreign and military policy to cultural cooperation. The GCC is governed by a Supreme Council with a rotating presidency and administered by a Secretary-General. Decisions are taken both by consensus and majority voting and are binding on the member states. A Dispute Settlement Mechanism supports those decisions. However, it includes countries outside of the EMP and is thus seldom a negotiating partner for the EU within the EMP. Furthermore, it has not served as a model for the creation of other groupings

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<sup>6</sup>The Mashreq includes Cyprus, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

in the Arab world. The Arab Maghreb Union, a North African customs union, and the Arab Cooperation Council were formed in the late 1980s, but existed largely only on paper.

In April 2000, Chris Patten, in an effort to build reliable regional negotiating partners, advocated the creation of sub-regional free trade areas, offering EU support for any efforts to establish multilateralism as a principle of South-South Cooperation. In 2001, the Arab League established an Arab Free Trade Area to be completed by 2007. In addition, the Agadir Declaration of May 2001 announced the establishment of a free trade area between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. The EU offered technical assistance to the “Agadir Process,” and the Valencia Action Plan should facilitate efforts on the part of North African countries to revive the Arab Maghreb Union.

Finally, a number of bilateral agreements also exist in the MNMCs. Turkey and Israel have negotiated a free trade agreement as a corollary of the Turkey-EU customs union. Of course Syria and Lebanon engage in bilateral cooperation, but the relationship is clearly dominated by Syria, a kind of “imposed” cooperation and thus unlikely to serve as a model for similar arrangements among the EU’s EMP partners (Callaya 200, p. 13)

In short, small and fragmented markets combined with few and weak subregional regimes that would make suitable negotiating partners for the EU in the EMP add up to low counterpart coherence. MNMCs compete with one another for EU aid and loans, thus limiting their incentive to join a bargaining coalition. Any region-wide regime is out of the question at the present time: Potential accession countries have a different relationship with the EU than the other Mediterranean countries, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which at times can be subdued by the larger EMP project, prevents a common negotiating front from being forged between Israel and the rest of the Arab states. Finally, as we have seen, even the Arab MENA states have not found enough common ground to create a negotiating coalition.

## **Explanations**

Are there underlying factors that drive these outcomes? What explains the EU initiative in creating a Mediterranean region? Why did the EU seek a transregional “partnership” with states around the Mediterranean basin? And why have the results been disappointing? I argue that the realist perspective best explains the incentive of both the EU and the MNMCs to create a region and to create an interregional relationship. Constructivist and bureaucratic politics approaches best explain the nature of the regime, but interest group and realist approaches best explain disappointments in terms of strength, commercial treatment, and weak counterpart coherence.. Below, I discuss and weigh these explanations.

### ***Explaining the Birth of the Euro-Med Process: Neo-realist perspectives***

There are good reasons to build a region within the realist paradigm of international relations. As Brooks and Wohlforth have remarked, “states often build regional partnerships in order to balance against the overwhelming power of another state. Indeed, region building is likely

to be a common occurrence in the coming years. The nineteenth century international system featured six to eight poles among roughly 30 states. In the early Cold war there were two poles, but the number of states had doubled to just over 70. Today there is one pole in a system in which the population of states has trebled to nearly 200. Inevitably then, much activity will take place at a regional level, and it can often be in the interests of the parties involved to use balancing rhetoric as a rallying point for stimulating cooperation, even if that is not the chief driver of their actions.” (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2002, p. 29).

Within this wider perspective, the Barcelona Process is part of the EU’s strategy to expand its own political influence in the region to meet three balance of power goals: 1) countering the United States in the region, especially in the Middle East, 2) controlling the region through the creation of asymmetrical dependency relationships, and 3) containing political Islam.

First, from this perspective, the Euro-Med process was triggered by European uncertainties about power balances in the aftermath of the cold war. Indeed, with the Cold War’s end and Germany’s achievement of unity and sovereignty, France feared that Europe would drift eastward; the EMP would help achieve a new power balance between France and Germany (Weinber, 1999). It would also be part of the EU’s effort to balance the influence of the United States. Indeed, the EMP has all the hallmarks of an increasingly ambitious EU foreign policy. If the EU could not yet aspire to be world hegemon, it could be a regional one, a power that would assert its preeminence over the US in North Africa and the Middle East. This preeminence would not be induced by direct political action, mediations, and missions, but rather by a systematic use of economic tools to create a region for political ends. And the wars of Yugoslav succession reminded Europeans that the post-war peace on the continent could again be threatened.

Second, as noted above, critics pointed out that the project was devised to protect EU member states from the adverse consequences of large-scale migration flows and a from an uncontrolled flood of competing agricultural products that might enter the European market under WTO agreements—an effort on the part of the EU to control the region for its own benefit by exploiting its asymmetric relationship with North African and Middle Eastern States. Indeed, recall that the *origins* of the EMP can be located in a pronouncement made by *EU* foreign ministers at an *EU* Summit. *Institutionally*, it is defined, administered and funded from Brussels. There are no headquarters or civil servants dedicated to this project outside EU structures and thus no symbolic venue with which it can be identified. The very fact that the timeline for appraisal of the process is successive EU presidencies is telling. From the South, the enterprise is interpreted more often through the core-periphery paradigm than as an instance of positive sum liberalism: a (friendly) takeover rather than a joint venture

Finally, the neo-realist perspective is bolstered by the fact that the impetus for EMP was clearly a strategic response to the rise of political Islam. As early as 1992, the European Council of Lisbon had expressed its unease at the "advance of extremist forces... in various North African countries". Two years later, the European Council of Essen elevated the Mediterranean to a "priority zone of strategic importance to Europe". And at the behest of France, Italy and Spain, NATO began lobbying the EU early in 1995 to concoct a new policy towards "Islam."

All of these goals could conceivably be met, however, through a construction of alliances in the region and a strengthened EU security architecture. Instead, however, the EU linked the goals of political and economic reform, cultural convergence, and security in a new package that defined the nature of the EMP. Realist explanations fall short when they attempt to account for the relatively revolutionary nature of the Euro-Med partnership, enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration. Indeed, the Barcelona Declaration is a Constructivist's dream.

***Explaining the Birth of the Euromed Process: The Constructivist approach***<sup>7</sup>

The Barcelona Declaration is grounded in the literature on what constructivists have recently called the EU's revolutionary approach to security, a set of tightly linked norms and practices that define a particular approach to security that departs significantly from the realist paradigm.<sup>8</sup> As Nicolaidis (2003, see also Wendt 1999) has argued, the EU has chosen to be weak in military capabilities, because it has adopted a "Kantian" culture. Many have argued that the EU's power rests on the ability to attract states to become members or partners of a political community, the access to which depends on the adoption of a set of norms, practices, and institutions. In the words of Graham Fuller (2003) Europeans have "forged their homelands into a new cooperative whole," and taken their power to be "the power of a gradually expanding international community of consent."

For constructivists, Europe practices "normative power" and this notion of power is codified in the Barcelona Process. Normative power can be defined as the ability "to shape conceptions of 'normal'" (Manners 2002: 240), or the ability to tame anarchy with civilian (as opposed to military) practices (Duchene 1973, Whitman 2002, Moravcsik 2002, Nicolaidis and Howse 2002)? In the eyes of constructivists, this normative power is what drove Europe's success in bringing stability, security and well being to the region.

Normative power can diffuse in time and space (geographically and functionally) and thus "conquer" other states and cultures. Whereas material power related practices often require bypassing and overruling the rule of law, normative power depends on the diffusion of the rule of law. Whereas states that use material power may only be able to force democracy, the rule of law, and human right practices onto other states (and hope for the best), normative power, if effective, may be able to achieve the same outcome by means of learning processes, which rely on endogenous rather than on exogenous changes, and, thus, it is likely to be more effective and durable. Normative power is exercised in "partnerships," not empires, in the diffusion of ideas, rather than forcing the acceptance of a normative hegemonic order.

Europeans also believe that security is best achieved through the enlargement of a liberal democratic security community (Deutsch, 1957, Adler and Barnett, 1998).

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<sup>7</sup> This section is adapted from Adler and Crawford 2003.

<sup>8</sup> The following is adapted from Adler and Crawford 2003.

This conception of security can be described as “cooperative security.” Based on concepts of pluralistic integration and inclusion, cooperative security is “*comprehensive*,” for it links classic security elements to economic, environmental, cultural and human-rights factors. It is also “*indivisible*,” in the sense that one state's security is inseparable from that of other states. Most important, it is “*cooperative*,” i.e. security is based on confidence and cooperation, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the work of mutually reinforcing multilateral institutions. Cooperative security has not only become an important policy tool, but also part of the EU's self-identification. Because the EU is constituted on a normative basis, this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics” (Manners 2002: 240, 252). Thus, whereas material power has historically been conducive to understanding political reality from a national and international point of view, normative power is conducive and consistent primarily with a transnational and supranational point of view.

A quick glance at the EU today, shows, that “Europeans already wield effective power over peace and war as great as that of the United States, but they do so quietly through ‘civilian power’ [which] does not lie in the development of battalions or bombs, but rather in the quiet promotion of democracy and development through trade, foreign aid and peacemaking” (Moravcsik 2002:12). The EU as civilian power obtains security by instilling expectations and dispositions in near abroad states, to the effect that adoption of EU norms and values will gain them inclusion into the ranks of the EU. A civilian power, thus, wields influence via EU accession, “perhaps the single most powerful policy instrument for peace and security in the world today” (Moravcsik 2003). It also provides civilian development assistance, builds global trust needed to manage crises, and works through multilateral means and world public opinion. (Moravcsik 2003. See also Whitman 2003). Most important, however, through “the propensity of the EU to seek to reproduce itself by encouraging regional integration around the world,” the EU's civilian power's “power” rests mainly in it becoming a “‘laboratory’ where options for politics beyond the state are generated, for the taking,” and, thus, also in it becoming a normative and practical model of regional or even global governance (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002:768, 771, 782).

The Euro-Med process is such a laboratory. Region building, such as in the case of the Barcelona Process and the recent initiative of a “Wider Europe-Neighborhood,” works by means of the social construction of collective regional understandings, especially the development of new and encompassing social identities, which, rather than canceling deeply seated cultural and national identities, pools those identities into a larger “we.” Like the CSCE did in the past, EMP partner states are invited to belong to a region of peace and stability that does not exist, but which is supposed to develop because people collectively believe that promoting region building is mutually beneficial.

In sum, for constructivists, the process of region-building in the Mediterranean is consistent with Europe's practice of normative power and cooperative security. As such, the Barcelona Declaration suggests a move toward a more holistic understanding or conceptualization of the causal linkages between economic and political development and security and stability. In fact, the Barcelona Declaration represented an important shift from the sectoral approach of the GMP of the

70s to a holistic approach based on the simultaneous launching of a set of economic, political, cultural and social initiatives that were supposed to reinforce each other. For the EU, the Barcelona Declaration is the most coherent expression to date of the link between economic liberalism and political liberalization as an EU foreign policy tool. Only with the EMP do we see the expression of a clear *external* political objective associated with this link, that is the “transformation of the region into a zone of peace and stability.”

***Explaining the Birth of the Euro-Med Process: Bureaucratic Politics in the EU***

The perspective of bureaucratic politics presents a much more humble explanation of the birth of the EMP. It suggests that the European Union’s incentive for the construction of the Euro-Med partnership is a direct result of the Commission’s drive to expand its own authority and influence within the EU.<sup>9</sup> From this perspective, the Commission is a key actor, with its own set of bureaucratic interests. The EMP effort, in this light, has implications for the division of labor within the EU. In the period leading up to the Barcelona Declaration, individual member states had significant leeway to influence EU policy. Indeed, the EMP was conceived in Brussels at a time when some member states were still keen to pursue their own Mediterranean policy.<sup>10</sup> Since then, however, the Latin EU states have increasingly given up their Mediterranean policies. Spain, Italy and Greece all scaled down their external policy making ambition in their bid for EMU membership.

Furthermore, EU officials have argued that the management of the EMP by the Commission helps to soften perceptions of neo-colonialism within the MNMCs. The EMP brings a greater degree of political scrutiny, especially as the European Parliament starts blocking financial protocols in the name of human rights. Such sensitive moves may be more acceptable on the part of EU institutions than individual member states.

Together, the realist, constructivist and bureaucratic politics approaches suggest a confluence of forces that provide a plausible explanation for the birth of the EMP. Clearly, after the end of the Cold war and the reorganization of the international system, Europe may well have sought a way to balance the power of the United States and contain political Islam. But the EMP is not a traditional power balancing mechanism. Many observers have argued that Europe’s stern

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with EU official not for attribution May 31, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> While Spanish interest in the Mediterranean is deeply rooted in history and has been the subject of considerable engagement since the late 1970s [Gillespie, 2000], Portugal only began to develop a Mediterranean policy by virtue of entry to the European Community in 1986 [Vasconcelos, 1996a, 1996b; Silva and Pereira, 1998: 86-87]. The Mediterranean has been a priority for post-Franco Spain, particularly under Felipe González and the Socialist Party (in office 1982-96), who grasped the opportunities for international influence to be derived from developing a European-Mediterranean-Spanish triangle as a focus of diplomatic activity (Gillispie 2002, p. 5).

opposition to the US invasion of Iraq is a clear indicator of the EU's adherence to the concepts of normative power and cooperative security. The bureaucratic politics explanation is more tangible, but it does not explain the broad and integrated scope of the Barcelona Declaration. It explains the Commission's drive to steer the Barcelona Process, but does not explain decision to build a "region" in the Mediterranean, and the linking of democracy, economic liberalization, and security. Thus I believe that Constructivists are on rather strong ground in explaining the nature of the regime. What they cannot explain, however, is the disappointing progress in realizing the concept of "partnership," in providing the EMP with institutional strength, and for the lack of uniformity in the EU's commercial treatment of the MNMCs. Certainly Constructivists cannot explain the disappointing results in terms of development, human rights, democratization, and security in the MENA countries. For an explanation of those results, I turn to interest group and then again to realist hypotheses.

### *Explaining Disappointing Progress: Interest Group hypotheses*

The Euro-Med process called for sometimes drastic economic reform in the MNMCs. In that reform process, new political coalitions have emerged that may undermine the progress toward region building and interregionalism.<sup>11</sup> As Solingen puts it, "politicians worldwide rely on material and ideal aspects of internationalization to broker political coalitions across constituencies that respond differently to the opportunities and constraints of internationalization. (Solinigen 2002, p.).

Directly in response to constructivist arguments, Solingen argues the following:

"Different coalitional combinations in different regions create regional orders, "identities," and shared expectations about conflict and cooperation and, conversely, are affected by them. Inter-regional comparisons suggest that where internationalizing coalitions gathered strength in a given region, there was a better chance that **zones of stable peace** might develop. In these cases ruling coalitions relied more on concerts, collective security, and multilateralism. . . avoiding aggressive steps towards each other and mutually adjusting to resolve outstanding disputes. (Solinigen 2002, p.)"

We can assume that liberalizing coalitions in the MNMCs will push the Barcelona Process forward. Certainly liberal coalitions in Cyprus and Malta have been able to liberalize the economies of those two countries to the extent that they are on track to qualify for EU membership. Morocco has achieved a higher degree of liberalization than other MNMCs, possibly as a result of Spain's effort to expand economic ties. In the last twenty years, Spanish business has moved from having a handful of affiliates in Morocco to possessing more than 800 companies there (Gillespie 2002, p. 7). Solingen suggests that liberalizing elites have gained strength in Tunisia, and Jordan; both promoted exports through preferential trade agreements with the EU and governments in both countries have stimulated private sector and foreign investment. "Tunisia's President Zine al-

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<sup>11</sup> Solingen (1998, 2001). Internationalization involves increased openness to international markets, capital, investments, and technology but also to an array of political and security regimes, institutions, and values.

Abidine Ben Ali deepened liberalization in financial markets and foreign investment, promoted tourism, and reduced maximum tariff rates from 220 percent to 43 percent in the early 1990s.” (Solingen 2002 p.)

While these examples suggest that progress in liberalization and partnership should have been made, a closer look at Morocco reveals the weakness of liberalizing forces. Spanish business expansion in Morocco was one-sided, created through diplomatic initiatives rather than market incentives, and accompanied by aid packages that have decreased over time leading to a reduction in operations. Joint ventures have proven unpopular with Spanish businessmen, who cite differences in business culture as the impediment to expansion. There are similar experiences reported in the effort to build “civil society.” Far fewer Spanish NGOs are involved in the Maghreb than in Latin America, and without the constant stimulus of financial resources, attempts to develop a cultural dimension to Morocco’s relationship with Spain have proved unsuccessful (Gillispie, 2002 p. 8). My suspicion is that liberalizing coalitions are weak in the other Arab MNMCs as well.

In the years since the signing of the Barcelona Declaration, what Solingen calls “backlash” coalitions have also grown, in the form of Islamic fundamentalism—groups opposed to both peace and foreign investment, and in the form of populist movements. Ruling coalitions such as the Baathist Assad regime in Syria, resist liberalization, seeing it as a threat to their power. As Solingen puts it, in Syria “public sector managers (as well as military and security) bureaucrats have countered the nascent power of private commercial and industrial groups” (Solingen 2002 p. ). In general, it would appear that “backlash” coalitions control the state apparatus in many of the MENA countries. They reject the liberal orientation of the Barcelona process and resist any kind of "conditionality" imposed upon them. As Calleya writes: “many of the requirements of free trade and greater foreign investment (abolition of monopolies and licensing arrangements, reduction of customs and excise fees, legal security and transparency, autonomous civil society organisations and institutions) threaten the revenue-base and even the power base of neo-patrimonial authoritarian regimes.” The power of backlash coalitions leads to a divergence of expectations and goals that they bring to the table. While Europe seeks stability through the "careful "Westernization" of the MENA countries, or the “convergence of civilizations” toward the European model, these coalitions are content with preferential access to European markets and development aid. Given the weaknesses of the EMP regime described above, they can abrogate an agreement to liberalize at any time.

Within Europe as well, backlash coalitions have emerged with the rise of right-wing politicians. Their nationalist rhetoric and xenophobia has had an important negative impact on the EMP and its multilateral agenda. Their decidedly anti-liberal stance and commitment to territoriality, sovereignty and self-reliance spell a rejection of "multilateralism," openness, and construction of a regional identity which lie at the heart of the Euro-Mediterranean process.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with EuroMedSco official.

Economic interest groups will also seek to realize their interests in the EMP, and they have a fairly strong influence—observed in the negotiating process at the EMP bi-annual Ministerial Summit. Tovias describes that impact: An MNMC minister in charge might reach a political compromise with the EU representatives, knowing he might be opposed by a domestic interest group. He must decide if he can cope with the pressure exerted by the latter on the government (Tovias 2002 p.10 ) The pressure often results in negotiating paralysis. Tovias provides the following example: The EU and Israel lock horns over Israel's application of the rules of origin, treating the occupied territories as part of Israeli customs territory. Under the prevailing rules, goods originating in settlements were shipped to the EC duty-free. As political tensions increased, the EU decided to apply the association agreement to Israel in its frontiers of June 4 1967. Negotiations to look for a compromise are in the offing. The Israeli minister in charge is obliged to negotiate a compromise knowing that business interests in the territories (e.g. Golan wine-makers) or in Israel will strongly oppose it (Tovias 2002 p. 10-11)

Without the strength of binding rules in the EMP, the direct linking of political conditionality to aid and loans and a voting mechanism that can overcome the paralysis of consensus, backlash coalitions and interest groups that would lose from EMP decisions will have the power to block progress toward the Barcelona goals.

### ***Realist Explanations for disappointing progress in the EMP***

Realists would argue that the Euro-Med “Partnership” cannot fully succeed as a partnership because of the imbalance of power between the “core” of the European Union and the “periphery” of the MNMCs. The economic inequality between Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean has created a structure of asymmetrical interdependence, giving the EU the upper hand in all negotiations in the Euro-Mediterranean process. The trade dependence of the MNMCs on the EU has increased in recent years to 52 percent, while Europe's trade dependence on the MNMCs is negligible and consists primarily of dependence on energy supplies. Even that dependence is likely to weaken as the EU enlarges and begins to look eastward to the former Soviet Union to fill its energy requirements.

Indeed, EU enlargement will greatly exacerbate this asymmetry. Trade dependence of MNMCs on the EU will increase, leading them to perceive the EU as a more formidable trading bloc. And as the EU looks eastward for products that currently come from MNMCs, EU trade sanctions will “bite” more than before (Tovias 2001). This will deepen Arab suspicions of European neo-colonial intentions in the Euro-Med process. The realist approach would suggest that as the EU turns its focus eastward, interest in the Mediterranean will continue to wane, and the Barcelona process will lose steam.

Furthermore, as the EU enlarges, most Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) will flow to Eastern Europe. Without an infusion of capital, the MENA countries will remain low-wage raw materials suppliers and export platforms for the EU's industrial machine. To the extent that FDI flows into the region, it will be attracted by low-cost labor and will concentrate in labor-intensive production methods across the industrial spectrum. In modern sectors, plants in these countries might be

simply "screwdriver factories"--assembling final products, importing key components, and using few local suppliers. Other foreign investments might be in "services"--sales, marketing, and distribution outlets for imports produced in the EU. Or investments will flow to low-technology extractive sectors, like oil and gas. All innovative activity would continue to be concentrated in the EU as the "core." This means that prospects for rapid economic development of the NMMCs are bleak.

The structural imbalances and their consequences have a pernicious effect on the Barcelona process. The agenda of Barcelona is liberal, the practices are meant to be liberal, but the imbalance distorts and discredits the liberal agenda.

Finally, the Middle East conflict has undermined the Barcelona Process. Since the EMP's inception in 1995, the Middle East peace process was halting and uncertain, and the higher the tensions, the more the EMP was disrupted and weakened. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict thus helped to produce a deep cleft, not only between Israel and moderate Arab countries that were promoting the Barcelona Process, but also between Israel and Europe. The triangular partnership between Europe, the Arab world, and Israel, is now in turmoil

While a realist approach explains the emergence of the Barcelona Process as a means by which Europe intended to balance American power, it also suggests that a failure in that effort can mean a failure of Europe's project of region-building and interregionalism implied in the EMP. The global pre-eminence of the United States means that America can interfere with the effort. Indeed, American hegemonic power poses one of the strongest obstacles to the Barcelona Process. For example, in its effort to transform the Middle East, the US proposed a free trade agreement in April 2003 between the US and Middle East countries that directly challenges the EMP's goal of setting a free trade zone in the Mediterranean by 2010.

### **Implications**

As a first cut at the evidence supporting each of these hypotheses, it is my suspicion that the institutionalization of EMP and the effort to construct a "region" is likely to remain weak and develop slowly if at all. Significant activity is likely to be confined to the economic chapter with little spillover to the other areas of concern. Continued conflict in the Middle East is likely to prevent progress in social, political, and cultural integration, as well as progress in the institutionalization of the EMP. Given the current focus of US foreign policy on rooting out terrorism, the United States is likely to be deeply involved in the region, and if the EU is attempting to create its own region to balance US power, this effort is likely to fail, at least in the short run. Furthermore, economic integration in the region as a whole is likely to be partial, halting and shallow, given agricultural protectionism in the EU, the economic chasm between rich and poor countries in the region, the weakness of democracy, and the potential growing strength of political Islam. To date, the political will to overcome these roadblocks to regional integration is weak, and therefore the EU strategy of region building and interregionalism in the Mediterranean is likely to remain weak for some time.

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