

# Europe's Mediterranean Policy under the Hardship of Identity-Oriented and Nationalist Trends

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When considering the “freeze-up” of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since late 2008, one is tempted to judge the intense yet ridiculous activity carried out for two years to revitalize the Barcelona Process severely. The contradictions, improvisations, turmoil and blunders of the French initiative in the Mediterranean Region have been often and rightly criticised; their sheer numbers, which leaves one perplex, detracted greatly from what Nicolas Sarkozy wished to make the great ambition of French diplomacy during his administration. This criticism, however, does not take into account the contributions of the initiative, such as an interest in placing the Mediterranean back in the limelight of European debate, or the attempt to reintroduce Euro-Arab (and even Israeli-Arab) dialogue into the Euro-Mediterranean Process. In retrospect, the setbacks of French policy can also be interpreted as the tip of the iceberg. They are highly visible because France remains a major actor on the Mediterranean stage. Yet France's failure was also a failure for Europe, revealing its difficulty in assuming its relationship with societies on the other side of the Mediterranean. It is all of Europe that is responsible, at least in part, for the stalemate in Euro-Mediterranean relations. And the time has come to ask ourselves the causes for what many observers have called a fiasco.

With regard to the political climate, since January 2009, the Europeans have clearly failed to prevent the Gaza affair from impeding the implementation of the resolutions adopted in November of 2008 by the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Marseille. They

did not succeed – or did not attempt – to dissuade the Israelis from launching their offensive, absolutely contrary to the commitments that had just been made not to resort to force in order to settle conflicts in the Mediterranean Region. One can even suspect a certain duplicity among European leaders, who could not have been unaware of Israeli preparations for war. On the more structural level, the absence of a clear EU perspective on the future of Europe and the destiny of the Euro-Mediterranean Region has encouraged a return to national strategies – or even nationalist attitudes – among major European actors. This is a significant tendency, despite some exceptions, such as the efforts of the Finnish EU Presidency in 2006 to revive Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, which had been marred by the failure of the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process (Barcelona+10). After a weak Czech EU Presidency in the first semester of 2009, it was hoped that the Swedish Presidency would relaunch the Euro-Mediterranean Process, but hopes were dashed due to lack of a strong consensus on the Middle East conflict. In any case, it is hardly realistic to count on a few rare countries still infused with European virtue to attempt to compensate on their own for the lack of EU vitality.

This is where we arrive at what has become a crucial aspect of the Mediterranean issue: the profound deterioration of the perception of Euro-Mediterranean issues among Europeans.

It is patent that many European governments and leaders – among them the German Chancellor – share the reticence of N. Sarkozy with regard to the accession of Turkey, which “is not part of Europe.” This reticence, more or less explicit, is the expression of fear (and rejection) of the Muslim world, the sentiment that Islam would be incompatible with the European project. As with migratory flows, this sentiment is attributed to public opinion, which the majority of

policymakers prefer to use to different ends instead of clearing up the matter.

## On the more structural level, the absence of a clear EU perspective on the future of Europe and the destiny of the Euro-Mediterranean Region has encouraged a return to national strategies among major European actors

A victim of its populist temptations as well as its diplomatic weakness and the short-sightedness of its project for peaceful coexistence, the European Union lacks Mediterranean ambitions. It experiences a great deal of difficulty in conceiving of its relations with the south except to passively and implicitly consider it a mirror and border of European identity. Yet this process is not moving in a single direction: other factors and other actors are currently pushing for a reestablishment of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

### The Narrowing of Europe's Perspectives on the Mediterranean

The placement of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) project in hibernation since its birth has heightened the European Union's loss of visibility and credibility on the international arena, particularly in the Mediterranean Region, such an important area for it. Hence, the denunciation in November 2009 by European diplomats posted in Jerusalem of the Israeli strategy of illegal annexation that led the EU to take up a relatively severe position was hardly heard in Tel-Aviv. And the year 2010 started off for the EU on a mediocre note: after a disappointing attempt at an institutional relaunch of the UfM in Cairo in January 2010, the Spanish EU Presidency was weakened by the country's economic difficulties and by the poor readability of EU governance resulting from the establishment of new EU institutions.

Although US diplomacy had also caused disappointment, it managed to turn the page of the Bush era to assert its presence on the Mediterranean arena in a different manner in 2009, namely through President Obama's respective speeches in Istanbul and at the University of Cairo. The change in the US Administration's style and the little importance it seems to attach to partnership with Europe is not an irrelevant factor in the relative weakening of the EU's position in the region.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from this mediocre diplomatic climate, a more serious and deeper sign of Europe's entrenchment behind its Mediterranean borders is the development of an identity compulsion with xenophobe overtones on the continent. Even if it has other roots,<sup>2</sup> this identity trend – which seems to denote a change of impulse behind the European project – is primarily deployed against Europe's southern neighbours. From the polemic regarding Turkey's accession to recent debates on national or European identity, the convergence of a series of events and discussions would lead one to think that Europe is now making Islam its external and internal "Other."<sup>3</sup> This construction of a "Muslim border" of Europe is a relatively recent trend: the "small Europe" of the 1950s, vaccinated by the war against nationalism and totalitarianism, was more open to the world and did not hesitate to cross the Mediterranean. Today, the identity tension is a "lunatic" who seems to have invaded the house of Europe without control and to the benefit of no-one. It harbours a security delirium and establishes redoubtable perspectives for the European project that contrast with the more generous approach to relations with the Muslim world taken by President Obama in his speech at the University of Cairo.

However, relations with the Mediterranean are much more important for Europe than for the United States. Not only for security, strategic, economic and environmental reasons, but also because the management of the *human and cultural proximity* with the south conditions the future of the European project, at least in part. Long suppressed, the *human dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations* now takes precedence as a major facet of relations

<sup>1</sup> Cancellation of Obama's attendance at the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, lack of NATO solidarity at the Climate Conference and absence of Obama from the Europe-US Summit in Madrid.

<sup>2</sup> The EU's far too rapid expansion towards the East has often been criticised without sufficient preparation of public opinion.

<sup>3</sup> Consider as well: the poor management of the Muhammad cartoons affair in 2006, the rhetoric of conservative parties before EU elections and the Pope's ambiguous positions on the "house" of Europe, a "spiritual homeland" where Christianity plays an "irreplaceable role" (speech in Prague on 26 September 2009).

with societies on the other side of the Mediterranean, in their age-old manifestations as well as their new expressions.

If one does not settle for the “divided Mediterranean” or the “East-West Confrontation” discourse, the word that would best and most objectively characterize relations between Europe and South Mediterranean societies is indeed “proximity”: an obvious geographical and historical proximity, a definite economic and ecological proximity, but also a very great *human and cultural proximity*. In this regard, the tarnished notion of “Mediterranean melting pot” refers not only to ancient or medieval heritage, but above all to the fact that, over the past two centuries, the populations of the Mediterranean Region have mingled at least as much as within Europe. The intertwined human and cultural ties arising therefrom have created mixed cultural and human areas – clearly perceptible in the Western Mediterranean – that offer resistance to the construction of the Mediterranean borders of Europe and an essentialist view of identities.

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Yet the European project has poorly managed this reality to the present. Since 1986 and the Schengen agreements, it has been used, following a policy more impulsive than well thought-out, to reinforce the border of Europe as a barrier to human movement in the Mediterranean, there where the free circulation of people was formerly the rule. After the failure of Euro-Arab Dialogue, the Barcelona Process did not reverse this policy, despite its wish to strengthen the partnership with the countries on the other side of the Mediterranean. It consolidated the division between the economic and human areas, while relying on cultural dialogue among civil society institutions to attenuate

the effects. And then the Neighbourhood Policy, despite its good initial intentions, ideologically consolidated the distinction between “neighbours” and the European family.

This European policy of “moderate apartheid” has quickly revealed its limits. It has not settled the question of the human dimension of trans-Mediterranean relations. On the contrary, it has engendered perverse effects, such as the development of clandestine migration and its millions of victims. Another, less dramatic yet significant consequence of European policy is the legal strategy of bypassing Europe’s borders used by individuals who can obtain dual nationality. These cases now number in the millions; they foster the emergence of a real *trans-Mediterranean individualism*, which reinforces the consolidation of *interface* Mediterranean societies in Europe. In this regard, civil society with a Mediterranean vocation has greatly expanded since the Barcelona Process (and partially thanks to its aid), in a direction increasingly independent of intergovernmental concerns, which was not really the goal sought by the system’s instigators, who wished to have civil society actors serve as a support to Euro-Mediterranean policy.<sup>4</sup>

### The Influence of Individual State Approaches on EU Mediterranean Policy

In 1995, the Barcelona Process defined a Euro-Mediterranean cooperation horizon appropriated by a multitude of public and civil society actors. This appropriation of the Euro-Mediterranean framework by the actors is perhaps the most tangible and durable result of the Barcelona Process. It was done all the more easily since the cooperation framework was not binding (except in association agreements) but rather incentivised, and financially supported by a series of mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> Thus fostered, the Barcelona Process’ Euro-Mediterranean concept encouraged, in a relatively fruitful manner, the proliferation of policies by the actors involved, even if each actor projected the experience of their particular relations with the Mediterranean area and tended to prioritize their own objectives and interests in economic, political or symbolic matters. In other words, the role played by

<sup>4</sup> HENRY, J.R. “Le retour de la dimension humaine,” in *La méditerranée, un avenir en question, Questions internationales*, March-April 2009.

<sup>5</sup> This statement forms the basis for the book: *Politiques méditerranéennes entre logiques étatiques et espace civil. Une réflexion franco-allemande* (J.R. HENRY & G. GROC, eds. Paris: Karthala, 2000).

Mediterranean actors has followed a contradictory dynamic since the beginning of the Barcelona Process: on the one hand, it tends to mobilise around a common reference to Mediterranean solidarity, though an impressionist one; and on the other hand, this convergence of principles diversifies specifically into a multiplicity of Mediterranean policies and strategies that coexist with common EU policy on Mediterranean issues. The fundamental actors involved have more room for manoeuvring the less effective or the weaker the EU's foreign policy in the Mediterranean is in confronting essential political issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This trend has been corroborated and aggravated by the so-called "crisis," or the wear and tear of the Partnership, attributable to a variety of factors but made evident by the failure of the Summit organized on the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Conference. This crisis has had the effect of toning down the role of Brussels and a common Mediterranean policy to lend greater visibility on the regional arena to the "fundamental" actors – from States (whose number has nearly doubled) to individuals.<sup>6</sup> It has above all been propitious for initiatives launched by State actors with a capacity to act, as could be observed during the War of Lebanon in the summer of 2006: only the major powers of the Union were capable of reacting and offering their peacekeeping forces while impressing their competitors. On different occasions, State actors seek to make their initiatives visible: hence, Germany did not conceal its ambition of fostering an end to the stalemate in the Palestinian conflict issue under its EU Presidency. And today, it vigorously defends its interests in solar energy, as does France with regard to nuclear energy.<sup>7</sup> In a pessimist scenario, the risk would be, of course, that the powerful States end up taking advantage of a weaker EU and using it to their benefit.

In the recent past, it has been French diplomacy that has illustrated to the point of caricature the prevalence of national concerns over the multilateral approach. Since the end of the Chirac Administration, it has used the Partnership's "crisis" as a pretext to

multiply its unilateral initiatives in the Mediterranean Region. But it was above all with the Mediterranean Union project launched by Nicolas Sarkozy in February of 2007 that its Mediterranean hyperactivity reached its greatest scope and demonstrated its limitations.<sup>8</sup>

The manner in which the French initiative was launched accentuated the competition among European State actors, with certain nationalist overtones at times, as in the French-German dispute that arose over this project. It was one of the most serious misunderstandings that had occurred between the two countries before being defused by Spain and Italy, much more than by EU officials, who came away weakened by this episode. In this regard, it is significant that the founding conference of the UfM, held in Paris in July 2008, and the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Marseille were fundamentally *intergovernmental* operations, from which France sought to take the maximum benefit. Similarly, it emphasised its role in the Georgia affair that same year.

The current lack of readability in the governance of the EU system is not propitious to a turnaround in the trend. The competition between the Commission Presidency, the new permanent EU Presidency, the rotating semestral EU Presidency, the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and finally, the UfM Co-Presidency, does not foster the emergence of a common European vision on foreign relations. By the same token, the role of the European Parliament in Mediterranean matters does not match its aspirations: there is no clear Euro-Mediterranean line to be gleaned from the assembly's positions, despite its criticism of the Partnership's dysfunctions and the ambiguities of the Neighbourhood Policy, and despite its decision of postponing the granting of advanced status that had just been established for Israel prior to Gaza.

The institutional confusion reigning among EU institutions contributes to fostering a return to inter-state relations and to playing into the hands of dominant States, as displayed by the French-German duo joining forces again on the major problems concerning

<sup>6</sup> This change is well demonstrated by the studies published in *Mediterranean policies from above and below* (I. SCHÄFER & J.R. HENRY, eds. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), which systematizes the hypotheses of the previous work by expanding analysis to a significant corpus of national Mediterranean policies in both north and south. Each of them is studied with regard to the different modes of appropriation of the Mediterranean idea and how it pertains to a position or policy.

<sup>7</sup> On Spain's attempts towards leadership in the Mediterranean, cf. the article by Eduard SOLER I LECHA, "Madrid: action indirecte ou baisse de régime," in the on-line journal *Outre-Terre*, 2009-3 (No. 23).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. my article, "French Initiative in the Mediterranean Region: Back to Square One?" in *Mediterranean Yearbook, Med.2007*, Barcelona: IEMed 2008.

the Union.<sup>9</sup> The institutional confusion at the EU's institutional summit finds its echo in the confusion of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership structures: the articulations and duplications of effort between the Barcelona Process, the Neighbourhood Policy and the UfM are not clear – even on the vocabulary level – and have become the object of exegesis by jurists. In any case, the freeze-up of the UfM weighs upon the functioning of the entire Partnership: after becoming scarce in 2009, Euro-Mediterranean meetings are struggling in 2010 to return to a rhythm equivalent to the one before the UfM, despite the efforts of the Spanish Presidency.

Not only negative conclusions, however, should be drawn from the process of fragmentation and establishment of state control in Mediterranean policies. No-one can deny French diplomacy's long-standing experience in Mediterranean affairs. More than any other, the example of France's Mediterranean diplomacy highlights a problem the EU has not managed to settle to date: how to put the different Mediterranean resources of European actors in synergy for the common interest? How can the EU assume the diversity of Mediterranean tropisms, vocations and assets of the States and other actors composing the European Union in a positive manner? This challenge of European governance has not ceased to grow as the EU expands.

It is obvious that political as well as cultural and human relations between Spain or France and a country like Morocco are much more close-knit than those it has with many of its European partners. How can the resource constituted by this diversity of individual Mediterranean relations between actors of the North and South be coupled with the need for a common policy? This is a question that the European Union has only posed in a highly timid fashion, through the back door of "stepped-up cooperation" between northern and southern neighbours.<sup>10</sup> The diplomatic vicissitudes of the past two years demonstrate that

the management of Europe's relations with its south can be exclusively based neither on a hypothetical common EU foreign policy nor on competing, disorganized national initiatives. Greater harmonisation of Europe's Mediterranean policy on all levels is desirable, in particular on the inter-regional level.<sup>11</sup> Is it possible without reducing the impromptus relative to the future – whether federal or intergovernmental – of the European project?

While the major Euro-Mediterranean displays in France in 2008 shook the EU institutions, they paid even less attention to the infra-State and civil society actors, whose role has gained a great deal of consistency and maturity since 1995, at least on certain issues.

The same is true for the issue of human mobility within the Mediterranean Region. Stimulated by the constant dramas of clandestine migration and their presence in the media,<sup>12</sup> public opinion has gained a crucial awareness of this dimension of Euro-Mediterranean matters. It has contributed to making aspirants to migration be considered not only as victims or threats, but also as new actors in the regional arena, filled with a legitimate "desire for Europe." Their demands have been more and more strongly relayed by NGOs that have taken up the task of denouncing the human effects of the closing of Europe's borders. Among them are actors in the fields of human rights (Human Rights League), politics (Social Forums, ATTAC, Réseau Education sans frontière in France, etc.) and religion (Community of Sant'Egidio, CIMADE, etc.) that do not hesitate to advocate civil disobedience as a form of action. The most important Churches have joined such condemnation.<sup>13</sup> Since its meeting in Marrakech in 2006, the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum has been demanding the freedom of circulation of people as an essential condition for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. All of these debates have contributed to putting the issue of Eu-

<sup>9</sup> The Franco-German Council of Ministers of 4 February 2010 envisaged the development of cooperation between the two countries on 80 points, including the Middle East. It is also the French-German duo that is leading support to Greece, with the support of the new EU President, to the detriment of the Commission President, the Spanish stint in the rotating EU Presidency and European countries of the "Mediterranean Club" in difficulty. The resumption of dialogue among national strategies has not prevented the persistence of misunderstandings. Cf. Gerd STROHMER, "La frontière du Rhin," in *Outre-Terre*, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Rostane MEHDI's contribution in *Rapport Reiffers (Rapport du groupe d'experts réunis par l'Institut de la Méditerranée sur le projet d'Union de la Méditerranée*, Marseille, October 2007).

<sup>11</sup> This is a concern strongly emphasized by the Inter-Mediterranean Commission of the CPMR (Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions). The Commission intends to promote a "Mediterranean Macro-Region," with the support of aid provided by the EU to regional initiatives.

<sup>12</sup> Or in films, as in *Welcome*, by Philippe LORET, or *Eden à l'Ouest*, by COSTA-GAVRAS, both from 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. for instance the recent condemnation of European immigration policies by Cardinal Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace: "La frontière entre législations restrictives et racisme risque de devenir toujours plus mince" (*La Croix*, 12 February 2010)

rope's migration policy back on the agenda since 2007.

Despite its increased power, civil society has played but a weak role in the debates and diplomatic negotiations that resulted in the creation of the UfM. More than in Barcelona in 1995, civil actors were marginalized during the process of establishing the UfM. At the very most, they were granted "projects" from above. Regarding the crucial issue of human mobility, the texts adopted by the Paris Summit and the Conference of Marseille arose from a security consensus among States (from both north and south) that paid very little attention to the demands of civil society. By the same token, the Migratory Pact adopted under the French Presidency has proven restrictive and protectionist of a Europe retreating to the security of its borders. The problem remains of a "selective" immigration as opposed to a "random" one, as the point is to separate the grain from the chaff in a purely mercantile approach. The political decision-makers do not wish to hear the demographers and economists who emphasize Europe's interest in opening its borders more freely to human migration, nor jurists who denounce the violation of the fundamental human right of freedom of circulation.<sup>14</sup>

### What Are the Resources for "Re-Mediterraneanising" Europe?

The preceding thoughts are not intended to provide a wholly pessimistic perspective of the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Even if in the long run, nothing may remain of the initiative launched by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007 but the phrase, "The future of Europe will be played out in the Mediterranean," the latter remains highly pertinent.

For the Europeans, proximity to societies on the other side of the Mediterranean is, in fact, an unavoidable reality with which they must come to terms in order to build a common future. Mediterranean relations carry enough weight in the future of the European project, in its spatial configuration and its con-

tent for any crisis in the Partnership to affect the European project itself.<sup>15</sup>

Though the management of this proximity is a necessity for Europeans, it has yet to be assumed as an indivisible whole: the hope or mistake of the Barcelona initiative was to wish to separate the human dimension from the economic, energy, environmental or even cultural dimensions of this proximity. This mistake has continued in the new approach to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation by "projects" within the framework of the UfM. To manage the environmental or energy dimension of proximity with other Mediterranean societies without considering the other dimensions of this proximity cannot but cause misunderstandings and frustration. How can one devise, for instance, a Mediterranean solar plan – which will have considerable environmental consequences in the South – without structuring it within joint human and social development? And if the point is simply to proceed to salvage sectoral UfM projects, this would mean admitting that the global project is in a bad state.<sup>16</sup>

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Hence, what are the assets and factors that could lead to a true renovation of Euro-Mediterranean relations? One could attempt to enumerate some of them, relative to the actors, the perspectives and the awareness of the human stakes in the Partnership.

1) A first factor is the increased capacity of civil society actors – from individuals to NGOs – to make their expectations and views on Euro-Mediterranean relations heard.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. in particular: "Vers un droit à la mobilité?," special issue of *Migrations et sociétés*, January-February 2009; C. WIHTOL DE WENDEN, *La globalisation humaine*, Paris: PUF, 2009; and the Human Development Report 2009. "Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development," UNDP, October 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. my article "Les enjeux méditerranéens de la crise européenne," in *Construction de la paix par le dialogue interculturel. Mélanges en l'honneur de Tuomo Melasuo* (HENRIKSSON & KYNSILEHTO, eds.), Tampere: TAPRI, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to interpret otherwise the ministerial meeting on sustainable development organised in Paris by the French Co-Presidency of the UfM in June 2009, and the project for a Euro-Mediterranean Charter on Energy and Climate Change, devised by Algeria and Spain, to be presented at the UfM Summit in Barcelona in June 2010.

Though the hiatus between the inter-State entente sealed in Paris and Marseille and the weak consideration of civil society's expectations characterised the adoption in 2008 of the Union for the Mediterranean's founding texts, the tension that was reached on that occasion between the inter-State approach and civil society aspirations could also become a factor boosting dynamism: we seem to have reached a point where only a process of crisis seems capable of making things move forward on certain human rights issues, through demands and conflicts relayed by NGOs. There is also a need for a change in the imaginaries and public opinions on both sides of the Mediterranean. The positive image of benevolent power that Europe enjoyed in both North and South is increasingly marred by the high human price of locking and bolting the borders.

The NGOs active in the Euro-Mediterranean Region are behaving less and less as passive auxiliary forces to the public authorities and attempt to play the role of demanding respect for human rights. Their criticism has contributed to turning the debate on national identity and immigration in France into derision.<sup>17</sup> Here and there, alternative voices are being raised to contest certain aspects of Euro-Mediterranean policy.<sup>18</sup> Researchers themselves seem affected by this evolution: they are less tempted by expertise and more concerned with promoting an independent analysis of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Likewise highly significant is the tension among government and civil society actors that can be seen within the Anna Lindh Foundation, one of the rare institutions of the Euro-Mediterranean system where the articulation between these two types of actors – State and civil society – is explicitly organised. Initially conceived under the comical form of “inter-governmental civil society organisation,” this institution was severely criticized for the unconvincing results of its first years of operation. This called for a change in policy, structure and human resources that resulted in the adoption of a triennial programme in December of 2008, in which the demands of the “rank and file,” namely regarding human mobility, were taken into account.

In an institutional context unfavourable to Euro-Mediterranean relations, the capacity for initiative, action and response of civil society actors becomes an important resource. This is what incites certain political actors to assert that they should be used as the support for relaunching the Partnership.<sup>19</sup>

2) Another positive sign in favour of relaunching Euro-Mediterranean relations is that the debates over the past two years have been the occasion, despite dashed hopes, for a vast amount of “brainstorming” on the future of these relations.

Before opting for the feeble and rather meaningless concept of “Union for the Mediterranean,” other paths had been explored for building the Euro-Mediterranean future without falling into the contradictions of the Mediterranean Union project, whose conception was incompatible with the notion and reality of the European Union. These names are not neutral, but of course make reference to different scenarios.

The most interesting formula was that of the “Euro-Mediterranean Union” put forth by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moratinos, already proposed earlier by other politicians (D. Strauss Kahn in 2004) and think tanks. Even if Mr. Moratinos' proposal was a decision based on political convenience, the term has the advantage of being polysemous. It can have a maximalist meaning (enlargement of the European Union with partners to the south) just as well as a minimalist one (creation of a structure including the European Union). It would be fully compatible with the oft evoked prospect of a progressive enlargement of the Council of Europe to the Mediterranean Region.

In any case, such a formula leaves the door open for better management of the Mediterranean's human aspect and above all a clearer vision of a common destiny, whereas the UfM can by no means act as a shared utopia that would mobilize people when individuals cannot move freely in the Mediterranean area. The formula would also be able to lend meaning to the regime of “advanced status” (towards what?) now enjoyed by Morocco.

<sup>17</sup> This debate went beyond national borders. Contrary to diplomatic custom, a former Belgian Prime Minister even indicated in *Le Monde* his “dejection” regarding the conduct and content of the debate.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the SODEPAU colloquium in Barcelona in November 2007. Along the same lines was the appeal made on 1 March 2010 to the President of France by some fifteen former French high-level diplomats in favour of a European initiative on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the note from 6 May 2009 submitted by Risto Veltheim, Finnish Ambassador for the Euro-Mediterranean Process, to the Euromed institutions.

3) The wordplays notwithstanding, debates over the past two years have provided an opportunity for some politicians to take up a position of advocating greater human openness by Europe towards its south. In France, for instance, politicians from different parties now show their concern about the effects of closing the borders of Europe to human movement and express an interest in having European policy change on this point. Almost everywhere in Europe, the Greens are decrying the evils of “Fortress Europe.”

It is true that advocating the return to freedom of movement and human mobility in the Mediterranean Region requires political courage. “It is an issue that paralyzes politicians,” even though they are aware of its relevance, observed a French diplomat involved in the UfM.

However, it is impossible to make the Mediterranean an area of peace on the European model without assuming the human proximity and the continuity between societies there. In other words, the only reasonable approach would seem to be to apply the formulas that have succeeded in pacifying the European space to the Mediterranean Region.

The first formula used in the European area was to articulate, beginning with the Schuman Declaration, an ambitious yet credible utopia for the populations

through feasible policies. Another formula consisted of strengthening human exchanges, beginning with prioritising policies targeting youth. But the oft-considered creation of a Mediterranean Youth Office or a Mediterranean Erasmus programme is running up against the policies restraining human mobility. The same holds true for the development of cooperation among the regions bordering the Mediterranean.

On the whole, the human dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations thus fundamentally calls into question the conception of Europe. The future of the European project depends largely on the management of human proximity with societies on the other side of the Mediterranean: either withdrawal into a pseudo-European identity bounded by the Mediterranean will reduce Europe to a “closed circle” construed upon fantasies of invasion by the new barbarians, who would be the Muslims; or the challenge of a “Europe without shores,” envisaged more than half a century ago by François Perroux, will engage the entire Euro-Mediterranean Region in a virtuous circle where all the dimensions of the proximity among societies bordering the Mediterranean can be assumed. This would not mean “Europeanising” the Mediterranean but rather “re-Mediterraneanising” Europe...