THE CONTRIBUTION OF GREECE TO STRENGTHENING

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS

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After the Mediterranean enlargements of the European Community in the early 1980s, Greece's position has enhanced further the strategic significance of the Mediterranean for Europe, not least because this 'unique body of water', to borrow a phrase, constitutes a crucial fault-line where several civilisations have mutually influenced and enriched each other. Today, Greece is called upon to play an important role in promoting peace and stability in the region. The twin analytical *foci* of this article aim at developing a better understanding of the emerging Euro-Mediterranean system and of Greece's role in it, both as part of the European integration project and as an integral part of the fledging Barcelona Process.

2. Introduction

The shift in the vocation of the post Cold War European international system has resulted in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe aspiring to become part of the European Union's (EU) zone of democracy, stability and prosperity. Yet, it is also no secret that the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean is of great importance to Europe. Since the mid 1990s, the EU's Mediterranean policy has gained a significant degree of multilateralisation, as compared with previous European approaches to the Mediterranean. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), launched in November 1995 has, by putting an institutional face on the forging of co-operative policies between the EU and its 12 Mediterranean partners (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, the Palestinian Authority, Cyprus and Malta), become a focal point of both scholarly and policy-oriented attention, with important implications for the international relations of the Euro-Mediterranean system, resting at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and Asia.

Much like Europe itself, the Mediterranean is a composite of different cultures, each having a distinctive sense of being and belonging into a heterarchical space. To borrow a phrase, it is 'a patchwork of images, composed partly of myths, partly of realities'. Mythical constructs aside, today, the Mediterranean reveals a pluricausal dynamism towards a new mapping of its component collectivities. These collectivities are currently experiencing tremendous changes in their geography, politics, economics and cultural composition. The extent to which old

images are replaced by new in this cultural tapestry depends on different understandings of its sense of unity and diversity.[1]

Against a background of unprecedented global and regional transformations that redefine the conditions of international politics, both sides of the Mediterranean are today groping for change. Indeed, elements of convergence and divergence are reformulated through modified perceptions, and an ascending pluralism in its governance structures. No doubt, in the framework of contemporary international relations, perceptions and misperceptions from the 'outside' are critical factors. Especially given that, as long as the 'internal' misperceptions persist, the relationship between North and South of the Mediterranean will remain tense, offering an apology for keeping sustainable regional co-operation beyond reach. Therefore, the critical question for the region is whether the Barcelona Process can meet its prescribed ends, without first transforming itself into a regional system of patterned behaviour, with a particular notion of rules of the game.[2] This raises the question of whether the co-operative ethos embedded in the new regional institutional setting can go beyond the level of contractual interstate obligations and bring a genuine Euro-Mediterranean partnership much closer. In this framework, the strategic choices of the EU will be of great importance for the promotion of norms of good governance, given the tensions arising from different conceptions of democracy and modernisation. Equally crucial is to assess whether there are any insurmountable socio-cultural barriers to furthering the prospects of a meaningful inter-civilisational dialogue, keeping in mind the recent re-embrace of religious fundamentalism and the 'clashing' speculations over the emerging crisis in the Middle East. It is only in this sense that the Barcelona process will act as a prelude to new and far-reaching 'Mediterranean beginnings'.

Greece has a clear interest in participating to its full capacity in the formation of a vibrant and viable Euro-Mediterranean space, one characterised by long-standing as well as emergent problems, but also by a notable potential for regional systemic change. This is particularly crucial, now that the EU, so closely bound at its birth to East European anxieties, and so obliged to be furthering the transformation of the European order post-1989, has perhaps not paid due attention to the new and pressing realities of Mediterranean security.

The country which gave birth to the idea of democracy some 25 hundred years ago, and an ensemble of historically constituted cultural properties that has managed in the course of time to reconcile homogeneity and diversity, Greece today is a promising regional actor, capable of contributing further to the cooperation structures in the Mediterranean. Greece has traditionally maintained good and friendly relations with Mediterranean countries, due to its geographical proximity, and strong historical, cultural and economic bonds, dating back to ancient times.

It is widely accepted today that in the post-1989 era, a series of 'new risks' has emerged in Greece's immediate security environment, namely the Balkans and the Mediterranean.[3] Today, the objectives of Greek foreign policy are, among others, to safeguard stability in the Eastern-Mediterranean, to further the process (but also the quality) of Europeanisation in its northern Balkan borders, and to project its civilian values in both these oft-troubled peripheries. With Greek politics being formulated in relation to an ever globalising, if not already globalised, world, the time is ripe for a redefinition of the country's strategic orientation in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

2. The Euro-Mediterranean space

Geographically, the Mediterranean encompasses at least two mega-regions: the geographical space which borders its north-west sector (EU) and the south-eastern one, namely the Middle East, and three sub-regional groupings: Southern Europe, the Mashreq and the Maghreb.[4] Although there exist many variations in such geographical divisions, it is still useful to think of the Mediterranean as a single security system. Arguably, no other part of the globe exemplifies better the post-bipolar symptoms of instability towards the fragmentation and revival of 'ancient feuds' than the Mediterranean, with security questions becoming increasingly indivisible, often regardless of its diverse sub-regional features.

Euro-Mediterranean society and culture is relatively unstructured and non-hierarchical. European civilisation owes much to the Mediterranean and the Islamic world, and both have found themselves locked in centuries of lasting dynamic tension and cooperation. To start with, one has to go back to the era of ancient Greek civilisation, and the days of the Roman imperium. In the following period, the Mediterranean witnessed an explosion of the Arab population that conquered the Greco-Roman civilisations, leaving a remarkable and lasting impact on a region that extended from Egypt to the so called 'Fertile Crescent'. The peoples living in this area were given a new religion, Islam, and a new language, Arabic. Neither of them, however, was able to create a melting pot through assimilationist techniques of enforced homogeneity, or for that matter lead towards a complete fusion or incorporation, although some commonly shared features did offer a bridge to overcoming diversity.

The Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek, and Persian civilisations, and later the Roman Empire, have all found their way to the Mediterranean. The split between the Byzantine empire in the East and the Catholic/Germanic kingdoms in the West, the rise of Islamic and Arabic rule in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain, the impact of extra-territorial forces such as the Crusaders, and the rise of regional powers like Venice and Genoa, have all contributed to a rich Mediterranean history. Their combined impact has often turned the Mediterranean into a potentially explosive area, wherein the divisions and controversies among its peoples intermixed with their historical ties and related destiny. As a result, the Mediterranean has always run the risk of becoming a site of endemic and often protracted conflicts.

From such a macro-historical perspective, the fragmentation of the Euro-Mediterranean space constitutes the major obstacle to sustain North-South co-operation. Tempting as it may be to characterise the Mediterranean as 'a horizontal dividing line' between the rich European North and 'an arc of crisis' located in the South, this division fails to capture the dialectic between distinct, yet intertwined, geographical spaces. A North-South conflict theoretical framework underestimates the realities of both North-North and South-South frictions and the sympathies that not only prevent the outbreak of autochthonous conflicts but also underlie

Western European efforts to develop harmonious, yet not symmetrical, relations across the Mediterranean. A more studied analysis though, reveals that the Mediterranean provides an efficient line of contact.

In fact, it has always constituted a crossing point for conflict and co-operation, antagonism and co-existence. Being a heterogeneous synthesis of diverse civilisations - conceptually, along the lines of a 'heterarchy' - as well as of unequal economic development, a plurality of political regimes, divergent perceptions of security, and uneven demographic growth, the Euro-Mediterranean system is one of several precarious equilibria, for which a comprehensive framework of analysis is yet to become discernible. True as the latter may be, the Mediterranean can be also seen as a network of diversities and dividing lines between different socio-economic systems, political cultures and regimes, languages and, crucially, religions. One may also refer to the Mediterranean as a space, where geography, history and politics intermesh with culture and religion with enormous complexity, resulting in a composite system of partial regimes, each reflecting a particular sense of being and belonging.

2.1. Properties of the system

Religion is a very important factor in the Euro-Mediterranean system, in which all three major monotheistic traditions co-exist. Much like Christianity, Islam originates out of Hebrew monotheism and branches of Judaism with common roots back to the patriarch Abraham. The influence of European thinking on the Arab-Muslim world dates back to the Hellenistic period, while the Muslim civilisation marked its impact on European-Christian culture for several centuries. But whereas the Hellenic-Judaic tradition, as Couloumbis and Veremis note, captured the imagination of the Europeans with relatively little resistance, Islam failed to make any significant inroads in the West. 'The Ottomans left their religious heritage in Bosnia and Albania but the Arabs who preceded them facilitated the transmission of Aristotelian thought into Europe of the tenth century. The subsequent blooming of the Renaissance was assisted by the Byzantine transfusion of classical Greek philosophy and Platonic thought that questioned the established Aristotelian wisdom'.[5]

Not only did European culture have no particular influence on Muslims for over a thousand years but it also benefited from the early Islamic 'enlightenment'.[6] Regardless of the socio-cultural and economic entanglements rooted in Mediterranean history, the modern European image of Islam sets its culture outside Europe; also, due to the burdened colonial past of the Europeans, the image of external 'otherness' to Europe is mirrored in the Muslim societies of the Mediterranean.

No doubt contemporary Euro-Mediterranean politics is full of misunderstandings about distorted perceptions and images of Islam, as it is about the threat of terrorism used by transnational extremist groups, especially after the events of 11 September. Other issues stem from the appropriation of Islam for political ends and the tensions arising from questions of universal values and human rights norms. Such misunderstandings emanate as much from mutual ignorance, as they do from intended confusion. One should also guard against the simplification often suggested in the media that 'Islamic fundamentalism' is a violent and merciless force orchestrated by Iraq and Iran with the help of other radical regimes. There is still a need to (re)define terms which reduce dialogue to a series of parallel monologues and reinforce misunderstandings. What is needed, is a reciprocal exchange that does away with any subjectivist view that wants the 'West' to act as a universal civilising force based on an almost metaphysical obligation to humanity.[7] It is, then, of great value that any meaningful debate about (political) Islam should dispel the clouds of deliberate myth-making and vengeful rhetoric that are particularly detrimental to a mutually rewarding dialogue.

It is a common place in international relations, that it is the threat itself as much as the (mis)perceptions that guide policy-makers. Today, most would agree that, even after the horrific events of 11 September 2001, the Mediterranean does not present Europe with any major military threat, as the growing arms races in the region and its militarisation are mainly intended for use on a south-south scale. Although issue-specific disputes are not to be ruled out, the contemporary security risk is linked with radical (terrorist) movements and the enduring North-South socio-economic asymmetries and migration trends. Nor do southern

Mediterranean states perceive any direct threat from the EU, for they associate 'security' chiefly with domestic concerns. Still though, the international management of domestic crises exacerbates anti-Western feelings.[8] Most North African regimes are sceptical of Europe's willingness to play a decisive role in Mediterranean security,[9] while they are suspicious of NATO's involvement in the region, despite the Alliance's 'Mediterranean Dialogue'.[10]

For their part, EU states exhibit a relative difficulty in dealing with Mediterranean affairs, in contrast to dealing with similar problems in other transformative regions, such as Eastern Europe. Although the development of the European defence capability arguably is a new element in Euro-Mediterranean relations, past experiences, e.g. Eurofor and Euromarfor, generated negative responses. This has led some to believe that a similar reaction should be expected in the light of the current upheaval in the Middle East. But it is equally true that the EU faces significant challenges in assuming a substantive role in the Mediterranean as a result of the presence of the US and the continuing reluctance of the latter to share its allegedly 'co-operative hegemony' in the Middle East.

Today, the Euro-Mediterranean system offers a most dramatic illustration of complex inequality and interdependence as its two shores have completely different records of socio-economic development. Unequal economic development, a variety of political systems and social structures, divergent perceptions of security and rapid demographic growth, are but a few major factors exacerbating Euro-Mediterranean relations. The northern Mediterranean countries are composed of prosperous industrial economies, locked together in a mutually dependent relationship with other industrially advanced European states within a new European order. On the other hand, the southern Mediterranean countries are being destabilised due to acute economic pressures (e.g. poverty, the politics of discrimination, environmental degradation, and the role of international and 'local' agencies as related to the development process) and a resulting radicalisation of both culturally and historically constituted social conflicts. As the dramatic regional population growth has been combined with some degree of economic depression new pressures emerge for individuals to move across the Mediterranean to Euro-land.

Although European Mediterranean states have reached a high level of democratic political stability and participate in highly institutional(ised) structures of governance, the existence of which prevents the appearance and escalation of both internal as well as external disputes, the rest of the littoral countries are confronted with acute clashes. The tendency for the latter countries to fall victims of the 'unitary trap' and, hence, act unilaterally in an effort to solve their problems, is self-defeating and needs to be replaced by a more balanced and comprehensive regime founded upon conjoint practices. This is based on the idea of enhancing stability through the prolepsis of crises, and through a long-term process of transparency and peace-building. Although the complexity of the Euro-Mediterranean space requires integrated multilateral institutions, it remains unclear whether these can effectively impact on the choices of the littoral states when it comes to issues where vital national interests are, or appear to be, at stake. No doubt, the success of any viable form of Euro-Mediterranean governance depends largely on the creation of flexible institutional arrangements to break down regional complexity.

3. Euro-Mediterranean formations

Euro-Mediterranean relations have become politicised as a result of the geographical proximity, the nature and level of interdependence, as well as the role that previous European policies towards the region have come to play. Signs of an enhanced European interest in the region were first recorded in 1975 at the beginning of the Euro-Arab dialogue, then in the early and mid-1980s with the accession of Greece and the Iberian nations to the then Community, and again after the 1990/91 Gulf crisis. However, Europe's external relations with the so-called third Mediterranean countries took the form of bilateral agreements, which paradoxically were of similar, if not often identical content. Such a fragmented approach resulted in two general types of association agreements: those concerning prospective members and closer economic associates (Cyprus, Malta and Turkey), and those relating to the rest of the littoral states that loom in the wider framework of the EU's Mediterranean policy.

The replacement of the pre-1989 international system has lent great fluidity and instability to the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean space, which were not well equipped in terms of policies, competences and institutions to deal with the new conjuncture. But as EU policy-makers directed their attention eastwards, the response to the growing scale of conflicts and serious disputes in the Mediterranean was left to the Union's southern members to deal with. France, Spain Portugal Italy and Greece bring Mediterranean issues to the fore of the EU's foreign policy agenda, for they have traditionally maintained a plethora of economic and political ties with the region. One might argue that the current EU focus on Eastern Europe (especially during and after the Nice process) affects the EU's Mediterranean policy.

In order to redress this imbalance, southern EU states put forward multilateral initiatives that aspire to a comprehensive EU Mediterranean presence. The most ambitious initiatives before the launching of the Barcelona Process were, the 'Mediterranean Forum' and the Spanish-Italian initiative in the early 1990s for a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM). Building on the Helsinki Process, this proposal envisioned a conference in which all political entities active in the Mediterranean would be associated with the building of a system of rule-governing state behavior similar to that which existed in the Cold War Europe, something, however, that regional complexity never allowed to bear fruits.

In the early 1990s, the EU decided to adopt a new Mediterranean strategy aiming at correcting the problems created by its bilateral trade relations. In June 1994 the Corfu European Council gave the initial impetus and in its communications of October 1994 and 8 March 1995 the European Commission tabled its proposals for a EMP that were endorsed by the European Council at its Essen and Cannes meetings in December 1994 and June 1995 respectively. On 27-28 November 1995, the EU Foreign Affair Ministers signed with their Mediterranean homologues the Barcelona Declaration. Epitomising the Declaration is the emphasis put on respect for democracy and human rights, political dialogue, economic liberalisation, and financial and technical assistance for the Mediterranean partners. It includes numerous norms on interstate relations and global disarmament, as well as provisions for co-operation on

combating terrorism and drug-trafficking, on issues of illegal immigration, and on increasing arms control, particularly regional renunciation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and on issues. Arguably, it has infused a greater political and security bias to Euro-Mediterranean relations, whilst encompassing an ambitious economic plan for an industrially inspired Mediterranean free trade area (MEFTA) by the year 2010. In practice, however, the Barcelona Process has moved forward to a large extent by the new Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements that updated and enhanced the previous individual agreements between the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries. The new agreements focused mainly on trade liberalisation, the encouragement of foreign direct investment and economic co-operation, as well as on the need to further political and socio-cultural ties.

Grosso modo, the Barcelona project was a collective European attempt to redefine threat perceptions stemming from the Mediterranean South by addressing the perils of social unrest and economic underdevelopment. Yet, the invention of the entire project should be seen as a vital step towards a 'regional partnership' that may animate some confident expectations for a common Euro-Mediterranean consciousness to emerge, thus laying the groundwork for the creation of an international regime, albeit one conforming to a rather lean definition of the term.[11] From a systemic perspective, it can be seen as a pluri-dimensional international regime in statu nascendi.[12] For the moment, though, it represents a balance of interests, rather than a truly common Euro-Mediterranean interest per se. Although it sets up a system of flexible arrangements to govern Euro-Mediterranean relations, the substantial differentiation of the ratio with the financial budget of the EU for the reconstruction of Eastern Europe was the major reason for attracting the interest of Mediterranean countries.

Indeed, the EMP is propelled by a certain economism, whose financial implications are particularly favourable to the non-EU partners. In return to the above, the EU linked issues of economic liberalisation to a set of political principles ratified in Barcelona. The European consensus around human rights, democracy, self-determination and religious tolerance, together with the fostering of multilateral economic and financial co-operation, may in time facilitate the convergence of the actors' expectations.

The regional Partnership may prove instrumental in fostering a new co-operative ethos among its members. Interest-convergence around economic tasks such as MEFTA could contribute to a relaxation of tensions in areas where controversy is more likely to arise than not. It is on this premise that a more easily discernible Euro-Mediterranean regime may come into being. This composite nature of the regional process offers a wide range of opportunities for the functionalist expectations of the countries involved to form the basis of a consensually pre-determined set of policies, which are beneficial to overall systemic stability. The emerging Euro-Mediterranean system can thus be taken as a system of rules governing the interaction of interdependent actors around functional tasks. By elevating the creation of rules of transaction to a systemic property of the regional process, a certain economic bias may prevail, whose liberalising effects could offer a platform from which substantive rewards can be gained for all. This points to a preference for a functionalist strategy that is nevertheless embedded within the practise of market-oriented regimes, and not least in the minds of EU policy makers.

Central to the need for accommodating substantive dialogue in the currently fragmented Euro-Mediterranean system and to preserve regional stability, is the role of institutions. The problem of organising Euro-Mediterranean politics out of the systemic fragmentation of this heterarchical regional space, is how to break down regional complexity. But first it has to be realised the importance of diversity as an essential principle, because the regional system is itself constituted of the clash of its different sub-systems.[13] True, some hierarchy of norms may in the end prove necessary, but this should also reflect the praxis of mutualism and respect for the 'other'. The aim of the Barcelona Process is for 'others' to be brought into the governance structures of the EMP, and for regional diversity to transform itself from a self-referential property of distinct units into an identifiable pluralist order.

It could be argued that at this level, the process of regime-formation is directed at setting the limits of acceptable behaviour within a nascent and flexibly arranged structure of governance. However, it is the very flexibility of the Partnership itself - the way in which it is valued by

the partners and the means by which its norms can facilitate agreement on the basis of mutualism and reciprocity - that ultimately sets the limits of 'consciousness-raising' in issues of Euro-Mediterranean governance. But let us now turn to Greece's role in the transformative Euro-Mediterranean order.

4. Greece and the Mediterranean

Greece is located at the eastern hub of a strategic theatre lying at the crossroads of the Euro-Mediterranean system. Although Greece belongs institutionally to what can be called the 'European zone of stability', unlike its other EU partners, it borders on a region of fluidity, where real or potential conflict endures. Greece shares a common heritage and culture with Balkan countries (Albania, Bulgaria, and FYROM) and with Turkey and Cyprus, approaching the Middle East. Greece's complex relationships with these three sets of neighbours in the Euro-Mediterranean space dominate current regional politics. The relationships between Greece, the Balkans, and Turkey/Cyprus and the EU typify the difficulties and challenges involved in seeking regional unity and co-operation.

Greece is a full member of the EU, courtesy of the latter's first Mediterranean enlargement in 1981. Since then, the evolution of European governance structures has had a direct impact on the country's orientation. It is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of Greek public opinion has supported increasingly, and quite clearly since the mid-1980s, the country's European orientation and its multifaceted integration into the mechanisms and institutions of the EU system.[14] Although Europe is fundamentally important for the Greek polity, it cannot regard Europe without also considering its unstable peripheral areas, the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Since antiquity, the Mediterranean has played a pivotal role in Greece's history, politics and society, as the country is located at the crossroads of three continents. Geographically, Greece is an integral part of the Balkan states system, in close proximity to the oil-rich Middle East, Black Sea and Caucasus, whilst the Aegean passage constitutes an important shipping route

for the transportation of energy products to mainland Europe. It has been argued that Greece's strategic environment is being shaped by the development of new lines of communication for energy, and other infrastructure projects.[15] Furthermore, Greece's position at the heart of the Mediterranean enhances its strategic significance for the EU as the region constitutes a crucial faultline between the rich North and the poor South. The challenge facing Greece is to project its civilian values by promoting principles and rules which would be applicable, in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Greek culture measures its greatness by its remarkable longevity in history. Since the Enlightenment, European intellectuals have posited Greece as the cradle of European civilization. Another aspect of Greek culture links Greece with the Orient and its southern Mediterranean neighbours. The fact, however, that Greece was for several centuries under the Ottoman rule also explains why the national identity discourse accepts Islamic cultures as constituting the 'other'. Hence, Greece has been defined along the lines, on the one hand, of its Europeaness and, on the other, its affinity to the Mediterranean and the Balkans, with the Mediterranean itself constituting from a Greek perspective a Southern European periphery. Greece has good relations with most Arab countries and Israel, although it maintains relatively little contact with its southern neighbors as compared to its Balkan counterparts. Due mainly to traditional but also emergent security concerns, as well as to the centrality of religion in Greek identity, the country orients itself more towards the Balkans than the Mediterranean.[16] But the emerging Euro-Mediterranean space is now attracting greater attention from Greek foreign policy-makers, as it represents an embodiment of a long-standing view that Greece cannot, as a nation, be oriented only towards one direction, but has to strike a balance between its competing European, Balkan and Mediterranean identities.

5. Greek objectives in the Euro-Mediterranean Framework

One of those countries, whose image internationally far exceeds its actual weight in international relations, is Greece. As such, it has often found itself in a delicate position between the dictates of complex interdependence and the quest for independent self-rule on

sensitive national issues. Greece has often been accused of having a fixed preoccupation with the Aegean and the Cyprus issue, and of being a stumbling bloc whenever issues relating to Turkey have arisen in the Brussels headquarters. However, things have significantly changed as the Simitis administration has moved away from the so-called strategy of 'conditional sanctions' to the one of 'conditional rewards' in relation to Turkey's EU candidacy.[17] Greece has declared its willingness to withdraw its objections, provided that Turkey contributes substantively to Cyprus' accession to the EU and towards a mutually acceptable solution to the Cyprus problem. Enténte between Greece and Turkey has been further exhibited following the destructive earthquakes both countries experienced in 2000. But the causes for such an improvement should also be explored in relation to the demands of modernization, globalization and, crucially, European integration. Participating in EU governance structures implies the undertaking of certain obligations about the functioning of democracy, respect for human rights, and acceptance of international law as a framework for national foreign policy-making. After the Copenhagen European Council decisions in December 2002 and the accession of Cyprus to the EU[18], developments over this issue are expected to contribute positively in the Eastern Mediterranean security dilemmas.[19]

Development and underdevelopment are integral parts of a unitary world system. It is not possible to isolate nation states from the structural parameters of the larger global system of which they are an integral part. Today, the Greek foreign policy is formulated in relation to the political and economic aspects of an ever globalizing world and the necesity, to quote from Foreign Minister George Papandreou, for Greece to redefine 'at a deeper level … [its] identity in the multicultural settings of Europe, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean'. Greece exhibits a firm European orientation, but at the same time it maintains particular Balkan and Mediterranean concerns that relate to a growing set of internal and external security issues. Accordingly, Greek foreign policy has three essential objectives: first, to strengthen the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean by facilitating the entry of Cyprus to the EU zone; second, to forge a foreign policy which will allow the country to exploit, as best as possible, all economic opportunities of the regional economy; and, finally, to take the lead in building the regional institutions for peace and prosperity in the Balkan and the Mediterranean regions. From an economic perspective, the shaping of a stable security environment in the Eastern

Mediterranean will facilitate the transfer of substantial resources from the national defence budget to the achievement of other urgent socio-economic ends.[20]

A major question in the region is whether conflict-prone areas such as the Middle East, will manage to integrate into the emerging regional system of stability or cling atavistically to patterns of local conflict. Greece has been active in supporting every effort towards diplomatic, non-military solutions in the Middle East, presenting an interesting position in this context, potentially useful for all parties. Greece's objective in the Mediterranean is crystal-clear: to carry forward dynamic initiatives in order to establish a coherent framework of principles and rules of justice and democracy, which will take effect throughout the region. This policy is guided by the principles of the respect for international borders, stability and security, as well as by full respect for human rights. Despite the complex problems faced by the majority of its surrounding neighbors, Greece aims at developing multilateral links with these countries based on multilevel historical and cultural ties and affinities, as well as on common economic and commercial experience.[21] Such ties will be further advanced when the Middle East process, along with negotiations on the reunification of Cyprus, start to bear fruits.

The sea-change in world politics since 1989 brought about a new challenge to the nation-state, in that it no longer possesses the capacity, nor even the normative power, to encounter the threats of the new era by acting alone. The effects of this change cannot be fully overcome as long as politically and economically unstable parts of the region are left outside international institutions of governance. Greece is a member of all important international and regional organizations. Although the country's EU membership has activated its European relations, Greece's Mediterranean policy has been generally reactive, thus letting other actors determine the parameters of the EU's respective policy.[22] Today, Greece has opted for a multilateralist foreign policy in the Mediterranean, by participating in socio-economic and political synergies aiming at the construction of a politically viable and socially acceptable Euro-Mediterranean space. For one thing, the opportunities for multilateral initiatives are evident.

With the launching of the Barcelona Process, Greece has intensified its efforts to develop diplomatic links and to promote economic and cultural ties with southern Mediterranean states. In doing so, it has made use of existing opportunities to act as a factor of stability throughout its partners' transitional phase. In response to the new challenges posed by economic and commercial opportunities in this region and other emerging markets in the world, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been actively promoting Greek business abroad by setting up a department to co-ordinate with other agencies and private sector organisations. Instructions have been sent to Greek embassies and consulates to foster economic and commercial ties with the business community of the host country. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activities and historical ties can ensure Greece's positive contribution to the development process, prosperity and well-being of Mediterranean people. Also the initiative of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in organising two meetings between Palestinian and Israeli politicians, journalists and academics in Athens in July and December 1997 is a good case in point. For Greece's foreign policy, after the Balkans, the Mediterranean is becoming not so much a newly found but a rediscovered land of opportunity and belonging.

6. The Greek presidency and the Mediterranean dimension of the ESDP

Greece held the presidency of the ESDP from July 2002 (following Denmark's opting-out) until the summer of 2003, something which came as both a great opportunity, and a great responsibility. According to the Minister of Defence, Mr Yannos Papantoniou, 'it gives to Greece the possibility of making an effective contribution to building Europe's ESDP, and a great responsibility, because in this 12-month Presidency too many issues have arisen in the international agenda'.[23] Following the mobilization of the Greek presidency during the Informal Conference of Defense Ministers in Rethymno, in 4-5 October 2002, the prospect of ESDP have been set on a more stable basis. The attempts to establish a common EU foreign policy reflect a deeper desire of the European states to reinforce the process of political unification of Europe, which is inconceivable without a common security and defence policy. Doubtless, the further integration of foreign, security and defence policies in the EU context is bound to have an impact on Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Yet demands for greater transparency become central to the political governance of the Mediterranean, especially in relation to the multilogical structures of the Barcelona Process. At a normative level, mutual trust-building, combined with the development of common understandings among the partner-nations and a culture of rule-governed state behavior, should be at the top of the regional agenda. In that respect, Mediterranean stability-building cannot be properly handled without the equal involvement of all parties concerned. It is necessary to devise ways to give non-EU partners a greater voice in correcting existing asymmetries, giving their concerns as much consideration as possible. Hence another function of the attempts of the 2003 Greek Presidency's seminars on the Mediterranean Dimension of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in Rhodes 1-2 November 2002 and Corfu 9-10 May 2003, to act as platforms for a constructive public discourse.[24]

The war against terrorism, which, as we all know, is endemic in the Mediterranean, the situation in the Middle East and the increasing emphasis given by the EU to illegal immigration matters, have raised questions in the South regarding the deeper motives for the setting up of ESDP, in view of NATOs' new priorities on international terrorism and the Middle East.[25] Important in this framework is the Greek initiative on the Mediterranean dimension of ESDP, which aims to carry forward the work done by the Spanish presidency, in order to further develop the capacity for dialogue with all Mediterranean partners, so as to identify the common Euro-Mediterranean interests and aspirations. Co-ordination mechanisms for bilateral cooperation between the EU members and southern partners should not be excluded from the agenda. The aim would be to incorporate important bilateral relations between different partner countries and EU members, at least at the level of exchange of information. This could then be extended to other sub-regional initiatives where security is a clear issue, such as the Mediterranean Forum.[26]

7. Final remarks

At a time when power is becoming more widely dispersed and low politics areas acquire greater salience for academics and practitioners alike, the Mediterranean finds itself in limbo between order and change. Today, and despite a long Euro-Mediterranean historical tradition, fast growing socio-economic differences reveal the asymmetric relationship that exists among the Euro-Mediterranean partners: the anticipated integration in the North is not matched by reinforced co-operation within the South. Although the Barcelona project cannot but go ahead through trial and error, it is equally crucial to keep a fundamental direction: designing efficient systems of internationalised rule requires a maximum of what can be described as 'capacity for governance'. At the macro-systemic level, such a capacity is presently lacking, not only due to various regional institutional weakness, but also due to the absence of credible commitments by the partners to make effective use of existing arrangements.[27]

Whatever the legitimising ethos of prevailing worldviews in the Euro-Mediterranean system, there is no doubt that trust-building, transparency, cultural pluralism, symbiotic association, and an open civilisational dialogue are useful tools for revitalising a cross-fertilisation between its highly heterogeneous units. Therefore, the search for a new system-wide legitimacy depends, first and foremost, on the Euro-Mediterranean partners' capacity to (re)discover a sense of process, and of purpose too, based on the conjoint principles of humanism, cultural pluriformity and social justice. Greece has always shown a remarkable understanding of the complex interlinkage and interdependence between Europe and the Mediterranean. Greece, within the EU framework but also as a Euro-Mediterranean partner, will continue to contribute to its full capacity in the dynamics of the post-1995 Barcelona order-building project and the gradual convergence of all partners for the future of the region. In this context, it will be more actively involved in regional network-building, civil society-strengthening and socio-economic reconstruction. This is particularly crucial after the enlargement decision taken at the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002, as the EU will now have to redress the asymmetry of its strategic focus to accommodate the pressing realities in the Mediterranean and the wider Middle East regions.

Without doubt, Greece today is being called upon to play an important role in promoting peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean space, by undertaking conflict prevention

initiatives as well as actively participating in the elaboration and planning of the EU's foreign policy. The 2003 Greek presidency of the EU has renewed the interest in the initiation and the institutional consolidation of a political dialogue on matters of Mediterranean security and defence. Taking into consideration the various opinions concerning regional security among the Euro-Mediterranean partners, this initiative appears to be urgently-needed, vis-à-vis the ongoing crisis in Iraq. It is extremely important that this additional line of communication be opened concerning the structure and nature of ESDP, by clarifying the European intentions and by dispelling any possible misinterpretations by the Mediterranean partners. Such a dialogue must be able to promote regional co-operation in the Mediterranean by demonstrating that the EU's intentions towards the Arab world are not hostile. The Greek suggestions for extra-transparency, trust-building and the institutionalisation of political dialogue in the Mediterranean, will enhance the internal cohesion of the Barcelona Process.

Greece is a strong supporter of the newly-formulated ESDP, but Greek foreign policy-makers may also find, after the 2003 EU Presidency, that NATO offers some excellent opportunities for multilateral co-operation beyond the confidence-building measures between the Alliance with Mediterranean countries.[28] More important perhaps from a Greek perspective is that the chances for substantive regional co-operation would dramatically increase if a viable solution for the Cyprus question were to be found, and Greek-Turkish relations were further enhanced, so that both countries can take advantage of the benefits stemming from their geostrategic position at the regional crossroads.

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[1] Current discourses assert that the Mediterranean exists as an 'entity' or 'unity'. This view chimes well with Braudel's, in that the Mediterranean formed a large-scale unity, whose history could only be understood by looking at the factors that tied its coastal parts together; a region that changed only over very long cycles of history. See F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. I, Fontana Press, London, 1987.

[2] D. K. Xenakis and D. N. Chryssochoou, *The emerging Euro-Mediterranean system*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2001.

[3] T. Dokos, 'Greece in A New Regional Security Setting', *Defensor Pacis*, Special issue on the Greek Presidency, No 13, Defence Analysis Institute, Athens 2003.

[4] There is a reluctance to include the Balkans as a Mediterranean sub-regional space, which is instead seen as comprising a separate region in itself. S. Calleya, *Navigating Regional Dynamics in the Post-Cold War World: Patterns of Relations in the Mediterranean Area*, Dartmouth, Aldershot 1997.

[5] T. Couloumbis and T. Veremis, 'Introduction: The Mediterranean in Perspective', in S. Stavridis, T. Couloumbis, T. Veremis, N. Waites (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of the European Union's Mediterranean States and Applicant Countries in the 1990s*, Macmillan, London, 1999, p. 2.

[6] H. Köchler, ' Muslim-Christian Ties in Europe: Past, Present and Future', Second International Seminar on Civilizational Dialogue: "Japan, Islam and the West", Kuala Lumpur, 2-3 Sept. 1996.

[7] With the majority of pre-liberal images being influenced by the pre-eminent role attached to a value-driven distinction between the individual and the collective, it was thanks to the legacy of the Enlightenment that certain notions of 'civility' were linked to a more normative discourse. Such a legacy has largely survived the present era, with the West aiming at monopolising global discourse on democracy and human rights. See further on this point in Xenakis and Chryssochoou, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 36.

[8] This perception stems from a chain of events that has fuelled the Arab world with a deep sense of strategic insecurity. The 1990-1 Gulf War, the international isolation imposed on Iraq and Libya, the overwhelming US preoccupation with Israeli security, both pre- and post-September 11, and the forthcoming military intervention in Iraq have convinced the Arabs that the West will not hesitate to strike out against them should its interests require so.

[9] G. Joffé, 'Southern Attitudes Towards an Integrated Mediterranean Region', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1997, p. 18.

[10] This issue was extensively discussed at the conference *NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Prospects and Recommendations*, ELIAMEP & NATO Office of Information and Press, Athens 17-18 January 2003.

[11] R. O. Keohane, 'Neoliberal Institutionalism', in R. O. Keohane (ed.), *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, Westview Press, Boulder, Co., 1989, p. 4.

[12] D. K. Xenakis, 'From Policy to Regime: Trends in Euro-Mediterranean Governance', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1999, pp. 254-70.

[13] A heterarchical order minimises homogeneity/universality as the principal referent for sub-systemic co-operation. This form of enhanced particularity through a reflexive appropriation of difference resonates well with a broader aspiration of partnership that transcends any mono-dimensional configuration of power, stressing instead the complex character of a common vocation. According to Bankowski and Christodoulidis, the plausibility of this claim to the importance of reflexivity (as opposed to co-ordinated hierarchy) rests on a systemic perspective, whereby 'sub-systems do not [necessarily] join together into higher level systems ... nor can they be conceived of as instances of a totality'. Z. Bankowski and E. Christodoulidis, 'The European Union as an Essentially Contested Project', *European Law Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1998, p. 350.

[14] For an evaluation of Greek-EU relations see M. J. Tsinisizelis and D. N. Chryssochoou, 'Images of Greece and European Integration: A Case of Uneasy Interdependence?', *Synthesis*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1996, pp. 22-33.

[15] I. Lesser, 'Greece's New Strategic Environment', in I. Lesser *et. al. Greece's New Geopolitics*, RAND-Kokkalis Foundation, Santa Monica, 2001, p. 2.

[16] On this issue see M. Pace, *Rethinking the Mediterranean: Reality and Re-presentation in the Creation of a Region*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Portsmouth, June, 2001, especially chapter 4.

[17] The rise of Kostas Simitis' 'modernizers' to the leadership of the country in 1996 brought significant changes to Greece's foreign policy. Simitis's impact has steered Greece away from its nationalist foreign policy to a modernist-Europeanist direction.

[18] See further on this in Philippos K. Savvides, 'Cyprus at the Gate of the European Union: Scenarios, Challenges and Prospects', *ELIAMEP Policy Papers*, No. 1, ELIAMEP, 2002.

[19] See further in T. Couloumbis and K. Ifantis, 'Altering the Security Dilemma in the Aegean: Greek Strategic Options and Structural Constraints - A Realist Approach', *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2002, p. 1-25.

[20] It is worth reminding that, owing to the instability and insecurity in its surrounding region, Greece is obliged to spend a disproportionate share of its economic resources on national defence.

[21] D. N. Chryssochoou and D K. Xenakis, 'Greece and the Mediterranean', in P. C. Ioakimidis (ed.), *The European Union and Greece: The New Role and the New Agenda*, Hellenic Ministry of Press and Mass Media, Athens, 2002, pp. 241-251.

[22] 'Greece used to become active in the Mediterranean only when issues on Cyprus or Turkey arise'. C. Rozakis, 'Greek foreign policy 1974-85: Modernization and the international role of a small state', in A. Manessis *et al.* (eds.), *Greece in Motion*, Exandas, Athens, 1986 (in Greek). As Ioakimidis explains, 'Greek foreign policy pursuits have been described as 'irrational', 'parochial', 'incomprehensible', 'aggressive', even 'crazy', underlying the absence of a systemic institutional framework of foreign policy making'. See more analytically in P. C. Ioakimidis, 'The Model of Foreign Policy-Making in Greece: Personalities versus Institutions', in S. Stavridis *et a l.*, 1999, p. 140.

[23] Y. Papantoniou, 'The Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union's Security and Defense Policy and the Hellenic Presidency', Inaugural speech delivered at the seminar organised by the Greek Presidency of the European Union, Ministry of Defence, Rhodes, 1-2 November 2002.

[24] D. K. Xenakis, 'The Mediterranean Dimension of the ESDP', *Defensor Pacis*, Special issue on the Greek Presidency, No 13, Defence Analysis Institute, Athens 2003.2003.

[25] First Year Report of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo) Working Group III, 'European Defence: Perceptions vs. Realities', *EuroMeSCo Papers*, No 16, 2002.

[26] Workshop on 'Measures for Conflict Prevention in the MedForum Countries' Framework', Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome 21-22 June 2002.

[27] D. N. Chryssochoou and D. K. Xenakis, 'Prospects for Euro-Mediterranean Governance', *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2003, pp. 47-70.

[28] Thanos Dokos, 'NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Prospects and policy recommendations', *ELIAMEP Policy Paper* No 3, ELIAMEP, Athens 2003,